



Haunting Authorship: The Colonial Entanglement of Space and Body in *Cheers, Soldier!*

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Abstract: Through examining Huang Chunming's transtextual project *Cheers, Soldier!* (Zhanshi Ganbei 戰士，乾杯！), this paper explores how settler authorship becomes structurally unsettled. Across its short story and stage script forms, the narrative centers on the multigenerational conscription of Indigenous men into successive colonial armies. Rather than presenting this history as resolved or representable, the texts reveal a deeper tension: the author's own position becomes entangled in the return of what cannot be narrated from the outside.

While the short story filters Indigenous experience through a reflective first-person voice, the stage script disperses that perspective, incorporating fragmented speech, embodied presence, and performative memory. As narrative control gives way to shared perception, authorship itself shifts from an interpretive authority to a residual structure shaped by absence, vulnerability, and repetition.

Through close textual analysis, the paper argues that this transtextual movement is not a linear adaptation, but a redistribution of narrative responsibility. *Cheers, Soldier!* does not aim to repair historical violence through fiction. Instead, it lingers in the uncertainty of what it means to write from a settler position. The result is not narrative empathy, but narrative haunting: an authorial presence that remains within the frame, no longer centered, but no longer able to withdraw.

Keywords: Authorship, Indigeneity, Postcolonialism, Hauntology, Space, Body

1. Introduction: The Tension of Haunting

Huang Chunming's *Cheers, Soldier!* (《戰士，乾杯！》) unfolds across two major versions: a short story published in 1988 and a stage script completed in 2005. Both were inspired by Huang's visit to Haocha, a Rukai village in Taiwan's southern mountains, where he encountered a wall of photographs and medals documenting four generations of Rukai men conscripted into military service. These men had fought under different banners: the Japanese Empire, the Kuomintang, and even Chinese Communist forces. They mostly died in unfamiliar territories and for causes unrelated to their own communities. This history, while grounded in specific familial loss, resonates with a broader structural condition of Indigenous dispossession and militarized assimilation under Taiwan's layered colonial situation.

In both versions of *Cheers, Soldier!*, this history enters not only through explicit content but through narrative structure, affective alignment, and spatial arrangement. The short story centers on a Han narrator whose journey into the mountains becomes a filtered encounter with Indigenous space and memory, while the stage script disperses narrative control, introducing multiple voices, temporal overlays, and ghostly presences that resist singular interpretation. And through the adaptation process what becomes increasingly unstable is the positionality of that witnessing and the narrative authority it presumes.

Existing scholarship has often emphasized the emotional intensity and ethical sincerity of Huang's project. Others have read the story as a Han writer's attempt to acknowledge Indigenous trauma and to recover forgotten histories. Yet relatively few studies have addressed the structural instability of Huang's own authorial position, or how the shift between media forms produces not merely aesthetic variation but an internal reorganization of voice, space, and embodiment.

This paper does not treat *Cheers, Soldier!* as a record of Indigenous experience, nor as a work that resolves the problem of settler narration through formal innovation. Rather, it reads the transtextual transformation from short story to script as a process through which settler authorship becomes haunted, specifically displaced, refracted, and embedded in structures it cannot fully control. Drawing on theories of haunting (Gordon), trans-corporeal feminism (Alaimo), and performance (Taylor), the analysis focuses on how spatial and bodily configurations across the two versions rework the author's narrative presence, not by removing it, but by dispersing it across affective and sensory planes.

2. Spatial Narrative: From Filtered Space to Shared Witnessing

As fundamentally distinct artistic forms, the short story and performance differ in their modes of spatial construction and mediation. The short story version of *Cheers, Soldier!* reflects Huang Chunming's engagement with space as he transforms firsthand observation into literary representation, extending beyond the realm of documentary realism. The narrator and the author in the story are rolled into one, with the first-person voice of "Huang"—a character who is explicitly modeled on Huang Chunming himself—anchoring the narrative. This narrative position has its own stylistic particularities, but from the perspective of authorship, it also reveals that Huang had not yet fully grappled with the ethical



implications of his position as a Han settler writer. The “I” in the story consistently functions as the reader’s lens, structuring what can be seen, felt, and known through a settler embodiment. This produces what might be called a high-density settler spatial experience, which is a biased space, a filtered Indigenous space.

