

A Japanese Peruvian Boy's Urban Wandering in Search of a Proper Place: Reading "Extranjero" by Augusto Higa Oshiro as "the Chorus of Idle Footsteps"

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Abstract: Augusto Higa's story, "Extranjero," portrays a Japanese Peruvian Nisei boy, growing up in Lima during the post-WWII era, who "walks in the city" to find a "proper" place. Drawing on de Certeau's notion of pedestrians' footsteps as a form of everyday practice that provokes illegible and unruly spatiality within the structure of power, this study explores how and why, as the boy walks, a sense of labyrinthine disorientation arises, *temporarily* disturbing the Peruvian government's project to integrate him into society as an assimilable, obedient and quiet foreigner.

Keywords: Augusto Higa Oshiro – Japanese Peruvians – Urban wandering – De Certeau – Ordinary pedestrians' footsteps

The second story, "Extranjero," of *Okinawa existe* (2013) by Augusto Higa Oshiro (1946-) portrays a Nisei boy, Masaharu, in the second grade, growing up in Lima around 1954. The post-World War II era, in which the story takes place, was the period of political and diplomatic normalization between Peru and Japan. On the surface of its diplomatic relationship with Japan, the Peruvian government publicly tried to portray a new and more positive imagery of the Japanese and Japanese Peruvian community in Peru. However, in reality, the Peruvian government did not immediately reduce the institutionalized antagonism against them. On the contrary, the government sought to prevent the Japanese Peruvians from fully integrating themselves into Peruvian society as fully-fledged Peruvians with equal rights (Gardiner 104; Masterson 218-19).¹

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¹ Masterson borrows the quote from C Harvey Gardiner's book *The Japanese and Peru, 1873-1973* (96).

This two-faced posture of the Peruvian government toward the Japanese Peruvians can be observed in the speech made by Víctor Andrés Belaúnde, the representative of Peru to the United Nations Security Council, at the 756th meeting on December 12, 1956:

[A] close relationship has always existed between the Government of Peru and the Government of Japan, and [...] there have been and are many Japanese settlers living in Peru, contributing to its economic development, obeying Peruvian laws and adapting themselves to the outlook, ideals and customs of our nation. (UN 756th Meeting 2; Masterson 219)²

Belaúnde made this speech to support the admission of Japan to the UN. On the one hand, it shows the Peruvian government's acknowledgement of the Japanese Peruvians as new valuable members to the nation, but on the other, the expression—"adapting *themselves* to the outlook, ideals and customs of *our* nation" (emphasis added)—indicates the division between the Japanese Peruvians (them) and the "true" Peruvians (us), implying that they are still foreigners who are in the process of adapting to a new society and are not yet fully-fledged Peruvians. In other words, the Peruvian government was attempting to construct the Japanese Peruvians' status as valuable and even desirable citizens, while, at the same time, maintaining a distance from them and treating them as *almost* Peruvians, still imbued with an essential strangeness or foreignness.³

In "Extranjero," Higa, situating his protagonist, Masaharu, in this postwar era in Peru, presents the Nisei boy's struggle to find a "proper" place as a Peruvian citizen of Japanese ancestry. His search for a "proper" place takes place in an urban, working-class neighborhood of Lima, and includes his school, a hiding place at a market, and his father's restaurant, among other places. In this neighborhood, Masaharu walks, runs, and wanders around, and the third-person omniscient narrator, closely following the protagonist's footsteps and movements, takes the reader to the street-level world of entangled alleys, run-down buildings, unlicensed *chicha* liquor stores, and even the stinking garbage cans at a market. Since Masaharu's feet are constantly in motion,

² Belaúnde gave another speech similar to this at the 708th meeting on Dec. 21, 1955. He stated, "We have a Japanese colony which is very happy to accept Peruvian citizenship, which complies with *our* laws and is gradually becoming assimilated (UN 708th Meeting 7-8 emphasis added). For Belaúnde's complete speech, see p.7-8 in the UN Security Council Official Records Tenth Year 708th Meeting.

³ It is also interesting to note that in his speeches at both UN 708th and 756th meetings, Belaúnde associated the admissibility of Japan to the UN with the assimilability of Japanese settlers and Japanese Peruvians to Peruvian society. Perhaps, in his mind, Japanese Peruvians, whether they were naturalized or Peruvian born citizens, were still foreigners from Japan, and such a perspective can be interpreted as a way to identify Japanese Peruvians as *almost* Peruvians, but not "true" Peruvians.

traveling through unnamed and unmapped places of the neighborhood, they cannot be easily traced. This narrative of unlocatability seems to imply a skepticism with regards to the Peruvian government's expectation to situate all the Japanese Peruvians in a "proper" place, and the boy's travails destabilize a constructed image of the Japanese Peruvians as one homogeneous group of people who are "adapting themselves to the outlook, ideals and customs" of Peru (UN 756th Meeting 2; Masterson 219). In this study, drawing on Michel de Certeau's notion of pedestrians' footsteps and movements in urban space as a form of everyday practice that provokes illegible, unforeseeable, and unruly spatiality within the structure of power (101), I will first explore how Masaharu's footsteps and movements on the streets, as those of de Certeau's pedestrians, arouse a sense of labyrinthine disorder and disorientation, *temporarily* disturbing the Peruvian government's project to integrate the Japanese Peruvians into society. Then, I will further discuss why this disturbance against the government's imagination of the Japanese Peruvians emerges only *temporarily*, and finally, I will examine where the temporary disturbance leads, as Masaharu struggles to find a "proper" place.

