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*Hyphenated Japan: Cross-examining the Self/Other
dichotomy in Ainu-Japanese material culture*

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Senior Year Honors Thesis
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Oberlin College, 2017

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Introduction

Hakodate is a lot like the kind of cities you find in Texas except blanketed in ice. The comparison comes from the jarring shift one feels being dropped from Tokyo – a city of cramped streets, narrow sidewalks, and a clockwork atmosphere of expediency – into the middle of this freezing city in Japan's northernmost island of Hokkaido. In Tokyo, the sense is that everyone has somewhere to be and everything is handled in a ritualized, transactional manner to keep an imposed order on an environment that is poised to spill into the chaos of one of the world's largest cities. Hakodate is home to people who wait for a cab together on the side of the street, smoking cigarettes to hold off the cold and to help the beer go down. At night, two teenage girls sit in the parking lot of a fast food restaurant carrying some laid back conversation before splitting off and taking the long way back to the sidewalk. The streets are spread out widely, enough room for many cars and trucks, though there are hardly more than a few at a time. People can come out in the early the morning to drop by the market, either to get fresh spider crabs, squids, and salmon or a bowl of sea urchin on rice for breakfast. It has that feel of a metropolitan space built on what was once a frontier town in the American West: open, free roaming, and sprinkled with characters, like you could drift in and out in a day and more than a few people would notice.

I imagine the similarities are not born just from a general feeling, but also from a kind of urban genetics. The cities of Hokkaido are, after all, the cousins of Omaha, Houston, and Topeka. This island was absorbed into Japan in the 19th century, as the ruling elites of Japan redesigned their country from a feudal collective of domain lords and samurai houses to a European-style industrial and agricultural power under a

constitutional monarchy. This process, called the Meiji Restoration after the ruling emperor, was overseen at least in part with the advice of ranchers, farmers, and landowners from Ohio to Nebraska. (Walker, 2005) The 19th century intellectuals and politicians like Fukuzawa Yukichi¹, Itō Hirobumi, and Saigō Takamori sought advice from who they saw as modern, advanced people for how to build a “modern nation,” using methods for urbanization, agriculture, and national expansion to keep ahead in the age of imperialism. The new prefecture of Hokkaidō was a place of settlers, cattle ranchers, and state-sponsored gun-toting expansionists to build the industrial half of the nation to the south. And, to complete the picture, there were Indians.

The indigenous people of Hokkaido, the Ainu, are quite a unique entity, in both a historic and classically anthropological sense. Their language is a linguistic isolate and their closest related genetic group probably faded away 1,000 years ago. Nevertheless, Ainu² are grouped with originally Western imaginings of Indians by different people for different reasons. The Japanese government learned methods from their American advisers on how to develop the Ainu homeland to their needs. Today Ainu are considered a part of the global movement for indigenous rights and nationless peoples. Even prior to their subjugation and theft of their lands, Western anthropologists grouped them with the indigenous communities they were more familiar with, describing them as Japan’s “hairy

¹ Throughout this paper, I will be using the standard Japanese style of writing names with the family name first, followed by the personal name (the man called Yukichi, belonging to the Fukuzawa family is called Fukuzawa Yukichi). This style will be applied to Japanese and Ainu individuals. Non-Japanese individuals (including people of Japanese descent who are either not citizens or reside in countries where the naming convention is different) will be written with the Western standard of personal name followed by family name.

² Historically, Ainu are not only inhabitants of Hokkaido, but were also dominant populations of Sakhalin, the Kuril Islands, as well as small populations in Kamchatka and in pockets of Far Eastern Siberia. Early ethnographic information indicates that these groups varied greatly, with different cultural practices and linguistic variation (Batchelor, 189-; Landor, 1893). In this paper, I am speaking about Japan, so I deal exclusively with Hokkaido Ainu and their inter-related Japanese citizens. For more information on non-Hokkaido Ainu, see Ohnuki-Tierney, 2009.

aborigines.”³ What I want to do in this thesis is examine not only whether this analogy with natives from New Zealand to North America holds up when the relationship between the Ainu and the Japanese is put under the microscope, but also what it says about the relationship between these two peoples (Japanese and Ainu), and Western colonial powers like America. What is revealed when we look at things not only in parallel binary constructions – Ainu/Japanese, Indian/American, even Japanese/American – but a series of relationships, all affecting each other, crossing cultures, and redefining each other in an age of increased nationalism, assimilation, and post-colonialism? How do these people define themselves by building contrasts or similarities with one another?

Japan has spent much of its history measuring itself against both the outside and the inside. Contrastive Others have come and gone, from China to America, and on the inside Others range from indigenous ethnicities like the Ainu, to caste groups like the *Burakumin*. Despite the large amount of foreign influence that has shaped the Japanese national identity in its current form, postwar Japanese discourses often hold that it is a culturally homogenous nation without minorities. Though this has not always been the discourse, since 1868 Japanese politicians and intelligentsia have constructed ways that allowed the Japanese to absorb cultural influence without harm, bring others into the nationality (by force) as an element to ensure that ethnic Japanese still remain favored. This was not limited to minority groups being forcibly assimilated, but also outside powers that Japan was anxious about. This theme is most famous during the height of

³ A defining feature of Ainu depicted in both Western ethnographies and Japanese government writings in the 19th century was that they were covered in hair. John Batchelor, a British missionary and ethnographer who spent much of his adult life in Hokkaido kindly pointed out, “This hairiness has been greatly exaggerated. We should naturally expect that conspicuous specimens of hairy men would be found among them; but that is no reason for the conclusion that they are all so thickly covered with hair as some would have us believe.” (189-: 17-18)

Japan's nationalism, but it also manifests throughout the pacifistic postwar. I will focus my attention on the history of colonialism in Hokkaido, and how the Ainu were put under strict assimilation policies. A trend emerges where colonized Ainu, despite being contrastive Others, are continuously imagined as a non-separate aspect of a greater Japanese national identity, and for each time that Japanese national identity is reimagined the Ainu's role in it is reimagined to suit the new framework, without input from Ainu themselves. For shorthand, I call this conception of Ainu, 'the external definition.'

Because cultural 'fusion,' as it colloquially called, happens along many lines, I will concentrate my study to material culture, since the cultural changes that most prominently signified association were materials like food, clothing, and technology. These were the materials the Japanese used to both make the Ainu like themselves, and themselves like the West. More than that, I will specifically focus on symbolic analysis of objects and how they are culturally laden to argue that the method of instilling objects with culture used by Japanese on both themselves and Ainu created an idea of culture as an object, something to have instead of an assortment of ways to live.

I structure this thesis in three parts, each introducing a way of conceptualizing materiality in Self/Other dichotomies that the following part builds on. In part 1 (chapters 1-3), I lay out the context for the reader to understand some basic discourses in Japan and how they have developed over the course of history. In chapter 1, I argue that discrimination in Japan, while similar to what Western societies would call racism, operates under a slightly different set of principles. Specifically, I look at how Japanese normality is conceived not as a race, but *minzoku* or nation, that potentially allows input from Others while attacking perceived threats to the current definition of *minzoku*. I want

to make clear that I am not attempting to describe what Japanese society is really like, but rather how prominent voices in Japan and the mainstream public imagines the country to be. As such, I hope to caution American readers from impressing their own ideas of racism onto Japan and understand how forms of discrimination along with definitions of nationality develop in particular histories. In chapter 2, I elaborate that particular histories are not histories formed in isolation, as I present the history the Self/Other dichotomy between Japan and America. I critique both American and Japanese writers for selectively imagining the history they share and overlooking difficult strains that allow a void for antagonistic authors to distort history. Through this, I show that the relationship between Japanese and Ainu is not a dichotomous Self/Other, but a balancing of many Selves and Others, and stress that Japan was reinventing itself at the time of colonialism in Hokkaido. In chapter 3, I go over the history of the Ainu, their relationship with the Japanese, and what frame of history is best used to talk about them. I describe the context of Ainu tradition and resilience against colonialism, and how I hope to write against both the external definition and the more particular “vanishing ethnicity” narrative.

For part 2, I move from historical analysis and use the context I have laid out to look at the use of material culture in constructing the Self/Other dichotomy, first in the prewar (1868-1945) and then in the postwar eras (1946-present). In chapter 4, I break down how Japanese colonial projects used symbolic materials associated with Japaneseness to force the Ainu to assimilate into the Japanese nation. I focus on the symbolic role of food-getting and language to argue that 19th century Japanese, inspired by Western advisers, built a discourse where culture could be contained and transmitted through the use of objects and in turn, Western culture, Japanese culture, and Ainu

culture could be made into objects. This chapter is the keystone of my design, explicitly analyzing the forms of materiality in colonial methods. Essentially, the three chapters leading up to it are the context needed to understand it, and the three following chapters are ideas built from the arguments it presents. In chapter 5, I look at the postwar era, and how the Japanese refashioned their traditions into a new discourse for their national identity. I trace how symbolic materials were re-examined to do away with prewar ideas like monarchism while preserving other ideas to anchor peoples' sense of Self in the devastation of war. From there, I look at how the Ainu were damaged by this new discourse, their aspect of Japaneseness shifting in ideologies, and how this spurred the Ainu 'movement' of the postwar.

Part 3 reorients attention to the Ainu as the center, instead of examining the Japanese writing the story. In chapter 6, I describe the positives and negatives of the 21st century's push toward cultural promotion, through the examination of tourist villages. I also question the problems of authenticity and heritage that may be reinforcing ideas like vanishing ethnicity and an imagining of Ainu as locked into the past. In chapter 7, I examine ways forward, looking back at how the legacy left by making culture into an object can be subverted and is being carried out by contemporary Ainu. I argue that this may be a potent tool of resistance for the time being, and may even be a way to resist some of the most basic principles that defined the Ainu and the Japanese in the colonial period, such as an understanding of time and modernity.

The purpose of this thesis is for me to examine ways that material culture and symbolic objects can dismantle the multiple Self/Other dichotomies functioning in contemporary Japan. I further argue that this is both a subversive practice, since these

forms of material culture were used to cement those dichotomies, and a revivalist practice for minority groups like Ainu. I hope to contribute to the growing field of ‘modern Indigeneity,’ studies of Japanese national identity, and the nature of how colonialism constructs Others, inside and out.

Part 1: *Distorted Visions, Competitive Imperialisms and Japanese Historical Memory*

Chapter 1

The Mechanics of Discrimination in Japan

“Things Are Easier in a Monoracial Society”

In 1986, Japanese Prime Minister Nakasone Yasuhiro generated controversy when he seemed to imply that American society was held back from Japan’s level of intelligence because “there are many blacks, Puerto Ricans, and Mexicans in America. In consequence the average score [for levels of education] over there is exceedingly low.” The controversy then erupted across the Pacific, leading Nakasone to deliver a confusing atonement. He praised the achievements of America for overcoming the difficulty of living in a multiracial society, while explaining, “things are easier in Japan because we are a monoracial society.” The apology satisfied no one, as it was read that Nakasone had called America’s black and Latino populations an obstacle to achievement. (Bowen, 2001) The anger over the racism directed at blacks and Latinos was deserved, yet a telling (though not surprising) silence occurred from both America and Japan on Nakasone’s claim that Japan was a monoracial society. Even the article I pulled this translation of the quote from, written fifteen years after the fact, agreed with Nakasone about “Japan’s remarkably closed and monolithic society.” (Ibid) From the outside, it certainly appears that way; according to the standards we use in Euro-American thought to assess the hazy concept of diversity, Japan is homogenous like few others. Japan

officially declared itself a country without minorities in the UN Human Rights Committee's International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. (Siddle, 1996: 179)

The lack of controversy over Nakasone's omission of Japan's minorities is not my main interest in this section; rather, I want to unpack the confidence in his assertion that Japan is 'monoracial.' In fact, his implication may be even greater – the oft-repeated sentiment that Japan's economic and political success can be attributed to a society that is harmonious, efficient, to the point of being not monoracial, but monolithic. In this view, Japan runs smoothly because citizens share a basic commonality that overpowers minor differences. (Befu, 2001: Morris-Suzuki, 1998: Siddle, 1996) Nakasone's statement then becomes not one of racial purity but the shared *national* identity of the people. It only became racialized when he applied the idea to America, a country that was founded with harshly drawn racial lines.

Still, one can't help but see racism, or something that resembles it, in Japan, not only against foreign nationalities but also within its interior. Minority populations like Ainu and Okinawans face job discrimination and lower levels of education (Howell, 1996; Siddle, 1996; Yoshino, 1998). Ethnic Koreans who are third or fourth-generation immigrants live in specialized "Korea towns," and are called *zainichi* (residents) rather than *kokujin* (locals). (Flowers, 2014; Howell, 1996) Media frenzies emerged over the last two winners of Japan's most popular beauty pageants when their respective winners were mixed-race Japanese, and criticized for not being "Japanese enough." (Fackler, 2015) While critiques of these phenomena are deserved, their counter arguments (especially from the West) are critiques leveled at Japanese society for simply being racist. The problem with this style of counter argument is that it operates under the same

premise as the one that enables it – that Japan is a monolithic/monoracial society that must accept variation from either the outside (in the case of Korean immigrants) or from minorities (Ainu). A more effective counter argument must first break down exactly what constitutes the *monolithic* nature of Japanese society (which I will show as being not as close to ‘race’ as it seems) and then interrogating how that monolithic nature is reinforced in different historical contexts.

Constitution: The Race/Nation System in Japan

The idea of a homogenous Japanese nation is just as strong in the American imagination about Japan as it is in the country itself. I find that when I tell people that I study Japanese minorities, they nearly always respond with bewilderment. “Japan has minorities?” “Are they immigrants?” “Are they related to the Japanese?” And then there comes the complicated moment where I have to broadly answer, “Yes, there are minorities. Indigenous ones. And they’re pretty different. In fact, I only study one of many.” What I have difficulty explaining in a passing conversation is the disconnection between race and racism in Japan, the complicated way that Japanese society has bred its own social stratification(s), and how these systems have reinforced themselves over the course of modern Japanese history.

It would be impossible to describe a perfect model for exactly how discrimination works in Japan. Nevertheless, there are enough broad, recurring trends in discourse to understand some of the values being negotiated in discrimination. Grasping these values (namely, homogeneity, cultural uniqueness, and adaptability) and how they emerge in small-scale cases should also help in establishing a bumper against what I see as an

irritating pattern of Americans misplacing their own race-value and counter-value systems onto 'Japanese racism.' To just assert that Japan is a xenophobic country full of racists is not only a flawed premise to work from, but contributes to an overall ignorance of the understanding of how social stratifications vary worldwide, reinforcing the existence of those categories (race, nationality, language) as given and not invented. I want to display that while racism is contingent upon the idea of 'race' in America, in Japan, the two are related but semi-independent.

Racism – in the contrast between Japan and America – can be called a continuous social action (term mine): never having a written or exact action itself, but a conglomerate of sayings, behaviors, and dispositions that form a method of socializing. Building from that premise, we can work along the lines of Bourdieu's writing on embodiment: how an individual in a social field absorbs the linguistic, socio-cultural expressions of the social sphere around them. In Bourdieu's view, this process happens usually without deliberation (the individual unconsciously absorbs these dispositions) and from there, forces individuals into recognizable social classes. Once these dispositions work in combination with a network of various social institutions and understandings, the individual takes on an embodied social self: a habitus, or a schema of embodied external dispositions and internal attitudes that move the individual through a social field. (1977; 1984)

From there, our understanding of racism would be a step beyond Bourdieu's version of habitus; we would be dealing in a version that places greater emphasis on forceful embodiment from aggressive or passive-aggressive outside agents than on how the embodying subject learns codes and subconsciously masters them. In keeping with

Bourdieu's comments that taste is a social weapon, then we can imagine further breaking down the process wherein the social object of race is weaponized into the action of racism; this is how, in America, racism is contingent upon the 'existence' of race. The social object and social action form one strand of what can be called a social structure.

In Japan, the concept of race does exist in the popular imagination, and racism (in the terms of the description above) is pervasive. However, the object lying at its core, the concept that is weaponized into the main tool that enables racism as a continuous social action, is something I would hesitate to call 'race.' The concept of *jinshu* in Japan corresponds roughly to 'race' in English, yet does not appear quite in the same way in writings and phenomena that display the Japanese social hierarchy analogous to racism. In the case of the Ainu, pre-Meiji depictions of them in woodblock prints speak volumes. They were painted as physically contrasted with the Japanese, with large eyes, excessive hair, and elaborate clothes that are generally inaccurate and focused more on emphasizing difference. (Ohnuki-Tierney, 1998: 45; Morris-Suzuki, 1998: 83) It might be our first instinct to label these paintings as racial caricatures – their closest American analogy would probably be the illustrations of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. So it is important to stop here and recall that just because they look like a different racial category does not mean the creator saw them as such. For a comparative perspective, I would point to cosmetics advertisements in South Asia and Hong Kong, which are adorned with images of women using skin-bleaching lotions to look fairer-skinned. While there is a strong argument to support the idea that it is a product of the legacies of colonial Britain, problematic in its own right, we should recognize that these are problems operating in a different framework, with scholars looking into issues ranging from colorism existing within

ethnic boundaries to negotiating cosmopolitanism in heavily globalized post-colonial settings. (Glenn, 2008; Leong, 2006; Shankar and Subish, 2007) One operates in terms of a hierarchy of separate racial categories while another does in terms of melanin levels as a cosmetic feature, which may or not be linked to a firm racial category. Yoshino (1998) also writes that while Japanese “exclusivism” shows many characteristics of racism (such as writings that describe the Japanese language as being tied to Japanese blood), racism is an inadequate way of describing the phenomenon. Though race and culture are closely associated, they lack a causal relationship that appears throughout the West.

Morris-Suzuki posits that a more accurate description of pre-Meiji Japanese conceptions of groups like Ainu and Ryūkyūans⁴ lies in the uniformly imposed Japanese philosophy of Social Order, or “an inherently unequal social order where everyone theoretically occupied a place in an intricate galaxy of statuses [...]” (1998: 83) The Confucian-inspired hierarchy of statuses placed distinct groups like Ainu not as wholly separate entities from a pure Japanese nation, but as low-ranking undesirables, full of culturally embedded markers like tattoos (associated with criminals) and hunters of wild animals. In this case, there was no Other because Japan rested in a ranked hierarchy from the Emperor down.

For further deconstruction of the argument for race as the guiding principle of discrimination/Otherness, I turn to the case of Japan’s Special-Status People.⁵

Historically, they have been called *burakumin* (discriminated people), and their

⁴ The inhabitants of the much smaller Ryūkyū arch of islands to Japan’s southern main island of Kyushu. Like the Ainu, these people were culturally and linguistically distinct from Japanese. They were also largely distinct from one another, including Okinawan, Yaeyama, and Miyako. The name comes from their unification under the Ryūkyū Kingdom. In some parts due to the warmer climate they inhabited, Japanese lords found it easier to subjugate the kingdom. The Ryūkyū arch was annexed by Japan in the early Meiji, like Hokkaido, and their modern descendants face discrimination similar to Ainu.

⁵ Get used to Japan and its euphemisms. They will not end here.

identification as such dates to at least the beginning of the 16th century. They are believed to be the descendants of ancient tanners, butchers, leather makers, and undertakers: any profession that required the handling of corpses, animal or human. The story goes that they were made 'unclean' according to Buddhist precepts and they needed to be shunned. However, they are virtually indistinguishable from other Japanese, speaking the same language, looking no different, and evidence indicates that the overwhelming majority of them as early as the 18th century worked in jobs not deemed unclean. They achieved this in part because of their ability to blend, but they were and continue to be categorically defined as a caste of undesirables. (Howell, 1996: 178-180) As late as the 1990s, Japanese private investigators could find work looking into the backgrounds of potential employees and in-laws to discover if they were *buraku*. I have found no evidence that the practice has stopped. The case of Special-Status People provides two points: (1) an Ainu-equivalent population occupying a similar place in the social hierarchy without the use of physical (or possibly *racial*) differentiation, and (2) how association with a certain object or symbolic item can be a foundational point for identity and discrimination and building the Self/Other dichotomy (this will become a central theme in chapter 4).

With a localized context for negotiating the Self and Others by the time Japan started drawing influence from the West, we can better understand how Western concepts could be superimposed onto pre-existing structures. If the social structure of what we call racism does function in Japan, then the question to ask is what object lies at its core. Recall that this object (analogous to race in the United States) is what becomes weaponized as racism's primary tool. With an interior Self/Other dichotomy functioning in Japan before Westernization, applying to Special-Status People and Ainu, a system is

open to more scrutinizing aid from social science and especially anthropology. It was at this time that *jinshu* (race) was introduced as a concept by Meiji intellectual Fukuzawa Yukichi. However, Morris-Suzuki (1998) elaborates that its acceptance as a concept by the Japanese public and intelligentsia, did not result in its prominence as a tool of national discourse:

“Western notions of race, which were commonly intertwined with ideas about the superiority of the white races, were not necessarily comfortable for Japanese readers. Although the word *jinshu* was accepted as the equivalent of the English word ‘race’ and was widely used by some anthropologists, after about 1890 a growing number of Japanese writers showed a preference for the term *minzoku*, which is perhaps best defined as the Japanese version of the German word *Volk*. *Minzoku*, in other words, can but does necessarily refer to a group of people who are physically related to one another. It can also refer to a community bound together by ties of language or tradition [...]” (87)

With the prominence of *minzoku*, race is not abandoned but repositioned. *Minzoku* allowed for a system that was both fluid (not making race a barrier) and appropriately rigid (allowing to retain statuses of the pre-Meiji era), and held obvious benefits as a tool to negate the nervous acceptance of white superiority.⁶ ‘Nation’ then occupied the social object weaponized for Japanese ‘racism.’ In fact, despite American wartime propaganda

⁶ For much of the Meiji period, many intellectuals and politicians did indeed think that white races had inherent superiority. The admiration for the Western government styles were often attributed to whites being in a higher state of progress, and many proposed policies continued this line of thought. One politician suggested the Japanese diet needed to be restructured and abandon rice to compete with Western strength should they go to war. (Ohnuki-Tierney, 2002: 64) Mori Arinori went so far as to suggest that the Japanese language be abandoned altogether in favor of English. (Befu, 2001: 127) Much of subsequent Japanese philosophy and science writes of finding specifically Japanese values in the midst of the Westernized country.

describing Japanese as obsessed with racial purity and therefore discrimination, the more prominent view of wartime politicians and social scientists (and a view endorsed by the imperial government) was that the Japanese race drew strength from its multi-ethnic origins, successfully hybridized into a single Japanese nation under the imperial dynasty. (Hudson, 2006: 413-414; Morris-Suzuki, 1998: 90-95) This idea of hybridization proved useful for colonial purposes, as it held the promise that the colonized people of Korea and Manchuria (and to a lesser extent Okinawa and Hokkaido), by being treated as subjects of the emperor, would eventually contribute to the strength of the nation.

The other important component of *minzoku* as an ordering concept for discrimination is that while presenting a barrier to outsiders that is both rigid and fluid, it also is rigid and fluid in its own definition. As the nation's government changes, its national lines are drawn, or anytime it receives a great shift in character (as Japan did most acutely in aftermath of World War II), the internal elements that constitute *minzoku* must be reorganized to fit new definitions. This tends to appear most prominently in Japan's legendary adaptability to outside influence, often celebrated within and outside Japan as the ability to absorb foreign elements and make them distinctly Japanese, or aspects of Japaneseness. These include rice and calligraphy from China (the former has become a symbol of Japaneseness), Buddhism from India (through China; several sects of Buddhism, like Nichiren, in Japan often emphasize Japan as a land uniquely suited to Buddhist study), and in the case of Hokkaido and the Ryūkyū islands, people and their histories. With that established, I posit that the constitution of *minzoku* and its reinforcement has two governing elements: symbolic materials and symbolic characteristics. Symbolic materials form the digits of the code of Japanese *minzoku*. They

are elements of culture that are recognizable: the people, the language, the routines of everyday life, and all the corresponding materials that are used to build those elements; essentially, they are the present, interactive items that are written on the larger “characteristics” of the nation’s ethos. In turn, these characteristics are considered the immovable parts of Japaneseness that new materials can be grafted onto (characteristics include homogeneity, long-lasting essence, and adaptability itself). Of course, characteristics can change as well, but they are frequently imagined as existing in a different, immovable realm from their materials. For example, for as much as I’ve talked about homogenous Japan, Oguma (2002) considers homogeneity strictly a postwar ideal of Japanese nationalism, a relative of the culturally monolithic, but hybridized empire of the prewar. In part 2, I will display some of the ways prewar ideals of constructing culture created the circumstances for building a homogenous nationalism. Just like the symbolic materials and characteristics, they can change as well, as new generations are born and die out, all the while building and positioning new materials that constitute *minzoku*. The act of sorting these symbols out and managing their relationships, of being the interpretant is not nation building, but nationality building.

Reinforcement: Nihonjinron and its Relatives

“*Ware ware nihonjin desu.*” It simply means, “We Japanese.”⁷ The phrase out of context is not terribly self-evident. In fact it’s almost bland – the most basic statement of self-identification that could hypothetically be used anywhere. But in context, it is a

⁷ I have also found it translated as “We, the Japanese.” This certainly does make it less bland sounding to an English speaker, but I find it unsatisfactory. First of all, Japanese lacks articles (both indefinite and definite) so the implicit nature of the phrase is lost. Second, the phrase’s power lies not in the words themselves but the social context they operate in.

powerful and moving sentiment. For the Japanese, the utterance of the phrase is a densely packed motif, uniting all the separate elements of Japanese identity – language, culture, history, tradition, custom, mind – and binding them so tightly that they mesh into the evident sense of being Japanese. I acknowledge the exact feeling behind the phrase is difficult to communicate, as I myself still have trouble grasping how such a statement can conjure that much. For many of the people who utter it, my lack of understanding is precisely the point.

Yoshino writes, “The main attribute of the sense of Japanese uniqueness is possessiveness. Exclusive ownership is claimed upon certain aspects of Japanese culture.” (1998: 21) To rephrase it for my argument, discrimination in Japan, whether or not one is “Japanese enough,” while affected by notions of race, derives from *having* Japanese culture. This is not to say any foreigner who can master Japanese culture is then accepted as Japanese. In fact, foreigners who speak too perfect Japanese can often cause discomfort, perceived as threatening the uniqueness. (Ibid: 29) When visiting with friends traveling to Japan for the first time, I often tell them to deliberately make their accents slightly off, as it will make interactions with locals smoother and less awkward. But this case still supports the general problem for people living within Japan: the presumption of having Japanese culture, and what groups are afforded that presumption. That is the element of prejudice, and usually non-ethnic Japanese citizens (whether they be Ainu or Korean) face discrimination due to this presumed lacking. It is why I cannot explain the phrase, “*Ware ware nihonjindesu*” – it is the characteristic of uniqueness and inaccessibility to those who are presumed not to have Japaneseness.

The semiotic layers, cultural elements, and recognizable gestures that are united under the phrase (the symbolic materials), are the constitution of Japan's *minzoku*, and while they can individually be parsed out and analyzed, popular imagination in Japan holds that when they function together, they form a completely homogenous, monolithic national identity, utterly unique from any other. They work along the characteristics of the *minzoku*, with the most prominent characteristic being homogeneity. And since I am writing about minority populations, this importance of homogeneity can have major consequences on these groups. Discriminatory practices are principally exercised on those who pose a threat to the homogenous nature of Japaneseness, both on a macro (immigration) and micro (bullying and discrimination) level. A difference in genetic heritage is included in this, but is just one incarnation, and is called *chi no shisō* (blood thinking). 'Blood' may be invoked to imagine the Japanese as a family (echoing the more racist tones of the Meiji period, where each person was related to a kin-group that ultimately linked back to the Imperial family as the progenitor), but Yoshino stipulates, aside from ultranationalists, this is an "imagined family" that is a product of formative experience that allows them to possess that spirit/culture that is the core of homogenous nationalism. (1998: 24) Moreover, once a characteristic enters the discourse, it is also absorbed into the realm of existing since time immemorial. In the Meiji period, the word for this concept was *kokutai* (national polity) or, "continuity that signified Japan's national distinctiveness." (Gluck, 1987: 249) *Kokutai*'s utility was in loudly preserving Japaneseness even as the country radically transformed into an industrial, Western-style nation state, assurance that even as things looked different, Japan was not becoming less Japanese. It could be seen in slogans like "Western Science, Eastern Values."

