

**LOIS-ANN YAMANAKA**

Growing up in Honolulu, Hawaii, the Asian American experience was a distant idea, one relegated to the confines of the United States Mainland. When I left Hawaii for the Northeast, I was confronted with hula grass skirts, Hawaiian Punch, and soft ukuleles as the advertised components of being “Hawaiian.”



Lois-Ann Yamanaka's *Saturday Night at Pahala Theatre*

dares to counter these misconceptions. Written as dramatic monologues and narratives in Hawaiian Creole Pidgin, Yamanaka pulls back the dark curtain from Hawaii's paradisiacal, tourist façade. Unapologetically grating to the ear, her staccato lines sing about the obsession consuming third- and fourth- immigrant generations to physically pass as “haloe” (white American Caucasian), the mass consumption of pop culture from “Da Mainland,” the sense of shame in local traditions, and the harsh socioeconomic realities fragmenting Hawaii.

Not only was it refreshing to read about issues confronted in my personal upbringing in Hawaii, I also became aware of how claustrophobic the “Asian American” label was. Perhaps this the main reason I admire Yamanaka, as she is one of many prominent Asian American writers from Hawaii daring to expand the narrowness of the “Asian American experience.”

—Qinglan Wang

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Proposal for Graduate English Student Conference at Georgetown, Spring 2015

Growing Louder from Afar: The “In-Between” Worlds in Cathy Song’s *Picture Bride* and Lois-Ann Yamanaka’s *Saturday Night at Pahala Theatre*

“I one Jap, but no that kine,/ the kine all good and smart and perfect/ That kine Jap is what I ain’t” (Yamanaka, 31). As jarring as this line may sound, it strikes a deeper chord in the works of Cathy Song and Lois-Ann Yamanaka. Their first poetry collections, *Picture Bride* and *Saturday Night at Pahala Theatre*, explore heritage, gender, and post-colonial issues unique to contemporary writers of Hawaii and result in the creation of a larger identity as established in Amy Ling’s *Between Worlds: Women Writers of Chinese Ancestry* (1990). This identity is constructed through a writer’s shift from a culture of origin to another, leading to a confrontation between belonging in the New World with the connection to the Old World. However Song and Yamanaka’s collections go beyond Ling’s binary, “between-worlds” mold that defined a large part of Asian American writers. In contrast, their works feature elements of post-colonialism and Asian migrant heritage, such as sugar cane plantation images, Hawaiian Creole English (also known as Pidgin), third/fourth generation multi-heritages, and social pressures on young females, and therefore construct a larger “between-multi-worlds” voice, space, and identity.

My project for this conference focuses on the post-colonial residual elements of Song and Yamanaka’s works and how each writer shapes her experiences to define Hawaii as a place of passage. This aspect of post-colonialism, in addition to each writer’s multi-Asian heritages, distinguishes a literary voice that is similar but different from other Asian American writers on mainland United States. Through analyzing how Song’s and Yamanaka’s collections are a part of and apart of the Asian American literary genre, my research will further define the literary voice of contemporary Hawaii writers.



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Date:** February 16, 2011

**ARTS AT 2011 WORLD SCHOLAR-ATHLETE GAMES**

KINGSTON, R.I. – On June 26 – July 4, 2011, the Institute for International Sport will host its 5<sup>th</sup> World Scholar-Athlete Games (**WSAG**) in the Greater Hartford Area, Connecticut. The Games welcome 15-19 year old scholar-athletes and scholar-artists, from all fifty states and over 160 nations, to explore common ground, conduct leadership training and develop peace initiatives through sport and the arts.

The Institute for International Sport is a non-profit organization, striving to build a network of globally aware teenagers who are interested in becoming humanitarian leaders and peace ambassadors in their home countries and communities. Held once every four years beginning in 1993, the Games are founded on the belief that common activities, such as sport and the arts, can foster understanding and friendship amongst students from differing backgrounds. The art programs offered consist of visual arts, digital media, dance, theatre, symphony, choir, culinary arts, and creative writing.

Participants will also take part in the Games Theme Days program which serves as a forum to unite all participants in discussions of global issues such as environment and sustainability, world peace, ethics in journalism, sportsmanship and fair play, leadership, ethics and responsibility in technology and race relations. The Games are followed by the World Youth Peace Summit, which features keynote speakers: General Colin Powell, Vice President Al Gore, and author of *Three Cups of Tea*, Greg Mortenson.

If you are interested in participating in the 2011 World Scholar-Athlete Games please visit the Games web site at [www.internationalsport.com/wsag/](http://www.internationalsport.com/wsag/) or contact Qinglan Wang the Director of Arts at [qwang@internationalsport.com](mailto:qwang@internationalsport.com) (401) 874-9389.

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