In his often quoted essay, "Walking in the City," de Certeau develops a theoretical approach to examining how everyday pedestrians' footsteps and movements on the ground level in urban space can offer an alternative understanding of the space organized and viewed by urban developers and planners who share the perspective of "a solar Eye, looking down like a god" with the "pleasure of 'seeing the whole'" (92). According to de Certeau, ordinary pedestrians make "the chorus of idle footsteps" in a city (97), which he also refers to as "the long poem of walking" (101), comparing the act of walking to a speech act, and their innumerable and countless footsteps and paths serve as a disruptive enunciation that contests "the totalizing eye" of power and order, which "makes the complexity of the city readable, and immobilizes its opaque mobility in a transparent text" (92). De Certeau attributes this multiplicity of pedestrians' footsteps making the city illegible to their ongoing search for a proper place that is always missing. He elucidates the meaning of the practice and experience of walking in the city: "To walk is to lack a place. It is the indefinite process of being absent and in search of a proper. The moving about that the city multiplies and concentrates makes the city itself an immense social experience of lacking a place" (103). By "lacking a place" (103), de Certeau means lacking an immobile proper place. As a myriad of pedestrians' footsteps and movements intertwine among others, they create a heterogeneous, entangled, and impenetrable urban space which cannot be captured in the name of a proper place. Yet, urban developers and planners try to cover the unruly urban space with a conceptual image of a homogeneous, readable, and penetrable city. Thus, by walking in the actual city, one can clearly grasp the pretense and artificiality of the existence of a neatly organized and named proper place, which is, according to de Certeau, the "experience of lacking a place" (103).

De Certeau's notion of everyday pedestrians' footsteps in urban space, offering an alternative and subversive perspective of urban spatiality depicted from the bottom,

not from the top, challenges the assumed readability of the city which masks the unreadable constellations of individual lives and stories in the urban space. To some critics, his notion may seem to sketch a binary formula of the everyday subversive walks at the bottom versus the official vigilance from the top as its opposite.⁴ However, I argue, following Ben Highmore's understanding of de Certeau's theory of the everyday, that de Certeau is interested neither in presenting the everyday practice of walking as the opposite of the official panoptic vigilance nor in replacing the latter with the former. In his study, "Michel de Certeau's Poetics of Everyday Life," Highmore asserts that the resistance of everyday life "is not synonymous with being opposition" (151) and states that "[a]ny attempt simply to mine de Certeau's work for an easily identifiable assemblage of 'oppositional' culture will miss the nuances of the project" (153). For Highmore, the resistance of the everyday is "what hinders and dissipates the energy flow of domination" and "a result of inventive forms of appropriation" (152). Drawing attention to de Certeau's concept of re-use or appropriation/reappropriation of a cultural system already constructed and organized by power, Highmore affirms that the resistance of the everyday "is both a preservative and a creation of something new[,] [and] rather than presenting the inverse of power, [it] offers a different and pluralized account of powers" (153). Highmore's interpretation of the inventiveness and heterogeneity of the everyday enables the reader to see clearly that de Certeau attempts to show that the everyday practice of walking appropriates and manipulates the already existing system of urban space with "tricky and stubborn procedures that elude discipline" in order to disturb (not to invert) the power "*without being outside the field in which [the discipline] is exercised*" (de Certeau 96 emphasis added).

In "General Introduction" to *The Practice of Everyday Life*, de Certeau has already presented how the individuals and groups who inhabit the realm of everyday practices, including walking, appropriate and reappropriate the established system of power, giving the examples of apartment renters, speakers, and pedestrians. As tenants (re)appropriate an apartment, or speakers the system of language, and transform them into something different with their own acts and memories and with their own phrases and accent respectively, pedestrians also (re)appropriate the streets and transform them, with "the forests of their desires and goals," into something different (xxi). But this difference or transformation, which renters, speakers, and pedestrians produce, emerges still through the already established socio-cultural productions of the apartment, language, and streets. De Certeau continues to emphasize that the enunciation of the

⁴ Brian Morris, in his article, "What We Talk about When We Talk about 'Walking in the City,'" drawing on the critiques on de Certeau's theory of the everyday articulated by social science and cultural studies critics, such as Jeremy Ahearne, Tony Bennett, and John Frow, points out that de Certeau's notion of everyday life tends to establish the binary division of the official/top/compliance versus the everyday/down/resistance (677-82). For more details of the critiques by Ahearne, Bennett, and Frow, see *Michel de Certeau: Interpretation and its Other* (1995), *Culture: A Reformer's Science* (1988), and *Cultural Studies and Cultural Value* (1995), respectively.

