Recent Scholarship on Japan
Classical to Contemporary

Edited by **Richard Donovan**

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INTRODUCTION: CLASSICAL TO CONTEMPORARY

I had the privilege of editing the *IAFOR Journal of Literature & Librarianship* from 2013 to 2018. I was also the Assistant Editor of the *IAFOR Journal of Arts & Humanities* for the 2012 issue. My time working for the journals of the International Academic Forum introduced me to a large number of scholars across a range of disciplines and from around the world. Since IAFOR is based in Japan, many of the papers I chose and edited for the literary journal were related to Japan and Japanese literature. I have selected some of the best of these to be republished in this collection as a 'state of the scholarship' report on Japan in the second decade of the twenty-first century. The contributors come from both East and West, and comprise both established and up-and-coming academics—but what they all have in common is an abiding and deep interest in Japan and its place in the world.

As the name of this anthology suggests, the papers cover a large timespan, from the classical Heian-period centuries, through the mediaeval period that followed it, and on into post-war Japan and the present day. The topics are equally as wide-ranging; yet it is surprising how many links between eras—and, indeed, papers—appear in the course of reading.

The first section of the collection, Classical Literature and Its Reconfiguration, presents Heian-era Japan through a revelatory female lens. Karolina Broma-Smenda focuses on the famous female poet Ono no Komachi, not exploring her poetry but rather considering the wider societal question of how the real woman was fictionalised in various literary genres, and to what ends.

Meanwhile, Ka Yan Lam's paper reframes Enchi Fumiko's 1960s novel *Namamiko monogatari* (*A Tale of False Fortunes*)—which both imitates and alludes to actual Heian-period literary works—as a ground-breaking feminist metafiction.

The second section, Post-war and Contemporary Literature, begins with Mark Williams' ever-relevant consideration of the role of literature in addressing traumatic experiences, with particular reference to the works of two lesser-known Japanese novelists after World War II.

Continuing in a similar thematic and temporal vein, Robert Ono examines the solace, and, beyond that, the potential source of identity, that

a literary form of ancient origins offered one of Japan's most marginalised groups, the patients of its leprosariums, in the form of the *tanka*, or short poems, that they published in the various institutions' journals in the second half of the twentieth century.

Haruki Murakami aficionados will find much of interest in the two papers treating his fiction. Andrew J. Wilson begins by looking back to mediaeval literature, in this case Kamo no Chōmei's Kamakura-period memoir *An Account of My Hut*, for an austere Buddhist counterpoint to Murakami's collection of short fiction *After the Quake*, the latter which, he contends, exhibits a necessarily humanistic turn towards the family and community in our disaster-fraught and complex modern era.

Although Haruki Murakami has sometimes been criticised for his ready appropriation of Western consumerist icons, in her paper Burcu Genç recasts the analysis as a Baudrilliardian power struggle that has implications for all individuals' attempts at living authentically in present-day society.

The third section, the most diverse, presents Japan in the international context. Although focused mainly on linguistic issues, in its fascinating comparison of publishing in eighteenth-century Britain and modern Japan Noriyuki Harada's paper also highlights the significant role of private voices in advocating for and directing linguistic change, in contrast with the slower-moving state itself. He demonstrates how innovative individuals were responsible for initiating many of the standardisations of written language, such as orthography, on which relies the modern civilisation enjoyed in both countries.

Piers M. Smith takes us on to Roland Barthes' travelogues of Japan and China, although the subject of his paper is more correctly the question of objectivity, or lack thereof, in observers' perspectives on foreign destinations, and how the 'neutral view' espoused by Barthes represents a breakthrough in such viewpoints, allowing nonjudgmental analysis and more-legitimate reflection on the 'other'.

Next, Akiyoshi Suzuki addresses the vexed question of how to read the literature of another country or culture, and whether, indeed, this is possible. The implications for international and intercultural communication become evident in this wide-ranging paper, which is at once personal and universal. In particular, with reference to various world literatures and critics, Suzuki provides a nuanced challenge to the largely unquestioned predominance of the Western literary paradigm.

Finally, I have included my own paper, from the *Journal of Arts & Humanities*, to demonstrate the place of translation studies in the critical examination of Japanese literature in translation, drawing on Czech theoretician Jiří Levý's application of game theory to translation studies in

order to consider how the English translator's acts, or 'moves', of disambiguation, may affect the representation of the original Japanese text to the English-speaking world.

I wish to conclude this introduction by thanking the CEO of IAFOR and Executive Editor of its journals, Joseph Haldane, and the IAFOR publications team, for allowing me to compile this anthology. I would also like to thank my father for suggesting the idea in the first place.

Richard Donovan, Kyoto, November 2019

Note on the text:
Citation styles, spelling and punctuation in each paper appear much as in the original, but there has been some harmonisation of formatting across papers and the correction of minor errors that went unnoticed in the initial publication.

About the Contributors

Karolina Broma-Smenda is currently an independent researcher. She received her MA in Japanese classical literature and culture in 2010 (MA thesis: *Feminity, Masculinity and Sexuality in Ancient Japan* (in Polish)) in the Department of Japanese and Korean Studies at the University of Warsaw, Poland. Between 2010 and 2016 she conducted dissertation research as a PhD candidate at the University of Warsaw (ABD). Her primary research interests were focused on female poets and writers of the Heian period. She was particularly interested in the analysis of Ono no Komachi's representations in Japanese culture. From 2013–14 she was an Exchange Researcher at Gakushūin Women's College in Tokyo as The Japan Foundation Japanese Studies Fellow.

Ka Yan Lam is a graduate student in the Department of English at the City University of Hong Kong. She is conducting comparative research for her PhD dissertation on the literature of Japanese novelists and late-Victorian writers, including Enchi Fumiko, Ōba Minako, Florence Marryat and Vernon Lee. She taught English in local schools and universities in Hong Kong and spent two years teaching at Ritsumeikan University in Japan. She has published articles in the *Journal of Popular Culture* and *Japanese Language and Literature*. Her research interests include British and Japanese literature, cultural theories, and comparative and world literature.

Mark Williams took his BA in Japanese Studies at the University of Oxford and a PhD in Japanese Literature at the University of California, Berkeley. He spent most of his career at the University of Leeds as Professor of Japanese Studies. He was also President of the British Association for Japanese Studies, 2008–11. He is currently Vice President for International Academic Exchange at International Christian University in Tokyo. He has published extensively, in English and Japanese. His published works include: *Endō Shūsaku: A Literature of Reconciliation* (Routledge); *Christianity and Japan: Impacts and Responses* (Macmillan; co-edited with John Breen), *Representing the Other in Modern Japanese Literature: A Critical Approach* (Routledge; co-edited with Rachael Hutchinson) and *Imag(in)ing the War in Japan: Representing and Responding to Trauma in Post-war Japanese Literature and Film* (Brill; co-edited with David Stahl).

He is also the translator of *Foreign Studies* and *The Girl I left Behind*, two novels by the Japanese author Endō Shūsaku.

Robert Ono is a senior assistant professor at Japan College of Social Work. Having received his PhD from International Christian University in 2014 with his dissertation on Ki no Tsurayuki, a tenth-century Japanese poet, he continues to explore various Japanese works of literature and culture, especially from a comparative and theoretical perspective. He is also the translator of several academic volumes, including Nosco et al (eds), *Values, Identity, and Equality in Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-century Japan* (Brill, 2015). His monograph in Japanese, *Ki no Tsurayuki: Bungaku to bunka no teiryū wo motomete* (Tōkyōdō Shuppan), was published in 2019.

Andrew Wilson earned his PhD in English in 1996 at Kent State University in Kent, Ohio. He has spent 24 years as a full-timer at William Rainey Harper College in Palatine, Illinois, where he teaches writing and literature, and where he has served as the college's Honors Program Coordinator and the English Department's Co-Chair. He has published in the *Mississippi Quarterly*, *The Hemingway Review*, the *Encyclopedia of Beat Literature*, and *Thirty Years After: New Essays on Vietnam War, Literature and Film*. He lives in Chicago with his wife Amy and their two young children, Sophie and Sam.

Burcu Genç is a PhD candidate at the University of Tokyo. She is majoring in Comparative Literature and Culture. Her research focuses on Japanese author Haruki Murakami and his fiction in relation to Jean Baudrillard's theory of consumerism. She is also interested in Japanese political economy and post-war history as well as contemporary literature.

Noriyuki Harada, PhD, Professor of English at Keio University, focuses on eighteenth-century English literature and culture. His interest also extends to comparative literary studies and the history of books and print culture. He has published many books and articles both in English and Japanese and translated Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* (2004), James Cook's *Voyages* (2006–07), Samuel Johnson's *Lives of the English Poets* (2009), and Samuel Richardson's *Pamela* (2012) into Japanese. His recent publications include "Translation and Transformation of Jonathan Swift's Works in Japan" in *"The First Wit of the Age": Essays on Swift and His Contemporaries in Honour of Hermann J. Real* (Peter Lang, 2013), and "Teaching Eighteenth-Century English Literature in Japan: Purposes, Curricula, and Syllabi" (*Lit Matters*, 2014).

Piers Smith is an Associate Professor of English Literature at Gulf University for Science and Technology, Kuwait. He has published chiefly in the fields of travel literature and travel writing, with excursions into Shakespeare, Burma, Borneo, Bourdieu, Auschwitz, Conrad, derealisation and the chronotope. Current research focuses on the grotesque in literature and representational art, versions of translated texts and the Gulf War.

Suzuki Akiyoshi, PhD, is a professor in the Department of Intercultural Studies at Nagasaki University in Japan, where he teaches American literature from the standpoint of world literature. He has published articles and books on American, Japanese and comparative literature. His recent books are *WorldCALL: International Perspectives on Computer-Assisted Language Learning* (co-author; New York: Routledge, 2011), *On the Late Life of Writers* (co-author; Kamakura: Minato-no-hito, 2014), and *East-West Studies of American Literature as World Literature & Essays* (Aichi: Hitotsubu Shobō, 2014).

Richard Donovan is an Associate Professor in Comparative Literature and Translation Studies in the Faculty of Letters at Kansai University. He has also worked as a translator at the Kyoto City International Relations Office. He obtained a PhD in literary translation studies at Victoria University of Wellington in 2012. The title of his thesis was *Dances with Words: Issues in the Translation of Japanese Literature into English*. Current research areas include the translation of modern and contemporary Japanese literature, representations of Kazuo Ishiguro's works in Japanese media, and the transmedial resurgence of *Twin Peaks*. His most recent book, also published by Cambridge Scholars, is entitled *Translating Modern Japanese Literature* (2019).

SECTION ONE:

CLASSICAL LITERATURE AND ITS RECONFIGURATION

How to Create a Legend? An Analysis of Constructed Representations of Ono no Komachi in Japanese Medieval Literature[1]

Karolina Broma-Smenda

Abstract

Although the historical figure known to us as Ono no Komachi (ca. 825–ca. 900) is considered to have been a famous and talented female court poet of the Heian Period in Japan, not much is known about her actual life. As a literary figure, however, her fame extended way beyond her own lifetime. Over the centuries she has continued to be an object of legendarization processes. Many literary works pictured her not only as a beautiful and skilled poet but also as *femme fatale*, courtesan, or Buddhist devotee. However, I believe that whom we currently call "Ono no Komachi" should be considered a literary construct significant for Japanese literature rather than a historical figure.

This paper analyzes representations of Ono no Komachi in Japanese medieval literature (nō drama plays, and *otogizōshi* secular tales), since I believe that the process of "creating" such legends has its origin in the specificity of the Japanese medieval period (12–16th centuries). Thus, the aim of this paper is to address the questions as to why this female poet was subject to legendarization processes and how various stages of those processes are responsible for the popularization of Ono no Komachi's historical image.

Keywords: Ono no Komachi, legendarization, classical Japanese literature

[1] This paper originally appeared in the *IAFOR Journal of Literature & Librarianship*, vol. 3, no. 1, November 2014, https://doi.org/10.22492/ijl.3.1.03.