Broadly speaking, this filtering manifests in two dimensions: cognitive filtering and emotional filtering. From the perspective of “I,” Huang offers a detailed account of his movement from the lowlands (Pingdi 平地) into the highlands (Shandi 山地). This is not merely a physical journey but a symbolic passage—from the world of settled Han society into the colonial periphery. As he travels, “I” recalls the Qing scholar Gu Yanwu and his call to “travel ten thousand miles (Xingwanlilu 行萬里路)” in pursuit of grounded knowledge. He frames the journey as a kind of fieldwork, saying: “My perspective more or less coalesced with Gu Yanwu’s preference for concrete learning over wishy-washy theorizing: learning through direct and indirect experience; with an emphasis on learning on-the-spot, and so on, made the effort of getting there worthwhile.”^[1] Embedded within this gaze is a structure of epistemological desire—the Indigenous space is cast as something to be known, studied, and absorbed. It is not inhabited on its own terms, but rather enters the narrative as an object of observation, a spatial Other under settler scrutiny.

Huang’s gaze lingers on the untamed mountain landscape, narrow, overgrown paths rarely touched by human presence.^[2] He fixates on Xiong’s astonishing physical strength and agility, framing the Indigenous guide’s bodily endurance as a counterpoint to his own mounting exhaustion, enacting what might be called a “tourist gaze.”^[3] Within this perceptual logic, the host’s reality becomes legible only through the visitor’s terms, turning the local guide, Xiong, in this case, into an instrument for the narrator’s journey of self-discovery. Anthropologist Kalland categorizes Indigenous knowledge into three layers: empirical knowledge, paradigmatic knowledge, and institutional knowledge.^[4] In this context, Huang’s descriptions of Xiong do not gesture toward any coherent social or spiritual epistemology. Instead, it reduces Xiong’s actions to a set of practical techniques for the narrator to absorb and emulate, engaging only with the first, empirical layer of knowledge. When Xiong offers advice on how to walk and how to breathe, the narrator accepts these corrections yet shows no interest in their cognitive or cultural foundations. Likewise, when Xiong explains why he need to clear the path by cutting back the grass, Huang is struck by the explanation but remains incurious. Indigenous knowledge is thus fragmented into isolated experiential moments, stripped of their cultural anchoring and repurposed as settler utility.

However, the stage script reconfigures spatial authorship as a performative and participatory act. By releasing narrative space into embodied performance, the stage version diffuses authorial control. No longer mediated through Huang’s first-person voice, the ascent into the mountains is radically compressed and transformed into a multisensory event. This becomes immediately apparent in the script’s stage directions: the lights gradually dim; the rhythmic slicing of underbrush by a machete echoes through the space; voices call out from offstage; dogs bark in the distance; and a flashlight beam—at once disorienting and direct—cuts across the faces of the characters^[2] and, by extension, the spectators. These theatrical elements do not “represent” space; they embody it, inviting spectators to feel the instability of terrain rather than to observe it from a distance.

Performance is not only about “what it is,” but crucially about “what it does”—how it mobilizes affect, disturbs the senses, and activates corporeal presence and audience participation.^[5] This recalibration of experiential space in *Cheers, Soldier!* fundamentally shifts not only how the Indigenous landscape is staged, but also how spectators perceives, shares, and co-construct that space. Taylor captures this dynamic precisely: “Performance is a doing to, a thing done to and with the spectator.”^[5] Building on Boal’s notion of the “spectator-actor”^[6], she expands its ethical and political implications. On stage, the journey into the mountains is no longer a settler’s voice attempting to interpret Indigenous terrain; it is staged through fragmented sensations, where the audience becomes spect-actors—not merely watching, but experiencing, reacting, and being acted upon.^[5] The audience thus becomes a participant in spatial perception and a co-creator of its meaning. And in this process, Huang Chunming, once the narrator and composer, recedes from the frame and joins the ranks of the spectators.