heterogeneity that the everyday practices brings to light takes place *within* the established power and order. He states:

Things *extra* and *other* (details and excesses coming from elsewhere) insert themselves into the accepted framework, the imposed order. One thus has the very relationship between spatial practices and the constructed order. The surface of this order is everywhere punched and torn open by ellipses, drifts, and leaks of meaning: it is a sieve-order. (107)

For de Certeau, the established order is invaded and destabilized, yet the destabilization occurs, to emphasize again, *within* the already established framework of order. The order is a sieve-order, full of small holes, yet the existence of it cannot be denied.

As one of de Certeau's pedestrians, Masaharu, the protagonist of "Extranjero," walks in the city, because he lacks a place, a "proper" place for a Nisei boy to feel at home and safe. The story opens with a scene in which Masaharu, being bullied by another Nisei student, Kanashiro, after school, dashes into the street and runs fiercely to get to his usual shelter, the garbage drums in a market called La Aurora. This opening scene may lead the reader to think that the "proper" place that Masaharu searches for is a safe place away from the bully. However, what he tries to escape from is not physically the bully alone, but something more deeply inculcated in his psyche: the discipline of being silent and passive. Whenever bullied by Kanashiro, Masaharu neither talks back nor fights back. In the opening bullying scene, Masaharu passively lets the bully insult and hit him, then runs away to the market, and hides in the garbage dump: "se alejaba por el jirón Cañete [y] se refugiaba en el mercado La Aurora, entre la multitud compacta de verduleras[,] [m]úsica de los parlantes, gente arrumada en los quioscos, vísceras en los mostradores, el lodazal de los pasadizos" (25). He waits in the darkness of the garbage dump until he feels safe, even though he knows he gets suffocated with the ghastly stench of the filth and grime, surrounded by a swarm of dogs, flies, and worms. After sensing a certain calmness, he gets out of the garbage dump, goes inside the market, passes through the meat, vegetable, and clothing sections: "marchando por el pasadizo de las carnes, podía observar los pernils en los ganchos [y] recorría los garitos de comida, seguía el corredor de las verduras y los vendedores de ropa" (26). Masaharu finally gets to Mr. Saito's kiosk stand, where the vendor talks to Masaharu and gives the boy a candy. The narrator describes Masaharu's wandering in the market as his "exorcism," which is completed by Mr. Saito's kind greetings with a candy. Here, the word "exorcism" hints that Masaharu is haunted by a devilish entity awakened by Kanashiro's bullying, but later at the end, the meaning of the existence of a devilish entity becomes clear. I will come back to the discussion on the existence of a devilish entity later. Being "exorcized," Masaharu takes Huancavelica Avenue and

passes through entangled alleys to get to his father's humble restaurant: “[a]travesaba callejones intrincados, paredes destartaladas, los cables de los tranvías, ventanas de rejas, un blacón corredizo, la panadería de los Miyasato y, por último, arribar a la fonda de su padre Hideo Murakami” (26).

Masaharu's paths from the school, the garbage dump, the market stands, Mr. Saito's kiosk, and to his father's restaurant are described in detail. The detailed descriptions of which paths he takes and what he sees, smells, and hears in the market and on the streets vividly expose his movements and human aliveness, contrasting the passivity and stillness that Masaharu maintains in front of the bully. Although Masaharu continues to walk, run, and wander around the city, disclosing his mobility and activeness with his footsteps and movements on the streets, his mobility and activeness only intrude on the discipline of silence and passivity, but never fully banish it. Thus, Masaharu's search for a “proper” place, escaping from the discipline of being passive and silent, is an interminable and “indefinite process of being absent and in search of a proper” (de Certeau 103). Even arriving in his father's restaurant, where he can be with his family after escaping from the bully, does not give him a sense of being at a “proper” place.

Masaharu's father's restaurant appears to be his “home,” where Masaharu sees his parents working hard and where he spends lunch time with his two brothers and two sisters. His parents are earnest and hardworking people who dedicate their lives to work; his siblings are well-behaved youngsters, who finish their lunch and go back to school without bothering their parents or their parents' customers. Despite the fact that his father's restaurant offers Masaharu, as a family member, a place to belong to and return to, it does not provide a proper place for him. On the contrary, his father's restaurant is where Masaharu is instructed by his parents' and siblings' behaviors and manners, without written or spoken rules, how to behave properly as a good member of the Japanese Peruvian community—that is—the place where he learns the discipline of silence and passivity.