1. Introduction

The historical figure known to us as Ono no Komachi (ca. 825–ca. 900) was a court poet of the Heian period (8–12th centuries),[2] who is frequently defined as a great example of female excellence in the area of poetry (Katagiri 1991, 122). Even today she remains one of the most legendary figures of classical Japanese literature and is pictured in many literary works. Her real name remains unknown: "Komachi" is a nickname—a court name (*nyōbō na*).[3] Ono no Komachi seems to have been a historically insignificant woman, because there is not the briefest mention of her in any of the historical records of her time. Possibly, young Ono no Komachi was sent to the capital Heian Kyō (present-day Kyoto), where she served at Emperor Ninmyō's court.[4] There she was recognized to be a talented poet, and was renowned for her unusual beauty. Indeed, her poetic talent is one of the features attributed to the historical Ono no Komachi that appears credible. She is one of the *rokkasen*—the six best *waka*[5] poets of the early Heian period[6]—who were defined as such by Ki no Tsurayuki (ca. 872–945)[7] in the Japanese preface (*kanajo*) to the first Japanese imperial poetic anthology,

[2] The Heian period is named after the capital city of Heian Kyō (Kyoto). The Heian period is considered to be the peak of the Japanese imperial court and aristocratic culture, noted for its art (especially poetry and literature). Although the imperial house seemed to be very powerful, the real political power was in the hands of the Fujiwara clan, an influential aristocratic family who had intermarried with the imperial family.

[3] In 1926 Sakurai Shū (1885–1942) suggested that Komachi's real name could be Ono no Yoshiko (dates unknown). Ono no Yoshiko appears in the ninth-century chronicle *Shoku nihon kōki* (Continued Late Chronicles of Japan, 869) as one of Emperor Ninmyō's (r. 833–850) consorts. Tsunoda Bun'ei argues that Ono no Komachi and Ono no Yoshiko are the same person (1970, 66–71).

[4] According to the traditional order of succession, Emperor Ninmyō (810–850) was the 54th emperor of Japan.

[5] *Waka* is one of the most representative types of poetry in classical Japanese literature. In contrast to *kanshi* poetry (written in classical Chinese), *waka* poetry was composed in Japanese. The term *waka* encompassed a number of differing forms, principally *tanka* (short poem), *chōka* (long poem), *sedōka* (head-repeated poem) and *bussokusekika* (Buddha's-footprint stone poem) (Hayashi and Andō 2008).

[6] Ono no Komachi is the only woman among the *rokkasen* poets. The other poets are: Ariwara no Narihira (825–880), Ōtomo no Kuronushi (d. 923), Kisen Hōshi (d. 909?), Sōjō Henjō (816–890) and Fun'ya no Yasuhide (d. 885) (*Britannica* 2011).

[7] Ki no Tsurayuki was a poet and courtier in the Heian period. Under the order of Emperor Daigo (r. 897–930), he was one of four poets chosen to compile the *Kokin wakashū* anthology (Yasuda 1975, 59–64).

the *Kokin wakashū* (Collection of Japanese Poems of Ancient and Modern Times, 905). There are currently about 100 poems attributed to Ono no Komachi, but it is believed that she specialized in love poetry expressing a variety of human emotions. Unsurprisingly, her poetry is often interpreted as deeply subjective, passionate and complex (Carter 1991, 84). Her love poetry may have contributed to the flowering of legends and tales presenting her as an amorous woman.

Since little is known about her actual life, Ono no Komachi the historical figure, whose dates of birth and death are uncertain, had very little in common with the legendary Komachi that appears in numerous literary works of many periods. Probably shortly after Komachi's death, stories about her life were being filled with various imaginative guesses. As a result, her fame extended way beyond her own lifetime.[8] The image of Ono no Komachi has lived and grown through centuries of Japanese literature.

In many literary works she is depicted not only as beautiful and skilled poet, but also as old beggar, as in the Buddhist *kanbun* (Sino-Japanese prose) work entitled *Tamatsukuri Komachishi sōsuisho* (The Rise and Fall of Komachi from Tamatsukuri, ca. 11th–12th century); *femme fatale*—as in nō plays; courtesan (*yūjo*);[9] or Buddhist devotee—as in the medieval secular tales *otogizōshi*.[10] Stories about Ono no Komachi have continued to be told, with variations, until the present day. She appeared in the Edo period's *ukiyo-e* paintings. Her legend inspired famous Japanese modern novelists such as Akutagawa Ryūnosuke (1892–1927), Enchi Fumiko (1905–1986) and Mishima Yukio (1925–1970). Stories of Komachi are even recorded in pop culture: in *manga* comics, *anime* movies and musicals. Thus, in this paper I will demonstrate that literary representations of that poet are great examples of legendarization processes, and that whom we currently call "Ono no Komachi" should be considered a literary construct

[8] In fact, Ono no Komachi is not the only legendary poet in the Japanese canon. Others include: Kakinomoto no Hitomaro (662–710), Semimaru (dates unknown), Ariwara no Narihira, Izumi Shikibu (ca. 970–ca. 1030) and Murasaki Shikibu (ca. 978–c. 1014 or 1025). See Anne Commons's work on Hitomaro (2009), Susan Matisoff's research on Semimaru's legend (2006) and R. Keller Kimbrough's work about reconfiguration of Izumi Shikibu in medieval Japan (2008) for examples.

[9] *Yūjo* or *asobi* were terms used to describe the various groups of courtesan-entertainers plying their trades in the cities, harbors, and highway inns of Kamakura and Muromachi Japan. It seems that in the medieval period the meaning of the term *yūjo* was closer to "wandering entertainer" than to "prostitute," indicating female singers, dancers, storytellers and puppeteers (Kimbrough 2008, 62).

[10] The term *otogizōshi* refers to a group of short secular stories written primarily from the Muromachi period (1392–1573) till the beginning of the Edo period (1600–1867) (Hayashi and Andō 2008).

significant for Japanese literature rather than a historical figure.

Also in this paper I would like to analyze representations of "Ono no Komachi" in some examples of Japanese literature, by asking why this female poet was selected as an object of the legendarization processes. What purpose did such legendarization serve? Here it ought to be emphasized that my analysis is not an attempt to establish any "truth" about her life. According to Joshua Mostow, such literary works were always designed for specific purposes and often for specific individuals. Thus, it is impossible to identify authors' intent, since the reception and production of literature is influenced by specific historical forces (1996, 10–11). Moreover, the aim of this paper is to address the question as to what factors influenced the creation of legends about Ono no Komachi (her passionate and witty poetry? Beauty? Alleged love affairs with courtiers?) and what possible reasons exist for the popularization of "Ono no Komachi" in the Japanese culture and literature of various historical periods.

2. Methodology—Legendarization Processes

The central thesis of this study is that Ono no Komachi is a great example of a constructed image that underwent numerous processes of legendarization over the centuries. Taking into consideration research in Japan and the West on legendarization and mythmaking processes in Japanese literature,[11] three types of legendarization processes can be distinguished: medievalization, marginalization and fictionalization.

Barbara Ruch describes medievalization as the process of legendarization undertaken according to and due to certain notions of characteristics of the Japanese medieval period,[12] comprising popularization of the literature and

[11] E.g. Nishiki Hitoshi's work on the origin of Ono no Komachi's legend (2004); Hamanaka Osamu's research on legendarization through presenting female characters as goddesses or Bodhisattvas (2011); Tsunoda Bunei's attempt to reconstruct Ono no Komachi's life (1970); Katagiri Yōichi's work on *Ise shū* (Ise Collection, date unknown) focusing on its fictive aspects (1985); Barbara Ruch's article about the creation of Japanese national literature in medieval times (1977); Terry Kawashima's publication about the process of marginalization from the late 10th to the early 13th century (2001); and Robert N. Huey's article dealing with the medievalization process in poetry (1990).

[12] The Kamakura period (1183–1333) marks the beginning of the so-called medieval period in Japan. It is a 400-year span from the fall of the Taira clan in 1185 to the Battle of Sekigahara in 1600, when Tokugawa Ieyasu (1543–1616) unified the country under his control. The three main historical divisions of the medieval period are the Kamakura period, the Northern and Southern Courts period (1336–1392), and the Muromachi period. It was the time in Japan's history when the warrior

culture of the Heian period among lower social classes, the idea of *mappō*,[13] and generally the strong influence of Buddhism (1977, 279–309). In other words, in the medieval period, those from lower classes (merchants, craftsmen, peasants, etc.) "learnt" about culture and people from earlier periods through newly evolved literary genres such as *setsuwa* (didactic tales), *otogizōshi* (secular tales) and nō dramas. Probably some extra information, involving supernatural elements, was added to the stories about famous poets of the Heian period to attract the attention of the audience. The historical figures gain new characteristics, which are mostly unconnected to their possible biographies. The stories about medievalized characters usually center on some repeatable themes. For Ono no Komachi, the stories tend to focus on the idea of impermanence and worldliness (*mujō*), the consequences of karma, and the prospect of women's enlightenment.

Another important process is marginalization. Terry Kawashima defines "margin" as an unstable and negotiable result of textual effects generated by authors and compilers who display a desire to promote certain ideas at the expense of the targets of marginalization (2001, 3). This means that a margin is created by the centers of power to identify the excluded (the "marginal") and then remove the excluded element from the center. Yamaguchi Masao explains that the excluded elements are often what the center fears the most, since they are believed to hold a certain amount of power (ibid., 7). Moreover, Kawashima underlines that gender is a crucial factor in the process of marginalization (ibid., 13); thus, specific kinds of women (*yūjo*, for example) or elements connected with femininity (menstrual blood, women's bodies) are often constructed as marginal. For example, it was a regular Buddhist practice to use women's bodies as symbols of *mujō*, such as in the *kusōshi* scrolls (nine pictures of death) presenting the decomposition of a corpse. At first, the body which was presented on the scrolls was of indeterminate gender. Later, it turned out to be a body of a beautiful woman, as Buddhism considered a female body to be impure (marginal), and scrolls were used to discourage in Buddhist monks sexual desire and attachment to the lust of the world.

The third process is fictionalization, which is a "creation" or "re-creation" of the life and the representation of a poetry or prose author, since we in fact possess very little verifiable information on the real life of the author. One of the most spectacular examples of such tampering is *Ise monogatari* (The Ise Stories, 10th century),[14] in which poems by different poets help to create

society came to the fore (Shirane 2007, 567).

[13] The age in which Buddha's law will degenerate.

[14] *Ise monogatari* is an *uta monogatari* (collection of *waka* poems and associated narratives) dating from the early Heian period. Authorship remains unknown. It

a fictive life of Ariwara no Narihira (Okada 1991, 119–123). Finally in my study, I apply deconstructionist reading practices to demonstrate the difference between the historical figure and literary construct of Ono no Komachi. Deconstruction analysis originated in the works of the French philosopher Jacques Derrida (1930–2004). It is a way of analyzing texts in order to dismantle binary oppositions, which allows the revelation of texts' fundamental undecidability (Bertens 2008, 102).

In this paper I would like to focus on medieval literary works, since I believe that the process of "creating" such legends has its origin in the specificity of the Japanese medieval period. Thus, in this study I analyze the duality of the image of the heroine in the *kanbun* text entitled *Tamatsukuri Komachishi sōsuisho* and examples of nō dramas and *otogizōshi* where Ono no Komachi appears as protagonist.