Now that I have laid out the foundation of *minzoku* – conceptual vessel of Japanese national identity – and explained clearly what it is not, it is time to make some attempt at explaining it beyond the abstract concept and into the negotiable material that permeates the popular Japanese imagination. More specifically, I will outline its two most basic and far-reaching premises of Japanese national identity: (1) that while foreigners can appreciate and study Japaneseness, only Japanese can fully understand it, and (2) that this almost ingrained ability to read, analyze, and intrinsically know Japaneseness is because Japan is unique among cultures. (Befu, 2001: 66-67) I want to qualify that when I talk about things like homogeneity and uniqueness I am not trying to explain “Japanese culture” or how it works, but trying to have a conversation with what Japanese say about themselves by engaging with writing on the idea of Japanese nationality. The Japaneseness I put forth in this chapter is hardly a representation of the actual lives of everyday Japanese, but a literal “assemblage of texts” (Geertz, 1973: 448) that operates visibly in public and people can measure themselves against.

In fitting with Yoshino’s (1998) analysis, it is a large set of modes and norms that one can possess, and I am examining the criteria for possessing it by looking at how Japanese sources write about it. From the academic shelves to the tourist sites, a massive body of literature has been produced to understand what is so unique about Japanese identity, glossed under the philosophy of *nihonjinron*.⁸ This type of writing is generally the guidebook for what I referred to as the interpretants in modern nationality building. However, Befu points out that any study of Japanese culture is often broadly associated

⁸ In American academic writing, *nihonjinron* often appears in tandem with Japan’s long-lasting belief in its uniqueness. However, closer reading indicates that while the trend of Japanese uniqueness is a long lasting product of Meiji-era nationalism, the actual tenets of *nihonjinron* (stressing cultural, linguistic, and psychological uniqueness) are largely a postwar phenomenon.

with *nihonjinron* ideology (typically nationalism). This fails to account for the variety of books and articles, which range from the erudite to the popular, and which deal with a variety of topics from cultural heritage and history to philosophical examinations of national character. It is the latter category that, within Japan, is actually called *nihonjinron*, since “ron” is a broad term for “view” or “thoughts,” which in this case would be thoughts on the character of the Japanese people. (Befu, 2001: 2-3) All in all, *nihonjinron* is a messy term, but a useful one for capturing certain types of popular writing, particularly those whose primary interest is the search for the essential Japanese national character, and who often write with an ideology of uniqueness.

For one such case study that is explicitly relevant to my focus on minorities (especially Ainu), there is the controversial philosopher Umehara Takeshi. Umehara is salient to my case for several reasons. He is considered by some to be an ultranationalist (though by no means a war apologist) and a popular *nihonjinron* author. I would hesitate in calling him an ultranationalist, though his writing often reads eerily similar to war apologists. He is more similar to them in the sense that he is a revivalist, looking deep into Japan’s past and religious history to rebuild the national ethos.

What interests me is his fascination (or perhaps, obsession) with the supposed prehistoric link between Ainu and Japanese that he believes stretches back to the earliest human populations of Japan. He has written that the Ainu and Japanese languages are related (they are not) and that they share the same genetic stock. (Befu, 2001; Hudson, Iwawallén, and Watson: 2014) Most notably, he has written that the Ainu culture represents the earliest form of the Japanese ethos, and that the roots of Japanese tradition and character can be seen most clearly in Ainu studies. (Habu and Fawcett, 1999: 591) In

spite of what many might see as a sympathetic view toward the Ainu as part of long-lasting Japanese national character, Umehara's writing represents the apotheosis of what Howell calls the domestication of Ainu, subsuming them within Japanese society but not different enough to erode homogeneity. He works from the premise that Ainu culture is "merely a remnant of an earlier, 'proto-Japanese' culture." (1996: 175) This idea of shunting Ainuness into a Japanese past is also a holdover from colonialist ideas from the Meiji period, which I will interrogate in chapter 4. At its best, this idea reinforces the external definition, where Ainu are positioned as a feature of Japanese, redefined to reflect aspects of its long-lasting essential characteristics. At its worst, it retroactively justifies the colonization of Hokkaido by making the Ainu natural Japanese who were merely being returned to their relatives (a strategy that would be used to justify imperialism in Korea). While there is an argument to be made for finding a place within the country you live in, there is little opportunity for Ainu to enforce and define the level of this distinction and how far it goes.

Building from Howell's critiques, I will add a further problem that this definition is built out of colonial history and formulated without Ainu input is problematic enough, but its grander problem lies in a frequent critique of *nihonjinron* literature inside Japan: more than reviving nationalistic attitudes that many Japanese blame for the war, the emphasis on homogeneity across all sectors of Japanese society coupled with need for long-lasting essence, serves to reinforce the status quo, making struggles across class, ethnic, and social categories negligible. (Befu, 2001; Habu and Fawcett, 1999) For the Ainu, it makes both their historical distinctiveness and their current problems of discrimination into threats against the Japanese national character, insofar as that

character is dependent on a homogenous status quo. While the idea of placing the Ainu within the Japanese national identity is a possible way to counter both of these problems, any attempt do so *without challenging the homogeneity requirement* is actually making the situation worse, and only serves to further preserve current problems. If this discrimination represents a challenge to homogeneity, then it is the latter (the status quo) that must be seriously challenged.

Returning to my focus on the Self/Other dichotomy and how discrimination works in Japan, I conclude this exploration by noting how ‘different’ Japan appears to Americans. It would be tempting to stop there with the banal conclusion that “Japan works differently from America.” But the point of curiosity remains: if the distinction between the Self and its Other is so hazy, then what does that say about the Self as the primary crafter of the distinction? To examine that, one must look at the function of imperialism in Japan and keep in mind just as these dichotomies are invented, they are invented in specific times under specific circumstances.

Chapter 2

The Reluctant Imperialist?

In the last chapter, I examined the aspirational image of Japan that many Japanese measure themselves against. I am now moving into a larger examination, looking at how Japanese measure themselves against Others, inside and outside the country. I approach this topic with two important factors to keep in mind. The first is that the history of Japanese imperialism (especially its height during World War II) is extremely taboo in current Japanese politics, pop culture, and education; a lack of discussion often leads to heightened emotions and extreme responses when the topic does emerge. The second is that I am an American anthropology student writing for an English-speaking readership that I assume is at least passingly familiar with images of Japan produced by American writers and scholars. These factors considered, I feel it pertinent to discuss both a problem and a pitfall: respectively, a tendency to reinforce a prevailing image of Japanese imperialism as distinctly brutal and borderline animalistic on one end, and a tendency to write against this image by presenting the Japanese as more sensitive/reactive Asian colonizers who were forced into becoming imperialists with their backs against the wall. Both styles are slanted, offensive to many parties, and contain kernels of truth that need to be addressed in this study. This is especially important since a great deal of study on the Ainu must involve discussing the West's influence on Japan. If I am going to look at Japan's first great colonial endeavor – the settlement of Hokkaido and displacement of the Ainu – then I should at least be aware of the place I am writing from and recognizing that Japanese imperialism, while influenced by the West, developed out of its own particular history in both time and place.

For the most part, even in many of the sources I use in this paper, Japanese imperialism/colonialism⁹ is described and treated as a reiteration of Western models, almost working with the assumption that Japan has officially entered that indistinct, taken-for-granted mode of discourse reserved for the so-called West. I find this tends to generate a variety of symptoms that, fortunately for me, can be traced back to the same problem: a void of information and discourse to treat Japan on its own terms that leaves room for politically slanted polemics for both Americans and Japanese attempting to discredit each other. I will focus on two distortions that arise from this void, American Orientalism and Japanese neo-nationalism.

American Wartime Historiography & Orientalism

Most are familiar with the images of Japanese produced by Americans during World War II that appear in propaganda cartoons (monkeys to imply non-humans resembling humans, and ants to imply a collectivist mindset). Less known in popular memory is the contemporary ninety-year-old organization of depictions circulated into America's field¹⁰ of what Said (1978) calls Orientalism. In the history of imperialism, an

⁹ I am aware that imperialism and settler colonialism are distinct from each other. I am not using them interchangeably. When I talk about imperialism, I am referring explicitly to Japan's actions after the Russo-Japanese war, from establishing a protectorate on Korea to the end of WWII. However, I believe that colonialism roughly encapsulates the entire process from the beginning of the Meiji period to the same end point. Unlike in the Americas, where settler colonialism and imperialism took place nearly a century apart, Japan's move from annexing land into its own country to establishing colonies as part of an empire happened within the span of 20 years. As such, many of the same ideologies and methods carry over unchanged.

¹⁰ Said's central examination in *Orientalism* deals with British/French conceptions of an Orient that corresponds to the Middle East/Islamic world, with America's later inheritance of this relationship being funneled through its alliance with Israel. He also acknowledges that the popular imagination of the Orient for Americans is typically built around the Far East "(China and Japan mainly)" (1978: 1). Though Said's main focus is on the inherited Orient corresponding of the Middle East for imperialist purposes, I am adapting a broader concept of a politically charged, domination-minded "inventing" of an imagined geography to describe America's relationship with Japan. This was not as explicitly colonial or as long lasting as Said's main focus, but it carries identical methods (essentialization, Self-Other dichotomies, and

interdependent relationship was constructed and organized across intellectual disciplines (historiography, cultural studies, anthropology, sociology, literature) to define, describe and eventually circumscribe an area called the East (or the Orient) under an authoritative guise of an apolitical search for objective knowledge. This inventing of imagined geographies (collapsing areas as diverse and wide ranging from Morocco to India) could then be defined in contrast to an equally invented West.

While Said was principally concerned with the historical process of inventing the Orient and its geopolitical effects, I am interested in reapplying some of his premises more broadly: the definition of the Self (whether this Self is a race, nation, or political affiliation) in terms of contrast with the Other (usually an assortment of wildly different and occasionally contrasting subjects, all unified). This is not a neutral process: in Said's study, the practice of Orientalism, while disguised as objective and in search of pure knowledge, was actually used to portray the East as weak, irrational, and backward in contrast to the civilized West to create a justification for imperialism. (1978: 7-8) Uses of Orientalism often reflect current political interests while presenting themselves as objective truths or basic analysis of facts, though Said, like Foucault, argues that since no piece of literature or science is produced out of historical context, built upon political institutions, the idea that 'true knowledge' is supposedly non-political is never actually the case. (10-11) I will adapt Said's influential framework to examine both the political realities of the U.S.-Japan relationship that has existed since 1853¹¹ and to explain the use

imagined geographies) to invent and justify power structures as given rather than created by historical reinforcement.

¹¹ This is the year that American ships, led by U.S. Navy Commodore Matthew C. Perry, landed his fleet of "Black Ships" (their folk name in Japan) at Kanagawa, on orders of President Millard Fillmore to forcefully open trade with the Japanese Shogunate. Though Japan had maintained relationships with Western countries before this year (notably the Dutch), and Western countries had been creating slanted images of a

of invented Self-Other dichotomies of America toward Japan, Japan toward America, and Japan toward Ainu. It's a complicated, politically turbulent minefield, so summing it succinctly is risky, but a fairly sufficient method would be to gloss this phenomenon as 'dichotomous competitive imperialisms.' Do not mistake this as implying equal footing among powers, or that the competitive imperialisms between America and Japan are equivalent to that between Britain and France: the 'competitive' implies not only fights over geographic areas, but ideologies behind those imperialisms.

For the time being, I will speak about American conceptions of Japan. It can be seen from academic writings – Ruth Benedict's *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword*, published in 1946 under commission from the U.S. government to better understand the land they were occupying, paints pictures of Japan's "shame culture" contrasted with the West's "guilt culture," and is often cited as an example of militant anthropology – to popular representations, such as Edward Zwick's *The Last Samurai*, wherein the samurai are compared to Plains Indians for their fading warrior ways. But while these works and others tend to focus on the timeless, pre-modern Japan of honorable samurai and feudal-cultural contracts, I find more relevant and under-examined the Orientalism that comes from describing Japan's attempts to mimic Western society (whom, to be perfectly clear, the Japanese were deliberately trying to imitate). Writings like these showcase an interesting wrinkle in the Self-Other dichotomy that also makes American Orientalism on Japan a highly distinctive brand, trying to establish a timeless, essential difference in a quickly globalizing world.

mysterious Japan that was closed to them, this is the year that the U.S.-Japan political relationship more or less began. Think of it as the U.S.-Japan the equivalent of Said's analysis of Napoleon's invasion of Egypt.

For a concrete example in the American context, I turn to Ernest O. Hauser, an American journalist who drew upon his time in Japan to write garishly titled *Honorable Enemy*.¹² The first chapter is called “Are Japanese People?” He answers:

“If the Japanese had wings instead of arms, or fishtails instead of legs, it might be easier to understand them. In observing people who read newspapers, smoke cigarettes, go to the movies and ride busses, we naturally think that they are like us. And we are baffled when we discover that they are quite different underneath. “[...] We will have to face these people. We will have to deal with them – peacefully or not so peacefully. And as they know all about us, we may as well know something about them. Let us learn something about the strength of our honorable friends. Let us learn something about the weakness of our honorable enemies.” (Hauser, 1941: 3-4)

The way repulsion and fascination/admiration are woven together in Hauser’s writing is a symptom of the overall theme of Orientalist discourse: an Other that is totally unlike the Self, that invites definition, so it can be maintained, managed, and its frightening aspects kept under control as its benefits are exploited. On a more specific level to the American-Japanese Orientalism of the Shōwa period,¹³ Hauser invokes a trend common in contemporary and postwar critiques of imperialist Japan. It is a kind of anger and disgust when the present Other (the Westernized Shōwa-era Japanese) is too

¹² This book was published a few months before the attack on Pearl Harbor. I selected it to stress that this cultural image of Japan was not limited to wartime propaganda, and that the propaganda, in fact, was based a pre-existing tradition of writing.

¹³ Since 1868, one method of tracing Japanese history is dividing periods determined by the reign of the contemporary emperor. The initial Meiji period ended in 1912 with the death of the Meiji Emperor. The following periods are the Taishō (1912-1926), the Shōwa (1926-1989) –which saw the reign of the emperor known in the West as Hirohito – and the current Heisei emperor.

close to the Occidental Self, that somewhere under this Western-seeming person is a difference, and that places him outside of human. And when this Other behaves like the Self, particularly in horrible ways, the repulsion is even greater. This is the main characteristic of American images of imperial Japan, even in the postwar era: that even as the world realized that imperialism is a crime, when the non-Westerner does it, it reveals its inhumanity. Japanese atrocities committed in the name of imperialism are made more revolting because they were carried out by non-whites.

While this kind of direct hyperbole disappeared fairly quickly after the U.S. Occupation of Japan¹⁴ and the building of the U.S.-Japan Cold War alliance, the treatment of prewar Japan by historians and political scientists has offered little self-reflection in its total condemnation. Prewar Japanese are routinely portrayed as sneaky (see: writings on Pearl Harbor) and zealous (see: writings on *kamikaze* pilots), and while condemnation of imperialism in any form is deserved, the Japanese tend to be depicted in almost animalistic terms at worst. In less extreme cases, authors tend to show little to no understanding of prewar U.S.-Japanese history as non-mutually exclusive stories, affecting and influencing each other, often attributing wartime fanaticism to long-lasting historical modes pushed to their extreme. (Benedict, 1946; Hoyt, 1983; Reischauer, 1978) Most of all they often lack any attempt to recognize their own place within the long-

¹⁴ For a fascinating and amusing look at the transition from outright contempt to faux-tolerance, I strongly recommend a look at the public domain short film shown to U.S. troops for their initiation into the occupation, *Our Job in Japan*, written by Theodore Geisel (a.k.a. Dr. Seuss). It is quite an interesting look at the U.S. military attempting to roll back their depictions of the Japanese as non-human and a race that was distinctly evil and brutal. Oddities include an X-ray of “the Japanese brain” to show that it is just like ours and can change depending on what ideas are put into it, a frightening depiction of “State Shinto” that is actually a generic rice blessing ceremony edited to evoke Satanic rituals, and a blink-and-you’ll-miss-it appearance by an African-American soldier when the narrator wants to make the point that America believes in racial equality, unlike Japan. The African-American soldier never appears in the film outside of this three-second cut.

standing discourse of American writings describing Japanese imperialism and wartime culture.¹⁵

Curiously, an example of Japan and America exerting cultural influence on each other (and a piece of support for their interdependency of Orientalist structure) is none other than Benedict's *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword*. While it is often tossed to the dustbin by 'respectable academics' as a war-commissioned tool of suppression (the kind that anthropologists are afraid to touch lest its poison should spread), it is a Japanese cultural artifact in its own right. In keeping with the tradition of drawing upon Western knowledge in times of national crisis (see: Meiji period), the book was widely popular upon its translation into Japanese. Approaching wartime academia from within Japan with caution due to a public sense of betrayal, many Japanese saw Benedict, the American, as an authoritative and uncorrupted source. Many of its explanations of Japan's shame culture and warrior way are now part of emic sayings by Japanese on their own country. Befu goes so far as to call this essentialization of oneself derived from a Western nation's image "Auto-Orientalism." (2001: 137) Benedict may have allowed her work to be used by aggressive forces, but she did, ironically, accomplish Wagner's premise of "inventing culture" (1975) far beyond its original intention. In fact, the influence of the book is exemplary of how Japan as a state has at least partially contributed to the essentialized Western conception of itself, not by being true but by how the state impresses notions of its homogeneity and the long-lasting essence of Japanese culture both inward and outward. The popular myth of historical imagining is

¹⁵ Descriptions of Japanese 'culture' building up to and during the war are often glossed with repeated points about extreme loyalty to the emperor, belief in racial superiority, and eagerness to go to war. There is little attempt to place these elements in a kind of context or observe how they developed (with Western influence and responses to it), or how their images may be distorted.

that Japan was a “closed country” until the Meiji period when it was “opened” to the civilized world (this is an idea that we will see in chapter 5 being ideologically exercised on the land of Hokkaido) operates at a general level of historiography in Japan and the United States. This where I turn to Ohnuki-Tierney, outlining that attempts to understand the dialectic between internal Self and Other(s) of Japan need to acknowledge that these dichotomies are, in their modern context, not only results of long-standing internal tradition, but the product of external encounters (in this case, the United States); that, far from being a closed-off culture that developed in its isolated context, “Japan’s history is a series of conjectures during which internal developments responded [largely] to flows in world history” (Ohnuki-Tierney, 1998: 49)

Altogether, most authors in the West still seem to behave as though any xenophobic content magically disappeared and that no genealogical continuum even might exist between the prewar Orientalist writings and the postwar, post-colonial writings. I also won’t pretend that that my call for self-reflexivity is a novel idea by any stretch. There has been work out of fields like anthropology and historiography that call attention to this style. Ohnuki-Tierney (2002) has written nuanced, humanistic portrayals of *kamikaze* pilots to disrupt a corpus of historical and fictional accounts of them as crazed, suicidal zealots while succeeding in not valorizing or absolving them of their actions. Dower (1993; 1999) has written extensively on wartime and postwar Japanese culture to showcase varied, complex, and even moving portraits of Japanese civilians caught up in times of far-right politics, as he critiques American wartime obsession with the subhuman nature of the Japanese and takes in his own writing to work against this. Some authors detail how Japanese policymakers of the Meiji period took large influence

from Western models, with Walker (2001) contrasting earlier oppressive measures by the Edo-period Japanese against the Ainu with more expansive Western-influenced colonialism. Taking steps to complicate the narrative, to acknowledge Japan's difference but not essentialize it, helps Japan from being the dangerous Other. Still, many of the sources I draw upon have tended to paint Japan in a manner, almost identical to abstract imperialists, with little self-awareness of their position. In attempting to describe the persecution of Ainu and rightly condemn the actions of the Japanese, they downplay or ignore Japan's external pressures, that they were not seen as equals in the imperial power game¹⁶. Instead, these sources use typical models of settler-colonialism, occasionally drawing comparisons to America and Australia, treating Japan as though it were any other imperialist.

By omitting particularities or attempting to work neutrally in a field that has historically left neutrality at the doorstep, authors inadvertently provide buttresses in the form of raw information to more agenda-driven writings, both American and Japanese. These omissions supply not only on the Orientalist end, but also on the other end of the spectrum, where politically driven revisionists are eager to fill the missing interpretation with distortions of their own. In this omission, one finds room for the valorization of Japanese imperialism and its treatment of Ainu by Japanese neo-nationalists.

¹⁶ At the end of World War I, the Empire of Japan proposed a "Race Equality" clause in the Covenant of the League of Nations, as a way of ensuring Japan retained equal status to its allies in the imperial world. It was rejected by Australia and the United States, who saw it as a potential way to empower their minority populations. CITATION?

Japanese Neo-Nationalism

Japanese neo-nationalists are an odd assortment of far-right traditionalists in a global political world that is shifting alarmingly to the right. The more extreme variety that I describe here lacks wide-reaching institutions, instead spread out along popular culture, niche academics, and the bolstering support from occasional remarks from the right-wing faction of Japan's long-ruling LDP¹⁷ (the entire party is right-wing, but some members shock even the establishment). My focus will be on the arguments presented that fill the void left by a relative absence in Japanese society to address the taboo subject of the war. I will stay away from discussing the 'mainstream' nationalism present in the LDP leadership of current Prime Minister Abe Shinzō to focus on historical revisionism that explicitly uses imperialism by the West as a rhetorical device.

The common argument for neo-nationalism in Japan goes like this: mid-19th century feudal Japan, facing pressure from Western powers that sought to colonize them, developed a modern and technologically advanced empire that enabled it to compete globally in the age of imperialism. As conflicts continued into the 20th century, Japan launched the "Greater East Asian War" (the Pacific theatre of World War II) to establish what is easily the greatest Orwellian euphemism in a government that develops them like canned goods: the "Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere." This network of nations (from the puppet state of Manchukuo/Manchuria to the Protectorate of Korea) would be united under the advanced Japanese empire to protect Asia from both communism and Western imperialism. This heroic endeavor was ruined by the United States drawing Japan into the war by sabotaging its economy and imported resources. The perpetrators of this narrative either downplay or outright deny atrocities like the Nanjing Massacre or

¹⁷ Liberal Democratic Party (*Jiyū-Minshutō*)

the coerced recruitment of sex labor from Korea and other colonies (Kobayashi, 1998). This is seen from the inflammatory comments of politicians like former Tokyo Governor Ishihara Shintarō, to the best-selling revisionist manga of Kobayashi Yoshinori, to the blaring loudspeakers atop blacked out vans where ultranationalists justify Japan's wartime atrocities to the public.

To counter this argument, I am not terribly interested in the actual historical circumstances of Japan's need to modernize, at least in this context. Whether it can be definitively said that they were 'merely' resisting imperialism or just shameless imperialists themselves is not only reductionist, but a bit of a goose chase, resting on the bizarre assumption that however many writings from government officials can tell us the about the morality or standards of imperialism for a period of forty years. Additionally, since the subjects of this paper are contemporary 21st Century Japanese citizens, the many battling perspectives of Meiji individuals, which some might present as the 'truth' of the matter, are dwarfed in relevance to what contemporary writers and thinkers actual make of them (the Meiji individual's perspectives – it's an awfully roundabout way of thinking so a roundabout writing style is unfortunately required). Even today, the war is far too taboo to have an everyday discourse about, and the ultranationalists who rail in megaphones along the streets in Tokyo are easily ignored, or receive the most attention from a bystander's selfie. Where the writings of apologists and nationalists have value is not in their intellectual rigor (far from it) or their popularity (even farther), but as a way to keep ourselves in check as post-colonial thinkers, wanting to free Japan from the overwhelming condemnation it has received in historicism and the importance of leaving no one off the hook.

As Fujitani (2016) points out, narratives like Kobayashi's are easily debunked by revealing the standard practices of historical revisionism: selective, decontextualized pieces of evidence that isolate faulty methods of conventional wisdom to extrapolate from there. At the end of the day, writers like Kobayashi will still believe what they want. Historical revisionism becomes popular because they are able to prey on a void of critical thought, the same kind of void that is left unaddressed by writing on the war in America and Japan. To repel the narrative, Americans and Japanese must practice some self-awareness and inward critiques to prevent a competition of objectivities, enabling competitive imperialisms.

Alternatives to Self-Other: Japanese and Ainu as Complicators

Moving forward into this examination of Japanese settler colonialism in Hokkaido, fully aware of its muddy, complex relationship with America both in theoretical and real political terms, there needs to be at least a search for an alternative. While the historians and anthropologists can be more self-aware of their writings of Japanese culture, and Japanese authors can avoid taboo and take ammunition away from growing neo-nationalism, I think that the case of the colonization of Hokkaido and the Ainu is an opportunity to interrogate the persistence of Self-Other dichotomies and how they reinforce themselves. For that it's time to move away from the world of analytical frameworks and into reflection on how they appear. Coming full circle and echoing the impact of Benedict's (1946) writing in shaping popular conceptions of Japanese culture, I would like to look back at Said's (1978) work once it entered Japan in translation in 1986. It was immediately embraced by intellectuals and general bookstores, who

recognized Said's theories in Western writings on Japan. (Nishihara, 2005) Yet they also found Said's theory incomplete. The Japan seen by its readers was doublecast, playing both the role of victimized Eastern nation for America and Russia, as well as cruel colonial power to Korea and Taiwan. Nishihara writes of the problem it posed for Japanese theories, that this history "raised the question of changeability between subject and object." Outside of the Middle East, the roles of colonizer/colonized, East/West, become less entrenched and harder to apply, to the point where countries like Japan and China can choose to identify themselves as the "Eastern victims" in order to escape their role as colonizers. (Ibid: 249) To a large extent, that might be the takeaway.

If Orientalism, and the Self-Other dichotomy itself, can be turned on its head so easily, it only stresses that they are invented, not given, categories. Nishihara stresses that changeability and multiple actors in the East/West dichotomy are the important lessons in doing away with the framework once and for all. (2005: 249-52) Looking at the case of the Ainu, where Japan plays colonizer to a colonized Ainu (whose position as an Other, I will show, is further complicated), is not a chance for Western scholars to merely critique Japanese society, (Howell, 2014: 101) but a change to interrogate and dismiss the notion of fixed roles of colonizer/colonized, by recalling that there are three entities (American, Japanese, Ainu) and none of them exist in pure contrast. It only leaves the question: what is the role of the Ainu?

Chapter 3

Who Are the Ainu (Really)?

If not just for the sake of being consistent, I should hesitate in defining who the Ainu are by questioning if they are an *Other* to a Japanese *Self*. The short answer is that they occupy a hazy relational zone to the Japanese, or as the Japanese are called in Ainu, *shamo*.¹⁸ As usual, the short answer paves the way to the long answer. One of the factors against the Indian analogy in defining the *Shamo*-Ainu relationship is that in North America and Australia, there was a clear distinction between the identities of the natives and their colonizers. Despite linguistic and physical difference, the Ainu/*Shamo* distinction was murkier, especially in light of their long status as neighbors. As referenced in chapter 1, Ainu were mocked in paintings for their different lifestyle and culture (and their alleged hairiness), but were not given the same Other slot as Koreans or Chinese who lived across the sea. By the Meiji period, a question among Western-trained Japanese social scientists, whose research the government funded, was, “How close are these people to us?” This followed with another question of assimilation, the Japanese version of the settler’s “Can we make the Indians like us?” This question of distinction is further complicated in the present day, where Ainu-descended people are of mixed Japanese heritage.