His parents wait on customers politely with a smile. The narrator describes how they work on a typical day at the restaurant: “Su madre, Matsuei, no dejaba de moverse detrás del mostrador, atendiendo a los clientes, sonriendo infatigable en su dócil cortesía” (26); “Hideo Murakami controlaba el desfile de los clientes. Sonreía inextricable, de pie, con las manos a la espalda” (34-35). In addition to smiling and being polite, being quiet is also considered to be a virtue in this family. His parents do not talk to each other or to their children there. Even when a confused uniformed military man barges into the restaurant and shouts at Masaharu's father, “¡Japonés, vas preso!” “¡Estás en la lista negra!” and again “¡El japonés va preso!” (35), his father neither talks back nor reacts to the intruder's insults. He stays quiet. His mother is the one who drives off the sergeant living in an anachronistic delusion, reminding him, with a kitchen knife, that the war ended nine years ago. But as soon as the sergeant leaves, no one speaks at the family table. “Masaharu y sus hermanos, inmóviles, continuaron

almorzando en silencio. En todo caso, en la mesa familiar, nada había ocurrido, nadie escuchó nada, nadie comentó, nadie vio nada. Estrictos. Rigurosos. Indolentes" (36). Some of the clients and the workers produce sounds of laughter, agitation, and murmurs, but within the family, in contrast, there is total silence. From outside the restaurant, street noises come in, but no one of the family talks.

Here at the restaurant, Masaharu learns that this silence and passive endurance, together with their diligence and polite smiles of formality, are accepted behaviors for this family. These stereotypical characteristics of this Japanese Peruvian family resonate with the image of valuable citizens who contribute to Peru's economy and behave appropriately, according to the Peruvian laws, "adapting themselves to the outlook, ideals and customs of our nation," without causing any troubles or instigating any subversive ideas, as implied in Belaúnde's speech (UN 756th Meeting 2; Masterson 219). If Masaharu could consider his father's restaurant as his "home" that he searches for and if he could follow the discipline and order of the restaurant, attuned to those of the Peruvian government, he would have a chance to be evaluated as a valuable citizen who can "adapt to the outlook, ideals and customs" of Peru and would no longer have to look for "home," a "proper" place. Feeling distant from his family, however, he does not perceive the restaurant as his "home." Before the intruder-sergeant incident, Masaharu's oldest brother talks about his visit to a Japanese Peruvian family and his youngest sister wants to play at riddles. But Masaharu simply eats without being engaged in the conversation or word game: "sentado en la silla, sumido en la indiferencia, respiraba impersonal [...], empuñando el tenedor, comiendo el arroz, masticando el guiso, porque sí y porque no" (34). Masaharu's indifference can be a reflection of his father, who lives like a working machine, under the discipline and order of silence and passivity, without ever expressing his emotions or thoughts.

The discipline and order of silence and passivity penetrate Masaharu not only at his father's restaurant, but also at his school. His silent and passive attitude is displayed in the following scene of him being beaten by the Nisei bully Kanashiro:

Masaharu no hacía nada. Abriendo los ojos, desarmado, recibía los golpes, sin lanzar una sola queja. «Anda, responder», le gritaban. Totalmente frío, no hacía caso, sin mirar a nadie, concentrado en sí mismo. Tal vez deseándolo o queriéndolo, acogía el castigo en el desamparo de su propia suerte. (29)

Masaharu's demeanor in front of the bully recalls that of Masaharu's father, who "entornó los ojos[,] [i]nexpresivo, [y] ladeó la cabeza" (35) in front of the sergeant-intruder. Just as his father conforms to the discipline of silence and passivity, so Masaharu behaves, yielding himself to that discipline at school.

Even when he is not harassed by the bully, he never says any words, sitting in the back of the classroom next to the wall. The teacher, Miss Muriel, is kind,

thoughtful, and respectful toward his muteness. She tries to talk to him quietly, but Masaharu responds to her with a strange non-verbal expression: “Y Masaharu, en compensación, gustaba de imitar patillos o muñecos. [...]. Poner cara de bobo, mover el cuerpo como trapo, los brazos muertos, sin brillo en los ojos, vacía la mente, el rostro abstracto” (38). Miss Muriel sees that Masaharu perhaps makes fun of something deep inside his inner self that he cannot express in his words, and she is the only one who captures his mental state. Earlier, on the way to his father’s restaurant from his hiding place, Masaharu asks himself “si no era un virtuoso comediante, con sus llantos, con sus risas, como si estuviera ante el espejo, duplicando pantomimas simuladas” (30). Masaharu thinks that he behaves like a *virtuoso* comedian because he knows how to hide his emotions—cries and laughter—and knows how to express them without voice like a pantomime actor. But his pantomimes are insincere and fake because he pretends to suffer from being mute, but in reality he is dying to break with the muteness and quietness. He confesses, asking to himself, “¿Hasta qué punto no era más que un artista del sufrimiento?” (30). He wants to quit being “un artista de sufrimiento” (30), but he has not found a means to leave his pantomime performance. Miss Muriel tries to pay attention to this psychological abyss where Masaharu is caught, but cannot reach it. Instead, as do many of Masaharu’s peers, she ends up attributing his strange behaviors to his “foreignness” as a Nisei boy, to “esas características extranjeras” (38). Her students say, “No le haga caso, Murakami es así” (38). When the bully Kanashiro attacks Masaharu, other students insult them, “Es un lío de japositos” (39). The cheering of “¡Defiéndete, Murakami!” (29) has disappeared. At school, the connection between Masaharu and muteness and passivity, as well as the correlation between his silence and foreignness, are infused.