3. The First Stage of Legendarization: *Tamatsukuri Komachishi sōsuisho*

Tamatsukuri Komachishi sōsuisho (hereafter *Tamatsukuri*) is a work composed of a preface written in *kanbun* and a main text, which is a poem written in Chinese (*kanshi*). *Tamatsukuri* is usually dated in the late Heian period; however, the oldest manuscript is dated to 1219 (Tochio 2009, 12). The authorship was attributed to the monk Kūkai (774–835), the founder of the Shingon Sect.[15] Nowadays this attribution is heavily questioned and mostly rejected (Komine 1995, 47). But there is no doubt that the author could have been a Buddhist monk, because the Buddhist influence is obvious. The whole text is permeated by Pure Land (*jōdo*) ideology and the paradigm of the Four Sufferings (*shiku*). Even the double-narrative structure is a reference to the literary tradition of the Buddhist sutras, where the prose component is supplemented by verses that reiterate and poetically summarize the prose passage. Chinese influence also can be noted in *Tamatsukuri*, especially references to Bai Juyi's (772–846)[16] poems *Qin*

relates 125 episodes involving 209 poems with narratives. The nameless main character is presumed to be modeled on Ariwara no Narihira (*Zen'yaku kogo jiten* 2011). Ariwara no Narihira was a *waka* poet active during the Heian period. He was linked to the imperial family by both maternal and paternal lineage. He is considered to be a *beau homme* in Japanese culture, famous for his numerous love affairs (Hayashi & Andō 2008).

[15] Kūkai is known posthumously as Kōbō Daishi (The Grand Master Who Propagated Buddhist Teaching) (*Britannica* 2011).

[16] Bai Juyi (in Japanese: Haku Kyoi) was a Chinese poet of the Tang dynasty (618–907). His literary works were widely read and highly regarded in Heian Japan. He

zhong yin (Poems Composed at Qin Zhong, ca. 810)[17] and *Chang hen ge* (Song of Everlasting Sorrow, 806) (Tochio 2009, 12).[18] The central figure of the text is an old female beggar. In the preface, she tells the story of her life to a wandering monk (the narrator) she has met. After hearing her history, he retells the woman's tale in verse, which forms the main text.

It seems very likely that *Tamatsukuri* played a significant role in the legendarization process of Ono no Komachi. The name "Komachi" appears only in the title of the work, and never in the text itself. However, late-Heian and early-medieval texts identified the protagonist from *Tamatsukuri* with the figure of Ono no Komachi in her old age.[19] *Tamatsukuri* is a very challenging work, written in difficult language and full of references to Buddhism and Chinese poetry, thus I will not attempt to analyze the whole text here.[20] I would like to focus mainly on the duality of the heroine's image. The contrast between her youth and her old age is a characteristic of the Ono no Komachi legend. This motif is repeated in most of her later representations.

The prose introduction and poem present a marginalized woman. She tells the story of her life, beginning with being born into a wealthy family. She was extremely beautiful, and a lot of men fell in love with her. She did not choose any of them as her husband. With the passing of time she lost her family and financial support, along with her beauty. Her reputation was destroyed, the suitors stopped visiting her, and finally she turned into a fallen woman, marrying a hunter and bearing a son. But she had been living in such poverty that her child died. (Marriage and a son appear only in the poem version of her story.) Alone and homeless she realizes the evanescence of life (neither beauty, nor wealth, nor anything else can last forever) and starts thinking about becoming a nun. Her arrogance is a cause of her decline.

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was also influential in the development of Japanese literature (*Britannica* 2011).

[17] Bai Juyi composed ten poems describing the sadness of the populace in the capital Chang'an (Lin 2012, 54).

[18] *Chang hen ge* is a long narrative poem that tells the story of Yang Guifei (in Japanese: Yōkihi; 719–756), the beloved consort of Emperor Xuanzong (r. 712–756) of the Tang dynasty (*Britannica* 2011).

[19] E.g. *Hōbutsushū* (Collection of Treasures, ca. 1179) and *Jikkinshō* (A Miscellany of Ten Maxims, ca. 1252). The poetry treatise to *Kokin wakashū* entitled *Gyokuden shinpi* (Treatise of Secret Treasure) states that Kōbō Daishi predicted Komachi's old age of pain as a karmic punishment, which moved him to write *Tamatsukuri* (Komine 1995, 47).

[20] See Kawashima 2001, 123–174, and Ryu 1999, 191–240, or Tochio's annotations (2009) for an extended analysis of *Tamatsukuri*.

> I am a child of an entertainer's household, I am from a wealthy and prosperous family. When I was at my peak, my arrogance was extreme; now that I have fallen, my sorrows are deep. (Kawashima 2001, 307)

She herself points to the reason for her miserable state. Even though the woman draws a moral conclusion from her past behavior, I would rather agree with Kawashima's opinion that she is portrayed as a victim of family ambition and misfortune (ibid., 134), as we can read:

> Thus the children of the emperor and courtiers fought day and night to propose marriage to me; the rich and noble guests all competed to set a wedding date. Despite these wishes, my parents did not permit them, and my brothers would not hear of it. Their only ambition was to make me an empress, and they had no intention of letting me be a wife of an ordinary family. (Ibid., 309)

Her parents rejected marriage proposals to fulfill their plan of their daughter becoming the Empress. But after their death, their daughter became impoverished, because there was nobody to support her.

Besides presenting a marginalized female figure, *Tamatsukuri* can also stand as an example of the fictionalization process, since soon after the work appeared, it was established that it represents (recreates) the old age of Ono no Komachi. I consider *Tamatsukuri* a didactic work intended to warn unmarried woman. The heroine, or, it is better to say, her family, arrogantly refused the marriage proposals of her many suitors. As a result, she grew old and ended her life in solitude. The image of an aged, miserable Komachi wandering outside the capital has its origin in the *Tamatsukuri*. This work created the enduring image of Ono no Komachi as beauty turned old beggar. Nevertheless, it ought to be emphasized that the female beggar in *Tamatsukuri* is not Ono no Komachi. The didactic story depicted in the text differs a lot from the common perception of her life.[21]

4. Making a *Femme Fatale*: Ono no Komachi in Nō Plays

Sarah M. Strong points out that the nō version of a particular famous character is often the one that has mattered most over the centuries, supplying the defining characteristics and preoccupations by which that character has been understood and known (1994, 391). Certainly, Ono no Komachi is a great example of one such famous character. In fact, she

[21] See Tsunoda 1976, 63–82, or Katagiri 1991, 122–157, for their attempts to reconstruct the poet's actual life. Moreover, the poetic skills of the protagonist are not mentioned anywhere in *Tamatsukuri*.

became the protagonist of five nō plays: *Sotoba Komachi* (Komachi at the Gravepost, 14th century), *Sekidera Komachi* (Komachi at Sekidera, ca. 15th century), *Ōmu Komachi* (Komachi's Parrot-Answer Poem, ca. 14th–16th century), *Sōshi Arai Komachi* (Komachi Clears Her Name, ca. 14th–15th century) and *Kayoi Komachi* (The Nightly Courting of Komachi, 14th century),[22] which fashioned her not only as a talented poet and beautiful lady-in-waiting, but also as one who behaves haughtily toward suitors and suffers the later consequences.

As aforementioned, *Tamatsukuri* is the first example of the legendarization process of Komachi's image. I believe that nō plays are the second important stage in the creation of Komachi's representation. I would like to examine two plays entitled *Sotoba Komachi* and *Kayoi Komachi*, which, in my opinion, popularized the *femme fatale*-like image of Ono no Komachi.

The theme which is characteristic of both plays is the well-known Hundred-Nights Tale (*Momo yo gayoi*) or the Making the Edge of the Carriage Bench Tale (*Shiji no hashigaki*). The plot of the tale depicts the story of a young man named Fukakusa no Shōshō, who falls in love with Ono no Komachi. When he confesses his feelings, she asks him to come for a hundred nights and sleep on a carriage bench in the garden. At dawn he should make a mark on the edge of the bench. Even amid windy, rainy or snowy weather, Fukakusa comes every night. Unfortunately, on the last night he dies on his way to Ono no Komachi's residence. The Hundred-Nights Tale was popularized by nō plays during medieval times in Japan. Kan'ami Kiyotsugu (1333–1384),[23] the author of *Sotoba Komachi* and *Kayoi Komachi*, created Ono no Komachi as an irresistibly beautiful, but cold-hearted, lady who skillfully deludes her suitor. However, in both plays, Ono no Komachi is also an old beggar looking for a way to gain salvation. The nō theater's rather negative presentation of Ono no Komachi in the Hundred-Nights Tale became the basis for numerous other tales about her and another reason for her legendarization.

The play *Sotoba Komachi* is traditionally classified as a fourth-category

[22] I will discuss the plot of *Sotoba Komachi* and *Kayoi Komachi* later in this paragraph. *Sekidera Komachi* by Zeami Motokiyo (1363–1443) tells the story of old Ono no Komachi, living in great poverty. On the evening of the Tanabata Festival she is visited by the abbot of Sekidera Temple, who comes to talk with her about poetry. *Ōmu Komachi,* also by Zeami Motokiyo, depicts Komachi as an old poet living in Sekidera Temple. She receives a poem sent to her by Emperor Yōzei. *Sōshi Arai Komachi* (author unknown) presents Komachi not as a *femme fatale* but the winner of an imperial poetry contest (*uta awase*).

[23] Kan'ami Kiyotsugu was a nō actor and author. He was also a founder of the Kanze school of nō (*Britannica* 2011).

or miscellaneous play (*zō mono*) and performed as an old-woman play (*rōjo mono*) (*Britannica* 2011). The play tells the story of two priests from Mt. Kōya who meet an old beggar woman on their way to the capital. She is resting on a tree stump, not realizing that it is an ancient *stupa*.[24] One of the priests rebukes her, and they start discussing Buddhist doctrine. Impressed by her knowledge of religion, the priests ask the old woman to reveal her name. It turns out that they are talking with Ono no Komachi—a renowned poet of the court. During conversation, Komachi starts to reminisce about how beautiful, talented and haughty she had been in the past. In a fit of madness, she imagines that she is Fukakusa no Shōshō, a suitor whom she had rejected in her youth. In the end, Komachi returns to normal and salvation is promised to her.

Kayoi Komachi is also an example of a miscellaneous play, but is defined as a *mugen* nō play because it deals with ghosts (*Britannica* 2011). The play features a priest during his meditation training in a mountain village. He is visited daily by a woman bringing him food. The woman reveals that she is the ghost of Ono no Komachi, and the priest decides to go to pray for her. But when the priest goes to hold a memorial service for Komachi, suddenly the vengeful spirit of Fukakusa no Shōshō appears. He forbids the priest to pray for Komachi. The priest asks two ghosts to show him the circumstances in which Fukakusa was visiting Ono no Komachi for one hundred nights. Finally, Komachi and Fukakusa are able to attain salvation together.

Sotoba Komachi and *Kayoi Komachi* are filled with Buddhist ideology and are probably the most overtly Buddhist among all Komachi nō plays.[25] It seems that in both, Ono no Komachi's life is subsumed to the purposes of Buddhist doctrine. The events of her life reflect the concept of Four Sufferings (*shiku*): birth, old age, sickness and death. She experiences physical and mental suffering and pain in her life, especially the inevitable woes of illness, aging and death. In *Sotoba Komachi*, Ono no Komachi is an old female beggar, so ashamed of who she became that she is hiding from the eyes of the people.

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[24] The stupa is a spiritual symbol manifesting the Buddha Vairocana and the cosmological belief in the Mahayana. *Māhāyana*, lit. "Great Vehicle," is one of the three main extant branches of Buddhism referring to the path of the Bodhisattva seeking complete enlightenment for the benefit of all sentient beings (Terasaki 1984, 180).

[25] One of the main functions of nō troupes was to propagate Buddhism and raise funds for the temples or shrines. At the early stages of the development of nō theater, many professional theatrical groups were closely affiliated with powerful Buddhist temples (Terasaki 1984, 155).