I will explore these questions in the following chapter, or rather what concepts the Meiji government adapted in answer to these questions. I will also describe current knowledge about Ainu cultural history and the problems of whether or not to treat it as separate from Japanese history. By now, it is important to make a shift in terms. I treat

¹⁸ Specifically, the colloquial Ainu word for the ethnic Japanese to the south, literally meaning “neighbor,” though the descriptions in Ainu writings indicate that it probably does not carry a neighborly connotation.

the Ainu and the *shamo* as Japanese in the broadest sense, being people of the Japanese archipelago though not necessarily people of the Japanese state. After all, to define identity strictly along the boundaries of a modern nation state (even though this is commonly done in modern Japan) is to imply those borders as existing from time immemorial and retroactively place categories over hazy lines of difference. The people I have called *Japanese* in prior chapters will now be called Wajin¹⁹, as this is the commonly used term in academic writing involving Japan's indigenous minorities (*shamo* is used in several sources, but always to establish Ainu as the point of derivation. Ainu and Wajin are both endonyms, though the latter long ago fell out of usage, which treat both people's distinctiveness as self-identifying). I will principally examine the relational questions, and how the line between Ainu and Wajin was negotiated over the history that we know both from an anthropological and historical perspective. I will still use Japanese when referring to all the citizens of the country and as a descriptor for the broad cultural norms that are seen all over the archipelago, but I do not conflate this latter usage with Wajin culture unless where noted.

Origins & Culture in a Relational Perspective

The first question most ask about Ainu, one that has remained relevant and controversial to this day, is just how distantly related they are to ethnic Japanese (Wajin). Archaeology and physical anthropology are public endeavors in Japan, as well as most of Asia, as they are considered important factors in shaping long historical narratives of the

¹⁹ Lit. "The people of *Wa*" derived from a name used to describe Japan relying on sources from China, which were read heavily by early court officials of Japan. Though the name is Chinese-derived, it was used as an early endonym until the imperial family reoriented themselves as a more metaphysical center with the name *Nihon*, meaning "the sun's point of origin." From Japan and most of Asia, there was no land further East.

nation. (Befu, 2001: 41; Ikawa-Smith, 1999) Despite its apparent heft, I've found that evidence pertaining to genetics tends to enter the popular conversation only in ways that fit with preconceived notions of Japanese identity: *nihonjinron* authors will adjust their philosophical premises to include factors that make genetic violations to homogeneity either negligible or a further entrenchment of the power of Japanese adaptability.

(Cotterill, 2011a; Habu & Fawcett, 1999; Dubreuil, 2007) Nevertheless, archaeological support has been critical among NGOs pushing for Ainu rights and recognition, so some brief points are worth reiterating.

The Ainu have long been thought to be related to the earliest inhabitants of the Japanese archipelago, a people who archaeologists and historians call the *Jōmon* people. Whether the modern Japanese are related to the *Jōmon* is an ambiguous matter, as there is little decisive evidence that the creators of found pottery were a unified, closed group of people. Evidence for Ainu ethnogenesis has become clearer since the 1990s: physical anthropology, archaeology and the use of world systems theory have roughly found the Ainu origin as emerging from a slow integration of four distinct North Asian Pacific peoples (the Okhotsk, the Satsumon, the Epi-Jōmon, and the Emishi) into a tightly related by highly diverse linguistic group that inhabited the archipelago as well as the far Siberian islands (the Ainu). (Hudson, 2004; Walker, 2001: 20-21) This loose affiliation of what we can call, in an archaeological sense, proto-Ainu, constituted the dominant population in Hokkaido and northern Honshu²⁰ until around the 10th century. (Hudson, 1999; Kikuchi, 1999)

²⁰ Honshu is the largest island of Japan, and holds almost all of its major economic centers and cultural cities, including Tokyo, Kyoto, Osaka, and Kobe.

The people to the south, who would eventually become the Wajin, were subjects of a loosely centralized government by at least the 7th century. Mentions of conflict with distinctive groups (not simply other lords or domains vying for control) appear in writing around Japan's Heian²¹ period (794-1185 C.E.), with writings on the Emishi. Of the four groups that eventually constituted the Ainu, the Emishi²² present the biggest paradox in the problem of distinctiveness. They were almost certainly ethnic Wajin, but were positioned by the elite of Heian as culturally distinct people for their rejection of the political order. Late period Heian chroniclers also mention the Watarishima Emishi, who hunted instead of farmed and traded animal skins, sharing a resemblance with the northern Satsumon. (Walker, 2001: 20-23) It is unclear if the Emishi's eventual destruction constituted genocide for this reason.

In keeping with the pattern of the Emishi and their blurred distinction between peoples of Japan, Ainu-Wajin relations were by no means wholly divided. Long before the annexation of the island, Hokkaido Ainu traded and fought with northern Wajin lords and independent Russian merchants. The Ainu lived as settled hunter-gatherers, typically along riverbanks where salmon, the keystone of their diet, was in large supply. Missing from reports by Wajin scouts of the northern domains, Ainu life was culturally varied and heavily influenced by custom to negotiate fortune with the gods that inhabited the natural world. Farming was practiced to some extent, especially for root vegetables that needed to be kept in large supply. However, much of what we know about traditional Ainu lifestyle and subsistence practices comes from a period when these practices were continuously readjusting to new, often turbulent trade markets with the Wajin. (Walker,

²¹ Not the name of an emperor, but of the imperial capital Heian-kyo, eventually renamed Kyoto

²² For a popular point of orientation, the Emishi appear as the dying tribe of the protagonist Ashitaka in the Studio Ghibli film *Mononoke no Hime* (Princess Mononoke)

2001: 78) By the mid-14th century, Ainu-Wajin trade was entrenched with the domain of the Matsumae clan being established in the southern tip of Hokkaido. (Ohnuki-Tierney, 2009) After the end of the Warring States period in 1598, the Matsumae clan was allowed exclusive rights to resources in the region, and free rein to exploit Ainu living in the area. The trade patterns meant Ainu were disproportionately dependent, often forcibly taken from their villages to work in Matsumae fisheries under extremely brutal conditions that have become somewhat legendary in Ainu historical memory. (Kayano, 1980: 23)

Despite occasional large-scale resistance from Ainu,²³ changes in Wajin policy toward Hokkaido were often made around exterior factors to the island, and often with the focus on the island itself rather than the Ainu. In 1799, the Matsumae domain was brought under the direct control of the Shōgun's²⁴ government, called the *Bakufu*. Attempts at assimilation policies were exercised, ranging from language mandates to health management. (Takakura, 1960; Walker, 1999) Takakura argues that while these policies were successful in terms of further diminishing Ainu autonomy, they were mostly ineffective at acculturation, which seemed to have been their intended goal – to make Ainu less distinguishable and more susceptible to direct Pax Tokugawa rule. (1960: 40-60)

²³ Samkusaynu's/Shakushain's rebellion, which took place in 1669, was the last and most famous revolt against the Matsumae clan to expel their authority from Hokkaido. (Walker, 2001: 49-53; Takakura, 1960: 27-29)

²⁴ There have been many shōguns in Japanese history, composed of many different families. Essentially, a shōgun is a military dictator and highest-ranking feudal lord whom the lower ranking samurai clans must pay fealty to. For legitimacy, the shōgun was often given his title by the emperor (forcibly), who played an entirely ceremonial role. At this point, the shōgun family was the Tokugawa clan, who commanded all of Japan's feudal domains from 1600 to 1868, when the Meiji period began. The Tokugawa patriarch, Ieyasu, had inherited power from his ally, Toyotomi Hideyoshi, after the latter's death. Toyotomi had successfully reunified the feudal domains of Japan under central authority after a long period of warring states. It should be stressed that although the shōgun held complete, unchallenged authority, he was better classified as head of government, rather than head of state, the highest-ranking for a collection of domains.

While the Meiji period saw many radical re-evaluations of Japanese norms (such as the dismantling of Japan's caste system and the opening of full diplomatic relations with other countries), the attitude toward Ainu was not dramatically different. Though massive changes came for individuals on a policy level, Wajin cultural attitudes toward their northern neighbors did not see much renewal. The Ainu policies managed by the Hokkaido Development Agency and Wajin anthropology were, if anything, pre-Meiji ideas bolstered with introduction by Western social science (major ideological pillars for assimilation, such as cultural evolutionism and agricultural management will be discussed and analyzed in chapter 4). Physical anthropologists (both Wajin and Western) were particularly infamous for their incursions into Ainu land from the Meiji period onward, working with settler police and soldiers to exhume Ainu graves and take blood samples for investigations into race-based²⁵ classifications of Ainu and their relationship to Wajin. (Peng and Geiser, 17-20) On a day-to-day level, life changed dramatically for the inhabitants of Hokkaido. In 1870, the island was annexed in its entirety by the new imperial government and Ainu were declared Japanese citizens. More specifically, they were declared *shimin* "loyal subjects [of the Meiji Emperor and his lineage]" After early stages of settlement by farmers, soldiers, and diplomats, leading to small but ineffective conflicts against armed Wajin soldiers, Ainu citizens rights were ratified in the Former Aborigines Act of 1899, which called for total assimilation into Japanese society and culture (specifically, Wajin society and culture). While Ainu subjugation did exist before the Meiji period, we can see that in the Meiji period, it becomes reformulated into bringing together disparate groups back into their "natural" paths – rather than many

²⁵ Though race (*jinsu*) was not placed into Japanese discourse in the same way it was in the West, it was accepted as a testable and identifiable trait by scientists, and became a point of interest for anthropologists.

different groups being absorbed into Japanese norms for trade or peace purposes, Ainu and Ryūkyūans become positioned as a natural part of the long-lasting Japanese nation (the importance of temporal depth will be demonstrated in chapters 4 and 5) waiting to be absorbed and *lifted* out of their primitive modes.

A final important note is that, similar to the various Aboriginal groups of Australia, the colonization of Hokkaido and the forced resettlement by the Japanese government resulted in numerous distinctive groups of Ainu (typically separated from each other geographically, such as what river they lived on, with correlating distinctions in mutually intelligible dialects and spiritual beliefs, such as what primary god the region was associated with) being lumped together. In turn, although it should go without saying, when we describe Ainu, we are describing extremely varied groups that sharply contrast with their pre-Meiji ancestors responding to numerous circumstances. Additionally, many current Ainu are not completely Hokkaido Ainu, as the Sakhalin Ainu were periodically open to varying levels of colonization (and in turn, inter-mixing with Hokkaido Ainu), until 1945, where the majority of Sakhalin Ainu (being Japanese citizens) were relocated to Hokkaido when Sakhalin was officially taken by the Soviet Union. (Ohnuki-Tierney, 1980) I feel this is worth mentioning because it works against the prevailing notion that pre-Meiji Ainu society was “pure” Ainu, and the changes resulting of the colonization can be understood simply as a process of dilution of this purity as Wajin cultural elements sunk in.

The story from there up to the present day is similar to other minorities groups in Japan, ethnically distinctive (Ryūkyūans) or not (Special-Status People). Although the official position of the imperial government was assimilation in the interest of Ainu

receiving “equal rights,” the beginning Ainu-as-Japanese-citizens history is characterized by housing and job discrimination, presumed inferiority, and pervasive linguistic and cultural marginalization, in the interest of stressing the superiority of Japanese (Wajin) culture and the homogeneity of the nation state. I will elaborate on this in part 2.

The postwar era is where the closest thing resembling an “Ainu Rights Movement” begins and continues to the present day, which went through waves of both radicalism and reformism. I will close with one more distinction: although Ainu organizations and others identify with the global struggle for indigenous rights, and that should be respected, I will list the current conditions that separate Ainu from indigenous groups in the Australian and American imagining. First, there are no reservations in Hokkaido.²⁶ There are virtually no Ainu who are not part Wajin. All of them speak Japanese as their native language and less than ten elders speak Ainu natively. There are currently no demands for greater autonomy, though greater self-representation has and is still being fought for. An uncomfortable question needs to be asked, and it is the same one asked looking back at earliest history: “Just how distinct are these people?” No matter the answer, there is a risk in supporting the external definition.

A Question of Distinct Identities

Having laid out the essential ‘beginner’s guide’ to Ainu along with my outline of the pitfalls of writing about the Japanese nation, I will turn to a prospect with the greatest number of pitfalls thus far: whether all the information I’ve supplied is describing the

²⁶ Additionally, further research has indicated that more Ainu may live in Tokyo than all of Hokkaido. The almost exclusive focus on Hokkaido as a space for studying the lives of Ainu has been criticized for being reductive and playing into stereotypes that imagine Ainu as a ‘country people’ who have not affected Japanese society as much as Japanese have affected theirs. (Cotterill, 2011b; Watson, 2014) I fully acknowledge that this is a weakness of this thesis.

Ainu nation or the people who are Ainu. Describing the history of the Ainu is an endeavor in which one cannot help, even when armed with the best intentions and methodology, shed some blood and wreak representational damage on vulnerable people. Both conventional and anthropological wisdom hold that there are two roads that one can take to solve the matter and, true to Robert Frost's sense of irony, neither will make much difference. Both will do some disservice to the people they describe. The matter is the notion of "Ainu History": should it be a separate category of historical particularism onto itself, or is it one of many parts of overall "Japanese History"? The argument for the former method goes that it grants more agency to the people who are its object and helps stress their cultural and linguistic destruction by colonialism. (Walker, 2001; Siddle, 1996; Dubreuil & Fitzhugh, et al., 1999) Those who take the latter method argue that since modern Ainu are so assimilated, living in Japanese society and for the most part following Japanese cultural norms as their own, separating them denies them agency to the people they are now and actually reinforces the myth of Japanese homogeneity. (Howell, 2014; Mason, 2012; Winchester, 2011)

Writing against the external definition might indicate that I would advocate the separatist approach, but I feel that since my focus falls on contemporary people, only using Meiji-Taishō figures as methodological reference frames, the 'particular Japanese history' approach is more fitting and generally preferable (Kayano Shigeru may have been a full-blooded Ainu who was fluent in the language, but he was also a reformist politician who worked in the Japanese Diet for minority rights). I have already displayed this in my framing of Japan as a land rather than as a state. What is currently problematic is how poorly this rubric of 'particular Japanese history' is defined. With a small corpus

of work only recently published, the movement seems to have found no cohesive theory to follow apart from its premise of ‘particular Japanese history.’ It is also closely linked to previous frames of historicism that helped create the external definition by defining Japanese history as the history of Japan, the nation state.

To illustrate the contradictions in this approach, I will turn to, of all people, Kobayashi Yoshinori (or rather Mark Winchester’s analysis of him). Not only is it important to step outside of academic writings and into popular items like manga to better understand contemporary thinking on Ainu, but also because, especially for someone who advocates a return to fascism, Kobayashi’s argument in 2008’s *Ainu Ron* (“[Thoughts] On Ainu”) is both shockingly progressive and disgustingly contradictory. Kobayashi’s main point of examination is on the historic discrimination against Ainu by Wajin, which he intensely criticizes, and the failure of assimilation policies. (Kobayashi, 2008, in: Winchester, 2001: 7) He broadly asserts that while *minzoku* is poorly defined, it should absolutely not be founded along lines of “blood thinking.” (Ibid: 3) It would seem that his goals are uncharacteristically progressive, until he begins criticizing both Japanese society and the Ainu Association of Hokkaido for violating the ideal of a “monoethnic” *minzoku*. He slams the discourse of an “Ainu *minzoku*” and scoffs at the notion that such a thing ever existed in the first place, effectively denigrating any call that Ainu individuals belong to any sort of group, even within Japanese society. In a moment of cognitive dissonance from a writer, who at least, is known for his self-aware style, he states, “today’s ‘Ainu culture’ and the ‘Ainu people’ are, to a great extent, fabricated according to political motives.” (Ibid: 5)

Kobayashi's line of thinking is the classic idea of Japanese nationality building: de-emphasize blood to create a linguistic and cultural *minzoku*, but stop short of creating a diverse state because the need to create a homogenous Japanese *minzoku* is what is most important to him. He paints assimilation (which he praises as necessary for homogenous *minozku*) and discrimination (which he views as a negative obstacle) as opposed forces, rather than acknowledging the historic link between the two and how they reinforce each other. (Winchester, 2011: 11-12) These premises aren't so much calling for recognition of Ainu-Japanese history as complicated and necessary, but a call for expediently fixing the problem of discrimination with an abstract cure. This is the kind of umbrella multiculturalism that works not in service to marginalized people, but the state and its self-conception.

His overarching argument is almost too complicated and full of contradiction to explain, but his language reveals much. Behind all of Kobayashi's pomp and ill-defined ultranationalism are the head-scratching dualities of trying to define a minority identity underneath layers and layers of semiotics that try to solve the contradiction of belonging to a nation, and especially one built out of as many oppositions as modern Japan. If one agrees with Foucault that accepting a counter-idea is not the same as rejecting a power structure, then a more appropriate route is not Kobayashi's endless counter-arguments, but Abu-Lughod's call to "write against culture." (1991) In order to do this properly, I will move against describing how Ainu identity works or what it constitutes, and instead examine the processes (historical and ongoing) within Japanese society that created the modern "Ainu problem" (nominally about discrimination and acculturation) that in turn made them into a 'problem ethnicity' (about the existence of people who are not merely

distinct from Wajin, but exist in a liminal space between the Self and the Other due to the relationship between assimilation and discrimination).

How can I write against the external definition if I treat the Ainu as one of many ‘Japanese?’ I think the problem with the external definition is that it is based on absorbing. It focuses on changing the aspect (Ainu) and readjusting their position to the normative mode (Japanese), rather than altering the meaning of Japanese in respect to Ainu and other marginalized sets of people. For that purpose, I am writing against Japaneseness as an essence, and treating it as a notion or idea. It is exactly the kind of desperate need to save the face of the nation by using vulnerable groups of people that Kobayashi calls for, thinking that it makes him an unconventional thinker. And across all my sources, I’ve found that a key theme that reinforces the external definition (though not necessarily constituting it) is the Ainu as a narrative of ‘vanishing ethnicity.’ This version of Ainu historiography, a goal in the Meiji period and a sad, passive “inevitability” in the postwar era, was oriented around the withering of the “pure Ainu” individuals and the culturally distinct Ainu who were not at all Wajin. It has gone through a multitude of forms, but operates under the same idea that with the further assimilation of Ainu into Wajin culture by speaking Japanese, living in Wajin houses, giving up Ainu food and eating rice, the Ainu will essentially become extinct. From Wajin like Kindaichi Kyōsuke to Ainu like Chiri Mashiho, Japan’s Modern²⁷ period is full of writing that laments erosion not only of the Ainu culture, but the Ainu people themselves, becoming extinct as they meld with the homogenous Wajin *minzoku*. (Hirano, 2009; Winchester, 2011) There is little to no discussion of how this might mean a redefinition or loss of

²⁷ Japanese history since 1868 (beginning of the Meiji period), with the restoration of the imperial government and Westernization of the country, is called the Modern period both in and outside Japan. The term is worth interrogating, but that is for another essay.

distinctiveness for the Wajin. The vanishing ethnicity narrative is on clear display in a piece of writing by Takakura Shinichiro, the “father of Ainu history”²⁸:

“Yet the Ainu never formed a nation because their economy never developed to the point where it could support a political organization and when they did acquire, from the Japanese, the necessary advanced economic techniques, the Japanese were, at the same time, acquiring political control over the Ainu and the subsequent Ainu attempt to form a small primitive nation came to nothing.”
(Takakura, 1960: 23)

The irony here is that the following decade would see a rapid rise in demands for Ainu Rights and calls for some forms of greater self-governance, with some of the more radical strains calling for Hokkaido as an independent nation state (Cotterill, 2011a; Kayano, 1980; Siddle, 1996). My point is not to object to anything Takakura says, but the frame of mind he is working from. His perspectives on what qualities are necessary to constitute a ‘nation’ and his presumptions about the definitions of political autonomy are tested, established frameworks of his time, and some points in the latter definition even hold water today. However, they are built off a frame that I would consider worth interrogating, as it survives into the present day, and across scholarly traditions from Japan and the West: the resigned tone that characterizes his writing and the deterministic way he presents history. Takakura sees “the extinction of the Ainu as a distinct population to be the *inevitable outcome* of Japanese extension into Hokkaido” (Howell, 2014: 105) (emphasis mine).

²⁸ There are many traditionally authoritative “voices” on Ainu history and culture, none of whom are Ainu (though some had prominent Ainu students), ranging from the relatively sympathetic (Kindaichi Kyōsuke) to the destructive, grave-robbing variety (Kodama Sakuzaemon).

The phrase here in Japanese would be the kind low-level clerks at small companies and ticket-mangers on the metro say when they think of how they didn't grow up wanting these jobs: "*doshoganai*" (there is nothing to be done). I want to flag here that I personally enjoy this perspective in some cases. Though the translation sounds pessimistic in English, in its fully cultural Japanese context it speaks not of settling for less but of appreciating the role you have in society. It is a way of motivating yourself not to resent the positions of others, but to work in your personal role to the best of your ability. This context may be more fully understood to a reader less familiar with Japan by augmenting it with another, more cross-culturally inspiring saying, that is said virtually every day when one must take on a non-routinized task (a test, an interview, or a holiday rush): "*gambatte*" (give your all). However, and perhaps this is because of my own American-embedded fixation on personal agency, I find it unsettling and inappropriate to say it of other people.

Though the term 'vanishing ethnicity' is often associated with postwar 'Ainu studies' that was characterized by 'salvage' varieties of anthropology, linguistics, and genetics, all caught up in the wild frenzy of the 'last pure Ainu' dying out, its ideological components are ironically consistent for a term that implies a short time limit. 19th century Wajin anthropologists stressed the need to study their 'primitive' neighbors, as they would soon fade into indistinguishable Japaneseness, almost exclusively as a means to discover more about Wajin origins. Modern day environmental movements in Japan use Ainu icons to reflect a distant time in the Japanese past, when fetishized conceptions of the Ainu's harmonious relationship with nature could guide Japan away from modern pollution problems. The use of Ainu was continuously justified not only because their

population was too small to worry about offending, but because their ‘way’ was temporally distant, un-modern if you will. ‘Vanishing ethnicity’ in any context, is a story about the inevitability of ‘culture death’ and the futility in fighting for the rights of the ethnicity, since its days are numbered anyway. At the risk of reinforcing notions of Japan’s unique, long-lasting traditions, one gets a familiar feeling reading Heian period poetry that waxed philosophically about the ephemeral beauty of flowers, and how tears would come to the eyes knowing that their lives, like our own, were brief.

But the Ainu are still here. They may not speak the language or look *quite* as different as their parents or grandparents did, but they live all over in Japan. Most actually live outside of Hokkaido, in Tokyo. They probably felt some long-deferred joy at the Japanese Diet’s 2008 recognition of the Ainu as the indigenous people of Japan. It was certainly a victory for the long efforts of Kayano Shigeru, Chiri Mashiho, and the many unknown Ainu-Japanese who risked open discrimination for bringing Ainu culture to the public eye, refusing to feel ashamed among people who wanted them to. But the cynical person can still see in the Diet’s action something more akin to a pat on the back or absolution: recognition with no new laws, no call for equal rights, no legislation against discrimination, could all be brushed away with a presumed attitude (on the part of Diet members) that the recognition serves no actual Ainu. After all, in the popular imagining, they are either all gone or the people who identify as such don’t count because they are too assimilated. Paul Chaat Smith reminds us that “silence about our own complicated histories supports the colonizer’s idea that the only real Indians are full-blooded, from a reservation, speak the language, and practice the religion of their ancestors [...]” (Chaat Smith, 2009 in: Winchester, 2011: 1)

The vanishing ethnicity narrative is what I will write against in the following chapters. Like Abu-Lughod's general statement, the narrative approaches culture the same way *minzoku* does – as an object, composed of enough strong, recognizable elements that it solidifies and can be discussed, analyzed. Kobayashi (2008) was right to say that “Ainu culture” as much as “Japanese culture” is invented according to political motives, but he misplaces his anger looking for some pure alternative. I think it more positive to look at how people build their cultural action and read it back to themselves as a way of sorting themselves into social settings. It says what vanishing ethnicity desperately tries to keep at bay: that it is not an inevitable collapse, no matter how many elements get lost, that there is a positivist style of being, using, and *living* culture – that people can be Ainu and Japanese, with no pollution or devaluing to fear.

Part 2: Culture in/is an Object: Colonization and Absorption of the Ainu

Chapter 4

Removing Barriers Toward Assimilation

The Act of Dining, the Meaning of Food, and the Reliability of Japanese Taste

Dining in Japan can be quite enjoyable if you don't mind eating the same seven meals.²⁹ I'm sure that as a *gaijin*³⁰ I cannot fully appreciate the subtle changes between the methods used for preparing tempura, but Japan's homegrown diet is still a small pool, with small variations on general meals of noodle soup, rice bowls, fried vegetables and tofu, and admittedly a large variety of seafood, but seafood nonetheless. Still, eating in public is one of Japan's great comforts, precisely because it is a risk-free activity that creates more room for social bonding than running one's palate through rigorous experiments. Almost every aspect of public eating is carefully designed to ensure a smooth experience. One of my favorite things about travelling to Japan is that it is unnecessary to rely on guidebooks or local expertise to find the absolute best restaurants. Frequently, the best places are the holes-in-the-wall, where guests sit around sharing

²⁹ On the first night you can help yourself a host of small dishes, ranging from fried tofu to shiitake mushrooms and maybe a few grilled sardines that roughly encompass the same light wet-salty flavor across four food groups. The next day, you can duck into a hole-in-the-wall in Tokyo or Osaka, collect a ticket from a vending machine out front and hand it to the man behind the counter to squeeze yourself between two other working men on lunch break, until you're quickly served your noodles in broth with some cuts of pork or chicken or tempura floating on top. From there, you cycle through sushi/sashimi, chicken on a stick, grilled vegetables and seafood, seafood hotpot, and various fried vegetables/chicken/prawns/tofu until you're ready to start all over again. And, of course, rice with everything.

³⁰ A truncated, informal version of *gaikokujin* ("foreigner" – lit. "person from an outside country). *Gaijin*, which is considered rude, literally translates to "outside person."

dishes for the table, drinking and smoking and lobbing mean jokes at each other that they will all agree to forget about the next day.

One of way of reading this is that almost everything about these restaurants is designed to ensure there are no surprises: the windows are filled with plastic mock-ups of the dishes that, unlike advertisements for fast food in America, are guaranteed to look exactly like their pretty representations, arranged down to the placement of the pork in relation to the leeks. Whoever serves you (either the waiters or the cooks) will loudly welcome you, and you respond with the appropriate greetings. A few times, especially when the restaurant is nicer, the group of foreigners that I am in is initially turned away even when there are available seats. Some hosts will assume that foreigners are ignorant of custom and will upset this careful structure. We then have to speak more complicated Japanese to display that the customs are familiar enough to us that the restaurant staff can accommodate with minimal effort (if we can speak the language, then we must have some amount of cultural knowledge, another example of how tightly bound together elements of Japanese national spirit/culture are conceived). In short, there is a risk of foreigners (Others) upsetting the carefully functioning order of Japanese life, though foreign materials may intrude if they are carefully mediated. If you're a native, the wide variety of foreign imports is available to eat from American fast food and coffee chains to a number of kitschy Turkish halal stands, where tastes are different but customs remain mostly the same. But the best food in Japan is Japanese. It's affordable and has a sense of mapping tradition onto a changing and extremely competitive free market. With all of this routinized structure and familiar food choices, dining out – an event of heightened, usually self-aware sociality anywhere in the world – holds more meaning than feeding

oneself. In the context of Japan, it is about ensuring the smooth, reliable surface upon which social energies can be reinforced, both in Turner's (1967) sense of resettling social norms and in Geertz's (1973) interpretation of catharsis from norms and the heightened awareness of cultural semiosis. Dining out in Japan is also a way of engaging meaningfully with the symbolic material of Japanese food.

There are countless reflections on Japanese society and challenges to prevailing notions among Japanese artists and creative minds, with writers like Ōe Kenzaburō challenging values of conformity. I say this to dismiss the stereotype that Asian cultures prize tradition over creativity or even lack the latter altogether, in contrast to Western ones. Still, if there was one line in English that could neatly translate the common aspirational form of daily life in Japan to an English readership, it comes from an unlikely place. Despite what *nihonjinron* authors write about the hermetically sealed-off nature essence of Japaneseness, I think a line from Stephen Sondheim's 1976 musical *Pacific Overtures* is one of the best, straightforward descriptions of the structure of Life (the ideal, not the experience, hence the capitalization) in Japan. The musical is set during the end of the pre-Modern period, and in the opening number the people of pre-Meiji Japan describe their everyday activities across the islands, from planting rice, arranging flowers, dealing with the lords, all overlapping and singing over each other until coming together to announce, "[We] Arrange tomorrow to be like today." (Sondheim, 2010) As soon as the song is finished, Commodore Perry's fleet appears, signaling the end of the Tokugawa Shogunate. Things are steady and predictable in Japan until they aren't.