At first glance, Masaharu’s silence and passivity at school remind the reader of those of his father at the restaurant, but unlike his father, Masaharu does not always remain quiet and passive; he temporarily leaves the realm of silence and passivity, hoping to find a “proper” place that may exist somewhere else, outside of the school and restaurant, in order to free himself from the masks of “un virtuoso comediante” and “un artista de sufrimiento” (30) and to reveal his real face.

Going back to the scene of Masaharu’s father’s restaurant, the narrator describes his father’s confined life in the restaurant:

Allí estaba, de pie, como una estatuaría, Hideo Murakami. Jamás salía de la fonda, no entendía de diversiones, respiraba, comía, sonreía incrédulo, las cosas estaban allí, delante de sus ojos, sin ayer, sin mañana, exactamente igual, clavado en el tiempo, en ese territorio de mesas, sillas, utensilios, clientes. (35)

The narrative voice’s emphasis on his father’s statue-like immobility subtly points out the difference between his father, who always stays at the same “proper”

place that he has found, and Masaharu, who moves around and explores the neighborhood in search of a "proper" place.

The detailed and vivid descriptions of Masaharu's routes and movements appear again in the middle of the story, just like those that followed immediately after the opening bullying scene. The descriptions are very similar to and almost the same as the previous ones, but each time that the narrator sketches them, he inserts a slightly different picture of the streets and market.

Customarily, Masaharu runs to the same market through the same avenue and hides himself in the same garbage dump: "Masaharu partía en silencio, la cabeza gancha, vencido, por el jirón Cañente. Quizá lloraría, o tal vez humillado, corría rumbo al mercado La Aurora, a la hora en que los cúmulos de basura henchían" (29). After he calms down and hears the noises of the market, he walks through the stands in the market and goes to Mr. Saito's stand: "Después, la calma tensa, recuperar los ruidos del mercado, los colores de los puestos, las formas de la gente, el barullo de los transeúntes. Y más tarde, deambular por los pasadizos, observar las frutas, las verduras, el techo herrumbroso, y la sublimación ante el quiosco del señor Saito" (29-30). The same routine to get to his father's restaurant continues: "[O]tra vez volvía por el sendero de Huancavelica, *otra vez* se topaba con los patios rugosos, las paredes de quincha, los tranvías, y los balcones corredizos" (30 emphasis added). Masaharu's usual same paths, movements, and shelter are repeated, as the narrator's expressions "otra vez" points out the repetition of the same pattern of his run and walk.

However, the narrator does not repeat certain elements, such as dogs, flies, and worms swarming in the garbage dump, pork meat hanging on hooks at the aisle of the meat section at the market, and clothing vendors. In contrast, the narrator adds this time the depiction of "las amas de casa [que] trotaban indemnes" (29) and "el techo herrumbroso" (30). Similarly, the following places are not included in the previous descriptions of Masaharu's paths from the market to his father's restaurant, but are inserted this time:

[C]ruzaba la farmacia para observar a la bella Lucía, la dependiente, quien nunca dejaba de prodigarle una sonrisa. En la esquina de Huancavelica y Angaraes, ingresaba a la bodega para saludar a la *obachan* Miyagui, una cruda viejita sentada en la esquina del mostrador, vigilando a los parroquianos, en todos los veranos e inviernos de su vida. (30)

The divergence and multiplicity on the streets are produced by the presence of the pharmacy clerk, Lucía, and the old woman, la *obachan* Miyagui, interminably and unchangingly watching people going by the store. La *obachan* Miyagui is the main character of the first story "Okinawa existe," who walks to her only friend's room everyday to relate her memory of Okinawa. Her name and the presence that appears during Masaharu's walk remind the reader who has read "Okinawa existe" before

“Extranjero” of her walks and life story and add another layer of divergence and multiplicity to the story of Masaharu. In reverse, what is omitted in the narrator’s descriptions this time is “la panadería de los Miyasato” and “la fonda de su padre Hideo Murakami” (26). Miyasato’s bakery is replaced with the pharmacy and Miyagui’s store, and because of this replacement, the reader observes that Masaharu sometimes goes by the pharmacy and Miyagui’s store, whereas other times he does not see them, but passes by the bakery. This difference reinforces the sense of deviation and divergence, making Masaharu’s walks unpredictable and unforeseeable. The omission of his father’s restaurant in the descriptions can also be interpreted in part as a way to emphasize the deviation and divergence, but more importantly, it suggests not only Masaharu’s refusal to enter the restaurant of discipline, silence and passivity, but also his appetite for continuing to wander around.