> **KOMACHI:** But now I am grown loathsome even to sluts,
> Poor girls of the people, and they and all men
> Turn scornful from me.
> Unhappy months and days pile up their score;
> I am old; old by a hundred years.
> In the City I fear men's eyes[.]
> (Waley 1976, 88)

Komachi's degradation in her old age symbolizes the idea of *mujō*—impermanence. In her youth she was a beautiful and highly intellectual poet, but time changed her into a decrepit old beggar. As mentioned, women's bodies were often used as symbols of *mujō*, presenting the idea that even the most beautiful woman can become repulsive in her old age. Moreover, this tendency can be also determined as a part of the marginalization of old women's sexuality. According to Fujiwara no Akihira (d. 1066), an old woman should rid herself of sexual desires, take Buddhist vows and become a nun (Kawashima 2011, 148). However, in *Sotoba Komachi* it is clear that Komachi's painful old age is a karmic punishment for her being cruel and cold towards her suitors.

> **KOMACHI (while being possessed by Fukakusa):** No, no.…
> Komachi was very beautiful.
> Many letters came to her, many messages—
> Thick as raindrops out of a black summer sky.
> But she sent no answer, not even an empty word.
> And now in punishment she has grown old:
> She has lived a hundred years[.]
> (Waley 1976, 96)

In *Kayoi Komachi*, she is a ghost, but even after death she is not released from suffering. When the mystery woman finally introduces herself as the ghost of Ono no Komachi, the priest recollects a story about a skull reciting the poem:

> **MONK:** The woman who was here did not say that her name was Ono-no-Komachi but simply said she was an old woman living near Ichiharano, where silver grasses grow, and then disappeared. Wait. That reminds me of something. When a person tries to go through Ichiharano, from behind a bush of silver grass, a poem is heard as such. "Alas, blowing autumn wind hurts my eyes. I no longer reveal myself as Ono-no-Komachi because silver grasses are growing from the eye-pits of my skull." This is the poem Ono-no-Komachi composed. So, I am certain that that lady must be the phantom of Ono-no-Komachi. I shall go straight to Ichiharano and pray for consoling her soul. (Kayoi-Komachi 2008, 4; errors sic passim: translator unknown)

The skull legend (*komachi dokuro tan*), along with the *momo yo gayoi* tale, is another example of the well-known stories about Ono no Komachi, which turns up in various different versions in medieval literature.[26] Mainly the skull legend presents Komachi as a poem-composing skull left in the middle of a field and calling attention to the pain in her eye socket from a growth of pampas grass (Kawashima 2011, 177). This story appears another attempt to marginalize the figure of Komachi. She is nothing more than skull and bones. Moreover, her past transgressions disrupt her peace even after death. In the skull story, a passerby (usually a man) hears her complaints and after following the voice reciting the poem he discovers a skull. After removing the grass, he gives the skull a burial. In *Kayoi Komachi*, there is a priest who decides to pray for the consolation of Komachi's soul.

The structure of both plays is hence quite similar: a priest comes to a certain place and meets a stranger. During conversation the stranger introduces herself as Ono no Komachi. It turns out that she needs the help of the priest to attain salvation and finish her earthly sufferings. Terasaki notes that the priest and Komachi form an opposing pair. The priest represents the element of the sacred, while Ono no Komachi is the profane (1984, 163). Unfortunately, Komachi is not allowed to gain enlightenment easily. The angry spirit (*onryō*) of Fukakusa no Shōshō appears. In *Sotoba Komachi*, he possesses Komachi, which is also a Buddhist conceit, since it was believed that those who suffered violent deaths became vengeful spirits able to possess the offender (Terasaki 1984, 156–57). In the second play, the ghost of Fukakusa forbids the priest to pray for his ex-lover's soul. Finally, in both plays, after reenacting the past events, Komachi is released from her earthly sufferings by the righteousness of Buddha. The reenactment of one hundred nightly visits is Komachi's act of *sange*—she can confess her sins and express repentance.[27]

> **RECITERS:** At that moment, a thought briefly comes to his mind that even if it is served in a beautiful cup like one made of moonlight, he should observe the Buddha's rule prohibiting drinking alcohol. Thanks to this brief thought, General [Fukakusa no Shōshō] gains the opportunity that leads to enlightenment. He is now able to atone for his various past wrong deeds. Finally, Ono-no-Komachi and General Fukakusa become Buddhas together. They become enlightened together. (Kayoi-Komachi 2008, 11)

[26] See Kawashima 2011, 175–215, for an analysis of different versions of the skull legend.

[27] *Sange* (or *zange*) is a Buddhist practice of revealing past transgression before the Buddha or other person(s) and expressing regret for that transgression (Strong 2001, 80–81).

However, in *Sotoba Komachi*, salvation is only promised to Ono no Komachi, as she decides to devote herself and her "heart flower"—her poetic talent[28]—to the path of Buddha.

> **CHORUS (*Speaking for KOMACHI, who is now no longer possessed by Shōshō's spirit)*:**
> Was it his spirit that possessed me,
> Was it his anger that broke my wits?
> If this be so, let me pray for the life hereafter,
> Where alone is comfort;
> Piling high the sand
> Till I be burnished as gold.
> See, I offer my flower [her heart flower] to Buddha,
> I hold it in both hands.
> Oh may He lead me into the Path of Truth,
> Into the Path of Truth.
> (Waley 1976, 98)

Furthermore, the number one hundred in the Hundred-Nights Tale is also significant. As Terasaki explains, Ono no Komachi is an old woman of nearly one hundred who has been suffering for many years because of her cruel and arrogant behavior in her youth. The number ninety-nine symbolizes the approach, while one hundred represents the achievement: for Fukakusa, it is the fulfillment of his promise to Komachi; for Komachi, it is the final enlightenment (Terasaki 1984, 180–81). In addition to presenting important Buddhist principles such as *mujō* and the karmic consequences of transgression, *Sotoba Komachi* and *Kayoi Komachi* show that literally everybody has an equal opportunity to achieve enlightenment: even the "fallen" Ono no Komachi. Nevertheless, the significance of the Buddhist influence should not be overestimated. Besides being made extremely aged and decrepit, Ono no Komachi is also portrayed as a lady of intellectual power. Her intellect remains sharp and she is brilliant in discussion about Buddhist doctrine, as well as displaying a wide knowledge of *waka* poetry. In *Sotoba Komachi*, when the priest rebukes Komachi for sitting on the stupa, she begins to question his doctrine. In the long disputation between Komachi and the priest, she upholds the concept of non-dualism, while the priest defends the doctrines of the Shingon Sect. Komachi contradicts him on every point, expressing the belief that

[28] Most of *Sotoba Komachi*'s translators and experts agree that "heart flower" (*kokoro no hana*) is a synonym for poetry or poetic talent, which is a reference to the *kanajo* preface to the *Kokin wakashū*, where Ki no Tsurayuki describes Japanese poetry as something that "has the human heart as seed."

everybody has an equal opportunity to achieve salvation.[29] She ends the discussion by reciting a poem:

> **KOMACHI:** I now emboldened
> Recite a riddle, a jesting song.
> "Were I in Heaven
> The Stupa were an ill seat;
> But here, in the world without,
> What harm is done?"
> **CHORUS:** The priests would have rebuked her;
> But they have found their match.
> (Waley 1976, 93)

The riddle depends on the word "stupa." In Japanese the word for stupa is *sotoba* (卒塔婆). However, *sotoba* written in different characters (外場) means "outside," or "without," and it is with this connotation that it is used in the poem. Komachi is saying that since she is outside of the Western Paradise ("in the world without" in Waley's translation), she is not offending the Buddha by sitting on the stupa. Her composition of a riddle or a joking poem (*tawabure*) is proof of her poetic talent and knowledge, since two *tawabure* poems are said to be the father and the mother of poetry in the *kanajo* preface (Murphy 2011, 38).

Finally, I believe that in these plays, Ono no Komachi is presented as a real *femme fatale*, whose charms bond her lovers in irresistible desire, leading them into deadly situations. As was mentioned at the beginning of this section, *Sotoba Komachi* and *Kayoi Komachi* popularized the Hundred-Nights Tale. However, the *momo yo gayoi* tale appears in early medieval works. Fujiwara Kiyosuke (1104–1177) in his work *Ōgishō* (The Secret Teachings) cites the story of one hundred nights based on the earlier, little-known work of poetic criticism entitled *Utarongi* (Poetic Discourse) attributed to Fujiwara Kintō (1056–1128). The plot of the story centers on an unnamed man courting a beautiful woman who wants to test his feelings by requesting him to visit her residence for one hundred nights in succession, and make a mark on a carriage bench in the garden. The last night, he cannot fulfill the woman's request, because one of his parents suddenly dies. In another version of this story, he becomes ill and dies. What is more, the woman feels sad when her lover-to-be does not appear, and she makes the final mark herself (or composes a poem expressing her feelings).[30]

[29] See Waley 1976, 89–93.

[30] See Strong 1994, 401–412, for an analysis of the origins of the Hundred-Nights Tale.

However, the woman from the tale is not identified as Ono no Komachi. It seems that the author of the nō plays was the first to link Komachi with the Hundred-Nights Tale, depicting her as a cruel and cold-hearted lady. The story received a new framework, becoming a didactic work that raises the issues of the evanescence of life, karma, and the opportunity to achieve salvation, the role of female poetry fashioning the image of Ono no Komachi in a rather negative way, which highly influenced her later reconfigurations.

5. A Fallen Lady Able to Enter the Path of Buddha: Reception of Ono no Komachi in *otogizōshi*

The nō plays popularized some attributes for which Ono no Komachi has been known: (1) poetic talent, (2) being an extremely beautiful lady-in-waiting, (3) an amorous nature, (4) haughty behavior toward suitors and (5) an old age of suffering and ostracization. In particular, her image in medieval literary works is often exaggerated. Another example of medieval literature where Ono no Komachi appears as the protagonist is the secular tales *otogizōshi*. Actually, there are four *otogizōshi* stories about Komachi.[31] Here I would like to focus on the *otogizōshi* entitled *Komachi sōshi*, which is the most studied of the medieval Komachi stories (Teele 1993, 39). What distinguishes this tale from the others is that it is not influenced by nō.

Komachi sōshi represents the standard story of flourishing and decline, of a beautiful young woman who becomes an old and suffering wanderer looking for Buddhist enlightenment. At the beginning, the text introduces the past of the courtesan named Ono no Komachi (*komachi to iu irogonomi no yūjo ari*),[32] her beauty and attractiveness to men, her talent as a poet and

[31] *Komachi sōshi* (The story of Komachi) is the main subject of this paragraph. *Komachi Uta Arasoi* (Komachi's Poetry Disputes) comprises three short episodes presented in three different nō plays: the first episode about Komachi's victory in the poetry contest known from *Sōshi Arai Komachi*, the second focused on poetry exchange between an old Komachi and the Emperor, which is a reference to *Ōmu Komachi*, and finally the third, presenting religious discussion between Komachi and a Buddhist monk, based on *Sotoba Komachi*. *Komachi monogatari* (The Tale of Komachi) combines motifs from the Hundred-Nights Tale, Komachi's skull tale, *Sotoba Komachi* and *Sekidera Komachi*. The fourth tale entitled *Kamigawari Komachi* (Komachi Speaks for the Goddess) depicts the story of a young poet who receives teachings about the way of poetry from an old Komachi living outside the capital. In this tale references to the *momo yo gayoi* tale, the skull tale, *Tamatsukuri* and nō plays can also be traced.

[32] Ichiko 2010, 87. This sentence can be translated as: "There was an amorous

her service at court. The text emphasizes how many letters young Komachi received from suitors.[33] Then the action advances, and we find Komachi in her old age living in poverty and loneliness in her house in Ono. Suddenly, she is visited by Ariwara no Narihira. His visit is not only an opportunity to reminisce about the past, but also to express repentance for her transgression (her haughty distance from the suitors). Since Narihira plays a priestly role (Strong 1991, 83), his arrival allows Komachi to begin her *sange*, revealing her sins before him. He urges her to forget the past and to concentrate instead upon Buddha Amida's Pure Land of Western Paradise. Finally, the religious awakening of Ono no Komachi occurs and Narihira disappears. Then she starts wandering around villages and finally expires on a grass field called Tamatsukuri no Ono.