On my most recent visit, I had an encounter with a similar (much smaller) occurrence of change. I stopped with my family around New Year's at an old *yakitori*

restaurant. We ordered an assortment of small dishes, all of which were delivered on individual sticks, so the waiter could charge us depending on how many sticks were left in the bowl when we got up to leave. The thing that drew our attention though was not the food, but something I or my parents had never seen in Japan: a restaurant that made exclusively Japanese food with an entirely South Asian wait staff. Foreigners stand out in Japan, as I can testify, often receiving bewildered stares from young children and friendly attention from adults who anticipate that you're completely ignorant of Japanese social codes or language. A family of foreigners in a restaurant is odd but expected in the globalized world. A staff of foreigners was, until recently, unheard of.

In hindsight it was predictable. Since the 1990s, Japan's birthrate has sharply declined. With an economy that reached its peak in the late 1980s, Japan has been trying and failing to reignite growth since. The birthrate is still declining now, and with an economy built for a huge population centered in a small geographic area, the current and future population cannot supply the necessary workforce to sustain it, let alone bring growth. With each passing year, the Japanese government is under pressure to make, what is for them, an impossible decision: let the economy plummet at best, crash at worse, or allow foreigners to become an established part of the workforce. Modern anxieties and identity crises can be found in the most interesting places. Having a foreigner in Japan serve rice caught my attention, even though it is a common source of grain all across Asia. At the risk of supporting one of *nihonjinron*'s main ideas, I cannot imagine what it must be like for a Japanese.

I'd like to back away from the picture I just painted and flag a few themes and motifs. First is the role of objects, particularly consumable objects, in Japanese sociality.

Second is the inaccessibility of culturally significant objects to non-Wajin participants (that is, in terms of understanding their entire meaning). Third is the spatialization of this inaccessibility. I feel it is necessary to emphasize that, even in the context of this story, people in Japan are not uniformly close-minded and rejecting of outsiders. Most of the time, when I enter into a restaurant and speak a bit of Japanese, it's often greeted warmly and people who feel like socializing compliment how excellent it is (the assumption being that foreigners have no interest in speaking Japanese, or from a more prideful but no less common place, that Japanese is a uniquely difficult language and any attempt by foreigners to speak it is an impressive task that calls for congratulations).³¹ Spending an afternoon at someone's home may be some of the warmest social gatherings I have ever attended, as both host and guest realize that they are expected to balance both an obligation to exceed expectations of their roles and exercise humility on their part, both insisting that they have not done enough. It is a place where things are both extremely formalized and equally intimate, that might seem stilted or cold to an outsider, and it is a kind of feeling seen all over Japan. Simply put, there is a place for foreigners in Japan and in some places foreigners serve as an interesting glimpses into life beyond the archipelago.³² But the integration of foreigners not as consumers but mediators and even producers of culturally significant objects, while not necessarily a complete negative from an emic Wajin perspective, is something that turns heads. The only symbol I forgot to explicitly mention was rice. It is so ubiquitous that in daily life it is easy to take for granted. But then, aren't the most meaningful cultural symbols the ones we integrate so fully into our lives and identities, we can hardly recognize their distinction?

³¹ This is the same reaction – generally speaking – you will get if your Japanese is jumbled, slow, or contains grammatical errors. The same reasoning applies.

³² I have seen children comment with fascination on the size of my father's nose on several occasions.

From this point on, I will mostly shift attention away from the broad trends of history and the superstructure of nationalism, cultural identity, settler-colonialism, and indigeneity to examine the objects (symbolic materials) that use (and are used by) those concepts to function on a person-to-person level as well as a level of society-to-society. Specifically I want to see how the Self/Other dichotomy (from Japan's external and internal Others) exists in Japanese material culture. More often than not, these objects are all-encompassing: they may be seen as basic, isolated material things, but just like the plates of chicken and glasses of beer described above, they operate in many contexts, being changed and changing the meaning of the world around them. In that turn, they are not only semiotically rich objects that signify either aspects or characteristics of Japaneseness, but also vessels that allow broad, multi-layered concepts like culture and language to be contained, ranked in hierarchies, and to create resource pools of cultural symbols. They allow culture and language – in this case, the culture that belongs to the ideal Japanese national – to exist as objects that one can possess.

In her analysis of the use of cherry blossoms (another potent symbol of Japaneseness) in wartime propaganda, Ohnuki-Tierney outlines that – conditioned by the social field in which they operate and the variety of meanings they can hold – symbols can offer “provocative alternatives for imagination, destabiliz[ing] the universe by calling the normative order into question.” Working in tandem with other symbols, an individual or groups can then take on multiple or no-selves. (2002: 44-47) In terms more specific to my study, objects with symbolic richness, imbued with many layers of meaning, can stimulate social change by allowing a group to exist in multitudes, stably contained in/as an object (culture).

The Meiji period was a time where, through the institutions of social science, things like culture and language and race – the concepts that build a modern, ideal (though not yet homogenous) Japanese national identity, or Self – become monolithic objects. These are in turn used (or weaponized) to simultaneously differentiate the Wajin from the Ainu and absorb the Ainu (both culture and people) into the empire, and later the *minzoku no wajin*. THIS IS AN IMPORTANT PARAGRAPH. YOU HAVE A THESIS STATEMENT HERE.

In this chapter, I will go through these objects, drawing them up as barriers to the ideal of nationalism, and examine how they are repositioned from barriers into enablers for assimilation. I will display how the acquisition of food and eating it can enforce assimilation, can “make the Indians like us” in a Jeffersonian sense. I will show how structures are placed to denigrate the Ainu into the distant past, where they and their culture-as-object exist as aspect of Japanese culture that the ‘modern’ Wajin have advanced from, and how Wajin can ‘lift’ the Ainu out of this primitiveness. I want to caution that this is not necessarily a homogenous nationalism yet, as there still existed the idea that Japan drew strength from heterogeneous origins.

Rice, the Self, and Those People With Animals

One of the most symbolically rich objects in Japan is rice. Rice is imagined as the staple of the diet, which is true to a large extent. It is the primary source of grain, and is served with almost every native meal. The Japanese word for meal, *gohan*, is the same word for rice. As I have mentioned, it is ubiquitous almost to the point of being taken for granted, but it is far from invisible. Rice holds incredible symbolic power, to the point

where it would not be much of stretch to say that many see it as a sign for the soul of Japan as a nation and the Wajin. Ohnuki-Tierney has written extensively on this symbolic power and its genealogy over Japanese history, highlighting two important themes: (1) that the prominence of rice in both economic and mythological discourse often holds that rice can both metaphorically and literally be an anchor for the Japanese Self, and (2) that rice is not native to the archipelago, but a historical import from China, which gives way to a symbolic characteristic of Japanese culture – adaptability to foreign elements, and in turn reinventing a sense of self that endures even while absorbing outside influence. (1998, 2006) One such expression is the position of rice in Shinto mythology.

Examining ancient mythologies to make statements about particular groups of people is an inherently risky and sometimes dangerous practice. It can reinforce both internal and external ideologies that the group is static, that ideas that were relevant hundreds of years ago hold as much prominence to the modern descendants of the people who “made” the mythologies.³³ At its worst, such writing often claims to identify ways in which people think.³⁴ It is a gross over-estimation of peoples’ historical memories. I am looking at Shinto mythology in its current function as a way for individuals and institutions (most notably the prewar government) to connect to a mythological past, rather than as an expression of contemporary thought. I may not be a mind reader, but I can claim with some confidence that most Japanese probably do not see rice and immediately think of the convoluted myth I am about to lay out. Moreover, discussion of the imperial cult strain of Shinto is important for a fully contextual look at the creating of

³³ Several authors and anthropologists, most notably Benedict and Reischauer, used this logic to make statements about wartime Japan, unintentionally validating the claims of wartime ultranationalists who drew upon traditions of *bushido* (warrior’s way) to promote militarism.

³⁴ See: the complete writings of Bernard Lewis and Daniel Pipes.

the Self taken out by the Meiji government, to shift the recently appointed ‘nationals’ or ‘imperial subjects’ away from Buddhism and folk belief in order to collectively form a new basis for the modern national identity. In the 21st century, even many nationalists of the LDP have shied away (publically) from this rhetoric.

When one walks into a Shinto shrine, especially the large, historic ones like Meiji Shrine, one can expect to see a looming, free wall of a wooden frame packed with thick barrels of *sake* (rice liquor), decorated with exquisitely painted kanji³⁵ calligraphy. In myth, rice is a gift from Amaterasu (the Goddess of the Sun and mythic progenitor the Imperial family, who in prewar discourse were the progenitors of the Wajin) to her grandson, the legendary first emperor, Jinmu. The rice grains are divine in nature, having been cultivated by Amaterasu in Heaven. Emperor Jinmu spreads the grains over the wilderness, transforming the barren lands into rice paddies. Positioned in this myth (keep in mind the people who commissioned its writing in the 7th century) is rice, and more specifically rice agriculture, as the Self against a wild alternative. The Self, in this case, is not the Wajin as a people, but the Wajin elite of the early Yamato government,³⁶ standing as leaders who impose the order of agriculture onto the no man’s land of wilderness (Ohnuki-Tierney, 1998: 32) Ainu are not mentioned in this myth, and I would certainly not go so far as to suggest it was designed to be exclusive. It merely leaves a space open for an Other to occupy, in the realm of nature. Here it is critical to make the extension of rice to rice farming, and the associated symbol of rice farmers as representing the foundation of Japanese national ethos. (Gluck, 1987: 180) The “agrarian myth,” as Gluck

³⁵ The Japanese form of Chinese characters (mostly identical to traditional, not simplified). It is necessary to distinguish it from Japanese’s two other alphabets, hiragana and katakana, which are phonetic.

³⁶ This was one of many kingdoms on the archipelago, but it eventually overtook the others and worked as a central government. It was the precursor to the Japanese state.

calls it, is alive and well in the postwar era, even as rice production has declined dramatically. Rice farming is still thought of as an essential, enduring symbol of Japan's ancient lineage. (Ibid, 177-178) At the same time, the expansion of Buddhism (around the same time this myth was first written down)³⁷ adds another layer of meaning to the Other of the wilderness: the impurity of dead flesh, or in culinary terms, meat. Though this applies equally to the flesh of humans and animals, in most Buddhist traditions a wilderness full of animals, set apart from the Self (agrarian Wajin), is a wilderness of impurity. Animals themselves are generally not considered impure or revolting in Wajin tradition, and some are often honored as helpful guardians in some Shinto folk beliefs, but the contamination of their corpses is an acute fear, a famous expression of such being the discrimination of the pre-modern Special-Status People (Howell, 1996; Ohnuki-Tierney, 1998; Walker, 2005)

In turn, the symbolic richness of these objects (rice/meat) draws clear lines between the Agrarian (associated with rice) and the animal-worshipping and –consuming Ainu (associated with meat). Both Ohnuki-Tierney (1998) and Batchelor (189-) offer related interpretations that Wajin and Westerners emphasized the hairiness of the Ainu (a bizarrely common trope of fascination that often titled travelogues and ethnographies) as a symbolic association with wilderness, and possibly an interpretation of the Ainu being similar to animals. Wilderness, as a broad enough label, then served as a symbolic

³⁷ Although it is often presented as a native religion of Japan – in contrast to Buddhism – Shinto is actually a name for a variety of Wajin folk beliefs around the Japanese archipelago. Japan's unofficial state religion for most of pre-Meiji history was Buddhism, though it was a heavily syncretic form designed to accommodate local custom. Many of the court nobles who disseminated the story of Amaterasu (as a national creation myth – there's no way of knowing that earlier forms of it didn't precede the Yamato kingdom) were Buddhists. Since Buddhism does not preclude the existence of gods or spirits, Shinto practices were often integrated into its mythology. The separation of the religions occurred in the Meiji period, where the government wanted to promote the imperial cult strain of Shinto as the state religion, and Buddhism was painted as a foreign import.

container for all the referents that were contained in Hokkaido upon its annexation by Japan in 1869. The animals, the mountains, and the “hairy” people who inhabited it, all faded into the natural landscape. The positioning of indigenous people as a “natural” part of the landscape is a common trope in settler-colonialism. It allows the Self/Other dichotomy to operate on many levels, with many potential justifications, where an attempt to tame ‘wild humans’ entails a positioning of humans (Wajin) against nature (the island in its entirety). The process that Said (1978) outlined in *Orientalism* takes on a more particular form, one that David Spurr calls “negation.” In the case of negation, the portrayal of the Other goes beyond backwardness, and represents an idea of “absence or emptiness” where national aspirations can be freely drawn (Spurr, 1993 in, Mason, 2012: 58). Simple association with a clear object contrast ties these narratives, operating on multiple levels, together: rice/agriculture against meat/wilderness. The Hokkaido that appears in literature of the period, the one that is promoted by the government, was a “terra incognita” or “virgin forest” or “*mushu no chi*” (ownerless land) (Mason, 2012: 55-59).

To counter that, the Wajin Self, or civilization, is presented in the symbolic image of rice, with rice being the essential figure of agriculture that expressed not merely culture, but Wajin culture. Though they may not share the same etymology in Japanese, the blurring of “cultivated” and “cultured” is usually at most its blatant in projects of “development.” (Mason, 2012: 63) Here we see the Self/Other dichotomy essentialized even further; not merely containing complex socio-cultural networks into ideas of imagined geographies and categories, but further compressing those categories and ideas into objects. As objects (in this case types of food) are culturized, culture becomes an

object, and a monolithic one at that, something that individuals can ‘have’ rather than a layering of ways of living. This is the Self/Other dichotomy literally objectified.

Not only does physical association with them then employ these objects as definitive markers of Otherness, but they also allow for seemingly easy fixes to “problems” of homogeneity. In one respect, they are rigid barriers and make dichotomies strict – in another they allow fluidity, as all one needs to do to assimilate is take on the objects. This exercise was not a new idea for the Meiji intellectuals. The earliest attempts at bringing the Ainu into the Wajin sphere of influence, when power over the Wajin-controlled strip of Hokkaido was transferred from the Matsumae clan to the Shōgun, heavily relied on acculturation, as displayed in several of the *Bakufu*’s instructions in commission from 1799:

“1. Teach the Ezo³⁸ [Ainu], in due time, how to raise crops and live on cereals and to become used to our way of life. Even before you teach them to cultivate the land try to change their diet from meat to grain by telling them that cereals are much better than meat. [...]

4. The Ezo have been forbidden to use Japanese but, in areas where the Bakufu has taken over, the use of that language shall be permitted and in fact encouraged so that the natives will more easily adopt our way of life. Keep in mind however that they are to use our language and we are not to use theirs.” (Takakura, 1960: 55-56)

³⁸ Ezo was the pre-Meiji name for Hokkaido used by the Wajin. As such, the Wajin called the people who lived on the island by the same name.

Rice, being both a powerful symbol and a strong economic tool, was historically used as a way to bridge the essential gap between Ainu and Wajin. The Meiji period, influenced by the writings of cultural evolutionists and Western imperialists, transformed it into a civilizing agent. Ainu families were typically granted plots of land by the government, to be used exclusively for farming. If crop failed or the land was used for other purposes, the Hokkaido prefectural government reclaimed it (Morris-Suzuki, 2014: 57)

I would like to take a moment to point out that this food dichotomy is also myth, not just in a social context, but a factual one too. Though rice was as ubiquitous as it is today (if you had the means to eat in the first place), an equally important staple of the diet was and remains seafood. Fish, shrimp, squid, and sea urchins populate Japan's coastal waters in large numbers and inland rivers that stem from the archipelagos; many mountains are host to an abundance of Pacific salmon. While the secondary ingredients and preparation methods used in the traditional Ainu diet were dramatically different from the Wajin of Honshu, their main food source was not deer, or bears, or even the root vegetables and barley they planted. It was salmon that lived on the rivers where they built their villages (Batchelor, 189-; Landor, 1893; Watanabe, 1973). The point here is not to stipulate that any or all differences were mere inventions or propaganda by the Wajin, but to illustrate how certain facts make their way into discourse while others do not, and how material things draw symbolic power from the social contexts in which they are placed. This sense of wilderness allowed for a material difference between Ainu and Wajin. By extension, it created a method for how to assimilate the Ainu. Farming functioned as a civilizing agent. However, rice farming could not be used as an expression of Wajinness.

This was not a conscious attempt to ensure the Ainu could never be fully Wajin, but more as a matter of possibility: as mentioned earlier, there had been numerous attempts in the pre-Meiji period to assimilate some Ainu living within the Matsumae domain by making them plant rice, but it proved impossible not only because of the refusal of the Ainu, but because of the infeasibility of the environment. Hokkaido's climate is not only cooler than the Japan's other islands, but dryer, not allowing the necessary irrigation for rice paddies to form, at least on a large enough scale. Ainu farms tended to cultivate the newer introductions to the Meiji diet, many of which were imported from the West. While this may seem like counter-intuitive, as the Ainu were not apparently being made to take on traditional Wajin symbols, these foodstuffs could signify the 'modern Japan.'

The Hulking Image of the West

The different images conjured by Said's – Orientalism – and Spurr's – negation – analyses of imperial rhetoric may seem mutually exclusive, but I would caution against treating them as contrasts. The relationship between the void that Spurr presents and the complexity of Said's Orient can be strongly interrelated, depending on historical and cultural circumstance. In the case of Meiji Japan, both hold salience due to Hokkaido's manufactured status as *tabula rasa* with the simultaneous radical redefinition of Wajin identity, becoming both 'modern' and 'nationalist.'

Listing the varieties of changes in the Wajin Self in the Meiji period is an impossible feat, both in terms of the breadth of entirely new elements and refashioning of old ones (not to mention the multitude of relations between the two). As such I will limit the analysis to my most pressing point: that an important takeaway from studying

Japanese imperialism is that it shows how Self/Other dichotomies are not built out of contrasts but relations. While contrasting themselves to Ainu, Wajin were struggling to define the Self they were constructing by measuring it against things desirably Western, including the diet. Despite the denigration of the Ainu association with meat, the Meiji government much admired the Western diet, which was perceived to be filled with meat. Now is as good a time as any to state the obvious but important: even in the government, Wajin were sharply divided over how to proceed in self-conception moving forward, with some calling for the end of rice agriculture in favor of taking on meat and others suggesting it was one of the few things that made Wajin superior to the West. A great fear was that Westerners were so large because they ate meat and drank milk, and that Japan would certainly lose a war with them if they tried to fight (Ohnuki-Tierney, 2002: 64-66) At the end of all of this is Hokkaido, a place strategically designed for the Wajin to impress their culture-as-object upon even as their Self grew fuzzier as it dressed in the clothes of its Other (the West).

The transformation of Hokkaido into Wajin space, albeit a murkier new version of Wajin, may constitute a kind of nationalism before imperialism. Japan's modern period is too often regarded as merely an imitation of the West, both politically and culturally, often coupled with the kind of contempt Said describes as reserved for Third World nationalism as poor misappropriation of Western concepts. (1993: 216-220) While imitation was deliberate, the so-called Westernization of Japan was also a serious engagement with new concepts of science and philosophy for intellectuals and common people alike. A frequent critique of the historicity of the European Renaissance is that it retained government and economic policies even as new pieces of art and architecture

supposedly changed the fabric of Europe itself. One might call the Meiji Restoration³⁹ a real-life version of what Europeans might have imagined of themselves: a serious engagement with ideas, a re-evaluation of how society and all of its organs could actually work. The Meiji intellectuals' attentiveness to the point of origin of these ideas and cataloging of multiple Others offers another interpretation as a case of hybridizing East and West, or culture clash, with Hokkaido serving as focal point. But this reading treats the symbolic materials that were used to redefine the Wajin Self as only markers, not tools that change the individual who uses them and reshape the surrounding world. Hokkaido becomes not a hybridized, East-meets-West space, but a ground of expression of the new Wajin Self through the use of objects and the actions that require those objects to function – namely colonialism. The act of colonializing becomes a modernizing process for the Self.⁴⁰

The materials of colonialism are wide and varied, but are easy to track due to the structural necessity of their ties. For a non-exhaustive example, there is the institutionalized cooperation of literature and anthropology. (Mason, 2012: 68-69; Said, 1989: 207-208) By its nature, colonialism requires building an expertise, bringing anthropology as a tool for 'making objects' out of culture and language. Exiting the realm of symbols, objectification becomes the principle. For a clearer idea of this process, I will turn to Hirano's (2009) theory of colonial translation. Rather than reorienting my analysis around a new framework, I am augmenting my current observation on objectification of

³⁹ The early Meiji period is also called the Restoration as a way of emphasizing the restoration of the emperor to his rightful place as ruler and emblem of the Japanese people.

⁴⁰ This act is also wholly applicable to Western imperialists, attaining new statuses by ranking up numbers of colonies, increasing their multicultural resources, and showcasing military power, and warrants generally more explicit acknowledge across the board. Japan is only the most obvious case because of the aesthetic changes.

culture (through the utilization of objects that are recognized as containing essential cultural elements) with Hirano's concept:

“[The] application of *material power* to fundamentally dismantle and then reorganize the social, economic and political relations that obtained prior to colonialization (the inscription of heterogeneity on the land) in order to insert them into capitalist production process [...] the destruction, expropriation, and absorption of the heterogeneous and multiple forms of life under conditions of the inequality of power [...]” (Hirano, 2009: 2-3) (emphasis mine).

Hirano's theory is relevant to three of my points: (1) that the colonization of Hokkaido was not a wholesale adoption of purely Western practices, but an adaption of pre-existing forms to a more European-styled methodology, (2) that the colonial period did not end after the 19th century but is still continuing through the consistent reapplication of colonial translation to Ainu and Wajin in the postwar era, especially in terms of retelling history, and (3) that material power is the primary weapon of colonialist violence. Hirano uses material power (a term that, in his full explanation of the theory, seems to be clearly influenced by Foucault's *biopower*, though there is no citation) to illustrate his views on capitalism. I do not deny that capitalism is an encroaching influence over every process I describe throughout this paper, but for my purposes, I look at materials not purely as pieces of capitalist production, but as semiotically rich vessels of negotiation or, more often, negation, that allow cultural nationalism to move easily across fields of meaning. Translating, in a colonialist sense, is about inscribing the new

version of the Self upon a negated land, and using materials as a means of dominating people.

Revisiting agriculture, meat entered the Wajin diet as a symbol of modernity and a statement of domination (even modernity-as-domination). Cattle ranches were a chief characteristic of this new phase, along with breweries to introduce beer into the Japanese diet. Agriculture, now Western-inspired, imposes itself onto wilderness, now augmented with cultural evolutionist models of agriculture (specifically agriculture that reshaped wild land) as a signifier of civilization. (Walker, 2005) *Sukiyaki* is often presented in the West as traditional Japanese food, but it is actually a conscious imitation of Western food made for a Japanese cooking style. Beef was not eaten in Japan until the modern period, and most pre-Meiji Wajin were vegetarians if they kept Buddhist precepts. While Ainu meat is still associated with wilderness, Western meat is tied to civilized agriculture. The use of meat never suggests an equivalency between Ainu and Westerners (aside from both being Others), but creates a field of meaning where a Wajin Self can experiment with new materials that reflect back on the characteristics of both Self and Other.

By thinking of how people critically engaged with symbolic materials, we can better understand how materials were used to refashion the symbolic characteristics of the Wajin Self. Separating the Wajin Self from Ainu Other was reconstituted from rice into agriculture (of cattle and rice). In terms of material culture, the barriers between the Self and Others operate, paradoxically, as enablers for assimilation. As objects, association with them becomes a marker of Otherness, in this case a marker of Ainu or Western culture. But as these objects help make culture into an object one can possess, then active, meaningful engagement – one where meaning is negotiated and normative order is put in

flux, similar to the process Ohnuki-Tierney (2002) describes – with these objects changes them from barriers to modes of transporting and translating cultures. Of course, this happens unequally as Wajin become Western in style and Ainu become Wajin in spirit. The role of the Meiji government helped work as a mediating force between foreign elements and native symbols, much in the way the current government is expected to do now. The management of symbols allowed Wajin society redefine their Self within the context of a state. The use of symbolic materials could forcefully transform an Other into an aspect of the Self.

“To make objects speak...” – the Construction of a National Language

With rice, the Meiji government and scientific establishment had found a symbol that served two purposes. Primarily, it served as an economically efficient method of assimilating the existing Ainu economy and lifestyle of the pre-Meiji era into the new Japanese nation state’s structure, as the nation of Japan itself was rapidly redefining itself. On a secondary level, rice served as a signifier of essential Wajinness in that changing cultural atmosphere, something that connected Wajin citizens to their own past (or the version of the past that the imperial government sought to legitimize as fact), and signaled that Ainu citizens had taken on at least some of the critical elements that would one day allow them to become equal to Wajin nationals.

Resistance was sparse, if we define resistance solely as a mass movement and never as an individual attempt at rejecting the reality of the colonizer – a strategy that becomes quite visible in the postwar era. Still, written records of these occurrences in the Meiji period are few. The unequal dependency of the Ainu economy on the newly formed

Wajin state became exacerbated by industrialization in Honshu and agriculturization of their home, in turn creating difficult legal maneuvers that limited Ainu access to their historic resources by the Hokkaido Development Agency. (Takakura, 1960; Mason, 2012; Walker, 2001; 2005) Ainu resistance was a slow process that I would suggest is probably better defined as ‘resilience.’ Resilience could be seen in those who pushed against Wajin encroachment on Hokkaido, but also in those who, facing both internal insecurities and external pressure, sought to assimilate as painlessly as possible and with as much agency as they could given the circumstances. By the Shōwa period, a notable figure of resilience had emerged in Yoshida Kikutarō, an Ainu who campaigned against discrimination by Wajin as well as more localized phenomenon like Wajin-run ‘villages’ for tourists, which he called an exploitation of Ainu culture and a presentation of Ainu that was anachronistic. However, his method of resilience that he taught to his followers was of total assimilation, since he believed Ainu culture had fallen behind and that Ainu should assimilate and intermarry to raise themselves to the level of Wajin. (Morris-Suzuki, 1998: 56-57) As a brief aside, Yoshida reminds me of Mori Arinori, the liberal Meiji reformer who so strongly believed in the superiority of Western culture that he suggested Japanese should speak English. Yoshida and Mori may have held vastly uneven levels of power, but they both believed strongly in the welfare of their people and felt such insecurity about their place in an imagined cultural evolutionist history that they sought to create a Self that moved perfectly in line with an Other. Though they held a variety of ideas, both Yoshida’s and Mori’s explicit call for language change presents another barrier in the Self/Other dichotomy, and, in some linguistic attitudes, another object to work with.

Language is less literal version of this materiality than rice or cultural signifiers like dress, food, and tool-use. However, it is a more recognizable form of the abstract becoming material or objectified, and a cultural object at that. Over the past 40 years, studies in linguistic anthropology have examined how the study of language imagines it as something to have rather than use. Though this is not an inherently flawed approach, it has been argued that critical aspects of language existing in an evolving social context have been left out of discussion. (Bucholtz and Hall, 2016) When I referred to rice as a cultural object, I spoke of both the object and its usage – entrenching Ainu dependency on the settler government and arranging signifiers of Wajinness – and the product of the objectification being food culture and agriculture.⁴¹ The same principle applies in this discussion of language: the abstract object as material or vessel of culture. Considering the ties of Japanese language to culture, stressed from an emic perspective, this is operating on a deliberate level. The usage of materials (or *material power*) are the recorders, typewriters, notes, and published translations of Ainu oral traditions into Japanese texts within a field of scientific and cultural understanding for the colonizer. I will examine the published translation more directly as a result of the process, since my examination is strictly of how culture and language can function as objects in a social order. The same materials described by both Hirano (2009) and Said (1993) shape the colonizer's culture-as-object along with that of the colonized.