The differences between the first descriptions of Masaharu’s paths and observations and the second may seem insignificant, since they do not affect the overall setting and development of the main story. However, these differences suggest that Masaharu’s everyday practice of walking presents a multitude of objects, people, detours, stores, noises, colors, smells, textures, etc. which cannot be perceived exactly the same way as before, and thus this practice develops a sense of unreadableness and unforeseeableness of the place where he walks. Masaharu’s footsteps and movements on the street multiply every time he walks, crosses the streets, and drops by stores, and bring about the sense of the unreadable and unforeseeable, thereby echoing “the chorus of idle footsteps” in New York City, observed by de Certeau, which disturbs the accepted spatial organization of the city imposed from above, through “the crossing, drifting away, or improvisation of walking privilege” on the ground level (97-98). The unreadable and unforeseeable image that emerges in Masaharu’s neighborhood, due to the multiplicity of his movements, further generating the feeling of the unlocatability and unruliness, disturbs the accepted and normalized spatial organization and order of his neighborhood. In other words, because of Masaharu’s unpredictable movements, he cannot be located and disciplined by his family, school, or other “disciplinary institutions”⁵ or “a solar Eye” (de Certeau 92). Even if the postwar Peruvian government wants to locate Masaharu in the realm of the discipline of silence and passivity with the help of his family and school, it becomes impossible to determine where he is. The complexity of the neighborhood, unveiled by his footsteps, makes the neighborhood unreadable and thus prevents the authorities from reading where he is or should be on the map of the illegible neighborhood.

The complexity and intricacy of his neighborhood along with the unlocatability of Masaharu become more intensified when he wanders around his neighborhood on Saturdays. Masaharu first visits a mentally challenged thirty-eight year-old man,

⁵ I borrowed the term from Michel Foucault’s essay “Panopticism” in *Discipline and Punish* (Trans. Alan Sheridan. 1977).

Moralitos, who lives on the Torrecilla Street with his mother. Masaharu crosses the patio on the street, goes to a grotto (small cave shrine), called "la gruta del Sagrado Corazón," and knocks on the door of Moralitos' house. Masaharu spends a pleasant time with Moralitos, playing an imitation game. "[...] Masaharu imita[ra] los gestos de Moralitos: el modo de andar, el balanceo del cuerpo, aquel rostro duro, y los rugidos disparatados. Era el momento en que Masaharu gozaba perplejo" (31). This is the first time that the reader can see that Masaharu makes some roaring sounds coming from his own mouth and laughs hard. But observing his own imitated gestures mirroring Moralitos suddenly gives him an abominable feeling about Moralitos and his mother. This abomination suffocates him, pushing him to leave the house and start wandering. His visit to Moralitos can be interpreted as an occasion that allows Masaharu to temporarily become a person who zealously produces some verbal roaring noises and laughter and who gazes at someone who is more vulnerable than him. At school, he is gazed at by the bully and forced to leave in order to escape from him, but here he is the one who boldly and freely takes the action of leaving the place, without being ordered or controlled by anyone. This transformation from a fearful, passive, quiet, and unexpressive boy into an active, aggressive, and roguish one anticipates his joining in with a bad crowd of neighborhood boys, "los malditos de la Torrecilla" (32).

Leaving Moralitos without saying goodbye, Masaharu wanders around the neighborhood, waiting for the gang of tough boys to appear at "la gruta del Sagrado Corazón." Masaharu sees them gathering, one by one, around the cave shrine. He lets himself go with them, looking for trouble and gets involved in a violent fight with another gang. The police come in, and the two gangs run off in all directions, but later Masaharu finds himself again with his group. Although he becomes inebriated, frantic, and fearless before and during the fight, his usual withdrawal and inertia return to him afterwards. Seeing other boys hanging around together again, "Masaharu aparecía recogido, adherido a la pared, sigiloso, como si estuviera enfrascado, sumiso. Asentía. Sonreía. Impertérrito [...] con la misma actitud de sosiego, sin mover los ojos, ni las piernas, ni las manos, sin ninguna importancia" (34). Then, just as before when he abruptly abandons Moralitos, he leaves the gang of boys without saying goodbye to anyone or making any sign of leaving, "sin alarde, sin resolución, cínico y adormecido, sin despedirse de nadie" (34). His temporary transformation into a fearless, aggressive, and frenetic boy, who participates in a gang fight, demonstrates that he has shown a different face that exists latently behind that of a bullied, defenseless, passive, and quiet boy.

Although visiting Moralitos and wandering around the neighborhood with the delinquents allows him to express his frustrations in actions, this does not mean that he has found a "proper" place, away from the discipline of silence and passivity through his visit to Moralitos or joining the gang of neighborhood boys. In the middle of a game with Moralitos and after gathering with the boys, he leaves the place without saying goodbye to anyone. The narrator repeats the expression, "sin despedirse de

nadie”(31, 34), insinuating that Masaharu’s withdrawal and indifference, drilled in through the discipline of silence and passivity, always surround him, making him unable to ever find a “proper” place to be a member of a certain group—family, neighborhood, community, society, or nation.