In addition, the stage script deepens the exploration of the fan dao (蕃刀) through the dialogues of Huang and Xiong, thereby engaging questions not only of material culture, but of paradigmatic knowledge and institutional knowledge.^[4] The term fan dao (蕃刀), or “barbarian knife,” originates from a Han Chinese designation for the bladed tools traditionally used by Indigenous peoples. The character fan (蕃)—a term commonly employed during the Japanese colonial period and the early postwar era to refer to Taiwan’s Indigenous populations—carries a legacy of colonial othering and racialized condescension. For the Rukai people, however, the knife is an essential tool: tied at the waist with a cord, it serves everyday purposes such as clearing brush, slicing meat, or crafting implements. When Xiong challenges the state’s classification of the fan dao as an illegal weapon, he is not merely defending a practical object. He is confronting a broader system of cultural and legal misrecognition shaped by Han-centric fears. His remark: “Only you lowland folks use machetes or watermelon knives as murder weapons” performs a pointed inversion: it redefines “weapon” not by function, but by the racialized epistemologies that assign danger based on who is holding the tool. The fan dao, then, becomes a site where Indigenous knowledge, law, and survival practices converge, and where they collide with settler institutions. What appears to be a casual conversation is in fact a microcosmic enactment of colonial hierarchy—a moment that dramatizes how Indigenous material culture has been criminalized through settler legal frameworks. Unlike the short story, where the knife is seen but never named, the stage script gives it discursive presence. In doing so, the script disrupts the cognitive filtering of the short story.

Moreover, Xiong’s home functions as a site of emotional filtering, where the narrator’s affective responses mediate the whole understanding of Indigenous history, trauma, and kinship. This house is not merely a domestic space, it becomes a haunted archive. Described as a dark, enclosed stone dwelling lit only by a single candle, its walls are covered with

certificates and portraits of warriors in uniform. Through a back-and-forth dialogue between Huang and Xiong, the space becomes legible as a surface of historical inscription, decoded through visible objects such as photographs and wall adornments—read as indices of colonial pasts.

In this process of visual reading, Huang experiences intense emotional reactions: shock, pity, fear, and shame. These affective responses become the lens through which he interprets the space. In her critique of a Christian Aid letter, Sara Ahmed responds to the painful narrative disseminated through compassion, “the over-representation of the pain of others is significant in that it fixes the other as the one who ‘has’ pain, and who can overcome that pain only when the Western subject feels moved enough to give”.^[7] The portraits of Rukai soldiers in Xiong’s home certainly testify to a history of familial pain, but they seem to acquire narrative clarity only when they elicit emotional disturbance in the Han settler narrator. Xiong’s home is thus transformed into a semiotic system—one that exists to be understood, decoded, and empathized with by the “I.”

In the stage version, the most striking transformation of this space lies in the unlocking of temporal layers: Xiong’s home is no longer merely a realist setting in which Huang and Xiong converse in the present. Instead, it becomes a multi-temporal space, a convergence point where different moments fold into each other and ancestors constantly appear as ghosts. As the stage directions describe, “Labara enters holding a bow; Tolo follows with a spearhead and fan dao, passing through the wall (my translation)”.^[8] This gesture shatters the boundary of physical space, signaling a collapse of linear spatial logic. The house becomes a generational portal through which Rukai ancestors return, reclaiming presence and voicing the past on their own terms.

What emerges here is not simply a new scene but an entirely different affective structure of authorship—one in which the settler narrator no longer holds the script of memory. Ahmed’s concept of “impression” is crucial in understanding this shift. For her, an impression is not merely a feeling; it is “the very affect of one surface upon another... that leaves its mark or trace”^[7], a deeply consequential form of affect. The stage script enacts this by interrupting narrative continuity to dwell in the embodied performance of memory. Labara and Tolo do not simply appear; they even re-stage hunting activities in the past, “Labala listens to Tolo while adjusting his movements, performing at the same time; like a person from the Stone Age, enacting stories of war or hunting around the campfire at night—his gestures are exaggerated and symbolic (my translation)”.^[8] The ghosts, as they reenact the mountain pig hunt, press the past into the present space, and impresses upon both the physical scene and the audience’s affective surface. It materially reconfigure the house: the past does not return as distant trauma filtered through narration, but as an active, surface-altering force. The performance of the ghosts makes space felt, rather than told.

3. Corporeal Narrative: From Drunken Hallucinations to Resonant Bodies

The transformation in Huang Chunming’s construction of the Indigenous body is also striking across his trans-textual journey. In the short story, the Indigenous body is mostly intervenes as a spectral residue rather than any fully embodied character. Its return is not willed, but summoned through the collapse of perception brought on by the narrator’s accumulating anxiety and guilt—as “I,” Huang the settler, reaches the limits of his sensory containment. One pivotal scene captures this threshold: Xiong offers rice wine late at night, and under its swift intoxication, “I” begins to experience hallucinations: the figures in the photographs on the wall begin to flicker and come alive in the shifting light and shadow. Here, intoxication does not merely alter perception, it also unlocks a deeper crisis of embodiment, wherein the narrator’s body becomes a medium through which unresolved historical violence returns.

