

EURAMERICA Vol. 42, No. 3 (September 2012), 497-534  
© Institute of European and American Studies, Academia Sinica  
<http://euramerica.org>

## Repositioning “Asia”—The Problematics of Liminality and Transpacific Imaginary in Theresa Hak Kyung Cha’s *Dictée*

Yu-yen Liu

Department of Foreign Languages and Literature, Huaan University  
No. 1, Huaan Rd., Shihding Dist., New Taipei City 22301, Taiwan  
E-mail: [yuyenliu@cc.hfu.edu.tw](mailto:yuyenliu@cc.hfu.edu.tw)

### Abstract

This paper intends to posit the importance of thinking through historical specificities as instrumental to understanding the particularities and ideologies that constitutes “Asia” as site of negotiation and intervention. This paper contends that a (re-)investigation of the Cold War discourse will make visible the imperial logic and shifting historical stakes under and through which the threatening presence of U.S. hegemony in Asia invites a careful reexamination of the invention not only of “American” but of “Asian.” Viewed in light of this argument, Theresa Hak Kyung Cha’s *Dictée* is both a complicating text that illustrates historically how the present (East) Asian American identity and culture are preconditioned by American empire and Japan’s imperialist past, and an intriguing text that metaphorically cultivates the problematics of liminality

---

Received April 21, 2009; accepted September 16, 2009; last revised January 12, 2011  
Proofreaders: Jeffrey Cuvilier, Wen-chi Chang, Yen-kai Peng, Andrew Yun-An Lin

and transpacific imaginary. Cha uses mixed media to convey the very intricacies of the interrelated discourses on Korean identity, Korean American, and the transpacific imaginary of “Asia.” As such, to analyze *Dictée* within the context of the Cold War discourse is to call attention to the hidden narratives and complex textualization that underlie the dichotomized understanding of “Asia.” In reading this subtle and abstruse text alongside the Cold War politics, this paper then addresses the issues of how “Asia” becomes the very site where various kinds of forces converge, intertwine, and hybridize, and where new ways of making meanings have been engendered and called into question.

**Key Words:** Cold War, liminality, transpacific imaginary, Asia, Asian American Studies