It is obvious that *Komachi sōshi* is an example of a didactic work used by Buddhist evangelists to present possible ways to attain salvation to the lower-class audience. Michele Marra observes that the Japanese middle ages witnessed an explosion of legends of famous female poets of the Heian period (1993, 58). Since female sexuality is often used as a tool to win men's attention (Goodwin 2007, 117), Heian female poets are portrayed in several ways in secular tales. One such representation constructed by Buddhist mythmaking is as courtesans (*yūjo*) obsessed by love and passion. Izumi Shikibu is also considered to be a famous female court poet. She is well known for her relationships with men, especially for her affair with Prince Atsumichi (987–1007), which is described in her alleged diary entitled *Izumi Shikibu nikki* (Diary of Izumi Shikibu, ca. 1007). In the *otogizōshi* tale *Izumi Shikibu* she is also represented as *yūjo*. According to the tale, a courtesan named Izumi Shikibu decided to abandon her new-born baby boy. Time passes and Izumi Shikibu's beautiful appearance awakes great passion in a young monk named Dōmei. Finally, it turns out that he is Izumi's abandoned son. This discovery is so shocking for Izumi Shikibu that she decides to leave the world of human passions by entering the Tendai temple on Mt. Shosha (Ichiko 2005, 131–39).[34]

Both Ono no Komachi and Izumi Shikibu became objects of the medievalization process; their "lives" were translated into Buddhist tales and identified as *yūjo*. Their nature is a cause of their decline. Ono no Komachi's wholesale rejection of her suitors marginalizes her from the capital—she lives a life of isolation. The passionate behavior of Izumi Shikibu brings her pain. As fallen ladies they have only one solution: devote

courtesan named Komachi."

[33] A total number of 44 letters is mentioned (Strong 1991, 83).

[34] This story completely distorts Izumi Shikibu's biography. There are no historical records confirming that she even bore a son, let alone had a love affair with him.

themselves to Buddhist teachings. Then, they will be cleansed of their impurities and will be able to obtain the mercy of Buddha Amida.

> Then Narihira said, "Don't long so for the past. Just as meeting is the beginning of separation, so birth is the beginning of death. In this world that is just the spray of water, what more is there to say? Forget all that you have just said, throw away your longings, and pray 'Let me be drawn to the holy world of the western paradise.' Get rid of your suffering, and help those you know and care for."
>
> Finally opening up her heart, Komachi said, "Ah, what wonderful words! How grateful I am for these words of guidance, signposts along the road of confusion as I wander between life and death. Really, really thinking about it, women do indeed have deep-rooted delusion. I shall put my reliance in you, as in Kannon, and in Jizō."
>
> Hearing her say this, Narihira said, "The Buddha will show you his compassionate mercy as you pursue the Road of Truth."
>
> (Teele 1993, 48)

The moral of such stories is again quite clear: If Ono no Komachi and Izumi Shikibu with their past transgressions and extremely amorous nature could attain salvation and be reborn in the Pure Land, anybody can enter the path of Buddha. It seems that Buddhist propagandists, trying to draw the attention of the common people, created such stories utilizing famous Heian poets as heroines to be comprehensible for the converts.

Finally, while Ono no Komachi's earlier coolness destroyed her reputation, she is not the only lady at court who kept her suitors at a distance. Lady Ise (?875–?938), who was a highly regarded *waka* poet of her time (Okada 1991, 13),[35] consistently refused the advances of men interested in her. Lady Ise is also known from *Ise shū*—her personal collection of narrativized poems (re)presenting, perhaps, a vision of her court life.[36] The reception to Lady Ise's resistance is rather positive: She is even rewarded for such behavior, becoming the mother of Emperor Uda's son.[37] This contrasts strongly with Ono no Komachi's old age of loneliness and suffering.

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[35] The *Kokin wakashū* anthology contains twenty-two of her poems, the largest number for a woman. She also took part as the sole woman in one of the most important poetry contests, "The Poetry Contest of the Empress During the Kampyō Era" (*kampyō no ontoki kisai no miya uta uwase*) in 893 (Okada 1991, 116). Thus it can be concluded that Lady Ise's poetic mastery was appreciated during her lifetime.

[36] In 888, Lady Ise entered the court of Empress Atsuko (872–907), consort of Emperor Uda (r. 887–97).

[37] There are no historical data supporting the existence of this child. In the text of *Ise shū*, we read that the little prince died at the age of five.

Both ladies are often compared in regard to their poetry; they are even called "the twin jewels of poetry."[38] Nevertheless, the figure of Lady Ise is not surrounded with as many legends as Ono no Komachi. It may be argued that one of the reasons is the fact that Lady Ise was known as a composer of formal (public) poetry, in contrast with Komachi's fame for her informal (private) poetry. A second difference was political status—Lady Ise was deeply befriended by Empress Atsuko, as well as being devoted to her duties in the Empress's service.[39] Moreover, she is believed to have attracted the attention of the Emperor in giving birth to their son. Undoubtedly, the love poetry of Ono no Komachi crucially influenced the development of her image. But I believe that medievalization and marginalization processes played a significant role in transforming her into a Japanese *femme fatale.*

6. Conclusions

Representations of Ono no Komachi in Japanese literature are created according to legendarization processes. In this paper, I have emphasized how the processes of medievalization, marginalization and fictionalization influenced the reception of this female poet. By analyzing the *kanbun* work *Tamatsukuri*, the two nō theatre plays *Sotoba Komachi* and *Kayoi Komachi*, and the secular medieval tale *Komachi sōshi*, I have demonstrated that the real life of the historical figure known to us as Ono no Komachi was not the source for those literary works. Rather one can conclude that poetry attributed to her and literary works where she appears as protagonist are often treated as bases for the (re)construction of her life. But the legendarization processes manipulated the creation of her image to achieve certain ends, such as Buddhist cautionary propaganda directed at women. As a result, legendarization processes reconfigured her representations differently in various types of Japanese literature, allowing the possibility of multiple interpretations: a talented poet, a beautiful lady exchanging poems with men at the court, an old wanderer, a courtesan.

I believe that the factors which influenced her legendarization are as follows. She was a stereotypical lady from the Heian period considered to be a daughter of a provincial governor for the middle-class aristocracy

[38] Cf. Miner, Odagiri and Morell 1985, 169.

[39] Ladies-in-waiting played an important role as go-betweens, forwarding messages between male aristocrats and the Empress by presenting their issues before her. Thus, for the aristocrats it was really important that the ladies they chose should be favored (Broma 2008, 67–68). I suppose that the friendship between Lady Ise and Empress Atsuko could be a reason why two brothers from the Fujiwara clan were interested in engaging in a relationship with Lady Ise.

(*zuryō*) sent to the capital to serve at the Emperor's court. I would argue that *Tamatsukuri* presents the story of a stereotypical young woman whose parents want her to become the Empress. Her excellent poetry probably was primarily responsible for the image of the amorous and beautiful lady involved in many love affairs with courtiers. However, there are two more important factors influencing her legend. Firstly, the fact that almost nothing is known about her life allows conjecturers to fill her story with a lot of imaginative histories. Secondly, there is the motif of Komachi versed in Buddhism. The consequence of these two factors is the construction of the enduring "before/after" image of Ono no Komachi as a beauty who turned into an old wanderer devoted to Buddhism. Finally, representations of Ono no Komachi created due to legendarization processes in the medieval era became so strong that they have survived until modern times. Her representation as a beautiful and talented poet is still encountered today, and she reappears as a heroine in works of Japanese popular culture like *manga*, *anime* and musicals. Her legend may have overshadowed her life, but it has also ensured her immortality.

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Rewriting Her History: Enchi Fumiko's *Namamiko monogatari* as a Feminist Historiographical Metafiction[1]

Ka Yan Lam

Abstract

The very nature of the historical novel that rests on the ambiguity between history and fiction contributes to the obscure boundary between fictional and historical discourses. Using a historical setting with people and events of historical fact, female historical novelists are capable of articulating their feminist concerns and making social protests on forbidden modern-day issues. While historical discourses mirror literary writing, the value of narrativity in historical representations of reality is merely as an aesthetic effect. Many authors of historical discourses interpret and report their materials in narrative form, in the process of which the representation is governed by certain factual criteria but also some degree of imagination. The resulting ambivalences create a space of ambiguity for women writers to address gender inequality and questionable social practices. Although Enchi Fumiko's *Namamiko monogatari* (*A Tale of False Fortunes*) has been regarded by critics as a historical novel, the objective of this essay is to defend her novel as a work of feminist historiographic metafiction. Enchi intertextually incorporates fictional and historical texts to expose the problematic conventions of the historical novel. Whereas emplotting the chronicle and the romance structures adds plausibility to the narration, the metafictional narratorial interventions undermine the truthfulness of the narrator's recounted tale. Hence Enchi has created a new form of historical

[1] This paper is a slightly modified version of the paper that originally appeared under the title "More Than a Historical Novel: Women, History, and Metafiction in Enchi Fumiko's *Namamiko Monogatari*" in the *IAFOR Journal of Literature & Librarianship*, vol. 6, no. 1, November 2017, https://doi.org/10.22492/ijl.6.1.02.

fiction that uncovers a different, more inclusive version of Heian women's 'history'.

Keywords: Enchi Fumiko, *Namamiko monogatari*, the historical novel

Introduction

As a post-WWII prose writer in Japan, Enchi Fumiko (1905–1986) produced over a hundred plays, short stories, novels, and essays, and received six major awards in literature (Mikals-Adachi, 2001, p. 197). Under the influence of her father, Ueda Kazutoshi, a renowned professor of Japanese linguistics, she developed from her childhood a passion for classical Japanese literature. With her unrivalled knowledge of the Japanese classics, Enchi reconfigures pre-modern elements and re-situates the characters of the past in a modern setting. Her literary works abound with intertextual references to classical texts and historical discourses, as exemplified in such short stories and major novels such as "Himojii tsukihi" (「ひもじい月日」"Days of Hunger", 1954), "Yō" (「妖」"Enchantress", 1957), *Onnazaka* (『女坂』*The Waiting Years*, 1957), *Onnamen* (『女面』*Masks*, 1958), and *Namamiko monogatari* (『なまみこ物語』*A Tale of False Fortunes*, 1965), the work most replete with historical fictional elements.

Enchi's post-war fiction has been generally categorized as *joryū bungaku* (女流文学, women's literature). In Japanese literary history, it has been a long-standing practice to place women writers and their writings under exclusive labels and categories. The concept of women's literature first appeared in the Taishō period (1912–26) and gradually developed into the twentieth century (Yoshinaga, 2001, p. 165; Ariga, 1995, p. 45). Literary works written by women are "customarily put together in separate volumes, regardless of their differences in style or the time in which they lived" (Ariga, 1995, p. 45). Women's literature is distinguished from men's literature, with the latter representing the literary mainstream. Understanding the gender-based segregation of writings by women in the history of Japanese literature is important because Enchi's fiction contests these gender assumptions with narrative strategies that distinguish her from her contemporaries. Her narratives not only address the social and cultural conditions of her time but also explore the psychological workings of her female characters, marking her works as among the most prominent women's literature that challenges the literary conventions and the stereotypical representation of woman.