On the other hand, this lack of a “proper” place ironically enables Masaharu not to be located and controlled by the authority that attempts to coerce him into staying within the realm of silence and passivity. The discipline that inculcates passivity, silence, and indifference is the very discipline that makes him feel uncomfortable and suffocated and pushes him to leave the disciplinary institutions of his father’s restaurant and the school. At the same time, Masaharu, by appropriating what he has learned through the discipline of silence and passivity, withdraws himself from the people and places that he encounters in the neighborhood in order to avoid being located and ruled in the realm of silence and passivity. Masaharu’s appropriation of the discipline of silence and passivity resonates with de Certeau’s pedestrians’ (re)appropriation of the already existing established system and order of urban space. De Certeau’s pedestrians walk in order to find a “proper” place, and in the process of their search, they leave uncountable footsteps—“things *extra* and *other*”—that intrude “the accepted framework, the imposed order” (107). Yet, de Certeau contends that the intrusion takes place under the established system of urban space and that the pedestrians’ appropriation and manipulation of the system and power do not completely wipe them out (xiv-xv, xxi, 96-97, 101, 107). In a similar way, Masaharu’s footsteps also do not expunge the discipline of silence and passivity. However, they do poke, pierce, and thrust the order of silence and passivity.

Going back to the scene in which Masaharu waits for the neighborhood bad boys to appear on the street of la Torrecilla, the narrator presents, in detail, movements and activities in the neighborhood. Elderly women come out to “la gruta del Sagrado Corazón” to clean the glass windows of the shrine, and Mr. Elías puts his chair at the door of his house as usual. The yellow walls of his house shine at the patio, and a sewage smell comes from the kitchens of the houses on the street. People in the neighborhood start passing through the patio in a late Saturday morning. These detailed descriptions of the Saturday neighborhood scene, like those of Masaharu’s weekday walks, demonstrate the heterogeneity and multifariousness of the inhabitants and their movements and activities. In this heterogeneous and multifarious atmosphere, the complexity of the neighborhood manifests itself and cannot be easily organized and reduced into a homogeneous and readable image of a neighborhood. Consequently, it becomes impossible to pinpoint exactly where Masaharu is located and toward which direction his footsteps are moving.

This unlocatability is also closely related to the disappearance of the label of Masaharu’s Nisei identity. At school, as soon as Masaharu encounters the bully Kanashiro, he is identified as a Nisei boy by the bully: “Ah, un japonés” (28). Later, Kanashiro tells Masaharu: “No te olvidas, somos de la misma raza. Somos niseí,

tramposo, farsante" (39). At the restaurant, the sergeant reminds everyone that because the owner of the restaurant is Japanese, he should be deported. Unlike these places, where the connection between Masaharu's Nisei identity and the discipline of silence and passivity is constructed, on the street of la Torrecilla, on Saturdays, he is simply another inhabitant of this neighborhood, like anyone else. He is no longer confined in the Japanese Peruvian discipline of silence and passivity.

However, his escape from the discipline of silence and passivity does not permanently last. His footsteps and movements have produced "a sieve-order" (de Certeau 107), which has weakened the established order and has allowed him to leave the discipline of silence and passivity. Yet, at the same time, the silence, passivity, and withdrawal stemming from his own appropriation of the discipline prevents him from gaining a sense of belonging. He does not belong to Moralito's place, the gang of the boys, or any other definite and fixed places or groups. As a result, he temporarily returns to his father's restaurant.

At the restaurant, where Masaharu observes his parents and siblings conform to the discipline and order of silence and passivity, he does not talk about what happened on the street with anyone, but tells himself: "Nada había ocurrido, nada había acontecido, sin ningún pensamiento en la cabeza" (34). He remains quiet and still for a while, engrossed in vacuity, feeling nothing and thinking about nothing. Although he seems to struggle, being stuck in the infinite circularity of leaving the discipline of silence and passivity—returning to it—leaving it again, his wandering around does not end in vain. Every time he leaves it, he gains tools necessary to unlock his silence: voice, words, and utterance. The next time he leaves the restaurant, he has the opportunity to use these tools.

Masaharu remembers that he needs to go to church to study catechism. As soon as he leaves the restaurant, a series of action verbs fill the passage. The action verbs—"tuvo conciencia," "[r]egresó a la casa," "[s]e bañó," "[s]e cambió de ropa," "[s]alió a la calle," "caminó por Huancavelica," "llegó a la iglesia," "buscó a su grupo," "[se] sentó" y "escuchó la voz [del instructor]"—shifts the air from the atmosphere of silence and passivity into the ambience of actions and motions. Such an ambience anticipates what Masaharu experiences next. He hears some voice calling his name, realizes that the voice is coming from the image of the Lady of Conception, and cries, praying and begging her to annihilate the existence of Kanashiro, of evil. "—¡Que no haya vileza! ¡Que no exista Kanashiro!" (37). This is the first time that Masaharu expresses his emotions in sentences. Although the discipline of silence and passivity continues to follow him, toward the end of the story, his walking enables him to further enunciate in sentences his inner thoughts.