Turning to a case study of translation, language, and the act of Ainu resilience, consider Chiri Yukie. She was born shortly before the Russo-Japanese war of 1904 in the Ainu community at Horobetsu. Growing up in Asahikawa, a section of Hokkaido notorious for strained legal battles between Ainu and Wajin settlers, Chiri was educated

⁴¹ No pun intended.

in mixed schools, completely bilingual in Ainu and Japanese, but shunned by other students for being both Ainu and a Christian. However, her high quality education and embodiment of Wajin culture⁴² brought her to the attention of Wajin linguist Kindaichi Kyōsuke in 1918. Kindaichi was by that point considered Japan's foremost expert on the Ainu language and historical linguistics (a definition that conveniently left out the many native speakers of the language). Under circumstances that are not entirely clear⁴³ (she almost certainly did not volunteer but there is no indication that he coerced her), she then became his research assistant and primary source for a proposed translation of *yukar*, traditional Ainu oral tales, epic in nature and describing the actions of heroes and gods (*kamuy*) in Ainu folklore. Chiri believed (probably under the tutelage of her Wajin teachers and the dire conditions her village lived in) that while Ainu tradition did once achieve a kind of golden age, its nature was primitive and Wajin assimilation was a desirable future, both on its own merits and as a way of escaping discrimination and poverty. She clung strongly to Social Darwinist beliefs about where her people stood on the evolutionary ladder, but also believed there was nothing inherently wrong or undesirable about the traditions passed on to her by her shamaness grandmother. Working with Kindaichi, she often wrote that the plan for Ainu resilience to Wajin discrimination should be total assimilation into Wajin society, while retaining memory of Ainu tradition as cultural artifact and respect for their own ancestors, a strategy endorsed by Kindaichi. Working together, they completed the manuscript of several *yukar*, written

⁴² Chiri's knowledge of traditional Ainu culture along with literacy and competency in educated Wajin society, unusual for young Ainu at the time, that Strong calls her dual mastery "biculturalism" (2011: 27)

⁴³ There is no contemporary record of how Kindaichi officially met Chiri or how he recruited her for his research, as Strong posits that Kindaichi's memoirs were written decades later and may contained either remembered or imagined pleasantries that might have masked the difficult situation Chiri was in. She also displays that he clearly viewed her as a gifted student explicitly wrote that she was brought to Tokyo as a student and not as a personal assistant to research/source. (2011: 30-32)

in Japanese for the first time, called the *Ainu shin'yōshū* (Anthology of Ainu Mythology).⁴⁴ Unfortunately, Chiri suffered from lifelong congenital heart disease, and (probably exacerbated by the frequent trips between Tokyo and Horobetsu to write translations for the book) died of heart failure in Tokyo in 1922 at the age of nineteen. (Hirano, 2009: 5-12; Strong, 2011: 1-44)

The Ainu of Chiri Yukie's day had already been colonized for a generation. The law that oversaw the status of Ainu in Hokkaido was the Former Aborigines Protection Act (FAPA) of 1899, a now infamous piece of legislation that would be the nemesis of Ainu rights movements in the postwar era. The act gave the Hokkaido prefectural government the power to manage Ainu communal property – including land and heritage objects – if the government saw it as in the Ainu's best interest. It is probably obvious to say that what the Wajin government saw as in the best interest of the Ainu usually did not align with what Ainu believed, and that the government often did not have much interest in hearing Ainu input on the matter. The commonly used critique of the FAPA in the postwar was that it was "paternalistic." In addition to land allotment, the FAPA also allowed state-sanctioned education. (Stevens, 2014: 201) This education was openly an assimilation project, where the Ainu language was not permitted and Ainu children were expected to only speak Japanese. Chiri Yukie's bilingualism opened avenues for her, but it was her mastery of *yukar* that made her invaluable to Kindaichi's studies. In material terms, she possessed a meaningful object that only select Wajin saw as valuable.

⁴⁴ Hirano's translation. (2009: 6) Strong gives the full title as "Collection of Ainu chants of spiritual beings" though she may be working from a more technical version, or even a double translation from Ainu to Japanese to English, as the phrase "*kamuy yukar*" in Ainu means "spiritual chants/songs" or "chants/songs of the gods." (2011: 3)

Moreover, she possessed double language, something that granted her access to a society that was unfortunately concentrated on denigrating her.⁴⁵

Hirano interprets the value of Chiri's bilingualism as an "imbrication" of the double principle of colonialism, where the discourse of primitiveness is used to subordinate the culture of the colonized into that of the national. Her possession of a 'primitive' language while belonging to the state/empire could be interpreted as a need for the replacement by a 'national language,' or even the structure for the existence of a national language in the first place. (2009: 8) Chiri may have been a model of what the state envisioned for Ainu of her time, but there remains a dangerous flaw in continuing to examine language assimilation as a practice through Chiri's status. It runs the risk of reinforcing a discourse on Chiri that treats her as an object, the same kind of discourse that the assimilationist policies of Meiji Hokkaido sought to create. Chiri's circumstances in life are by no means a useless or dangerous point of analysis, but they must be augmented through presenting her as an interpreting subject, something that Hirano bemoans as lacking but scarcely does.

Chiri's translation of *yukar* is an interpretative act. She is as much of an interpretant as Kindaichi, though not as socially sanctioned. It just so happens that her interpretations of the language fall mostly in line with the colonial discourse; she did agree that the Ainu were a vanishing ethnicity (Ibid: 10-11) Nevertheless, her interpretation of how to use the language shows cracks in colonialist discourse. While resigning Ainuness to an idea of 'primitiveness' she viewed the *Ainu shin'yōshū* not as

⁴⁵ Under the FAPA, her official status was both *shimin* (loyal subject [of the emperor]) the Japanese word for aborigine or native – *dojin*, literally meaning "dirt person." More specifically, she was a 'former native,' displaced from her point of origin, and never able to completely leave that behind in a legalistic sense. The word 'native' in English has similar etymological roots to the word 'natural' or 'from the earth.' In other words, the use of 'dirt person' should not be shocking.

only an object of study, but as a tribute to her own grandmother from whom she learned the *yukar* (Strong, 2011) In fact, her view of primitiveness itself may have not completely aligned with the idea of the colonizer. Strong suggests that Chiri believed the act of writing and translating the *yukar* was an updated way of passing them onto a generation of future Ainu and non-Ainu, a way of continuing the gift her ancestors had given her by passing them down. (Ibid: 40-44) Drawing from that, translating also may stand as an expression of reciprocity, a central theme in Ainu folk belief.

Both scholars of Ainu culture (Peng and Geiser, 1977; Watanabe, 1973) and Ainu people invoke principles of reciprocity as an Ainu characteristic, with the latter often stating that reciprocity is a continuing feature into the post-colonial world. (Dubreuil, 2007) Kayano Shigeru described this relationship as a somewhat familial form of returning gifts to one's progenitors. The progenitors themselves received "wisdom" from the gods (*kamuy*). (1994: 1-21) The wisdom in this case was the knowledge of Ainu tradition and culture, which functioned as a gift to each successive generation, left with a complex network of reciprocal obligations to offer similar gifts (objects) from the natural world back to the immaterial world of gods and ancestors.

Chiri's actions of continuing *yukar* can be read as a way of passing on an object to future generations, but it serves another function through the act of reciting (or in this case translating) where the past is doubly a recipient. Additionally, Chiri's interpretation of meaningfulness behind the symbols expressed through the Ainu language did not entirely reflect Kindaichi's. Where he saw a vessel of Ainu tradition, Chiri reflected a more personal and localized aspect of tradition, specifically that of her grandmother and her home at Noboribestu. Later studies and writings on the *Ainu shin'yōshū* have devoted

time to identifying the rivers around Noboribetsu that Chiri used/inherited for the locations within the *yukar* narratives and the animals that serve as narrators. Specific names for salmon, and in turn what river they come from, appear across the *Ainu shin'yōshū* and reflect specificities of Noboribetsu dialect and ecosystem (Strong, 2011: 57-60) These were also not scenic listings of natural features – each object or symbol of the natural world in Ainu myth is packaged with a distinct relationship to the world of the gods (*kamuy moshir*).

In fact, calling it the ‘natural world’ is mostly selling it short, since the closest thing in Ainu folk belief is not another dimension or contrasting realm, but a corresponding aspect of the universe: divine things can exist both in *kamuy moshir* and *ainu moshir* (world of the people), but humans cannot perceive the divine aspects. A key example of this is in some Ainu beliefs about bears. Elaborate bear ceremonies, like *iyomante*, are often misunderstood as the sacrifice of animals to the gods. However, tradition holds that the bear is actually a god entering into *ainu moshir* with the gifts of meat and fur in its material body. (Dubreuil, 2007) *Iyomante* consists of a year-long practice, raising a bear cub in a special house and feeding it as an honored guest, culminating in a ceremony where the bear is killed, or “sent back.” Both the action of the killing the bear and the accompanying chant (*yukar*) are required to return the spirit of the bear to its natural place in *kamuy moshir*. (Kitagawa, 1961; Munro, 1963) Little of this appears in *Ainu shin'yōshū*, but to fully understand the practice of the use of language for Chiri Yukie, an understanding of Ainu beliefs of reciprocity is required. Moreover, Chiri’s translation of *yukar* into Japanese furthered that relationship across language barriers, not only to Wajin but Japanese-speaking Ainu, even though she worried that the

transmission from orality to writing would lose fundamental aspects of this relationship. (Hirano, 2009: 9-10) The language and its symbols given to us by Chiri Yukie should be taken not only as a key to her life and her culture, but as a linking point between *kamuy moshir*, *ainu moshir*, Hokkaido and Japan, where the relationships continue to exist and evolve through the use of language. Unfortunately, the discourse of the colonizer on this language and its gifts remains present.

Where Chiri's story can be told as one example of the turmoil faced by Ainu who inhabited the split identity of subaltern and primitive Other, Kindaichi operates as a builder/constructor. He was a man who, despite his best efforts at being a moderate, served an instrumental purpose in building Hokkaido as part of Japan and Ainu as part of Japanese national identity (within Wajin codes). And in these actions, he was instrumental in redefining his own country at a time when its identity was growing hazier and suffering from an inferiority complex of its own. Kindaichi was an agent of the National Language Research Center at Tokyo Imperial University. By Kindaichi's own admission in his memoirs, the primary goal of the center was understanding languages "in relation to Japanese." He made Ainu his object of study where others chose Korean, the Chinese languages, and the Ryūkyūan languages, for the purpose of understanding the origins of Japanese. (Otomo & Kindaichi, 2001, in Hirano, 2009: 4) At the same time, the imperial government was designing education programs to promote nationwide literacy. It was the birth of the language as we recognize it today, using methods of standardization, classification, and nationalism to instill the language as both unifying and a source of pride. Meanwhile, Ainu were discouraged from speaking Ainu outside of solicitation by linguists, and linguistic writings typically stressed the language's

inferiority due to its lack of a written alphabet. Like rice, speaking only Japanese was a useful signifier for assimilation.

The treatment of language as an object and the promotion of it for ethnic or nationalist purposes is a fairly common routine, still seen all over the world today. It holds potential positives, such as preventing language death and spreading cultural awareness via translation. That is why it is best to turn away from the debates over how language should be treated vis-à-vis nationalism or scientifically approached, and return again to the materials of colonial discourse. The research from the Imperial Tokyo University could provide a deluge of information for understanding the national Japanese language, both for how to speak it and how far it stretched into the past in relation to its interior Others. The ideas about race/nation, and the totalizing nature of *minzoku* in combining the elements of Japanese culture into inseparable parts of a national synthesis bear repeating. The Ainu language, while not literally considered a form of proto-Japanese, was positioned as a primitive *aspect* of Japanese national language, which in turn offered a clearer understanding of the Japanese past from a scientific perspective. (Hirano, 2009: 4-6)

The work of Kindaichi and his colleagues can be easily glossed as a prime example of colonial anthropology, in a matter similar to Ruth Benedict on the American end. But his explicit acknowledgement of the relational component of his study should be noted. Though he tries to stress difference where he can, citing the primitiveness of Ainu in comparison to Japanese, his motive is uncovering the relationship between the languages. Following that logic, a paradox emerges: Kindaichi is actively working to instill the Self/Other dichotomy in his writing (and, indeed, it was read that way), but his

political motive is causing the line to blur. Where rice/meat could be a signifier of total difference, language-as-an-object draws clear lines while implicating both the Self and the Other as relatives. The Other can become the Self by planting rice and speaking Japanese, while the Self obtains the privilege of positioning the Other as an inferior aspect of itself. GOOD. For a literal material, there is the *Ainu shin'yōshū*, a translation not only from Ainu to Japanese, but from oral tradition to written tradition, both of which, in the contemporary thought, constituted a translation *from* primitiveness *to* modernity.

Kindaichi's research into language was an institutionalized method of placing within the definition of the Japanese *minzoku*,⁴⁶ while simultaneously functioning as a redefinition of what this *minzoku* was. The position of language and “national language” as a firm, categorical object was a creation for the understanding of scientists, but it entailed the existence of a nation (*minzoku*) that the object (language) was intrinsically bound to. Moreover, in the context of studying Ainu in Meiji Japan, this field was bound to the colonial project and its relation to the institution that oversaw the study (the study of Japanese-related languages, such as Ainu, being bound to the colonial land of Hokkaido, which was being made into Japanese territory). For a comparative example, I return to Said and his analysis of Renan's writing on Semitic languages. Renan bizarrely claimed that “the Semitic” was a creation of Orientalist philology. In Said's explanation, Renan defined this instance of ‘creation’ as the creation of an object (Semitic) that could be open to study: “To make objects speak was like making words speak [in reference to

⁴⁶ At this point, *minzoku* is still a contested term, and how broadly it applies is debated within Japan. Some treat the entire Japanese empire as a *minzoku*, including all non-Wajin subjects, while others support the empire but insist on the existence of a culturally pure *minzoku* within the empire. The complexities of Kindaichi's political feelings are unknown, but that does not render my interpretation incomplete. He is constructing objects like language in order to understand what the object of *minzoku* can actually constitute.

the translation of Egyptian hieroglyphics], and giving them circumstantial value and a place precise place in a rule-governed order of regularity.” (Said, 1978: 140) The relationships of Christian Europe to Islamic and Jewish Orient aside, Renan’s exploration lacks the explicitly relational element of Kindaichi’s study of Ainu. Still, it operates under the similar basic principles of the material in the field of linguistics. If we can imagine the Ainu oral tradition as an object (and Kindaichi’s writing seems to treat it, along with all of Ainu language, as such), and an object of study at that, where value is created by the researcher who positions the object in a field, then Chiri’s *yukar* can be read as a kind of re-appropriating of Ainu language tradition to a production of the colonial enterprise’s field of relational linguistic studies. Through the colonial enterprise, what was heterogeneous space becomes delineated material, capable of having in the interest of cultural identification and abandoning in the interest of assimilation. In the shift from a science to popular society’s imagination (while remembering that science operates in a socially-conditioned field – see scientific racism), Said’s “rule-governed order” or field of study becomes a *cultural field of meaning*, where objects of value are semiotically loaded as cultural identifiers.

I do not mean here what people usually describe as loss of ‘pure culture.’ In fact, I work in the opposite way. As I will show in chapter 6, the process of objectification is an all-encompassing force and, while modern incarnations of it present endemic problems that need correcting, it can be subverted and turned into a tool of resilience. To simply bash translations as a total service to colonialism is to ignore the actual efforts of Chiri Yukie to pass down tradition she held great pride in and personally connected to.

I also do not want to broadly condemn Kindaichi, a man who is largely respected in Ainu political organizations as someone who helped preserve the language. Though the Ainu language is currently moribund,⁴⁷ hopes for its revival are possible in no small part due to Kindaichi's work, both for his writing on its structure and for using his position as a respected academic to give exposure to writings by Ainu including his student and fellow linguist Chiri Mashiho (one of Yukie's brothers). Kayano Shigeru portrays him quite kindly in his own memoir. (1994: 125-131) Unlike his contemporaries in linguistics and anthropology, who collected cultural artifacts and exhumed graves for cataloguing purposes and believed that Ainu culture should be wiped away by Wajin culture, Kindaichi stressed the value and artistry in the language he studied. While he did follow strict colonialist logic that was prevalent in Japanese academia (and most of anthropology) at the time, believing that Ainu culture was less evolved and would inevitably fade, he likened the writings he studied to the works of the ancient Greeks to argue that the Ainu were not an inferior or less intelligent race than the Wajin. His attitude and actions were sympathetic, although patronizing.

What I find most compelling about Kindaichi is that he may have been aware of the "march of progress" in a different sense. As he repeatedly warned the Chiris about how they as Ainu had fallen behind the modern world and that they must take on modern culture if they wanted to escape persecution, it is hard not to imagine that these lessons were told to him as a Wajin, being warned of the expanding power of the West and how Japan has fallen behind. Though I would not call for any false equivalency between the Wajin and the Ainu, neither then nor now, I do feel it is important to keep in mind how the rush toward "modernity" and the looming anxiety over being displaced by time as a

⁴⁷ "Moribund" – linguistic classification for when children are not speaking it.

forward-sprinting force of nature, hangs over the need for Japanese citizens to radically re-evaluate the culture they were familiar with. Most importantly, time here is not abstract: it, like linguistics, becomes a definite and ordered principle that shapes human culture in the world. In a colonialist framework, where ‘progress’ is imagined as the ultimate marker of hierarchy, time itself can be made into an object. Unlike food and language, however, time as an object is not something to have. It is perceived by colonial necessity to be a totalizing, objective structure that orders Ainu, Wajin, and Western cultures into fixed places within it.

Out of Time

Over the course of this chapter, I have shown how Wajin intellectuals and policies transformed pre-existing elements of Hokkaido’s ecosystem for colonial purposes. But above language and food and even culture is the governing principle of time. After all, without a clear, ordered vision of time, there can be no definitive sense of modernity. And clear, rule-governed-orders are necessary to colonialist vision. The invocation of time as an order is seen in the repetition of Ainu ‘primitiveness’ and writing that stresses how the “light of culture” was “late” to reach people who lived in remote islands in the Eastern Sea. (Kindaichi, 1993 in Strong, 2011: 30) Though Kindaichi is referring to Hokkaido and Sakhalin, his statement is curiously reminiscent of how the Wajin discussed their own islands as the West and its supposed superiority loomed over them. Time, and specifically the unilineal model that operated for much of the 19th and 20th centuries, is the grandest place where these meaningful objects fit and negotiate Selves from Others.

Though time is often invoked as a basic, uniform rule that applies strictly to all, according to Johannes Fabian, Time (capitalization is for the constructed notion or principle) can just as easily be invoked to stress difference, a system of categorization, or a way to deny coevalness between the knowledge-producer and the object of study (1983: 35) Speaking of anthropology in the West, Fabian argues that due to historic ties to Christian concepts of Time (moving toward the period of Salvation, which evolved into a secular form of moving toward ‘progress’ and ‘modernity’) Enlightenment thought conceived of Time in a way that marked Others (from pagans to primitives) as passive figures awaiting a predestined temporal state currently occupied by the Self. He calls this figure, “the Emerging Other.” (25) By making time into an ordered field of meaning (and therefore a cultural barrier), anthropology can subdivide Time into the “Time of the Other” or the “Time of the Anthropologist.” (Ibid) Reapplying this to situation here, the primitive “Time of the Ainu” can never exist simultaneously with the “Time of the Wajin” (as the Wajin anthropologists help structure the colonialist project). In turn, the only solution to the paradox is one where the Ainu must become Wajin. Though Japan’s history does not include elements like Christianity on wide scale, the import of time from the West was one of the most unobstructed in the Meiji period and allowed for labeling of the Ainu as ‘out of time.’

The unilineal understanding of time (popularized by cultural evolutionists like Herbert Spencer and Lewis Henry Morgan) is one notable expression of Fabian’s theory: understanding that all human history moves in a fixed direction, and that differences between people in different spaces are produced by conceptions/writing rooted in temporal differences, or “naturalized-spatialized Time [giving] meanings(s) to the

distribution of humanity in space.” (Ibid) Meiji intellectual Fukuzawa Yukichi was influenced by cultural evolutionists like Spencer and Morgan. In his influential *Bunmeiron no gairiyaku* (Outline of a theory of civilization), he classed societies into three temporal categories: primitive, semi-civilized, and civilized. He additionally stated that Japan was trapped in the semi-civilized stage, and fallen behind the civilized West. Citing Morgan, he presented many theories on how to change this status, frequently by juxtaposing culture (a civilizing agent) to nature (something that dominated the lives of man in the primitive stage). (Walker, 2005: 161)

Fukuzawa (arguably the most influential thinker of modern Japanese history) and his theories on modernity were used throughout the Meiji period, including in the justification of ranching as form of development in Hokkaido. As it was necessary for economic and colonialist purposes to introduce ranching, it was additionally advantageous as a way for Wajin to declare their Time as equivalent to the West’s. Though agriculture had existed before, Fukuzawa insisted that, while semi-civilized societies placed culture over nature, becoming civilized meant dominating nature and ordering the natural world to suit the needs of civilization. (Walker, 2006: 161-162) Ranching demanded deforestation and the elimination of wild predators like wolves. Additionally, an expression of dominance-as-civilizing could be seen in the forceful appropriation of Ainu lands and destruction of Ainu culture. I have said before that the act of colonializing can be a modernizing process for the Self. In this sense, by lifting the Ainu into their own Time through the action of becoming colonizers, the Wajin simultaneously assert themselves as a modern nation, bringing themselves into the Time of the West.

The translating of “Ainu” into a discrete, contained Other usable for Wajin Self-making, was actually contingent upon there being an Ainu culture to lose. Time, and by extension hierarchies of progress, can only operate when culture shifts being conceived as a “set of rules to be enacted by individuals, but as the specific way in which actors create and produce beliefs [...]” (Fabian, 1983: 24) And with invention of a discrete culture, an object existing in time, it became an object to lose, and in turn, an ethnicity to vanish.

What the ecological ideas of Fukuzawa, the linguistic families of Kindaichi, and the policies of the Meiji government have in common is the use of time not as a broad statement for a cultural evolutionary model, but as production of the concept of proto-Wajin. The question is not exactly, “can we make the Indians like us?” but “What are the tools we use to bring this version of ourselves into today?” And in turn, this is an extended expression of bringing the Wajin (a people who imagine themselves behind the West) into today. The effect it had on Ainu was the vanishing ethnicity narrative.

No one should mistake this as a suggestion of equivalence between Wajin and Ainu, especially within the cultural field of meaning in Japan. The material power of colonial translation, placed within an understanding of Time, and the Ainu as the Emerging Other, allowed for Wajin culture to change slightly by moving its symbols through Time, while Ainu symbols (and with them, culture) remained fixed in the primitive stage of Time. Ainu and Wajin are not equal victims of acculturation (not least of which is voluntary vs. coerced). Wajin objects are *dynamic objects*, not only changing and adapting to the world around them, but also holding essential qualities that have remained since time immemorial. Ainu objects are *static objects*, fixed to a past

positioned below that of Wajin and unable to survive in the modern world with no association to modern people. In the Meiji period, Ainu are first assigned their continuing burden: the external definition, constantly reinstated to make Ainuness remain in the Japanese Past,⁴⁸ whether that past expresses language, environmentalism, or quotidian tourism.

⁴⁸ The capitalization is to agree with Fabian's capitalization of Time (not a past, but a principle of Japan's "Past").

Chapter 5

A History for the People

In the aftermath of the war, Japan is destroyed. It is not beyond repair, but it is left with very little. By the end of 1945, the war had completely taken over Japan's economy, and had depleted resources already dwindled by a succession of famines. Even people in the cities were struggling to put food on the table, while people in the country were dying of starvation. Even the soldiers in the Imperial Army, fed on propaganda and fear of an American invasion, suffered horribly from empty stomachs. Lacking field kitchens and basic rations, expected to live off the land of the tropical islands they fought the Americans on, lived on undercooked rice and abuse from commanding officers. Fear of the American invasion was inflamed by warnings of mass slaughter, rape, and enslavement, with much talk of suicide should the American Army arrive until cautioned otherwise by the Imperial government upon surrender. When the Americans finally came ashore en masse for the second time in Japanese history, they brought crates of rations. At a certain point, everyone is led by their stomach. From then on, the American occupation ran remarkably smoothly for seven years, and the Japanese economy grew surprisingly fast upon the establishment of the new democratic government. Historians continue to debate how the Japanese recovered so quickly from the complete devastation of World War II. Some chalk it up to the supposed passivity of Japanese culture, suggesting that Japanese are conditioned to go along with the crowd and have a conformist mindset. Others like John Dower (1993; 1999) offer more nuanced interpretations that are more focused on the circumstances created by the devastation brought by both the Imperial government and the American military.

In addition to the starvation that plagued the end of the war and its aftermath (the Americans did not feed people for free over the course of the occupation, and expected people to work on infrastructure and construction in return for money to buy imported food – many could not afford it still), people across Japan were deprived of many of the basic tenets that formed their national identity. The emperor officially disavowed his claim to divinity in the early years of the occupation and was stripped of all his political powers (possibly in exchange for immunity). As Japanese colonists returned from Korea and Taiwan, the people of the country were forced to see the fabricated nature of the cultural signifiers (militarism, the emperor-as-father, racial pride) that held them together across a rapidly changing period. In order to keep the country together, they were forced to reinvent what it meant to be Japanese. Much of this reinvention was focused on defining Japaneseness in peaceful, democratic terms. There was little talk of Korea or Manchuria, which became taboo subjects. Racial ideas, colonialist ideas, and war as a subject were all downplayed. Trying to find new virtue, not by creating an entirely new national identity wholesale, but by looking back into the past (another version of the long-lasting Japanese spirit) trying to find the better angels – through suffering. It is often mentioned that the focus on suffering was often limited to Japanese – little to no attempts at reconciliation or even discussion of brutalities during the war. The Imperial cult branch of Shinto was no longer state sanctioned, and the postwar era saw small pockets of the population turn to revitalized religious movements that ranged from lightly nationalist (Tenrikyo) to globally minded (Sōka Gakkai).⁴⁹ I will limit my focus to archaeology with

⁴⁹ For the general population, religion proved to be an unsuccessful cultural identifier, and is usually left out of most nationalist discourses, including *nihonjinron*. Most Japanese (as well as most people in East Asia), while integrating practices of religion into daily life, describe themselves as non-religious, approaching religion as a matter of custom and tradition woven into more consciously minded cultural

occasional excursions into the cultural attitudes and politics of the postwar atmosphere to give the archaeology context.

This is the moment in history where we witness cultural destruction/nationality building through the transmission of cultural objects and objectified culture that specifically become – in Wajin discourse – *static objects* that can be accessed and manipulated by the powerful. Running through all of this is the use of temporality for both Japaneseness and Ainuness. Modern Japaneseness (Wajinness) sees its temporal depth increase –through connection with dynamic objects like rice – where Ainu become ‘modern people,’ but Ainuness is moved farther into the past, with no association to modern people.

From Marx to Nihonjinron: A Search for New Wajin Pride

As stated in chapter one, archaeology is a public field in East Asia and exists in academia as a practice of history, in the same the way American archaeology exists as anthropology. Moreover, it is locally minded in a nationalist sense, where well-funded archaeologists are charged with the goal “to enhance understanding of a nation’s past by increasing its temporal depth.” (Ikawa-Smith, 1999: 626) This ideological pattern fits across East Asia, from the search for mythical “ancestors” of the people of the modern Chinese nation (Liu, 1999), to attempts to firmly unify the three precursor kingdoms of the Korean peninsula (Pai, 2000) to the many contested examinations of the link between ancient Korea and ancient Japan, where both nations battle for a narrative that asserts one

activity, rather than seeing religion as a group identify with. An average Japanese family may make the annual end-of-year visit to the Buddhist temple their family has belonged to for seven hundred years, then spend the next week preparing for Christmas, then get ready to pray for luck at Shinto shrines on New Year’s Day. Or, in the words of a helpful Japanese expression: “There are so many good religions in Japan, why choose only one?” (Shapiro, 1989)

above the other as a kind of grudge match left over from colonization.⁵⁰ (Miyamoto, 2008) No matter what the situation, the idea of increasing the nation's "temporal depth" holds true, and it leads to an interesting recurring situation: when the idea of the nation or national character changes under historical circumstances, nationality must essentially refabricate itself (as was the case in 1868 and 1945). In the postwar, the cultural writings that once searched for the long-lasting continuity of Japan's national spirit (*kokutai*) were replaced by the field of archaeology, with each new find entering the public discourse in a way that increased the temporal depth of some symbol of the new national character (the Self). Moreover, archaeology was exciting and new as a public field, since excavation and analysis during the wartime period were put under intense scrutiny and censorship out of fear that finds could undermine the emperor's divinity.