Namamiko monogatari is a fictional story that mocks the historical chronicle *Eiga monogatari* (『栄花物語』*A Tale of Flowering Fortunes*, late eleventh century). Although historians and scholars hold various opinions on the dates of publication and the identity of the author, according to Helen Craig McCullough (1990), *Eiga monogatari* is the earliest Japanese vernacular history, written between 1030 and 1045 by Akazome Emon (赤染 衛門, 960–1040s), a Japanese *waka* poet who served the Fujiwara family as a lady-in-waiting. It was conjectured that Akazome wrote the first thirty chapters of the work but the last ten chapters are of anonymous authorship (ibid, p. 200). Akazome's section consists of a panegyrical account of the eleventh-century regent Fujiwara no Michinaga (藤原 道長, 966–1028), focusing on the glorious life of Michinaga and his family. *Namamiko monogatari* unfolds with a prologue-narrator who recounts how she came to read the manuscript of an ancient love story titled *Namamiko monogatari-shui* (hereafter shortened as *Namamiko-shui*) forty years before. When she reads *Eiga monogatari*, the discrepancies with *Namamiko-shui* that she observes motivate her to recall her memories of the latter story, in which Michinaga is portrayed as a calculating and power-obsessed individual. In the chapters that follow, the narrator recounts the tale of *Namamiko-shui*, but the narration is interspersed with the narrator's metafictional intrusions. *Namamiko-shui* is a tale embedded with multiple narratives, based on historical figures and events that took place in the Heian court under the reign of Emperor Ichijō (一条天皇, 980–1011). *Namamiko-shui* gives a fuller account of the empress consort Teishi than the historical chronicle, and is infused with the stories of other fictional characters, including the shaman sisters Ayame and Kureha. The story also depicts the machinations of the regent, who rises in power and status by insinuating his people among the court and instigating plots to denigrate the household of Teishi. Amidst the downfall of Teishi's family and a series of fabricated spirit possessions, the ladies-in-waiting who claim to be possessed by vengeful spirits accuse the empress consort of plaguing other royal family members with her living spirit. Nevertheless, the genuine love between emperor Ichijō and Teishi stands undefeated. Ultimately, Michinaga's conspiracy is doomed to fail. In a nutshell, this version portrays Michinaga negatively and creates a more resplendent image of Teishi.

Namamiko monogatari qualifies as a historical novel as the story is set in a real historical period with people and events of historical existence. As a historical novel, it also reveals "the essential and causal links between the historical setting of the novel and the events and characters depicted in it" (Bowen, 2002, p. 247). The Japanese literary genre *rekishi shōsetsu* (歴史

小説) puts more emphasis on the author's research into the historical facts while writing the story and how faithfully s/he represents the history (Zhao, 2015, pp. 10–11). This understanding was strongly advocated by Mori Ōgai (森 鴎外, 1862–1922), who made pioneering contributions to the literary genres of both modern and historical fiction. As discussed in his famous essay "Rekishi sonomama to rekishi banare" (『歴史其儘と歴史離れ』 Faithfulness to History and Departure from History), *shizen* (自然) or naturalness in historical facts is what he feels unwilling to alter, asserting it be maintained in a faithful manner even though the author's subjective interpretation is inevitable (Mori, 1915, p. 106). Half of Mori's thirteen historical novels tend to follow history, but those after *Sanshō dayū* (『山椒大夫』, 1915) become more detached from history, he having sensed the limitations imposed by the "*rekishi sonomama*" (faithfulness-to-history) approach. The difficulty in preserving faithfulness in his historical novels rests on the indelible presence of fictionality, hence driving him towards adopting the alternative of "*rekishi-banare*" (departure from history) (Mori, 1915, p. 107). Mori's struggle with the two methods of historical exposition genuinely informs the ambiguous nature of the historical novel. Although the boundary between fictional narrative and historical discourse is crossed, the genre is more than merely the mingling of fiction and history.

Since the historical novel concerns a preoccupation with the past and how it is situated within the present, it subsumes the potential for social protest and feminist criticism. As Diana Wallace (2005) aptly summarizes in *The Woman's Historical Novel: British Women Writers, 1900–2000*:

> Any historical novel is 'historical' in at least four senses: in its use of a particular period for its fictional setting; in its engagement with the historical moment (social, cultural, political and national) of its writing; in its relation to the personal life history of the writer herself; and in its relation to literary history, most obvious in the intertextual use of earlier texts. (p. 4)

Apparently, the nature of historicity obscures the boundary between historiography and literature in the historical novel. Wallace further notes that using the historical setting as a "fantasy space" the author can "centralise a female consciousness and explore female fears and desires" (ibid, p. 2). For women writers, the genre permits "writing about subjects which would otherwise be taboo" and "a critique of the present through their treatment of the past" (loc cit). Linda Hutcheon (1988) shares the view and adds a self-reflexive dimension to the characteristics of historical fiction. She defines "historiographic metafiction" as novels that "are both intensely self-reflexive and yet paradoxically also lay claim to historical events and

personages", highlighting their "theoretical self-awareness of history and fiction as human constructs" (p. 5).

With reference to the potentiality of historical fiction in its ideological and metafictional nature as proposed by Wallace and Hutcheon, I examine the characteristics of the historical novel as manifested in *Namamiko monogatari*. By means of the intertextual incorporation of historical and fictional discourses and the strategy of emplotment, coupled with the metafictional interventions of the narrator, Enchi not only exposes the problematic approach of the conventional historical novel but has also created her own form of historical novel to articulate feminist concerns over the suppressed women in the Heian era. Her approach inserts women's subjectivity as a form of resistance developed from within the male-dominated literary scene, rendering her masterpiece a 'feminist historiographic metafiction'.

Incorporating Historical and Fictional Discourses

First and foremost, the incorporation of historical people, events and places as well as historical narratives is imperative in historical fiction. At the beginning of the prologue, the narrator mentions that during her childhood her family was acquainted with Dr. Basil Hall Chamberlain, a Japanologist active at Tokyo Imperial University in the late nineteenth century. Enchi adopts this approach of including people and events of actual historical existence for the purpose of establishing the authority of the narrator's accounts throughout the novel. When the prologue-narrator is speculating on the period in which *Namamiko-shui* might have been composed, she concludes that the work might be derived from a more obscure piece of writing from the Tokugawa period:

> 私は読んだその物語は、鎌倉か室町期の古書を更に写しかえたものか、或いは徳川時代の余り有名でない国文学者の戯作の一つで、建部綾足の亜流の筆ずさみかも知れないのである。 (Enchi, 2004, p. 12)

> Judging from that, the story must have been a transcription of an older book from the Kamakura or Muromachi period, or possibly a fictional work by a not-so-famous literary scholar of the Tokugawa period—perhaps a second-rate work by Takebe Ayatari. (Enchi, 2000, p. 11)

Here the mention of Takebe Ayatari no longer seems such a random act if we are informed that Takebe was one of the instigators of the *yomihon* (読本), the earlier form of the historical novel that pervaded Kyoto and Osaka between the mid-eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries (Zolbrod, 1966,

p. 486). Takebe made an invaluable contribution in the early period between 1750 and 1800 to the *Kamigata yomihon* (上方読本), with *Nishiyama monogatari* (『西山物語』*Tale of Nishiyama*) (1768) being his representative work. *Kamigata yomihon* consists of "adaptations of Chinese vernacular fiction, collections of tales with a historical setting, Buddhist narratives, or anthologies of supernatural stories" (Zolbrod, 1966, p. 487). The practice of indicating historical periods and actual figures therefore implants a sense of historicity into the fictional narrative.

Apart from using proper names of historical existence, the narrator reconstructs the narrative, *Namamiko-shui*, by rewriting historical facts recorded in the chronicle *Eiga monogatari* in a cut-and-paste manner. These passages that the narrator claims to be reproduced from the historical document are interpolated with her recounting, her narratorial commentary and the quotations taken from other historical narratives such as *Makura no sōshi* (『枕草子』*The Pillow Book*), *Genji monogatari* (『源氏物語』*The Tale of Genji*) and some Chinese poetry. For instance, when the narrator attempts to justify her narration about the attractiveness of Teishi, she references a passage taken from *Makura no sōshi*, wherein Teishi's exquisite beauty is likened to the depiction of a lute-playing woman in a Chinese poem, "Song of the Lute", written by the Chinese poet Po Chu-I. Likewise, while vouching for the greater credibility of the depiction of Teishi in *Namamiko-shui* than that in *Eiga monogatari*, the narrator makes reference to a (fictional) passage purportedly quoted from *Makura no sōshi*, a collection of tales and anecdotes written by another of Teishi's ladies-in-waiting named Sei Shōnagon (清少納言, 966–1025). The adulation of Teishi supports the narrator's complimentary recounting of the physical appearance and extraordinary talent of the empress consort. These intertextual references thus serve to enhance the authority of the fictional narrative.

Against the traditional approach of historical fiction that stresses faithfulness to real histories, Enchi's *Namamiko monogatari* represents an unconventional form of historical novel that challenges this positivist nature of historiography. By parodying the historical chronicle *Eiga monogatari*, Enchi problematizes the traditional mode of representing reality. The prologue narrator perpetually declares the accuracy of her recount and claims with absolute certainty that the manuscript is a unique source of history and covers more comprehensive 'historical facts'. As such, she is exploiting the self-reflexive truthfulness inherent in the moniker 'history'. Yet, as the narrative unfolds, it is revealed that her narration is inconsistent, unreliable and self-contradictory. What is then exposed is the limitations of historical narratives—history has no basis in its authority because this

authority is actually a self-established illusion. When a discourse is labelled as 'historical', it immediately stands as if it represented truth. Yet the fact is that historiographic representations could provide "a mediated form of access to the past" but never "a transparent reflection or a reliable account of any historical event" (Nünning, 1997, p. 235). The truthfulness of actual past events could never be verified by historians, whose unavoidable subjectivity "lies behind the process of selecting, integrating, and interpreting the 'facts'". Hence the claim to historical truth and objectivity is nothing but a pretension (Nünning, 1997, pp. 227–28). Masuda Yūki (2013) shares a similar perception with Nünning that what proper history shows cannot fully reveal all histories. Such history is a kind of 'surface history' (表の歴史 *omote no rekishi*) which undoubtedly leaves out to a certain extent things forgotten or unrecorded in historical discourses (pp. 43–44). This kind of history, the 'inside history' (carrying the meaning of 'behind-the-scenes': 裏の歴史 *ura no rekishi*), needs to be traced and recovered. And by subsuming this 'inside history' into the so-called 'true history' (真の歴史 *shin no rekishi*), it is possible to challenge the traditional approach of historical writers who regard only 'surface history' as 'true history' (op cit, p. 44). In *Namamiko monogatari*, the narrator conscientiously recounts the 'inside history' of Teishi and the Fujiwara family and speculates on such details as its author, the period of composition, and the unknown whereabouts of the manuscript. Enchi has produced a new and unconventional framework for the historical novel.

Emplotting Plot Structures

The intimate relationship between fictional and historical representations in the historical novel can be achieved by another narrative ruse—emplotting the events in typical plot structures. By means of emplotment, narrativity is added to history. According to Hayden White (1996) in "Storytelling: Historical and Ideological", emplotment means to "endow historical events with a figurative meaning by endowing them with the structure of a generic plot type, such as farce, romance, tragedy", etc. (p. 74). These generic plot types possess the narrative coherence found in real events, which is that of "structures, tonalities, auras, and meanings" (op cit, p. 65). In other words, when historical events are represented in generic plot types, the value of reality is attached to the historical discourse. Representing history with narrativity exerts an effect of immediacy or an illusion of the reader's experiencing the events 'realistically', and this value "attached to narrativity" is an aesthetic effect of the emplotment of real events within the model of "imaginary" life (White, 1980, p. 27). The aesthetic effect is made possible

by the fact that history borrows from fiction the figurative imagination. Paul Ricoeur (1984) enunciates in *Time and Narrative* that in composing historical discourses historians can only imagine what happened, without having witnessed the events themselves. They intentionally write as if the past had taken place. This fashion of writing to some extent imitates what Ricoeur indicates as the "metaphorical reference" in poetic writing, when the reconstruction of the past is achieved metaphorically by the historian's re-imagination of history. Conversely, "[h]istorical intentionality" is borrowed by historical novelists who tell their narrative as though it had actually occurred, as evident from the use of "verbal past tenses" in narrating the unreal events as if the actions had happened or the state had previously existed (op cit, p. 82). This "reciprocal borrowing" reveals that fiction borrows "as much from history as history borrows from fiction" (loc cit). Enchi's historical novel illustrates what Ricoeur contends to be the "interweaving reference between history and narrative fiction" (loc cit). The events in the recounted tale formally and stylistically imitate those in the chronicle, *Eiga monogatari*. Other than the chronicle plot, history is also represented in the typical romance plot of Emperor Ichijō and Teishi. These typical plot structures greatly enhance the plausibility of the fictional narrative.