It is in this moment of collapse that Avital Ronell’s theorization of addiction and “Dasein” becomes especially resonant. Ronell invokes the concept of “Dasein” to explore the ontological structure of addiction. She interprets Dasein as inherently thrown into the world in a condition of radical uncanniness and potential. This uncanniness, she writes, produces a form of vertigo: “Dasein is taken back fully to its sheer uncanniness, and hit with vertigo. But this rush gives Dasein its thrownness as something possible, and as something that can be repeated”.^[9] In the short story, alcohol does not merely intoxicate Huang; it becomes the medium through which “passive subjectivity” is released. His bodily condition becomes an embodiment of what Ronell calls “uncanny thrownness”: the moment he is struck by alcohol, he is also struck by the haunting histories embedded within his being.

Moreover, in Ronell’s reading, anxiety is the existential mode through which Dasein confronts its own being as thrown and guilty, and is given the chance to repeat this confrontation not as blind compulsion but as a possibility for resolution—*Entschluss*, or decision. However, she warns that the “addicted Dasein” cannot seize this possibility; instead, it “doesn’t detach itself from the experience of passivity in order to decide upon repetition in time; rather, it is inhabited by a compulsion that blindly bypasses finitude’s markers.”^[9] In Huang’s intoxicated state, his body misaligns with the perceptual registers of history. Through hallucination, the ghosts of Indigenous soldiers emerge silently before him. His bodily reaction is compulsive, tearful, repeatedly raising his glass in an almost ritualistic gesture:

Dropping my head, I felt my nose tremble, dropping as I lost all my bearings. I felt so sad at heart that I resorted to opening my mouth to control the agitation. Drool and tears, all the more. I knew I could not hold back my urge to sob; all I asked of myself was to make no sound, to not lose my control, and not to startle the others. I did my best to keep my mouth wide open. That was the one method I knew to keep myself from making noise.

I could still hear faint shouts of, “cheers, soldier.” I still...^[1]

Huang is trapped in a cycle of emotional collapse and repetition, paralyzed by settler guilt. He possesses neither ethical agency nor the capacity to seize any possibility.

Evidently, the short story's construction of the body centers on Huang himself—his guilt, his fragility, and his longing for atonement. Therefore, the spectral Rukai warriors serve as figures of absence. They function less as characters than as necessary conduits through which the settler's emotional overflow takes form.

By contrast, the stage script brings the ancestral ghosts directly onto the stage, as fully present figures who appear early in the play and coexist alongside the living within the Indigenous village. In the character list, ancestral figures such as Tolo, Labala, Yamauchi Haruo, Bashan Zhi, and Du Linjie are all explicitly named, with a note specifying: "The following characters are all ghosts".^[1] They appear concretely on stage, each with a identity, voice, and set of actions.

Tolo: Two kinds of Chinese soldiers?

Labala: One is the kind that Yugan—who married Laba Wus after her first husband died—joined. The other is the kind that Yugan and Laba Wus' son joined. Oh! I remember now, I remember. One kind is from mainland China, and the other kind is from here in Taiwan.

Tolo: But aren't they both Chinese soldiers?

Labala: No, they're different! They're different! They fight each other...

Tolo (shocked): Are you saying Yugan and his son fought each other?

Labala: That's right.

Tolo: Then why did they go become Chinese soldiers at all? (My translation)^[8]

In this scene, the ghostly grandfather Labala and great-grandfather Tolo are endowed with distinct personalities and a striking sense of agency. Through Tolo's persistent forgetfulness and questioning, their dialogue takes on ethical weight, unfolding as a layered inquiry into generational memory, loyalty, and loss. The stage script expands the scope of narrative agency what was once mediated through the settler's perspective is now embodied and performed by the ghosts themselves. Huang no longer possesses the authority to "summon" the ghosts into presence; instead, he exists alongside them, within the same haunted and shared terrain.

Ke-Ming Lin and Hui-Chen Huang, in their intertextual analysis of the three versions of *Cheers, Soldier !*, offer a compelling insight. They argue that the stage script functions as an elaboration of the "punctum" embedded in the soldiers' photographs.^[10] In the script, Huang Chunming, as author, releases the "punctum" from the static frame of the image and gives it a body. By staging the absent, deceased soldiers, who in the short story remain unvoiced and invisible, as ghost characters, the script translates the punctum into theatrical space.