Despite his temporary escape from the discipline of silence and passivity and his transformation into a fearless and aggressive boy, the same routine returns to Masaharu. Again at school, Masaharu is beaten by Kanashiro, but he still does not do anything to defend himself, but responds as if nothing had happened, "sin llanto, sin queja, sin

amargura, puesto que nada había ocurrido. Otra vez resignado, sentado en el fondo del aula, Masaharu permanecía ausente” (39). And after school, he finds himself on the street, directing himself toward the same La Aurora market, where he finds his shelter. As always, the narrator follows Masaharu’s usual paths. This is the third time that the narrator gives the detailed descriptions of the streets, and they are very similar to the street scenes depicted in the first and second versions:

Masaharu ya estaba en el jirón Cañete, entre el olor doméstico de la *chanfainita*, y las paredes descascaradas. Calles con su *chicheríos*. Viejas mansiones mohosas. Puertas con sus ventanas de maderas. *Triciclos y ambulantes cochambrosos*. [...]. Ingresaba al mercado La Aurora, solamente para sentir *la piel áspera de la piña*, y observan *las venas de las chirimoyas*. Aparecían *filetes de pescado* en bandejas, pernils de cerdo colgados en ganchos. Atravesaba el pasadizo de *los comederos*. Y luego desembocaba en el quiosco del señor Saito. (39 emphasis added)

As examined above, the new details indicated in italics reinforce the heterogeneity and complexity of everyday activities and movements on the streets and at the market which constantly multiply, fluctuate, and diversify. Because of the heterogeneity and complexity of the neighborhood revealed by Masaharu’s ritual of walking, it is almost impossible to always maintain the same order and organization of space in the neighborhood. In this unruly neighborhood, Masaharu’s location imposed by order and accepted by his family and school—the realm of silence and passivity—cannot be conserved perpetually. Thus at the end of the story, Masaharu does not conform to the discipline of silence and passivity.

The story ends with Masaharu’s response to Mr. Saito’s question:

Saito preguntaría:

—¿Por qué no te defiendes?

Masaharu le miraría a los ojos, sin consuelo, ni pena, ni nostalgia, respondía:

—La maldad existe, sin remedio. Es un cojo, tiene cuatro dedos, se llama Kanashiro. (39-40)

For the first time, Masaharu answers Mr. Saito in sentences, and this is the first time that he communicates his thoughts in sentences to, not a statue of a saint at church, but a person. Masaharu’s broken silence, declaring the existence of evil around Masaharu, embodied in the figure of Kanashiro, attests to his liberation from the discipline of silence and passivity. However, by reading carefully the narrator’s and Masaharu’s last words, the reader cannot help noticing other expressions that connote passivity and withdrawal: “sin consuelo, sin pena, ni nostalgia” and “sin remedio” (40).

Masaharu does not show comfort, pain, or sentimentality to Mr. Saito, but passively accepts the existence of evil without trying to find a solution. Furthermore, the very last word is Kanashiro, the last name of the Nisei bully, who not only constantly reminds Masaharu of his ethnic and racial background, but also causes him to be confined in the discipline of silence and passivity. Thus, Masaharu's liberation gained through his walks is, as in his previous escapes, a temporary and makeshift release from the discipline of silence and passivity, which is *only transiently* disturbed and *always* stealthily and continuously follows him.

Masaharu's search for a "proper" place remains inconclusive, leading the reader to suspect that such a place is illusory. The voice, words, and utterances, which he has found and gained in the process of his search, are microscopic and invisible dots cramped with others. These are too small to be seen on an official map of his district composed by the Peruvian government or city planners who do not listen to the voice of the mass. The postwar Peruvian government, as shown at the beginning of this study, drew a map for the Japanese Peruvians—the map of discipline and order that instructed them on how to plan out a correct route. The correct route was to become halfway Peruvian citizens with strangeness and foreignness who would obey Peruvian laws and assimilate themselves into the dominant Peruvian culture and society, keeping quiet and docile, "obeying Peruvian laws and adapting themselves to the outlook, ideals and customs of our nation," as shown above in Belaúnde's speech (UN 756th Meeting 2; Masterson 219). Contrary to this role model of the Japanese Peruvians, Higa presents a Nisei boy who does not remain quiet and docile, but struggles to find a way to escape from the places in which he feels confined in the discipline and order of silence and passivity. While still situating his protagonist in the realm of silence and passivity, Higa gives him the opportunities to leave the realm, return to it, and leave it again and traces his footsteps moving back and forth between the exit and entrance of the realm of silence and passivity. By doing so, Higa exhibits infinite, mutable, and plural labyrinths of disorder and disorientation that impedes Masaharu from finding a "proper" place, yet allows him to deny his permanent confinement to the discipline of silence and passivity.

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