The use of the chronicle framework in *Namamiko-shui* is pivotal, since chronicles are important sources of court history. Unlike national histories, chronicles tend to record the "realities of aristocratic existence" and ordinary daily subject matter, which are believed to reflect actual history (McCullough & McCullough, 1980, p. 8). The way Enchi mimics the discursive style of the chronicle form in the composition of *Namamiko-shui* evidently indicates her intention to harness the authoritativeness of the historical chronicle. For example, the Heian tale is told in chronological order as indicated by the exact time, date, and month in the calendar (e.g. 正暦五年二月二十一日 *shōryaku gonen nigatsu nijyūichinichi* (the twenty-first day of the second month of Shōryaku 5), 巳の時 *mi no toki* (the hour of the serpent)) (Enchi, 2004, p. 47; p. 98). Apart from references to the season (e.g. 夏の盛り *natsu no sakari* (the middle of summer)) (ibid, p. 115), the splendour of aristocratic life is represented by the festive and ceremonial events (e.g. 元服 *genpuku* (the Coming-of-Age ceremony)) (ibid, p. 19).

In addition to imitating the fragmentary, episodic writing style in the chronicle, Enchi integrates passages that are written in the Heian language style. These passages the narrator claims to be quoted intact from historical documents stand in contrast with other parts of the novel. S. Yumiko Hulvey (1995) describes the imitation as a "pseudo-classical" style that adds an

authentic and archaic flavour to the narratives (p. 180). The embedded quotations are interspersed with classical Japanese suffixes, for instance, the final predication marker *–i* as in おはしましけり *ohashimashikeri* (*ohasu* is the honorific form of 'to be/go/come') (Enchi, 2004, p. 18). Other features include honorific prefixes attached to nouns like *mi-* in 御髪 *migushi* (hair) (ibid, p. 19) and certain special vocabulary like まゐる *mawiru* (the humble form for 'to go/come') (ibid, p. 25). Further, as noted earlier in general, the chronicle plot structure significantly contributes to the credibility of the fictional representations of the events in the historical novel (White, 1996, p. 67). By depicting events resembling the style used in *Eiga monogatari*, that work's plausibility can extend to the recounted tale. Since the retold story conforms to the general outline of the historical events and people, the illusion of literal truthfulness is naturally maintained (loc cit).

Although the narrator has constantly emphasized the veracity of the tale, her unreliable accounts and narratorial interventions simultaneously expose its fictitiousness. Right from the beginning of the prologue, the narrator frequently stresses the truthfulness of her narration. For instance, she stresses the accuracy of her account while reminding the reader that her memory is deteriorating:

> もし私のこの記述がもとになって「生神子物語」の原本がどこかから探し出されるとすればこれほど有難いことはないし、そうでないにしても、私ももう知命をすぎて、記憶力など若いころに較べて著しく減退していることを思えば、幼い頃私だけが読んで比較的正確に暗記している「生神子物語」の内容を、「栄華物語」その他の文献を参考にして一応補修し、書き残して置くことも満更無駄ではないように思われるのである。(Enchi, 2004, pp. 14–15)

> If, based on this description, the original copy of A Tale of False Fortunes should turn up somewhere, there could be nothing more gratifying. But barring that possibility—and considering that my life is half over and that my memory is rapidly deteriorating—there may be some value in my recording for posterity the contents of A Tale of False Fortunes, a work no one but myself seems to have read and that I have committed to fairly accurate memory. I shall fill in gaps by referring to A Tale of Flowering Fortunes and other documents. (Enchi, 2000, p. 13)

On other occasions, claiming that the manuscript is the sole copy and she is the only person who has read it, she expresses regret that nobody has heard of it and its whereabouts remain unknown. Despite the relative infallibility of her memory, she is exposed as being unreliable in her narration when she admits that she might have conflated her childhood memories and personal

emotions with the historical facts. Most importantly, all verisimilitude is virtually destroyed by the metafictional closing, when the narrator intervenes immediately after quoting the final sentences taken intact from *Namamiko-shui*:

> 「生神子物語」の本文はこの文章で終わっている。年譜を調べると道長の薨じた万寿四年はまだ後一条帝の後世であるから年代の記述に誤りがあるが、これは物語のことで作者の語りたい諷喩をのべる手段に歴史を前後させたものであろうか。(Enchi, 2004, p. 196)

> A Tale of False Fortunes ends with these lines. An investigation of the chronologies reveals that when Michinaga died in the fourth year of Manju (1027), it was still the reign of Emperor Go-Ichijō, so there is some error in dates. But then it is a work of fiction, and perhaps the order of historical events was inverted as a means for its author to suggest something. (Enchi, 2000, p. 150)

The inconsistent years of death and the inaccurate names of the emperor in reign irrevocably refute all the kinds of authority and credibility established throughout the narrative. In this ending, factuality overrides fictionality, subverting the authority of historical representation. More importantly, it reveals that in the historical novel fiction and history are rather inseparable and interdependent. The previously made claims to historical truth are only a pretension. Enchi appears to take the view that the writing of the past needs not to be an entirely true record of history. Instead, there are different interpretations of history, and certain degrees of distortion are acceptable.

The resulting ambivalences between fictional and historical discourses create a potential literary realm for women writers to transform history into romance for the reinsertion of women's voices. As noted by Wallace, it is common for women historical novelists to incorporate "romance, fantasy, the Gothic, the adventure story and the detective novel"; particularly, romance has its roots in the Gothic historical novel (2005, p. 3). In *Namamiko monogatari*, Enchi emplots the historical events in the romance plot structure. Her portrayal of Teishi's gentle and uncalculating personality is more convincing than the unfavourable characterization of Teishi in *Eiga monogatari*. The laudatory depiction of Michinaga in *Eiga monogatari* represents 'proper' histories that do not privilege women's subjectivity but glorify men's power and the patriarchal domination in Heian aristocratic society. In contrast, Enchi foregrounds in *Namamiko-shui* the denigrated status of the female characters. Through "an imaginary recovery or recreation of women's lost and unrecorded history", she disrupts the exclusive view of history itself as "unitary and closed" (Wallace, 2005, pp.

16–18).

Enchi expresses her feminist concerns in the novel not just by rewriting an appealing account of Teishi but also more broadly in her representation of the roles of Japanese women in the eleventh century. As aforementioned, writings by women, whether they were written in the Heian or modern periods, have often been labelled as women's literature. As a matter of fact, the Heian era was the golden age of ancient women's literature. A number of canonical texts in Japanese classics were produced and engineered mostly by women (Kuribayashi, 2003, p. xi). Heian women, mainly court ladies, were glorified for contributing to the Japanese national classics (Ericson, 1996, p. 77). The reason why Heian court women produced a profusion of Japanese classics was partly related to the legitimate practice of polygynous marriage. Male aristocrats were allowed to marry more than one wife. The court ladies had ample time to spare when they were not serving their husbands. At the same time, under this system, Heian women suffered from an inferior position bereft of agency. Having to share their husbands with other women, they were doomed to be unhappy in marriage, their identity and obligations attached to "family, clan, and country rather than to themselves as individual moral beings" (Lewell, 1993, p. 78). Taking on the roles of mother and wife, they were often manipulated by men to obtain political power. To endure life in such a society, they had to maintain their composure while suppressing their own anger, jealousy and misery. Hence it is not surprising that the women in the novel should be associated with the vengeful spirits that haunt other royal members. Although the female mediums possess more autonomy in a trance possession since they are allowed to voice their sufferings, they are depicted as horrid beings in the story. Enchi challenges these masculinist assumptions by incorporating fake spirit possessions and establishing an unconventional image of Teishi. As a result, she inserts women's viewpoint into the historical discourses and creates a genuine and invincible romantic relationship between the emperor and his empress consort.

Conclusion

The narrative ruse of fusing fictional narrative with historical discourse greatly reinforces the tension between history and narrativity. The novel should be read by considering both domains and their relationship, because history and fiction are intimately connected and virtually inseparable. While it is claimed that *Namamiko-shui* is the true version of the history of Michinaga and Teishi, the tale is contrasted with Akazome's historical representation in *Eiga monogatari*. The presence of the two versions

suggests that the author, whether of the fictional narrative or the historical discourse, could give different interpretations of the same history. Hence the activity of emplotment might "generate alternative and even mutually exclusive interpretations of the same set of phenomena" (White, 1996, p. 68), indicating that history is not about "one authentic representation of the past but a plurality of competing versions" (Nünning, 1997, p. 227). Further, the contrasting characterization of the main characters encourages the formation of a different image of Michinaga and Teishi. Takenishi Hiroko (1967) supports this view in her contention that the incorporation of the fabricated ancient tale functions to create a more vivid image of Teishi (p. 168).

Enchi employs a variety of narrative strategies to address the question of truthfulness and falsehood between the historical and fictional accounts. Plausibility is attached to the chosen plot type. There is no pure history or pure fiction, and history is simply the presentation of an image of the past. Incorporating the chronicle and romance plot structures poses questions of the evaluative criteria about how faithfully historical novelists represent historical facts. The style of narration in *Namamiko-shui* aims to reconstruct a 'history', whereas the metafictional interventions undermine the credibility of the narration. These ambivalences present the novel with a multivalency that allows the exploration of gender issues and the rewriting of history from a perspective that foregrounds women's concerns. Therefore, by means of the historical novel, women readers are presented with "the imaginative space to create different, more inclusive versions of 'history'" (Wallace, 2005, p. 3). And historical novelists can "supplement those incomplete and partial accounts of the past which systematically ignore the viewpoints and roles of women" (Nünning, 1997, p. 223). By mixing fiction and history, Enchi contests the gendered assumptions underlying historiographical writing by women in general.

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SECTION TWO:

POST-WAR AND CONTEMPORARY LITERATURE

LIFE AFTER DEATH? WRITING THE ALIENATED SELF IN POST-WAR JAPAN[1]

MARK WILLIAMS

Abstract

This paper represents an attempt to consider how artists in general—and Japanese post-war novelists in particular—deal with traumatic experience and how this process is reflected in their subsequent literary texts. More specifically, it will consider how two Japanese immediate post-war authors, Shimao Toshio (1917–86) and Shiina Rinzō (1911–73)—neither of whom saw active experience at the front but who both emerged, by their own admission, heavily traumatized from their experiences of the period—tackled the issue of depicting in their literary texts their wartime experiences and their subsequent attempts to return to 'normal' life in the immediate aftermath of war. The literary process whereby they first 'act out' and subsequently 'work through' their particular traumatic experiences will be examined—and, in so doing, their oeuvres will be presented as ongoing, collaborative projects aimed at more fully 'constituting' certain traumatic events in cognitive, affective and ethical terms.

Keywords: Shimao Toshio, Shiina Rinzō, trauma, Asia-Pacific War

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I would like to begin by offering an alternative title for this paper—which would be along the lines of: 'Don't mention the war: The Japanese literary response to the trauma of the Asia-Pacific War'. This variant seems appropriate inasmuch as, in this paper, I shall be focusing on two Japanese authors who, for all their own harrowing, and inevitably intensely personal, experience of the Asia-Pacific War, have left us with a corpus of literary texts in which direct allusion to this experience is often marked off, as much by its absence as by any intense focus on the traumatic past.

Needless to say, the gamut of those who can be subsumed under the rubric of Japanese 'war authors' is broad: whereas some authors chose to focus predominantly and directly on their experiences on the battlefield, others included these experiences—could not help but include them?—in texts that are ostensibly about unrelated topics. Still others deliberately tried to repress their wartime experiences and sought their literary material elsewhere. Nevertheless, the significant point here is that, even in these texts, the war remained as what the critic Irmela Hijiya-Kirschnereit has described as an "unstated presence" (1996: 247).