For that purpose, I will present two different cases to examine Japan's postwar redefinition, and how the aspirational Japanese Self was repositioned. The first is the Toro site, uncovered in 1947, which began a new era of conceptualizing the Self through many of the same materials – such as rice and rice farms – given new meaning. The second is the Sannai Maruyama site, uncovered in 1994, which showcases the continued absorption of possible Others into the postwar era homogenous discourse and disseminates them back into popular world of tourism. One is at the very beginning at the postwar and the other at the start of the economically stagnant Heisei period. Both

⁵⁰ There are clear links from historical writing between the Korean and Japanese (specifically Wajin) predecessors. Japanese nationalists will focus on evidence to support their idea that the ancient Wajin once conquered Korea and gave it all the Korean cultural signifiers it has today, while ignoring evidence that suggests otherwise. South Korean nationalists will focus on similar evidence that supports their idea that the ancient Wajin were ethnic Koreans who remained passively loyal to their king even after leaving, therefore making Korea (the former colony) the actual colonizers of the Japanese archipelago. (Befu, 2001: 41) In the Northern half of the peninsula, the narrative escapes me, but it probably has something to do with Kim Il-Sung being the greatest leader in the history of the universe because he neither defecates nor urinates.

exemplify the refabrication of *minzoku* in accordance with contemporary popular ideology.

As stated in chapter one, symbolic materials of national discourse must function along with symbolic characteristics. While the latter is imagined to be unchanging and essential, in any nation they do change and are more or less retrofitted as eternal features. This practice is seen in colonial translation along with nationality building. In the postwar, many symbolic characteristics (including long-lasting essence and uniqueness) remain, but the defining characteristics of the immediate postwar, the ones that prove the most radical change, were democracy and pacifism. These two ideas were the filters through which all new ideas and symbols needed to pass, since they were the most politically advantageous to the new Japan-U.S. Alliance and the sharpest contrast from the prewar, even as the official Occupation propaganda stated that these two essential features of Japan that been obscured by the war. (Dower, 1999) What fascinates me is that many of the symbolic materials remained, but the semiotic emphasis changes to be more in line with these new paradigms. For a semiotic analysis, I will return to the most prominent and familiar symbol of the Toro site: rice.

During the war, state religion and official ideology, displayed not only in Diet speeches but also in popular songs and school textbooks, held that the emperor (then the Shōwa Emperor – Hirohito) was both the descendent of the matriarch goddess Amaterasu and was divine himself. In turn, items associated with the emperor and the *tennōsei* ideology (the emperor as father of the nation) were considered endowed with divine properties. (Ohnuki-Tierney, 2002; Dower, 1999) Rice (as explained in chapter 4) was a recurring motif in Shinto myth, and the planting of rice could serve as a connection to

Japan's ancient past. In the prewar, this connection was repeatedly stressed by Meiji ideologues as personified by the emperor due to his familial relation with Amaterasu. The past and the agrarian myth thereof could exist in the present by turning to the rice farmer. (Gluck, 1987; Ohnuki-Tierney, 1998) The Self is never so much a confirmation of pre-existing symbols from an interior perspective but almost always configuration of symbols positioned against an Other. It just so happens in this case that the Other is a vision of Japan itself, as a militaristic and monarchist country. The evidence of rice farmers at Toro was configured in a frame for liberalism.

Though the U.S.-allied government was conservative, the Japanese public wholeheartedly embraced liberal⁵¹ ideologies as the antithesis to feudal ideologies that were held responsible for the war. Caught up in a variety of vague “power to the people” exclamations, the Toro site captured the imagination of the public for being both liberal and familiar. The Toro site was planned for excavation during the war, but held back by the lack of resources funneled into the war effort. During the occupation, it was finally unearthed and widely publicized, becoming a public display for nearby citizens. Toro was the remains of a village of huts that dated back to Japan's *Yayoi* period. Unlike the *Jōmon*, whose relation to the modern Wajin is ambiguous at best, the people of the *Yayoi* were almost certainly the ancestors of the modern Wajin (the *Jōmon* share much more in common with the Ainu). Most importantly, it provided solid evidence that *Yayoi* were rice farmers, as grains and agricultural tools from the site were sufficient evidence to reconstruct familiar systems for rice agriculture 2,000 years prior. (Edwards, 1991: 9-12)

⁵¹ The strain of liberalism I refer to in Japan is very close to classical liberalism in early imaginings of democratic states. In the context of Japan, it tended toward more center-left politics that anti-monarchy and focused on quiet populism but socially conservative.

Arguably more important than the find was the writing published around Toro and the specific way it was portrayed in the Japanese press and academia. In the first issue of *Rekishi hyōron* (published two years before the Toro excavation), Tashiro Masao wrote – almost signaling to the Toro archaeologists their cause – that, “What the citizens need is a history of the people [...] The people’s history is one of the nameless masses born and working in society, of what kind of livelihood they practiced.” (Tashiro, 1946 in Edwards, 1991: 14) The socially minded (some might call socialist) re-conception of rice farmers filled the semiotic layer left by the *tennōsei* ideology, what many Japanese described as a “void” in the aftermath of defeat, where many citizens were stripped of the myths that built their history. (Dower, 1999; Edwards, 1991) Rice lost none of its symbolic power, but its meaning changed. Moreover, the agrarian myth remained as well, but fixated with a liberal/socialist minded interpretation.

On a popular level, postwar intellectuals calling for a “cultural nation” sought new ways of finding cohesive Japaneseness in the aftermath of the war’s chaos. Again conceptualizing culture as an object, the paradigm shift (aided by meaningful symbolic materials like rice) focused on expunging the emperor as a cultural symbol. The prewar connection of *shimin* (subjects of the emperor – regardless of ethnicity) was imagined in a multitude of ways from blood to soul. Rice was by no means the de facto symbol of the imperial dynasty, but it did serve as a way of connecting to Japanese national identity in a way that was tied to the emperor. The emperor being removed from the semiotic layering is almost like the void being articulated by these authors, and rice as a symbolic material, being what Victor Turner would call an “instrumental symbol” (1967: 32), can be used to guide one to a new symbolic characteristic: Japan as a land of workers, common people,

with those common people being distinctly Japanese for their association with rice. This “refashioning of tradition” allows new discourses (however clearly politicized) to become naturalized, as long as they operate on large social levels using symbols with vast arrays of meaning/meaningfulness. (Ohnuki-Tierney, 2002: 255)

Edwards argues that this was one of many instances, intended by both the Japanese government⁵² and the Occupation that essentially served as a shadow government, to superimpose democratic meaning on pre-existing imperial/nationalist symbols. (1991: 19) For a literal spatialization tactic, General MacArthur,⁵³ who held command of the Occupation, situated his headquarters within the Dai Ichi Life Insurance building. The Dai Ichi building served two important symbolic purposes: it was a tall, clearly visible building that was a recognizable landmark of Tokyo. It was also directly across from the Imperial Palace. MacArthur deliberately cultivated the American presence (which was understood by Japanese to be essentially democratic in nature, despite its authoritarian control of the country until 1952) visibly into Japanese public life, and symbolized both the assertion of democracy over monarchy and the cultural pathos of the Imperial dynasty shifting into a “democratic” institution.

⁵² The wartime government was kept mostly intact by MacArthur and his cultural advisers (including Edwin Reischauer). Many politicians who were active during the war cooperated with the Occupation. MacArthur especially demanded that the emperor be spared a trial and kept on as a symbolic leader, fearing that executing the emperor would tear the country apart. The story presented to the public in both Japan and America was that the government was essentially good and democratic, but had been hijacked by “war lords” who subversively added feudalistic messages to their peaceful culture. The Shōwa Emperor was not included among the “war lords” and presented as a powerless figurehead. While the chief members of the War Cabinet were imprisoned (some were executed as war criminals), many were released after the founding of the People’s Republic of China in 1949 in order to keep Japan’s democracy from generating a leftist government. One such prisoner-turned-allied-politician was Kishi Nobusuke, a wartime economic manager who oversaw Imperial Japan’s puppet state in Manchuria, assisting in the imprisonment and de-facto enslavement of thousands of Chinese. He became a favorite of the Truman doctrine and U.S. foreign policy positioned him to become a postwar prime minister to build the U.S.-Japan alliance. He ended serving as prime minister twice. His grandson is current Prime Minister Abe Shinzō.

⁵³ MacArthur was called at the time, and is still occasionally remembered as, the “*gaijin shōgun*.” It’s technically the correct term: he was a warlord who held ultimate authority over the country by military rule, while using the emperor to legitimize his authority.

Post-occupation, archaeology continued as a function to link Wajin people to a new conception of their history, and in turn the nation they at once were becoming and always had been (keeping in line with the *kokutai* principle, even if the word itself fell out of usage). While imbuing old symbolic materials with new characteristics, left-wing scholars (which the immediate postwar produced in ample supply) were also focused on avoiding characteristics associated with the war era. Mark Hudson (2006) elaborates that one of the leading frameworks in which postwar archaeologies operated was Marxism, both for its critique of emperor mythologies and aristocracy and its avoidance of topics that were prominent in the war, most notably race and ethnicity. Along with Tashiro's call for a "a history for the people," Minister of Education Morito Tatsuo wrote of the need to rebuild Japan as a cultural nation (in contrast to an ethnic one) and sought to democratize education by attacking barriers to education for common people as "feudal notions." (Morito, 1946 in, Edwards, 1991: 20)

With the sharing of culture as a primary signifier of Japaneseness and the status of Japan as a cultural nation, a key discourse begins to emerge: that Japan is a homogenous, monoracial society. (Oguma, 2002) This had much to do with pacifism as it did with forgetfulness. Since Japan had been ordered to surrender all territories taken by "violence and greed" in the Cairo Declaration of 1943 – Hokkaido and the Ryūkyū islands were conspicuously not included – all remaining territory (and people within them) were seen as wholly Wajin, with differences so minimal as to be negligible (Siddle, 1996: 232). When the Japanese government officially declared its lack of minorities to the UN in 1978, they addressed the Ainu is not being of being applicable because "the difference in their way of life is indiscernible." (Stevens, 2014: 203) In fact, the absence of ethnicity as

a concept from archaeology is something Hudson (2006) cites as a key flaw that paved the way for more broadly nationalist fields of *nihonjinron*.

While the push toward democratization and the conscious abandonment of wartime ideologies yielded many benefits for Japanese freedom of expression and economic production, Hudson highlights that “continued avoidance of the subject of ethnicity [...] resulted in the unconscious reinforcement of reductionist views of ethnic identity in Japan.” (2006: 411) In turn, peripheral lands containing minority groups – Hokkaido and Okinawa – were left with no place in the national narrative to rebuild: “Ainu archaeology [...] it avoids many of the dangers and pitfalls of ethno-nationalist archaeologies but at the same time it marginalizes the contributions of the Ainu people to Japanese prehistory.” (Ibid, 423) By the time Marxism fell out of favor in the 1970s, a discourse of Japanese archaeology and anthropology tended to focus on local curiosities, such as fisherman and country folk. Ainu archaeology hardly developed as a field, with most questions about Ainu history either a remnant of the Jomon and a clue into ancient Wajin, or treated as peripheral to primary Japanese national history (which, again, is conceived of as long-lasting Wajin history naturally building toward the current iteration of the nation/nationality). At the same time, the Marxist-influenced nationality building, in continuing to position rice farmers as preserving the long-lasting Wajin Self, inadvertently continued to position ‘forager Ainu’ as an internal Other. The avoidance of ethnicity, despite being well intentioned, made no attempt to challenge racism and the concepts it rests upon and reinforced the homogenous national Self.

For the Ainu, the practice further entrenched them as Others. In a sense, it was too late – Ainu were already completely linked to the Japanese nation state, but now being

deprived a place in it all. The external definition did not die out, but Ainu then became a curiosity, or a feature of the land (much in the same way they were in Meiji conception of Hokkaido). By avoiding ethnicity, there is no way to reconcile with the past. This is usually considered the most unfortunate characteristic of postwar historical discourse: wrongs from the war are ignored while Japan focuses on its own victimhood.

If there is a key word to characterize the process of Wajin cultural reinvention of the postwar era, specifically of the way the war is treated, it is ‘avoidance.’ The massacres and brutalities toward Korea and Manchuria were not spoken of and the collective memory in popular culture characterized Japan as “always the victim of the war, never its aggressor.” (Shapiro, 1989) It is admittedly difficult to hold a country’s feet to the fire when they are both rebuilding their own history and the cities they live in. Often postwar Japan is compared to postwar Germany unfavorably, with Germany being praised for repenting Nazi crimes and Japan criticized for its avoidance of the past. Fujitani (2016) argues against comparing Japan and Germany, citing not only the vastly complex networks of differences between the country and their wartime ideologies, but also because it runs the risk of valorizing Germany. Praising Germany’s repentance as a way to chastise Japan, he argues, goes against the very messages of Germans who made those apologies.⁵⁴ While the criticism of the Japanese government’s silence on war crimes is deserved, the contrast with Germany too often reads like the chastising of a child by comparing him with his older brother (or perhaps cousins – Austria might be the brother, or conjoined twin). Silence and lack of remembrance, themes that Hudson (2006)

⁵⁴ West German President Richard von Weizsäcker cautioned his people from celebrating how far they came since the war and declaring that they have sufficiently atoned for the past. Instead, he said that people – individuals and groups – look back at their country’s actions as lessons for how to approach injustice in the present. Von Weizsäcker famously stated that there is no such thing as collective guilt, only the past that people of a country inherit and the responsibility to look at it with a straight eye.

identified and traced through the postwar, are not problems because they prevent Japan's absolution, but because avoidance fails to address the endemic problems that the devastation of the war created, including the principle of homogeneity.

Fujitani (2016), in his examination of neo-nationalist manga, points to role of pop culture in shaping public opinion and the dangerous void created by avoidance. His definition of pop culture, however, is restricted to popular magazines and manga, while another important field and an equally public one is archaeology. Archaeology, as both a relative of history and anthropology, is a public ordering method for Japan's cultural field of meaning, where its symbolic materials are analyzed and exchanged. This is especially true of archaeology's integration into the tourist industry.

The media frenzy around the Sannai Maruyama site, a years-long excavation that first captured attention in 1992, is an interesting counterpoint to the discovery of Toro. It shows both how far Japan has come from the devastation and hopelessness of 1945 and the reinforcement of ideas that have yet to fall out of the popular imagination. Both were seen as incredible new clues into the past of the Japanese people, but where Toro was a site of rice farmers, Sannai Maruyama is a glimpse into the life of prehistoric hunter-gatherers. Nonetheless, Sannai Maruyama did not reject previously held notions; the same symbolic characteristics remained, now further entrenched by decades of homogeneity as a long-lasting feature of Japaneseness.

Sannai Maruyama, uncovered in the Aomori prefecture of northern Honshu, was a settlement of hunter-gatherers dating back to between 3,500-2,000 B.C.E., its end lining up roughly with that of Toro's beginning. Like Toro, it began as a mostly independent, underfunded excavation where archaeologists encouraged public visits to give free

lectures on the importance of the site. Consequentially, popular support in Aomori prompted a letter writing campaign for government funding, which led to media attention, which led to that funding. The material findings were numerous, but most notable were the wooden settlements dating to the *Jōmon* period. Instead of dismissing the finds as irrelevant to the ethnic Wajin, curiosity exploded around this new clue into how the modern Wajin came to be. (Habu and Fawcett, 1999) By this point, the discourse of a “cultural nation” had taken root, with Japanese (Wajin) culture understood as *the* link between people of Japan, in a place where the emperor had once stood. In spite of all the drastic changes from the Meiji period on, a symbolic characteristic of Japaneseness was more than adaptability – it was absorption. Disparate or important elements of Others that had entered into Japanese culture were discussed by *nihonjinron* authors as components that were made distinctly Japanese through the skillful “hybridization” of Japanese attitudes and psychology. (Befu, 2001; Hudson, 2006; Morris-Suzuki, 1998) Anything that could “hybridize” or even ‘contaminate’ Japanese culture instead was cultivated as having a Japanese essence, the same way outsiders (or internal Others) could mimic or internalize elements of Japanese culture, but could never have Japanese culture. The process of hybridization would always result in a pure Japanese end product.

The discourse of hybridization into purity was used amply over Sannai Maruyama. Habu and Fawcett (1999) identify Sannai Maruyama as the first popular instance of searching for Japanese cultural/national identity in the *Jōmon* period, where previous finds (like Toro) had drawn the earliest sign of Japanese identity from the following *Yayoi* period. The discourse of hybridity-into-purity, which was developed as a way to preserve homogeneity in the face of change and against the prewar understandings

of ethnicity, directly enabled the *Jōmon* to enter into the sphere of Japanese origins *as an aspect of the ancient Wajin past*. I hope this idea sounds familiar.

To reiterate what I said in chapter 1, different ethnicities are not so much a problem as much as active threats to the nature of homogeneity itself. People of the past, who cannot talk back, who can be absorbed without resistance into a new discourse that accommodates them as an aspect of homogenous Japan, are ideal objects for nationality-building. It is when people are alive and restive that, no matter how well they speak the language or assimilate, they are ‘worthy’ of discrimination and exclusion. The *Jōmon* may be perfect proto-Wajin, where the Ainu are not. Expectedly, none of this re-evaluation of the origins of the Wajin meant much to the Ainu. (Dubreuil & Fitzhugh, et al., 1999)

In the postwar era, Ainu land is considered naturally Japanese, and therefore not taken by the central government. The Ainu have no utility in this postwar ideal: they’re not the ancient workers of Japan’s peaceful past (like the rice farmers), their victimhood does not become a source of national bonding. While acknowledged as a discriminated and subjugated people, postwar political reform could not acknowledge Ainu as a *colonized* people like Koreans. Hokkaido was remade not into acquired territory, but *koyu no ryodo* (inherent territory), in order to avoid it being lost in the demands of the Cairo Declaration.

Still, the Ainu were not ignored. They didn’t enter into a grand, national narrative, but that is not what I am arguing constitutes my external definition. They become an object of study, in a way that is not terribly different from this process in the prewar era.

They are still labeled a dying race. But in the postwar era, they feel the weight of homogeneity. So they begin to grow more restive.

The New Ainu: Being Looked at as Animals

Critic Kamada Tetsuya characterizes the lives of Ainu like Chiri Mashiho as a struggle (*tōsō*) “between those who reject the desire to act as if one is well-grounded when one is not, and those who would force a fabricated grounded-ness onto an Other.” (Kamada, 1999 in Winchester, 2011: 11) Extrapolating from there, one might conclude that the Wajin, as the majority associated with the nationality, are the ones who “would force a fabricated grounded-ness” and the Ainu *minzoku* is the former category that rejects. In the specific case of Chiri (which I will return to later) that dichotomy is actually spread across ethnic lines. In fact, one might say that any strict divide between the role of Ainu and the role of Wajin is harder to make by the postwar era aside from historic roles of colonized and colonizer respectively. This haziness is not predicated on the ‘success’ of assimilation, or what the Japanese government would have you believe. Rather, it is because of what any form of resistance that a group of varied people have: variation in methods and goals.

Problems of forced grounded-ness are present in many postwar discourses on Ainu, beginning with the vanishing ethnicity narrative. Despite the reluctance of Japanese social sciences to address ethnicity (Hudson, 2006), the history of Ainu oppression was openly discussed in Japan even before the war, though it lacked popular support and criticism of it failed to address the underlying phenomenon that allowed its persistence. Where the treatment of Korea and other surrendered colonies was all but a whisper (and

to some extent still is in the 21st century), the acknowledgment of Ainu hardship did exist. Ainu were often discussed in social science, philosophy, and history texts consistently from the prewar era onward. Even prior to the repeal of the 2008 recognition of the Ainu as the indigenous people of Japan, the oppression of Ainu was recognized as part of Japanese history and Hokkaido's 'development.' It is referenced in the writings of nationalists like Umehara and even alluded to in popular manga such as *Hagane no renkinjutsushi* (Fullmetal Alchemist) and *Shaman King*.⁵⁵ Mason (2012) correctly asserts that one of the shortcomings of the postwar discourse and why it never blossomed into a serious reflection was the avoidance of acknowledging modern Hokkaido as the consequence of oppression. Heroic images of *tondenhei* (settler soldiers) and writings on vanishing Ainu ethnicity are positioned next to each other in Hokkaido, but presented almost as murals where all images are features but share no immediate connection. I mean this literally: stepping off the train at Hakodate, you are greeted by an elaborate stone mural featuring carved Western ships, settler soldiers, ranchers, kanji, and two smiling Ainu, recognizable by their headbands and beards. (Fig. 1)

Though it was understood and acknowledged that development and oppression shared a link, the exact causal relationship was left unsaid for the most part. The Ainu are simply glossed as a vanishing ethnicity, almost as inevitable force of history. The response becomes salvage anthropology. The field of "Ainu studies" was more or less one long attempt at forcing fabricated grounded-ness, albeit unintended. It ran from broad cultural studies, to forms of anthropology, to philosophy, and conceived of Ainu culture as a fading resource of information that had to be salvaged for future research. (Watson,

⁵⁵ The latter series features an Ainu member of the main cast trying to save the forest that surrounds his village and the former features a race of people driven to near-extinction by a fascist government, which the creator has confirmed is inspired by the history of the Ainu.

et al. 2014) In this case, the past is preserved but the people living in the present are neglected. At worst, they become objects that symbolize the past. Salvage anthropology and voyeuristic tourism in this sense share a bonding idea that treats Ainu as a fascinating inquiry or glimpse into primitiveness rather than a contemporary people living under harsh conditions due to a legacy of colonialism.

The sense of having ‘grounded-ness’ forced upon one is most often realized as what I would call ‘the prying stare.’ There may be a more scientific term, but I feel that leaving it straightforward better captures both its emotional resonance and its constant presence in the life of many Ainu than attempting to modify it into a strictly post-colonial lens. The prying stare is the daily reality of many Ainu I describe in this paper, feeling gawked at and intrusively inspected by Wajin and Westerners. In this term, it shifts attention away from the method of the looker and speaks to the experience of the one being stared at. From this perspective, it does not matter whether the person staring is a tourist or an Ainu culture scholar. It only matters that they are the latest in a long line of people coming to Hokkaido to stare at Ainu in a way that makes them feel like objects of spectacle or even like animals. Chiri Yukie felt the prying stare of a photographer who wanted her picture for a magazine. (Hirano, 2009: 9) Chiri Mashiho may have felt it from his own teacher, Kindaichi Kyōsuke. (Winchester, 2011) Kayano Shigeru felt it both from “*shamo* scholars,” who came to exhume graves and take away utensils, and in inquisitive and patronizing school children from Honshu when he was paid to perform traditional dances for, while a Wajin manager presented him as a living native. (1994: 98-99, 104-106) It was felt and attacked by Hagiwara Mojiki, who published an article in

1931, who attacked the Hokkaido tourist industry⁵⁶ for allowing non-Ainu to “observe us with exactly the same attitude as they would have if they were looking at animals in a zoo.” (Hagiwara, 1994, in Morris-Suzuki, 2014: 55) In an article the same year, the prying gaze was felt and attacked by Konobu Kotarō, this time against scholars of Ainu culture: “We have nothing against research in itself, but I want to express profound regret that at the way in which scholars have in the back of their minds an image of us as research material, as though we were animals.” (Konobu, 1994, in Ibid: 56)

Needless to say, this was about as undesirable a form of grounded-ness as one could experience. Moreover, it shows the difficult and painful link between tourism and cultural studies, since despite differences, both have a similar consequence for the person who is made into the “object” of study. On one level, it is a reaffirmation of Ainu as natural features of the land. On another, it denies subjectivity to human beings, with no room for interpreting the meaning of their predicament in terms that will be read by a broader society. This kind of forced grounded-ness went so far as to make Ainu people objects themselves, or spectacles to be stared at. The dehumanizing effect was often met with increased pushes for assimilation by Ainu community leaders like Yoshida Kikutarō and Kannari Taro, who encouraged Ainu to adapt what Morris-Suzuki calls “the material culture of the majority” to escape the prying gaze. (Ibid)

While this is a solution in the short term, most people recognize that it can create problems of its own for those assimilating. In Frantz Fanon’s (1952) *Black Skin, White Masks*, he outlines how the act of mimicry (of the majority or colonizer) creates a double-consciousness in the mind of the colonized. While the colonized may be able to navigate

⁵⁶ At this point in time, the tourist industry that promoted Ainu as living native spectacles was not limited to recreated villages with hired actors. It also extended to the actual homes of Ainu citizens, who usually had such limited options for work that they were left with no choice but to accept the money.

the structure of the colonizer's world by embodying the dispositions of the colonizer, the colonized subject will dig the hole deeper and entrench colonial rule on them as an individual. The double-consciousness comes from embodying non-native dispositions associated with oppression while simultaneously seeing them as an escape from oppression, and this inevitably leads to an inferiority complex where the colonized internalizes the racism inherent in the colonialist discourses they take on to survive. Though Fanon focused on black colonized people, his theories have been reapplied to virtually all corners of the post-colonial world. This kind of psychology I have already discussed via Yoshida and Chiri Yukie, to say nothing of the thousands of Ainu scholars I cannot even account for because they remain invisible. This sense of inferiority would explode in the postwar.

While acculturation and assimilation are the most discussed themes of the prewar Modern period, their related socio-economic problems are sometimes left either unsaid or presumed. Though the anthropologist and revivalist alike have culture as their primary interest, it is reductive to treat poverty and education discrimination as the straightforward results of acculturation, when they help shape each other by continuously limiting modes of expression and options in a capitalist society. It is odd to say that Chiri Yukie, someone who died at nineteen, was one of the lucky ones, but her education and biculturalism gave her a prominent, visible place in life to support her family and her community at the politically active Chikabumi. Native education under the FAPA was underfunded and considered to be of poor quality, made worse by discriminatory classrooms run by Wajin teachers. (Kayano, 1980: Siddle, 1996) Alcoholism became a widespread problem by the 1890s and poor healthcare planning mixed with high stress of

discrimination may have been involved with deaths among prominent young Ainu, including Chiri Yukie and Kannari Taro. Siddle points out that the depressed image of Ainu socio-economics and the sense of apathy that hung over most villages “only served to reinforce official and popular perceptions of a ‘dying race.’” (1999: 108)

Resistance in the prewar era was chiefly characterized as ‘welfare politics’ aiming for the renegotiation of the FAPA, while attempting to reform Ainu society from problems like alcoholism and poor education by encouraging assimilation. It drew support as a way of escaping the prying gaze, an early version of rejecting fabricated grounded-ness. But in the democratized world of the postwar, left wing politics began to thrive all over Japan, from opposition to the Vietnam War and pushes for equal rights for everyone from laborers to minority groups. In this political climate, the Ainu struggle switches from social reform to indigenous rights. Though a variety of causes emerged, the goal of institutions like the Ainu Association of Hokkaido sought principally to repeal the FAPA with a new law will be written with Ainu input. (Stevens, 2014) In fact, the AAH was established as a representational body in 1946, less than a year after the end of the war. Rather than going through all of these causes, I will focus on the central theme of management of symbolic materials. The goal across the causes focused on returning control of cultural representation to Ainu themselves, whether this meant Ainu management of tourist sites and museums or, in Kayano’s case, collecting objects specifically to keep them out of the hands of collectors and Wajin. (1994: 105-110) The discourse that follows against the postwar external definition as a feature of Hokkaido or of homogenous Japan comes as a stark, screamed, “no!” The chief characteristic becomes Ainu pride, conceived as directly in opposition to the government of Hokkaido and the

history of colonial practices, from literature to anthropology. (Siddle, 1996; 1999) By returning control of symbol management to Ainu, a critical first step is made toward challenging the history Wajin definitions for Ainu and Ainuness. This is often realized as cultural revival, opening museums to promote Ainu pride, compiling dictionaries to teach the language to future generations, and salvaging artifacts to keep them in the hands of Ainu who will decide how to present them. I want to make clear that this cultural revival was extremely varied, with radical fringes calling for total secession from Japan altogether, and reformist sections, like those of Yoshida and Kayano, who sought to work along pre-established lines to install greater Ainu representation within them. It should also be stated that many Ainu still took on assimilationist attitudes. Morris-Suzuki defends these ‘invisible Ainu,’ explaining that individuals like Kayano were controversial within Ainu communities and were accused of bringing undue attention to people who, at the end of the day, only sought to escape the prying gaze, which still remained a possibility; even if Ainu had control over representing themselves, it still meant presenting themselves to outside eyes. (2014: 60)

Cultural revival and promotion was certainly a positive direction for Ainu struggle, but like Marxist archaeology, it left an open problem unaddressed. In this passage from Kayano Shigeru’s memoir, he describes the motivation for his own salvage project (collecting artifacts) in terms that fall oddly in line with the vanishing ethnicity narrative:

“Seeing such self-centered conduct by *shamo* scholars [practicing salvage], I asked myself whether matters should be left as they were: Our land, Ainu Mosir, had been invaded, our language stripped, our ancestral remains robbed, the blood

of living Ainu taken, and even our few remaining utensils carried away. At this rate, what would happen to the Ainu people? What would happen to Ainu culture? From that moment on, I vowed to take them back. Once I promised myself this, I believe my personality changed.” (1994: 99)

Kayano is correct to point out that the act of salvage collection not only perpetuates the vanishing ethnicity narrative, but enables it by eroding the lives of living Ainu. But his tone and rhetorical worries leave a kind of “negative evidence” as Hudson (2006) described for ethnicity in Marxist archaeology, for what it means to be Ainu in the postwar era. He speaks along the lines of materials and mourns their loss, but does not ask what Ainu can mean in the future, only what it meant in the past. His attempts at carving his own Ainu objects, both as a way of generating extra money and disrupting the flow of Wajin-made knock-offs he saw circulating in Hokkaido were important, but also express his tendency to view Ainu culture, and Ainuness, as a kind of a thing to be ‘possessed’ along the lines of Wajin culture.