Originally, for Barthes, the punctum is that element in a photograph which escapes symbolic coding. It is affective and intimate, "pricks, bruises, and poignantly wounds" the viewer.^[11] Crucially, the punctum does not reveal meaning. it reveals being, and that being is almost always haunted by death. For Barthes, photography is an art of death. Every photograph is marked by its temporal condition: it captures a moment that once was, a moment already lost. He points to the dual temporality of the photograph: it shows life while affirming death. The viewer sees not only the person but the fact of their absence, their loss, their having been. The punctum, then, is not merely a detail, it is a wound in time. Within this framework, the ghost figures in the stage script are no longer silent referents behind the frame of the photograph. They now speak, move, and act. They become what Barthes calls "the living image of a dead thing."

In fact, even though the ghost characters and the living coexist within the same spatial frame in the stage script, they cannot directly communicate with one another. The pivotal figure who initiates Huang's encounter with the ghosts is Xiong's mother. In both the two versions of *Cheers, Soldier !*, Xiong's mother, named Laba Wus in the play, appears bedridden, aged, and physically immobile. Yet despite this shared condition of material fragility, her narrative function undergoes a profound transformation across the two texts.

In the short story, Xiong's mother is never given a name. She is introduced solely through spatial cues—"from behind the curtain"—and her voice is mediated through indirect speech or filtered dialogue, with Xiong serving as the interpreter of her Rukai language. Her only notable moment of vocal expression occurs when she sings a spiritual song described as "half-spoken, half-chanted," funereal in tone. The song carries the full weight of her unspoken thoughts, as Xiong later translates for Huang: "She says her life is miserable, says I refuse to let her drink; she wants my dad and our ancestors to weigh in on this. All the people she's talking to are dead, those dead guys on the wall".^[1] Yet despite its affective intensity, this moment does not grant her agency. Her voice does not transform the space, nor does it summon the dead directly; rather, it functions as a mood-setting sonic device that amplifies Huang's emotional disorientation and hallucinatory collapse. Within this atmosphere, Huang writes in his notebook: "On earth, where could there be a history more disheartening than this? Where would there be an ethnic minority with a fate more heartbreaking?"^[1]. In this way, the suffering of Xiong's mother becomes narrative capital for Huang's melancholic settler reflection.

Different from the short story, Laba Wus—Xiong's mother assumes a dramatically central role in the stage script. Though she remains bedridden, her spiritual song becomes an extension of her body. Her voice is not only expressing emotion but also restructuring the stage structure: as the lights flicker, ghostly soldiers emerge within the domestic setting of the stage. They enter as autonomous figures, drawn forth by the resonance of Laba Wus' voice. In this moment, Laba Wus becomes the acoustic and spatial center of the performance. The voice of the Indigenous woman functions as the force that animates the stage, summoning ghost soldiers from across multiple historical regimes.

[...] Laba Wus' singing suddenly rises. Tolo and the others join in, echoing her in call and response. Sitting in place, their bodies sway rhythmically back and forth. Huang moves along with them, but stumbles, swaying awkwardly. (My translation)^[8]

This moment makes clear that her voice is not separate from her body. It is "the time-space where human corporeality, in all its material fleshiness, is inseparable from 'nature' or 'environment'"^[12]. In this sense, Laba Wus's chant can be understood as vibrational unfolding of her flesh into space and toward others. Her song compels the men to enter a shared

rhythm, producing a corporeal resonance that crosses character boundaries. Even after the others stop singing, her chant continues, sustaining a refusal to resolve: an insistence not of symbolic mourning, but of bodily persistence. The maternal Indigenous body exceeds its stillness, speaking not through dialogue, but through vibration.

This reconfiguration of narrative resonates with Olivia Michiko Gagnon's account of how Tanya Tagaq's performances, through breath and sound, "enacts a powerful decolonial gesture" and "stage an intense encounter with the colonial archive".^[13] Gagnon argues that such performances do not aim to recover a fixed historical truth but instead activate a sensory entanglement—a mode of being with the past that insists on "staying in and with the blur of times, histories, affects, and bodies".^[12] In this light, Laba Wus' chant is not merely a dramatic device, but an archival act: a sonic transmission that emerges from her body as a medium beyond flesh. It sutures the present with ghostly pasts, not through plot, but through resonant presence. Her voice becomes the site where colonial violence, ancestral return, and Indigenous agency converge. As with Tagaq, who refuses "to let go of the past" while also refusing "to be relegated to that past"^[12], Laba Wus's continued chant holds open the haunted structure of the scene—not to explain history, but to vibrate it into presence.