Revival was ideologically antithetical to salvage anthropology, believing that Ainu culture had a place in modern society and that it should be promoted. In the modern day, cultural revival has taken on a more interactive style, merging tradition with ingenuity, and I would argue that rediscovery must necessarily come before creative engagement. But revival, hypothetically, leaves objects potentially static. The management of objects did fall into Ainu hands (or at least shared with Wajin) but left incomplete was the deconstruction of the vanishing ethnicity narrative altogether. As a result, it primarily introduces a status of being Ainu that most Ainu cannot realistically achieve, leaving them feeling insufficiently cultured or even inauthentic. (Uzawa, 2014)

In its early stages, cultural promotion was seen as a way to counteract the ethnicity from vanishing, but it initially failed to state that the vanishing ethnicity narrative had never been true in the first place. Specifically, that meant create not a “new identity” or even a “revived identity” but numerous modes of expressing identity, to transform the symbolic materials of Ainuness from static and being rearranged in time, to dynamic ones that reshape temporal understandings of identity and nationality in the same way Wajin ones do.

Returning to the original example of rejecting grounded-ness, Chiri Mashiho wrote in 1937 that the Ainu as a *minzoku*⁵⁷ had already died out and suggested that people like him should be called “*Ainu-kei nihonjin*” (Ainu-Japanese).⁵⁸ In his manga rebuttal to the 2008 recognition of Ainu as the indigenous people of Japan, Kobayashi Yoshinori cites Chiri and his writing as proof that the modern Ainu do not constitute a distinct *minzoku* and that assimilation into greater Japanese society should be their goal. Winchester criticizes Kobayashi for ignoring the changing contexts that Chiri wrote in throughout his life, from wartime academic who would be ostracized for not embracing patriotic rhetoric to the revivalist of the postwar who championed the rebirth of the Ainu language. (2011: 11) Kobayashi, in his usual strategy of decontextualizing complicated arguments to use their speakers as authoritative talking heads in order to support his flimsy rants, cites Chiri’s claim to be Ainu-Japanese as an example of why assimilation

⁵⁷ He may have meant this either as a culturally distinct group or an autonomous national group.

⁵⁸ It can also mean “Ainu-born Japanese” though this translation is considered offensive in modern terms, and it is easy to see why: rather than modifying Japanese, it denigrates Ainu as something to be saddled with, subsumed under being Japanese. Still, some have reinterpreted Chiri’s intended meaning as closer to Ainu-Japanese, given the implicit nature of Japanese language as well as the fact that he wrote it during the war, where he could not claim any identity higher or equal to being Japanese or risk accusation of being unpatriotic and subversive.

should be the goal since Chiri was the “genius Ainu linguist.”⁵⁹ (Kobayashi, 2008 in, Winchester, 2011: 10) However, closer inspection of Chiri’s life, its changing circumstances, and his complicated feelings toward assimilation, reveals a man who could be characterized as a resentful pragmatist. I agree with Winchester that Chiri’s term “Ainu-Japanese” was not a sign of aspirational assimilation but an attempt to confront and manage the colonial history of Hokkaido that continuously defined and redefined his place in Hokkaido’s social context. (2011: 10-12) It was a grab for agency which nationalists like Kobayashi take as an authentication to take that agency away again. In short, Chiri’s sentiment is not one that affirms the external definition by stating something, but one that denies inaccessibility of Japanese national identity and the notion that it entails Wajinness by inserting his own contradictory Self (Ainu-Japanese) into it.

In order to avoid the same trap that Kobayashi lands into – attempting to assert the true meaning of Ainuness away from actual Ainu – I will avoid citing Chiri as proof of any argument that I may suggest for moving forward. I will instead try, to the best of my ability, to follow his logic to extrapolate what he may be saying about what it means to be Japanese. In the popular imagination and national discourse, there is no such thing as a *X*-hyphenated-Japanese in Japan. The phrase goes, “*ware ware nihonjin*.” There are the Korean *zainichi* (residents), but they are not “Korean-Japanese.” For non-ethnic minorities, there are the Special-Status People (*burakumin*), but they are merely discriminated Japanese or *Buraku*, not “*Buraku*-Japanese.” Perhaps the meaningful way forward is not to think about how the Ainu must change or the Wajin must change, but how Japaneseness itself must be affected and redefined by the presence of Ainu,

⁵⁹ Translation: “an Ainu academic said this so that makes me right!”

Ryūkyūans, Koreans, Chinese, *Baruku*, against the homogenous imagining cultural purity, where these are mere aspects under the all-consuming *nihonjinron* ideology.

Part 3: *The Changing Face of Modern People in Japan*

Chapter 6

Modern Paradoxes: Consuming and Creating Identities

In the midst of northern Japan's snowy winters, flying is haphazard, so the best way to get from Tokyo to Hokkaido is on the *shinkansen* (bullet-train). Its shape, sheen, and silence suggest something more than modern: futuristic (even though it has been around since 1964 – the future is never set in stone). On the inside, it is scrubbed clean and dashes from Honshu to Hokkaido smoothly, almost like being teleported. It's an appropriate method of transport to Hokkaido, where Japan can be seen in its modern period from the ground up. There are none of the centuries-old shrines or imperial palaces that cover Tokyo. For someone who knows Japan well, Hokkaido feels as though it has sprung up from another country. The island is presented as both a wilderness and a space completely ingrained with what Japanese call modernity.

The simple story is that Japan became a modern nation in 1868, but of course, modernity is a process of redefinition and adjustment and negotiation with the Self. If the Self of Hokkaido is modern from the ground up, then what are we to make of a symbol like this: walking through a train station in Sapporo, in between the tourist center and a chocolate shop, is a caste statue of a traditional Ainu hunter, a marked bandana around his long hair, and a bow and arrow at his side. He is elevated on a mount, above everyone else, but he is integrated into the train station which people use to commute to work every day. (Fig. 2)

The day before seeing the statue, my father and I were in Noboribetsu, taking photographs of a natural landmark for an artist friend back in New York. Around us, Chinese tourists were bused around, equipped with guidebooks and selfie-sticks, catching more photos before the sun went down and they returned to their hotel at the hot spring. After nightfall, we walked along the main street to get some air until I saw something in the window of a gift shop that I needed to take a picture of: positioned between cartoon bears and waving kitten mascots inside were two plump figurines with round bodies made from what seemed to be lumps of clay, one woman and one man. (Fig. 3) The man had an owl perched on his shoulder, and a beard larger than his head, which was graced at the top by the eye-catching signifier of a traditional Ainu bandana. Inside, there were more cartoon animals flanked by an entire shelf of what seemed to be collectible Ainu totem poles, all with the traditional banded clothing. (Figs. 4 and 5) Along the ceiling were cloth bands with caricatured Ainu people, with large heads and small bodies, carefully painted with muted features – simple lines for noses and dots for eyes, with all the traditional clothing serving as markers – all hanging above more cute owls. On our way out, I caught a glimpse of two wrapped, transparent packages labeled, in English: “Bandana” under the brand “Tradition of the Ainu People.” (Fig. 6) Outside the gift shop, I could see that top half was a white, plaster-looking design, with wooden supports that ran up like pinstripes, enveloping its tiny windows, almost in the style of an old home in Holland. It was like three layers of Self/Other collapsing into one tourist trap.

Hokkaido is indeed a space where modernity⁶⁰ is ingrained into the land, and – as Hirano (2009) pointed out – the heterogeneous landscape is translated into the firm, recognizable self-conception of the island, as it is presented to tourists. Only this time, it is the wide variety of colonial Hokkaido – the animals, the Ainu, the settlers, the Westernizers – all being built into the outer structure Hokkaido's Self, the same way an Ainu hunter can be integrated naturally into a 21st century train station.

In this final section, I will focus my attention on Hokkaido in the present day, how it presents its outward Self, and the materials that compose that Self. More importantly, I will look at how the legacy of colonialism has integrated (though not entirely assimilated) Ainuness into that Self to find evidence of Ainu responses to colonialism, assimilation, and their status as an Internal Other/aspect of greater Japaneseness.

This chapter will focus on the symbolic materials traversing Hokkaido's tourist industry and the place that Ainu and Ainuness occupy in that network. The tourist industry showcases important avenues that introduce Ainu individuals to methods against colonialism and toward a self-definition that may challenge the symbolic characteristics of not only Hokkaido, but also all of Japan. Hokkaido can be seen as a space where Ainu and Wajin are trying to sort out their place in modernity – historically at each other's throats.

⁶⁰ In this case, the modernity I refer to is the project of the Meiji political and cultural reforms that are continuously being reinvented and reinterpreted in Japan by both the government and all the varieties of people, from national modernity to Indigenous modernity.

The New Landscape of Hokkaido

Hokkaido's reconstruction of its history is a layering of paradoxes. There are the paradoxes of being modern while celebrating the natural world; the paradoxes of being proudly Japanese and honoring the Japanese settlers of the Meiji period, while extolling the proud heritage of the Ainu; the paradoxes of Japan's self-definition in the modern world, while adorning the landscapes and universities with statues of Westerners.

In a tourist guidebook prepared by the Hokkaido Regional Development Bureau (2016), the contradictions of Hokkaido become apparent, as the governing bodies attempt to sort out the strands of Hokkaido's identity to discover what image is best to present to visitors, both from inside and outside Japan. In a lot of ways, Hokkaido is still a periphery to an idealized *Japan*, its image appearing on milk cartons and dairy products in Honshu, almost as though it still exists in some people's imagination (certainly the advertising industry's) as an adjacent colony designed for imports. The guidebook, called, "A Journey into the History and Culture of Hokkaido," flows chronologically, and consequentially must face its complicated history. On a page labeled, "Friendship-oriented development of Hokkaido" it tells of the cooperation between Americans and Japanese to develop Hokkaido's land, "in contrast to the relationships linking major powers and their colonies in other parts of Asia in those days." (Ibid: 9) It is a remarkably tone deaf statement considering the Ainu were the ones having their lands being "developed," though it is, admittedly, subversive in acknowledging the unique relationship Japan was able to enjoy with the West by avoiding its own colonization. On another page, there is a history of the Ainu that briefly discusses assimilation (and does mention that it was forced), attempting to acknowledge the suffering of the Ainu but

without a sharp critique of Japan's actions. While one should not expect deep introspective analysis from a book for tourists, constructed to present the best possible image of Hokkaido, the text is an insight into the most basic management of Selves and Others in the island's cultural context and promotion of modernity, while enticing visitors to sample the accessible (symbolic) materials of this culture, including not only souvenirs but museums and landmarks. (Fig. 7)

The external definition of Ainu (where Ainu are positioned as a feature of Japaneseness, redefined to reflect aspects of its long-lasting symbolic characteristics) takes on a slightly different meaning in contemporary Hokkaido. In the colonial period, they were made into a feature of the land, their culture a clue into understanding the past of the Wajin. In the immediate postwar, they were a dying race being absorbed into a democratic conception of Japaneseness, often imagined as the environmental of Japan (Howell, 1996: 174) or as a curious sight to gawk at (Morris-Suzuki, 2014: 50-57). The popular place of Ainu in contemporary Hokkaido is both a reinforcement and curious wrinkle in this pattern. Ainu are woven into the capitalist landscape of Hokkaido in a fetishized, consumerist strain, but are also given a platform and (limited) room for self-definition. Unlike the tourist villages of Kayano's day, Ainu and scholars of Ainu culture collaboratively run these villages and museums as a measure against the exploitative practices of the past. In spite of this, Ainu remain a feature of an industry (and, in fact, an industry of presenting and designing the Self of Hokkaido). The environmentalism that Howell speaks of is plainly on display in the tourism discourse, where the Ainu are described as "nature-embracing." (Hokkaido Regional Development Bureau, 2016: 5) This notion is also a holdover from the colonialist discourse that defined living in tandem

with nature as primitive, only now with a positive spin. Moreover, the concept of creating specific sites for displaying Ainuness inevitably reinforces problems of contemporary heritage tourism, including Flowers' "ethnicized spaces" (2014) and Comaroff & Comaroff's "branding" of ethnicity (2009).

Still, too hastily condemning museums and tourist villages is problematic in its own right, both for its wholesale dismissal of what is undeniably an aspect of modern Ainu identity as well as the fact that it closes off examination of positive avenues that exist within the tourist villages. For that, I move to a close examination of my own visit to the Ainu Museum at Poroto Kotan (a recreated village in Shiraoi, Hokkaido), interloped with Melissa Kennedy's own case study of the same place, in the hope of briefly moving out of the structures of power in Hokkaido (which will be revisited shortly afterward) and try to analyze the symbolic materials of Poroto Kotan in a space they occupy on their own.

A Space for Others: Poroto Kotan

I hesitated about looking into tourist venues for anthropological study. It seemed an odd, uncomfortable merger of the two historic problems of the prying gaze, even if certain areas of it have reformed to be more educational and self-defined by Ainu. In the end, I decided it was critical to this paper to study the method of tourism itself. However messy its history and difficult its implications, tourism is, at the end of the day, present and visible and should be looked at with an eye that sees not only what presents but how tourism itself is integrated into the Ainu/Wajin sorting of modernity in Hokkaido.

One of the comforting things about Poroto Kotan is that no one could mistake it for a place where people actually live. In the parking lot, music plays over the loudspeakers strung up on the end of the village, seemingly for atmospheric purposes. The music is traditional Ainu *mukkuri* or “jew’s harp,” a thin wooden strip, carved neatly and with an elastic band wrapped into a hole at its edge. (Fig. 8) By holding it in your mouth in a specific way and plucking the band, it can generate a twanging melody that sounds somewhere between a sitar and a harmonica. I know this because I bought a *mukkuri* at the gift shop later.⁶¹ Alongside it were CDs by Oki, an Ainu musician living in Tokyo who performs traditional music on a *tonkori* (similar to a sitar) that he merges with dub and trance music. For a moment, I wished that they had been playing this in the parking lot, something that I could imagine many people listening to in their cars, over the carefully constructed atmosphere of traditionalism invoked by the *mukkuri* player. I thought of the fears of people like Yoshida, who worried that villages and museums that featured people in traditional clothing perpetuated the stereotype of the time that Ainu still lived in thatched huts and hunted wild animals. Then I remembered that I was in no position to make demands of what kind of Ainu I wanted to see.

What I did see were two performance huts. Going into one, there was a small, non-elevated stage, surrounded by wooden bleachers. Nestled among a medium-sized crowd, mostly Wajin, we sat quietly as the members of the village staff recited traditional poetry, performed dances with each other, and played songs on the *tonkori* and *mukkuri*.

⁶¹ The gift shop did not surprise. This was a museum after all, and the amount of gift shops in Japan may surprise Westerners with pathological fears of tourist traps. Shinto shrines, at least on the outside, more or less have gift shops, where people can buy plaques to write their wishes for the future on, something many Japanese regularly do. Still, the Ainu gift shop was a more varied assortment, selling mock-ups of traditional instruments and headbands along with more creative items like the CDs, manga with Ainu characters, and a pack of playing cards written in Ainu.

At the museum, I received another pamphlet, this one called “Ainu History and Culture.” (Fig. 9) On its front and back is a joined image that shows various elements of Ainu life, almost like a more fully realized version of the stone mural at Hakodate. There are divisions between *kamuy moshir* and *ainu moshir*, alongside various images of traditional Ainu hunting and weaving. The objects along the wall are grouped according to function. One wall holds clothing; another hunting and gathering tools, along with other objects that are significant to other ways of Ainu life in the past, such as cradles along a wall for childhood, and items for sending-back rituals for death. Plaques describing their way of life are written in English, Japanese, Chinese, and Korean. They are the largest texts on the wall, since each object is only given a plaque with minimal descriptions in the four languages. With rare exceptions, an arrow is simply labeled, “arrow.”

It is clear that many of these objects have been created from scratch alongside the artifacts collected from the self-salvage phase of cultural revival. This is unsurprising, as decades of Ainu leaders advocating assimilation probably meant fewer such objects were created. As a way to make money on the side, many newly created objects were sold off to collectors or scholars. For the educational purposes of the museum, the distinctions between artifacts and reproductions mean little. Most science museums contain sculpted plaster versions of dinosaur bones to complete skeletons, either because the whole skeleton was not recovered or simply because the museum cannot let the bones leave the lab. I bring this up because it introduces a frequently asked but quite confusing question of these types of museums: are these objects “authentic?”

While authenticity is a loaded and potentially dangerous criteria for how Indigenous-descended people live their lives according to tradition, the question stems

from legitimate concerns. Kayano (1980) described seeing improperly made wooden sculptures that were sold as Ainu artifacts, and was understandably angered that Wajin were continuing to profit off the marginalization of his people. Decades later, activist Uzawa Kanako writes of authenticity as a “straightjacket” singling out the pernicious effect of when it is defined by others (not only the majority, but non-Ainu with stereotypes and expectations of their own). (2014: 90-91) When intertwined with the politics of commodification and performance of identity for outsiders, authenticity can be disturbingly applied to ethnicity as much as it can to a product for consumption, the most recognizable example being “ethnic food.” (Flowers, 2014)

But if the presenter/creator can only determine the criteria for authenticity, then is that not a heavy burden on people who must constantly ask themselves if they are “authentic” Ainu? Reiterating Fanon’s (1952) theory of a split consciousness, Ainu individuals that are both imprinted with Otherness by society and asked to take on a denigrating blended style of life are, usually, asking themselves if they are authentic in being. Authenticity may just be the latest form of forcing fabricated grounded-ness onto an Other. Moreover, in a post-colonial setting where tourism becomes the mode of building an identity, then a disturbing analogous link exists between an ethnicity itself and a brand. (Comaroff & Comaroff, 2009) However, the questions of authenticity do exist for Ainu as much as the tourist villages are a fact of life, and are something I will briefly explore as an interesting route for future examination in chapter 7.

Whatever process was behind the creation of these objects, I believe that they are still symbolic materials of Ainuness, since that is how they are labeled and recognized. Referring back to the status of Ainu objects as static, however, they did not necessarily

operate the same way as Wajin material culture. Though both served as signifiers of their respective ethnicities, Wajin objects were symbolically laden with the ability of transference to some extent – they could reshape the individual who completely inhabited them into someone resembling a Wajin. As I have shown, in the prewar era this was recognized as a possibility for assimilation, though in the homogenous discourse of the postwar, Others can never access Japaneseness (Wajinness). Ainu objects are signifiers of Ainuness, but can also be collected as exotic materials – their symbolic characteristics (Japan's ancient past of primitive hunter-gatherers, and other Wajin-inscribed meanings) are locked in the past, inaccessible to everyone. Implicitly, no one would want to bring them out of the past either.

But that is how they function in the wider network of the tourist industry, where neat materials are sold as knick-knacks or collector's items. How do they operate in Poroto Kotan? One is left more or less to extrapolate from the plaques about Ainu concepts of *kamuy moshir* as to any kind of symbolism associated with the objects themselves. The materials are not *tabula rasa*, vacant and waiting to inscribe meaning onto, but neither do they hold secrets waiting to be pried out. They are recognizable pieces of Ainu material culture being currently deployed to give a more (though not entirely) complete image to the museum as a whole.

Kennedy (2009) argues that the mix of artifacts with replicas and little information gives Ainu who work at the tourist villages a more hands-on interactive relationship with presenting their culture. She cites the experiences described by Kayano Shigeru and Narita Utariyan attempting to learn to weave traditional carpets and carve wooden ornaments respectively, how instead of repeating the exact methods they had

been taught by parents or grandparents, they were forced to take things apart, examine in their inner-workings, and use trial and error to “re-enact the natural process of inventing, perfecting and mastering craft techniques that are normally internalized over several generations.” (42) Generally, this seems to line up with not only a basic understanding of how culture works, but examples from individuals I’ve listed already. Chiri Yukie did not just copy down the *yukar* that her grandmother gave her – she carefully tried to adapt it for written Japanese and either interpreted or inherited localized elements to reflect her home of Noboribetsu. Kennedy contrasts the bare descriptions of Poroto Kotan with Maori museums in Wellington, New Zealand. She notes that Maori displays give ample explanation for each object, detailing not only its exact function, but on how traditional beliefs and symbolism are tied to that object, according to narratives and folk beliefs passed down along generations. At Poroto Kotan, she notes that Ainu objects could be taken off the wall and used in a ceremony right there. (Ibid: 39-41) Paradoxically, this ‘cultural erosion’ or ignorance of one’s past, allows room for inventiveness and avenues for Ainu individuals to pour themselves into using these objects. In turn, the symbolic power over these objects cannot only be drawn out into the individual, but poured back in with the cultivated identity and feelings of the individual, creating a more immediate relationship with tradition, rather than a stark recreation. Though I feel that Kennedy overlooks the problems of the prying stare and the unpleasant history of tourist villages (Kayano, 1980; Morris-Suzuki, 2014; Siddle, 1996), I agree that this avenue is worth exploring.

It struck me that at the museum I had seen the one place in Hokkaido where Ainu were not discouraged from expressing their distinctiveness, and in fact, were encouraged

to do so. Hiwasaki points out that tourist villages – at least before the recognition – were the “crux of Ainu-Wajin relationships” where cultural exchange (albeit uneven in terms of power distribution) was openly acknowledged and information shared. (Hiwasaki, 2000: 394)

Readdressing concerns on tourism, I still find many problems with the somewhat sensitized and tradition-heavy style of Poroto Kotan. As Morris-Suzuki points out, “even if tourist projects are controlled by Indigenous people themselves, this does not necessarily ensure that the tourists will behave with sensitivity and understanding.” (2014: 60) While I seemed to gather that none of the other visitors (who were all Wajin beside me and my father) seemed to think that this traditional style was the way these people actually lived, I was concerned that they might take away that this was “Ainuness,” a peak into the ancient past that is no longer relevant to the everyday lives modern people, or cultural aspects that people live and take for granted. More troubling was that there was little information on the walls or in the pamphlets that explicitly implicated Wajin settlement as the cause of cultural destruction.

For a useful theory on a comparative example, Flowers (2014) examines the promotion of multiculturalism in Tokyo with government-supported Korea towns. These are neighborhoods populated by third- or fourth-generation Korean *zainichi*. Granted, Flowers is writing about places where people live, making her study of Korea towns more comparable to tourism of the lived-in Ainu villages of the prewar, rather than the recreated museums of today. Still, there are similarities in her observations of a contained multiculturalism, where the government can carefully promote and control specific areas for its internal Others, “as an ethnicized space – a space represented by

commercialization of the ethnic diversity.” (2014: 81) It is Flowers’ critique of spatialization and the management of profitable materials that is most salient to my point and bolsters my concern that tourist villages, for all the positives they offer, are a space for Others. It is good that there is a space where Ainu are encouraged to be distinct in a country that praises homogeneity. It could be better if those who are distinct directly bring that sensibility into a space of homogeneity to disrupt it.

Though material management is improved, the spatialization remains a problem. Hiwasaki (2000) suggests that the separate spaces may allow for a “re-created ethnic identity” but I find this concept flawed and reductive. Being recreated still relies on the premise of having once been dead or destroyed. The power, or potential power, glimpsed at Poroto Kotan where Ainu individuals can forge an interactive relationship with heritage, seems blocked off by the very thing that Hiwasaki presents. Recreated objects can help *understand* or *conceive* of an identity, but implying that Ainuness itself can be “recreated” through this kind of interaction falls along similar notions of Meiji assimilation logic, where culture and identity are contained in objects. As I will show in chapter 7, the meaningful engagement with Ainu symbolic materials is a key toward constructing an identity, something of a response to the methods of acculturation in 19th century, but a recreation is off the table. It is locked in the discourse of a past to be revived.

In another paradox, tourist villages are an antidote and symptom of the legacy of colonialism. They may work in an isolated sense against the vanishing ethnicity narrative, but present a problem in that they take the vanishing ethnicity and lock it off into a separate space, allowing and confining Ainuness a place in the modern world. Most of all

they present a version that helps cultural promotion and offers individuals an avenue into engaging in meaningful relationships with Ainu material culture. Outside of these villages, there can exist ways – like the music of Oki, both modern and indigenous, without being paradoxical – that materials can act in meaningful ways for contemporary people who are Ainu, not just curious outsiders who know little of their existence. The villages made the proclamation, but the expression is to be found elsewhere. Before moving into my final chapter, where I explore those potential avenues, I will briefly discuss the wider network of current mainstream Ainu-driven activism, built through the discourse of cultural heritage and promotion.

The Heritage of Colonialism

The Cultural Promotion Act replaced FAPA in 1997, ninety-eight years after the law was first passed. It was by and large a victory for many Ainu activists of the postwar, not only for its complete removal of FAPA, but also because it was written with input from Ainu organizations. Kayano hailed it as the first step toward undoing the legacy of colonialism and discrimination that haunted generations of Ainu. Seeing the fruits of this bill, one can see the double-edged sword of heritage tourism. In this space for Others, while an important avenue for engaging with a past and a statement of pride in Ainu identity, is too easily crafted into the new landscape of Hokkaido, both economically and conceptually. Positioned in the guide by the Hokkaido Regional Development Bureau, it runs the risk of being seen as another aspect of this land, presumed to be Japanese. The

village may talk back to the visitors and the scholars who once dismissed its people as primitive, but it does not talk back to the nationality that inscribed its place on the land.

Heritage also carries some odd implications about where Ainu culture can be found. Referring back to the objects in Poroto Kotan, do the artifacts count as heritage while replicas do not? Or is it simply a matter of being in the traditional style? The problem there is that it leaves no room for the kind of creativity displayed in the music of Oki or the clothwork described by Iwano (2016), where Ainu women craft fabrics under traditional methods but with original designs, sometimes futuristic designs. Is heritage another instance of having culture as opposed to living it? After all, since it is usually interpreted as inherited or passed down from sense of continuity, it can be easily called “culture named and projected into the past” instead of the relevant values and social methods lived by everyday people (Comaroff & Comaroff, 2009: 10) But of all the flaws, I think the most important question to ask in the world of heritage promotion – more than worries about commodification and even spatialization – is to what degree is heritage, like the Self/Other dichotomy crafted into Hokkaido’s landscape, relational? Abu-Lughod is correct in claiming that cultural relativism is increasingly becoming an odd concept, as is Boas’ particular histories, because all the world’s cultures are linked to varying degrees by the legacy of colonialism. It might be rather tone-deaf on how heritage – both the modifications on tradition and its refashioning as ‘heritage’ instead of ‘culture’ – is tied to colonialism, or even how colonialism invented this ‘heritage’ by making it into a minority, aspect, or ‘vanishing ethnicity’ in need of promotion? As Morris-Suzuki sardonically observes, “Do the ‘other cultural properties passed down by Ainu’ include memories of the long struggle against discrimination?” (2014: 63)

I don't seek to dismiss the incredible gains won by Hokkaido Ainu in cultural promotion. In a relatively short amount of time, and almost entirely due to their own activism, they won major victories for a minority group in a country that still more or less claims not to have them. What I seek in this analysis is to cast a wider net, and try to accommodate for the Ainu who are still living invisibly as modern Ainu, or Ainu-Japanese if they prefer, and to call for a way they can improve their condition without having to take on performative roles they may be uncomfortable with⁶²: that they can still be Ainu by living as they do. A useful distinction is one lewallen makes between "being Ainu" – an inherited role associated with genetic descent – and "becoming Ainu" – choosing to actively engage with the material culture that is there as a kind of healing. (lewallen, 2016) The issues of discrimination on the level of individuals are largely beyond my knowledge and should be examined. But there is something to be said for how Wajin are willing to engage in Ainu as an abstract, but apparently not so much as real people with actual problems. The culture should be protected but the people are told to be familiar and unthreatening to homogeneity. The issues of fixing discrimination on a daily basis should be addressed moving forward. Still, it is important to think broadly while playing the long game of reform, all along the line homogeneity rears its ugly head. When people become threats to homogeneity is when they become either detestable or mere guests with no permanent place. This leads into the interesting spatialized area where Ainuness is renegotiated and actually encouraged. So the final question remains: how can renegotiation move into the public, if people desire it?

⁶² Kayano describes embarrassment of shame performing dances for Wajin in Honshu who were ignorant of Ainu discrimination and acculturation.

Chapter 7

Time is a Material Thing

In this final chapter, I hope to contribute to the growing field of studies that examine Ainu people in the present day, not as a vanishing ethnicity that must be salvaged for information. I view my work as looking away from salvage studies and toward studies on what Ronald Niezen calls “therapeutic history.” (2009, in Hudson, Iwawallen, and Watson, 2014: 6) Specifically, I frame my look at the role of material culture and symbolic materials in organizing the Wajin-Ainu Self/Other dichotomy as one example of Ainu actively redefining their own struggle against colonialism and colonialist frameworks through self-representation and ingenuity over authenticity. Though this practice does not use many of the same materials that were once used against Ainu by colonialists (like food and food-getting practices), where the Wajin practice did and continues to make statements about the essence of being ‘Japanese,’ the Ainu “self-representation of therapeutic history are actually part of a creative process of becoming.” (Ibid) There is significance in the act of self-representation, rather than being objects of research, but I hold that that is not the qualifying factor. I spent much of chapters 5 and 6 saying that willingness on part of Ainu does not sanctify any mode of being or experience of becoming, in large part due to the multitude of contradictory approaches taken by Ainu individuals.

For a true counter response to the world the Meiji government built across all the islands of Japan through colonialism, a radical redefinition of the Self must be rebuilt in such a way that the Self and the Other are little more than markers or tools to shift focus to an explicitly relational identity for all people. That is a daunting task that (as far as I

know) no one seems to have an exact prognosis for. But looking back at the role of Time in Japan's history of colonialism, and the function of symbolic materials in managing Time, I believe that a critical first step is to dismantle the understanding of Time that enabled colonialist discourse. Therapeutic history is seen across the Ainu community today, even in imperfect venues like tourist villages, as Ainu are given the chance to build meaningful relationships with their cultural heritage through recreating materials and displaying them. It becomes an act not of recreating the past, but of negotiating with it and possibly even redefining notions of modernity. In fact, once removed from endemic problems of tourism – such as the prying stare and commodification – and spatialization of Others, this kind of material interactivity is a way of violating the objectified view of history presented by Fabian (1983), which transforms the past and remakes Ainu material culture away from the static and into the dynamic. Consequentially, the understanding of Time established in the Meiji period withers away on an individual level, shifting from a progress of history to temporally malleable relationship, mediated through symbolic materials.

The Accomplishments of Inauthenticity

I have already discussed how the incomplete state of many Ainu objects, along with personal feelings of being insufficiently authentic, can be reconfigured as an advantage in cultural revival rather than a weakness. This point is supported by and built off of the theories of Kennedy (2009) and Hiwasaki (2000), despite my disagreements with them on the problems of heritage tourism. It may seem pessimistic, but I feel that heritage tourism may be too deeply embedded with problems to be reformed. Aside from

the strains of capitalism and branding of ethnicity, there is also the fact it creates a spatialized component to the internal Other of Japan and furthers the external definition in terms of Hokkaido. So the question to ask moving forward is this: how can Ainu take the positive elements that exist within heritage tourism and cultural promotion, and transplant them into a newer, less problematic channel, hopefully one that can subvert the external definition of the Japanese Self?

If it seems that I have taken a critical tone on objectification or materiality, then I should make a qualification: I am not so much critical of objectification as a means as much as I am critical of colonialism and capitalism. I also find it an unconvincing argument to say that using tools of the colonizer or capitalist is inherently a mode of reinforcement (though it of course is a risk) and not of resistance/resilience. There can be a subversive, even cathartic power in taking the tools of the colonizer and turning them back around to try and establish a more even ground. Consider the response novels that impress subaltern perspectives onto colonialist visions, such as Ngugi wa Thiongo's *The River Between* onto Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* (Said, 1993: 211) or more recent publications like Kamel Daoud's *The Meursault Investigation* onto Camus' *The Stranger*. In some terms, like Chiri Mashiho's statement from chapter 5, where he stated that the Ainu had faded into an "Ainu-Japanese" one, it is simply a matter of taking stock of the reality before you and understanding the best possible path to work from. I feel it pertinent to explain that materiality often has a deeper meaning than people tend to give it credit for. Let me state it plainly: objects are frequently not *mere* objects and can operate as vessels of meaning/meaningfulness. This kind of material power is seen famously in

commodity fetishism (Marx, 1867) and embodied capital (Bourdieu, 1984) but a more positive example that is also more relevant to my point comes from Webb Keane.

In the most basic form of Peircean linguistics, filtered into a frame more applicable to cultural anthropology, socially conceived meaning is an exercise between strictly divided ideas (signified), things (signifiers), and persons (interpretants). Translating this into the frame I have already been using, they function as symbolic characteristics, symbolic materials, and social agents of Japan (whether Ainu or Wajin), respectively. However, studies of semiotics often lean on ideologies that hold the three of these as mutually exclusive and unintentionally hierarchal, placing materials as mere “representations of ideas”; a possible rethinking can be a focus on the relationships between them that negotiate meaning, particularly a focus on “logical-causal” relations that may open social analyses to the social power of material things without reducing them to only vehicles of meaning. (Keane, 2003: 411) It may be advantageous to think of how the tool modifies the user, the ‘phenomenal world,’⁶³ as it is being modified by those things reciprocally. From there, one can imagine a field where the symbolic materials I have discussed in previous chapters are not plastered with meaning by governments or even societies that function along lines of conformity, but reproduce those meanings through the meaningful engagement with (and not necessarily by) social agents like Wajin and Ainu. Then it may not be so surprising that rice was reconstituted in the postwar era to hold such a similar symbolic position as it did in the prewar era; the

⁶³ A discussion of ‘the phenomenal world’ may be too long and complicated to explain here, as there is little agreed upon definition and debate among anthropologists to include varied phenomenologies from around the world. A useful, simplified definition for my immediate purposes would be the physical world as it is being experienced by bodies moving through it, so an example may be the experience of an Ainu or Wajin interacting with an object at a heritage site, or even simply viewing it and evaluating their own experience in relation to it. For a more in-depth analysis of the definitions and theories surrounding phenomenology, see Duranti (2009) and Csordas (1999), as well as the philosophical writings of Judith Butler and Martin Heidegger.

argument could be made that it had less to do with rigidity on the part of Wajin culture, and more to do with the role of rice in social functions.

Some might extrapolate from my previous chapters that I am endorsing the view that people remain essentially the same across ethnic and cultural lines in a heterogeneous society until they engage with the culturally laden objects around them.⁶⁴ It may be a point worth interrogating, but such a perspective operates with the assumption that objects are *mere means* or representations of something, rather than means in themselves, a courtesy we typically extend to people.⁶⁵ In another perspective, more in line with Keane's writing, objects do not have to be mere representations of culture, nor the actual containers of culture, but extensions of culture as a lived process. This is what I have been talking about when I invoke 'living culture' as opposed to 'having culture.'

As displayed with the positive avenues of tourist villages, the interaction with recognizably 'Ainu objects' among individuals allows for an interactive relationship with ethnicity and culture. Another, more particularistic version of the having/living distinction and a less problematic form of this interactive relationship with material culture is seen in Iwano's examination of Ainu women's clothwork, where cultural revivalists teach themselves and each other how to make Ainu cloth, carpets, and dress. To call this 'fusion' is too simple a descriptive: it is a carefully organized communal process, where Ainu women use traditional forms and ideas for how to properly make a given piece of clothwork, while artistically rendering their own personalities. This process allows Ainu women to meaningfully engage with materials of Ainuness and soak

⁶⁴ Think of the discourse around Americans who march in parades on March 17th as "Irish-for-a-day."

⁶⁵ Unless we are immoral according to Kantian thought.

in tradition, crafting new materials as a way of crafting their own identities as Indigenous people. (Iwawaki, 2016) In the words rephrased from Ainu clothworker Kotori Sowa, a line is drawn between ‘being Ainu’ (inheriting blood) and ‘becoming Ainu,’ or actively choosing to assert one’s indigeneity through building an interactive relationship with heritage. (Ibid: 51-52) All of these are examples of therapeutic history, by using the materiality set down by colonialist theory as a form of resistance. It is the construction of ‘inauthentic’ symbolic materials, in any venue, that allows one to move from being Ainu to becoming Ainu.

I am using the phrase ‘inauthenticity’ cautiously, realizing that it carries loaded connotations that can be distressing for many Ainu. In my use, inauthenticity is not a contrast to some concept of authenticity, but a rejection of the ideal itself, challenging the existence of authenticity in the first place. It seems that authenticity in the discourse of indigeneity in Japan is a “culturally pure” form of Ainu identity, untouched by Wajin incursion. It is then curious, but not surprising, that Japanese national identity is not held to the same standard and given a conceptual core to absorb elements until everything is distinctly and uniquely Japanese. It seems that the ideal is that authentic Ainu live in *kotan* (traditional villages) and hunt wild animals, as indicated by the disappointed tourists who come to see natives and instead see people wearing clothing. (Morris-Suzuki, 2014: 54) To put it simply, it is a form that must be inherited, and therefore can be destroyed by colonialism and assimilation. But inauthenticity, taken in a broad, wholly antithetical form, allows any form of Chiri Mashiho’s rejection of fabricated groundedness. An inauthentic Ainu can “become Ainu” if they choose, with creative expressions of identity running across the material. Rather than a re-created identity, it holds

continuity with the traditions of old, as regardless of assimilation, Ainu people have lived their culture over generations. Paradoxically, a requirement of inauthenticity can mean that everything is authentic through meaningful engagement. This is not to say that any individual can become Ainu through mere association. I am saying that the parents and grandparents of contemporary Ainu, may have become Japanese, but did not stop being Ainu.

The collusion between personal identity and the refashioning of tradition is seen all over Japan, from the fusion of traditional music with Western-inspired rock and pop, to the novels of Ōe Kenzaburō, written about Japan, inspired by French literature, and reflecting his own childhood in Shikoku. They are not quite as recognizable if taken in the context of the nationality-as-majority, but they function in the wider sense of history all the same. A similar practice occurs in creative acts from Oki, to Kotori Sawa, to Uzawa Kanako, recalling a moment of becoming Ainu through creativity:

“As [the dance] was my composition, I wanted to take the dance in a new direction and perform it in a way that I felt was more expressive of myself and of my own personality. I felt by interpreting a traditional dance in this way I would still be showing my respect for my traditional culture and elders, but by changing the music and the steps I could weave myself into the story.

“[...] I wanted to do things in a new way to emphasize the fact that culture is always continuously developing. As I am of a generation that is the result of strong assimilation, I feel I have lost many aspects of traditional culture but I refuse to accept that I am not in touch with my culture when I choose to author it in my own way. [...] To be ‘authentic’ is, for me, to recognize and express my

own to recognize and express my own emotions and what better way than through dance, a form of cultural expression I am able to create myself.” (Uzawa, 2014: 89-90)⁶⁶

Uzawa talks about dance, but her method and ideas are clearly expressed in the same studies on weaving and interacting with a variety of materials. My focus is on materiality, but the same principle applies. The symbolic characteristics of Ainuness, at least in these expressive forms, are seen at the meeting point between rediscovering tradition and creatively engaging with symbolic materials. As much as they express Ainuness, a layer of activity, activism, and creative engagement with tradition become layers in the semiosis of Ainu culture being lived.

In Time, Through Time

Returning to the Self/Other dichotomy, I will take one last look at Time. For lewallen, engaging with symbolic materials is not just a cry of distinctiveness from a field of homogeneity, but another version of a traditional characteristic of Ainu culture: its focus on reciprocity. (2016: 32) Just as Chiri Yukie sought to construct a gift back to the lineage that had given her the knowledge of *yukar*, clothworkers craft themselves and their materials as a way of honoring the still-present relationships with ancestors and *kamuy* who imparted this knowledge onto them. The risk typically posed by the heritage discourse is that if one interacts with an object, they are merely channeling the past and reapplying it to the present. But by invoking the characteristic of reciprocity with the

⁶⁶ An interesting wrinkle is that Uzawa describes the dance as being mistaken for an entirely traditional one by a newspaper the next day and attributes this not in a localized Japanese sense (she was performing at a Saami festival in Norway) but with stereotypes that indigeneity entails traditionalism.

past, Ainu activists and revivalists can actually allow the past, or rather tradition, to exist in the present in a way that is relevant to modern Ainu. Like the Wajin of the postwar, refashioning symbolic materials for a new conception of themselves, Ainu can refashion the very meaning of Ainuness to express Indigenous identity. There is an important distinction to make here: while the practices are similar for Ainu and Wajin, the former practice a key tenet of colonialist practice: the use of Time. Where Time was understood in the colonialist Wajin and Western sense as solidified with continuity into the present, the Ainu version flips the situation and conceives of Time in terms of a relationship not between the Self and the Other, but across relationships themselves. If Keane (2003) is correct in asserting that people and things can occupy similar agentive roles by being examined for their role in causal relationships rather than their interpretative agency, then Fabian's (1983) illustration of the Self/Other dichotomy in temporality can be subverted through undermining in the absolute power of the interpreting Self. Rather than existing as objects fixed in time or embodying qualities that are trapped in a primitive past, Ainu objects subvert the very understanding of Time laid down by colonialist thought. This is what allows Ainu objects, within this local ideology, to become dynamic instead of static, mediating relationships across a malleable form of Time through relations.

In this sense, I endorse Kennedy's view that "Ainu traditional culture is located in the creative process and practices remembered and reconfigured in the present rather than in the finished products salvaged from the past." (2009: 42) If these objects can be brought out of their space for Others (not by all but by some) they can challenge the understanding of Time put down by colonialists of the Meiji period. What began as a salvage operation to rescue objects from the past with Kayano and Chiri Yukie, then

transformed into the present activity described by Kennedy and lewallen (2016), can become an exercise in dynamic expression of identity through meaningful material interaction, if it is not that already. By applying Kennedy's (2009) and lewallen's (2016) theories to Fabian's (1983), the process can do more than situate things as either in the past or in the present, but put forth a malleable form of Time that exists relationally, where the past (tradition) does not move directly into the solid and written present (modernity) and instead they can rewrite each other through the transfer of materials in causal relationships. Just as colonialism in Hokkaido 'caused' the current iteration of the Ainu identity and Self/Other dichotomy of Ainu and Wajin, subversive action and symbolic renegotiation can not so much undo it, but alter its understanding. Frankly, this is how history works already, as the attitudes of people in the present rewrite the understanding of the process of time. All it takes to change it is finding the ways in which those who are not privileged to rewrite history can redefine their place in it, which brings everything back to the Self/Other dichotomy, how it is spatio-temporalized, and how that can be resisted. Across the three Selves (Ainu, Japan, America) displayed in this paper, there are infinitely complicated relationships being renegotiated and redefined, just not confronted.

Looking forward, dismantling the Self and the Other is a shift from defining what either one is to the relationship between the two. Navigating transnational and trans-temporal relationships and acknowledging the experiences that resulted from them is a critical step to moving beyond binaries. There are currently two methods on the table: one where identities are built around relationships in creative way (seen prominently though not exclusively in Ainu and many Indigenous peoples), and identities built around

contrasts, measured against both internal and external Others (seen prominently in nation states) In the future of Japan, it will fall on sites of Wajin power and norms of society – as well as the colonialist powers that inspired them, most notably America – to reject Selves defined by contrasts and look to the relations they have built with many peoples to refashion what it means to be a national in a growing post-colonial world, under something other than homogeneity or domination: the relationality of the peoples of Japan.

Conclusion: Against Cultural Purity

The world around us, cut up by borders along land and people, seems to operate as a strict network of Selves and Others. All one has to do to look past this is to look slightly upward to see a Self dominating an Other, maybe the Other of a completely different Self, looming above. The triple separation between Ainu, Japan, and America should strike one not as a call for more careful frameworks for categorization, but as proof that these dichotomies are invented, and though they may be hard to entrench, they can be undone. They were made with the very objects we see around us, the kind that we take for granted because they tell us that much about ourselves. And, as both Wajin and Ainu have shown, they can be remade with those very objects, for better or worse.

I also want people to take away that the world we see in Japan was created at least in part by its relationship with America. It should be kept in mind that power is not given either, and those we recognize as powerful today may have once been someone else's victim. This can never excuse or justify the actions taken by those with power, but it can help us better understand how to deal with them, from the coast of Asia to the most powerful imperialist force in the world today.

The case of Japan is one that I chose because it is recognizable to me, fits in with my prior research, and has meant things personally to me from a very young age. But I hope that its clarity in breaking down these dichotomies and the ingenuity of its minority populations can display to readers that the world we live in is made of particular histories, and not isolated ones but ones made of relationships that have built us in all of our forms. They have not always been pleasant relationships, but they are still there, and I believe

that newer forms of cultural and social anthropology can give us the insights to see how that materiality can be used for positive, meaningful change.

If Japaneseness is imagined as a superstructure of citizenship or geography rather than an innate, unique national bond, then Ainuness does nothing to devalue it. Currently, we find ourselves in exactly the inverse: Ainu culture and history become part of Japaneseness through the external definition and the writings of *nihonjinron*, but Ainu individuals have less Japaneseness in them innately. Since one long held solution to dismantling the Self/Other dichotomy has been to introduce greater complexity and more voices, the variety of Ainu, despite relatively small numbers, speaks volumes. There are the revivalists, the Tokyo Ainu, the invisible ones, and the activists. There are those who would be proudly Japanese, or those who seek a middle ground, having their Ainuness affect their Japaneseness. I titled this paper *Hyphenated Japan* not to prescribe an identifier for Ainu or Koreans or Okinawans, but to suggest the incursion of many people into the idea of Japanese national identity. This would mean more than a “melting pot” where people are absorbed and difference is negligible, but to see people sharing a kind of inclusive identity that makes them people of the country as a chain of islands, with a relational history, rather than refabricated as one nation that has been building to this point since forever ago, with mere peripheries to add diversity. I believe it is an idea worth entertaining.

As for the future of the Ainu people, I have shown two arguments: one says that Ainu must be wholly and completely cut off from Wajin/Japanese, forever in the past and present, and any attempt to follow along the current avenues of public Ainu identity (such as the Hokkaido tourist industry) must be shunned and boycotted for their inauthenticity,

their dark histories, and support of oppressive, nationalist-capitalism that denigrates Ainu identity. Another argument goes that the Ainu are a mere aspect, that their time of distinctiveness is in the past, and nothing should be done but acknowledge wrongdoings and move on.

What I find amusing is that although these arguments present themselves as diametrically opposed, they are identical to the point of being like brothers who fight over the same wooden toys. They both advocate inaction and refuse to look at the lived experiences of many people. But most of all, they are founded on the same premise that to be more Ainu makes one less Japanese and vice-versa, that the advancement of one culture is the dilution of another. It is the premise that enables nationalist ideologies like *nihonjinron*'s insistence on the homogeneity of Japaneseness. It is the premise that fixes Ainuness into a road of inevitable death, both for those who wish for it and against it. It is the premise developed from treating history as a straight line of victories and losses, rather than as something that continues to shape us as we continue to live it out. While the past is not something that we can escape or rewrite, whether we are colonizer or colonized (or even both simultaneously), it is not our definite future either. It is tempting to aim for absurd, fantastical solutions to the tragedies of history, to shun current forms entirely not because they may be unsustainable or actively unjust in the present, but because of how their foundations were laid. But the past has happened. We can't fantasize about an ideal state, before the corruption emerged and before change for the worse operated. We can only accept that the result of the past is something we must live with, examine its flaws and injustices, remove them where we can, and try to design a preferable future. The search for cultural purity is Jay Gatsby's delusion that one can

repeat the past, lay out its ideal foundations and ignore the circumstances people are living under today. While some may argue it saves the culture, it will inevitably denigrate people deemed impure. We can be like those who would reject grounded-ness on the less powerful: taking a realistic look at the histories we inherit and try to bring out of it the best we can.

Appendix

Fig. 1



Fig. 2



Fig. 3



Fig. 4



Fig. 5



Fig. 6



Fig. 7

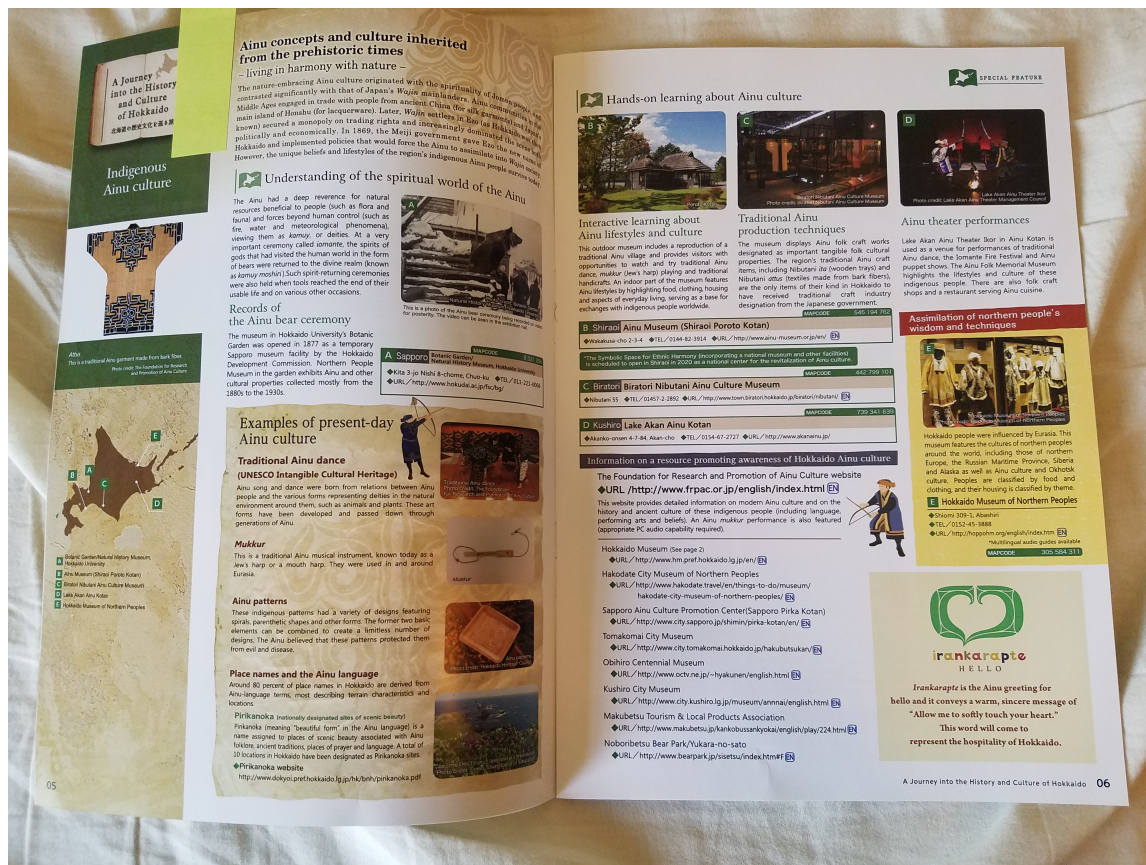
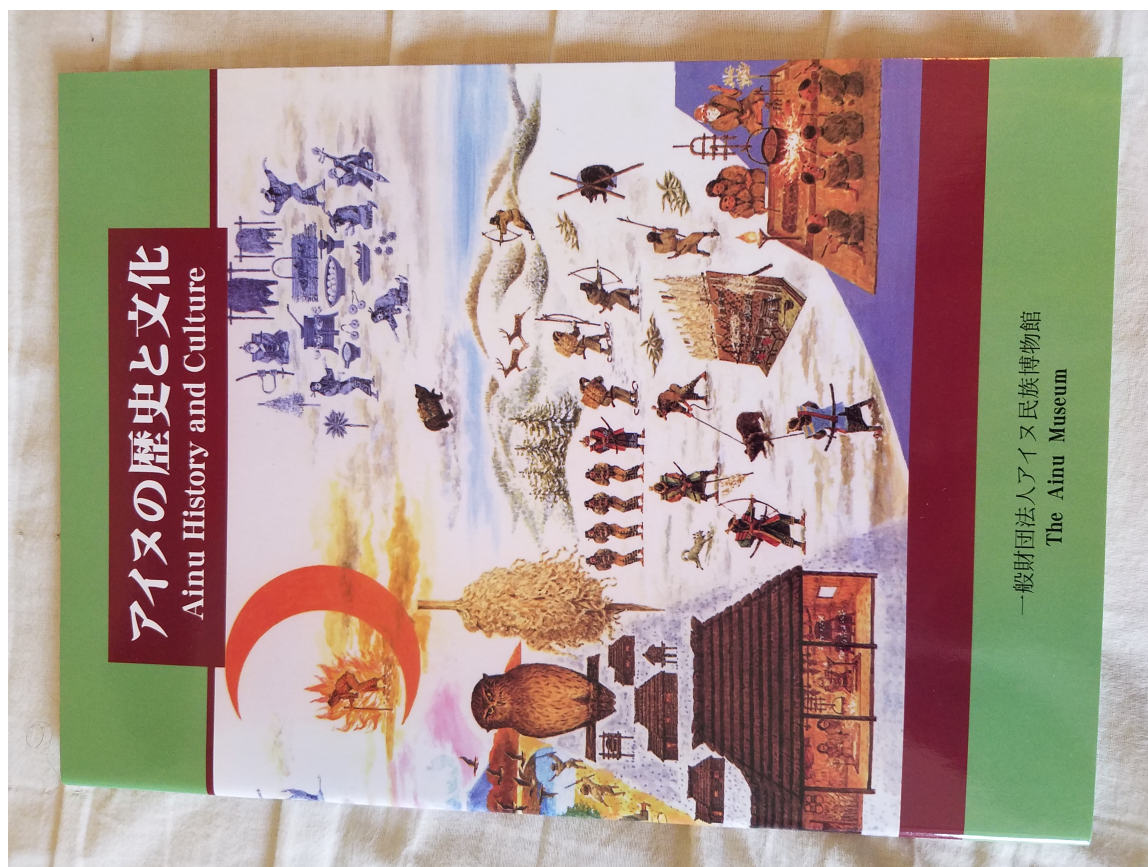


Fig. 8



Fig. 9



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