4. Haunting Authorship: The Ethics of the Mirror

The trans-textual transformation of Huang Chunming's *Cheers, Soldier!* from short story to stage script, marks a deliberate structural intervention in which authorship itself becomes both the object and process of ethical scrutiny. Huang Chunming consciously positions his authorship within a mirrored apparatus, not to affirm his identity, but to interrogate it. In Lacanian terms, the self is never a stable core but "an imaginary function"^[14], a construct born of misrecognition and sustained by the illusion of coherence. Dylan Evans further explains that the imaginary seduces the subject through "illusions of wholeness, synthesis, autonomy". Huang Chunming, however, does not naively inhabit this illusion. Instead, he repurposes the mirror, transforming it from a site of self-deception into a reflective device that forces himself, as an author and a settler, to confront the fragmented and spectral nature of his narrative authority.

In the short story, Huang Chunming's authorial voice operates within the comfort zone of the imaginary. The first-person narration, steeped in emotional introspection and moral positioning, creates the illusion of ethical proximity to Indigenous suffering. Here, Huang Chunming embodies what Althusser describes as the ideological subject, reassured within a mirrored structure where "each subject can contemplate its own image... the guarantee that this really concerns them"^[15]. Yet by dispersing the authorial control—allowing ancestral spirits, embodied performance, and Indigenous voices to dominate the narrative space—Huang Chunming shifts from being the framer of the story to being framed by it in the script. This is an active ethical gesture: he repositions himself as both creator and spectator, compelled to witness his own authorship materialize as a haunted presence within the space he has constructed. This haunting aligning with Gordon's assertion that haunting "has a shape, an electric empiricity, but the evidence is barely visible"^[16]. At the stage level, Huang Chunming's authorial presence becomes precisely this—palpable yet elusive, embedded in the gaps between voices, the silences of stage directions, and the ghostly revival of Indigenous bodies. His presence lingers like a specter, a presence that does not command but haunts.

Moreover, Huang Chunming's reflection on "original sin", "the structural violence embedded in this society"^[17], places this haunting within a broader ethical framework. Adaptation does not absolve the author of settler complicity; rather, it exposes it. Identity, as Schick reminds us, "only exists as the dual of alterity, conveyed through narrative"^[18]. Huang Chunming's work, therefore, is inseparable from the Indigenous Other. It is constituted by the very voices and bodies it seeks to represent, and in this process, and it is haunted by them. The mirror here is not a device of self-recognition but a mechanism of ethical instability, dragging the author into visibility and forcing him to confront the ghostly remnants of colonial narrative structures.

Thus, haunting authorship is not merely a state of being reflected or subverted by one's own narrative architecture. It is a deliberate staging of moral uncertainty: a space where Huang Chunming faces the fractures of his settler authorship while seeking the contours of ethical possibility within that haunting. By transforming his presence into a spectral trace within the stage script, he treats the mirror as a site of ongoing ethical interrogation, where authorship becomes visible precisely to explore how one might exist responsibly within structural violence and historical ghosts.

In this sense, truth is not produced to assert authority but to expose the fragile process by which the author negotiates his position within a story that is not his own. Entanglement is a mode of ethical being, where narration means enduring discomfort, maintaining uncertain visibility, and seeking acknowledgment, rather than mastery, on the reflective surface of one's creation. Huang Chunming's adaptation reveals that true ethical posture lies in allowing oneself to remain perpetually entangled as a form of accountability, within which the difficulties and unresolved possibilities of moral engagement are glimpsed but never settled.

5. Conclusion

The trans textual journey of *Cheers, Soldier!* is not merely a reflection of narrative transformation, but a testament to Huang Chunming's active confrontation with the ethical dilemmas of settler authorship. Rather than seeking narrative mastery or resolution, Huang Chunming deliberately fragments his authorial presence, redistributing space, body, and voice to expose the structural haunting embedded in colonial storytelling. This is not a gesture of self-erasure, but one of ethical agency—a conscious choice to position authorship within a field of vulnerability, resonance, and shared witnessing. Through this process, Huang Chunming reframes storytelling as an ongoing negotiation with historical ghosts, where responsibility is measured not by the ability to represent the Other, but by the willingness to be unsettled by them.

In *Cheers, Soldier!*, Huang Chunming does not resolve the tensions of settler authorship; he materializes them. His work

invites us to reconsider authorship as a dynamic ethical practice—one that embraces entanglement, foregrounds discomfort, and acknowledges that in the face of colonial memory, the most honest narrative act is to remain haunted.

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