What we need to recall is that, for the vast majority of these writers, the war remained as a source of trauma. My focus in the paper that follows, then, will firstly be on a consideration of how artists in general—and then Japanese post-war novelists in particular—deal with traumatic experience. I shall then move on to an analysis of how two specific Japanese immediate post-war authors, Shimao Toshio (1917–86) and Shiina Rinzō (1911–73)—neither of whom saw active experience at the front but who both emerged, by their own admission, heavily traumatized from their experiences of the period—tackled the issue of depicting in their literary texts their attempts to return to 'normal' life in the immediate aftermath of war. So let us begin with a consideration of some of the principles involved in the literary representation of trauma in general.[2] In this context, it is surely true that the contribution of art to how traumatic historical events are constituted, integrated and comprehended has yet to be sufficiently acknowledged. As the critic Ernestine Schlant has observed, for example:

> Politicians and political scientists, economists, journalists, opinion makers, and poll takers all form their conclusions according to some 'objective' criteria, but rarely, if ever, is literature consulted. Yet literature is the seismograph of a people's dreams and nightmares, hopes and apprehensions…. [L]iterary truth often goes deeper than political or economic analysis, and it reflects the conditions and values of the society

[2] Much of the following section draws on my co-authored paper (2010a).

under which it was created. (Schlant & Rimer 1991: 1)

Another grouping that could arguably be added to Schlant's list of those who, all too often, fail to 'consult' literature—or film for that matter—in producing their narratives of traumatic events and experiences is that of the historian. In fact, the neglect of artistic works by historians, political scientists, economists, journalists, etc. may help explain (though only partly) why so many constitutive elements of the Asia–Pacific War (e.g., the Nanjing atrocities, the ongoing 'comfort women' issue, Hiroshima) remain controversial and insufficiently fathomed to this day.

According to the philosopher Walter Davis, traumatic events and experiences must be 'constituted' before they can be assimilated, integrated and understood (2003: 142). As such, what is required, in addition to the historical facts, is the subjective element (including emotion). And I am certainly not alone in arguing that this is precisely what the literary artist is in a unique position to provide.

Drawing upon their formidable powers of intuition and imagination to create potent, affect-charged forms and images of extreme historical violence, psychological damage and ideological contradiction, artists enable their audiences to engage virtually, to internalize, to 'know' and to respond to trauma in concrete, human terms. In this sense, art serves as the "conscience of its community" (2007: 7). Furthermore, as Davis surmises, "creating new affects" is one of the "primary businesses of great [artistic] work" (2001: 228).

So what does all this mean in practice? As already noted, some authors are directly involved, whether as perpetrators or victims/survivors; others may have been present as witnesses, while still others were not present at the time or place of traumatic occurrence at all. There is nevertheless a real sense in which significant numbers from all these cohorts can be seen as suffering the after-effects of trauma—in some cases what we would now call PTSD—and, as artists, they are obliged, whether consciously or not, to consider their traumatic experience and the convoluted processes by which survivor-narrators struggle to represent and (re)constitute their experiences—and to reintegrate themselves—through artistic expression.

The critic Cathy Caruth reminds us that, with trauma, there is, by definition, a period of 'latency' during which the victim experiences frequent and unwitting repetition of the traumatic event—as s/he feels, to cite Dominick LaCapra, as if s/he "were back there reliving the event, and the distance between here and there, then and now, collapses" (LaCapra 2001: 89). At the same time, however, the period of latency allows for a degree of perspective that permits the traumatized individual to begin "the arduous process of working over and through the trauma" (*ibid*: 90); in

short, the survivor is seen as living, not with memories, but with an ongoing, as-yet-unassimilated event. Equally significantly, it is important to bear in mind that the process of interpreting the event can lead to "an enlarged understanding of the self" (Freeman 1993: 29). At the same time, Caruth reminds us that, "while the images . . . remain absolutely accurate and precise, they are largely inaccessible to conscious recall and control" (1995: 151). With time, a critical distance may be achieved—but then the question may become whether the trauma is the encounter with death, or rather the ongoing experience of having survived.

Building on this hypothesis, LaCapra identifies two clearly identifiable stages to the process of representing and reintegrating the self under such circumstances, both of which are crucial for distancing the writer from the original trauma, for laying certain ghosts to rest—and for renewing interest in life and the future. He suggests:

> Writing trauma … involves processes of acting out, working over, and to some extent working through in analyzing and 'giving voice' to the past—processes of coming to terms with traumatic 'experiences', limit events, and their symptomatic effects that achieve articulation in different combinations and hybridized forms…. [It] is often seen in terms of enacting it, which may at times be equated with acting (or playing) it out in performative discourse or artistic practice. (LaCapra 2001: 186–7)

The distinction between the two stages of the process ('acting out' and 'working through' the event) is crucial. But how does each find expression and what is the relationship between them? In his consideration of these issues, LaCapra offers the following definition of the process of 'acting out' trauma:

> Acting out is related to repetition, and even the repetition compulsion…. This is very clear in the case of people who undergo a trauma. They have a tendency to relive the past, to be haunted by ghosts or even to exist in the present as if one were still fully in the past, with no distance from it…. For people who have been severely traumatized, it may be impossible to fully transcend acting out the past. (Ibid: 142–3)

The shift from the 'acting out' stage to the situation wherein the author embarks on the process of 'working through' the trauma may be subtle, even imperceptible. But it tends to be marked off by a heightened ability to distinguish between past and present—to "recall in memory that something happened to one . . . back then—while realizing that one is living here and now with openings to the future" (*ibid*: 22). In all this, the collective challenge for us, as concerned outside observers, is to engage,

unlock and (re)constitute the affect-charged, value-laden human dramas that have been imaged—and imagined—in this case in specific Japanese artistic representations of the traumatic past. And, if we trawl through the literature, there is a whole wealth of images, both visual and verbal, that spring to mind: the 'human seal' of Hiroshima; the young female survivor and skull amidst the ruins of Nagasaki; the Okinawan man who awakens one morning to find his leg swollen grotesquely, his big toe emitting water from which phantom soldiers come to drink nightly; the dying soldier in a remote cave in the Philippines with maggots squirming in his unseeing eyes as he quietly lectures about how the entire history of the universe is contained in a single stone. What we are called to do is to try and grasp their relevance to the present and future. Left unengaged, unconstituted and un-acted upon, such images—and the historical traumas that they reference—will, whether we realize it or not, continue to disturb us both personally and collectively, like recurrent but unregistered nightmares, haunting the present and threatening the future.

Let us turn then to the Japanese literary response to the trauma of the war. I start from the premise that the events, experiences and aftermath of the Asia–Pacific War were not only traumatic for the majority of Japanese people and the nation as a whole at the time, but have continued to be so to the present day. In this sense, Japanese artists affected by such trauma, whether directly or indirectly, can be understood to be engaging in ongoing, collaborative projects aimed at more fully constituting particular traumatic experiences and events in cognitive, affective and ethical terms. It is in this context that I consider the oeuvres of two authors, Shimao Toshio and Shiina Rinzō, both of whom came of age during the War, neither of whom saw active service at the front, and who had vastly differing experiences of the War—but who can nevertheless be used to offer insights into how the artist deals with trauma. More specifically, I shall be suggesting that traces of these two processes—that of 'acting out' followed by 'working through'—can be seen clearly delineated in their respective texts.

Turning first to Shimao, the trauma of his wartime experience is well-documented. Encouraged to enlist in the *tokkōtai* (special attack forces, better known in the West as the *kamikaze*) as a largely unwitting 'volunteer', Shimao spent the last two years of the War on the island of Amami Ōshima, just north of Okinawa, as leader of a suicide squadron, with every day spent preparing himself and the approximately 200 men under his command for their fateful mission. The go-ahead for this mission was finally delivered on 13 August 1945, with Shimao and his men spending the next 36 hours in a state of 'ready alert'. Noon of 15

August arrived with the men still in limbo, only for news of the imperial declaration of surrender to slowly filter through, leaving Shimao and his entire team to confront the prospect of a life that had been denied them until that moment. Having also missed the great earthquake that hit the Tokyo area in 1923 as a result of a day trip that had taken him out of town, in subsequent years, Shimao was to make much of his sense of having missed the two most formative moments of his life. As he remarked in 'Tobikoenakereba!' ('I must overcome!'), a piece penned shortly after the cessation of hostilities:

> Two incidents in my past serve to symbolise the way in which I always seem to be caught between two stools. At the time of the Great Kanto earthquake, I had left our home in Yokohama in order to recuperate and was thus unable to become a victim. Then in the recent war, I opted for service as a commissioned officer and became head of a kamikaze squadron. But we never sailed and I survived the war having never experienced life at the front. (Shimao 1980–83, vol. 13: 121)[3]

For those spared such a confrontation with death, we can only guess at the psychological upheaval and trauma Shimao went through, both at the time and as he sought to 'act out' and then 'work through' these events and to return to 'normal' life. But his works give us fascinating insights into the workings of the human mind *in extremis*; indeed, in many ways, they can be seen as offering some of the most detailed case studies of man emerging from the ashes of defeat—as some of the most haunting examinations of human nature—in the entirety of modern Japanese literature.

Shimao starts his oeuvre by asking the question of how to cope with traditional peacetime after such an experience: his early stories show a protagonist, often called Toshio, in a state of ready alert—in which, not only has he learnt to live only for death, but he has come to terms with that as his destiny. As Toshio remarks in the early short story, 'Shutsu-kotōki' ('Exodus from the Island', 1949):

> The moon was high in the night sky. There was nothing to do now but wait for the command to sail. Strangely enough, I had lost all attachment to life in this world. Every moment that our departure was delayed sowed in me the seeds of impatience. It was painful to continue in this state of ready alert. This was our chance … the perfect opportunity. I would have no qualms about sailing right then. But the order didn't come. (ibid, 6: 282)

[3] This and all subsequent citations from the Japanese, including titles of works, are translated by myself, unless otherwise indicated.

It is hardly surprising that Shimao's protagonist is shown as possessed of an inverted vision of normality—with post-war peace here perceived as a temporary respite from the norm of war. This leads to a warped perception of life as a struggle, not with his fellow man, but with his own inner being. The more he comes to accept that the emptiness he experiences following release from death stems from an inability to replace his constant readiness for death with any credible role in post-war society, the more he comes to see the enemy as within his inner being. Needless to say, Shimao is not unique in this; but I would argue that he does succeed, more than most others I can think of, in taking this to its logical conclusion: using literature as a vehicle for genuine self-scrutiny.

It is to be expected that the early Shimao stories—written, we must remember, under the constraints of the US Occupation—focus on the confusion and fear both of the 'ready alert' period and of his ensuing abject circumstances in Occupation Japan. With time, however, the author becomes more balanced and objective—and it is in 'Shuppatsu wa tsui ni otozurezu' ('The Moment of Departure Never Came', 1962), covering much the same material but written some fifteen years later, that he finally appears reconciled to the inevitable: to understand that release from death will not necessarily entail return to full life. His consequent pain and indifference to life is highlighted in the following extract from the later story:

> I was overcome by an intense fatigue and lay face up on my bed. There was nothing about which to feel apprehension and, in that sense, there were no grounds for fear. Yet I was engulfed in an indescribable sense of loneliness. It was as though the future, in which there was an alternative to death but which had previously been banished from our minds, had been reduced with the passage of time to something commonplace, and the sense of fulfilment in life that I had assumed would ensue automatically seemed to slip through my fingers….
>
> In the past, I had merely reacted out of an unabated sense of abhorrence and had lived in fear of air-raids, of insubordination, and of the moment when our suicide boats would strike the enemy craft. When such possibilities disappeared, not as a result of any wish on my part but like the conclusion of some natural phenomenon, I was left with a sense of emptiness, devoid of all energy to go off to confront a new situation. (ibid: 325–6)

Here finally, Shimao seems to have acknowledged—to have 'worked through'—the full extent of the struggle to which he had been subjected from the moment the order to sail had been revoked; he can now finally accept that, having found himself alive but living for certain death, he had

subsequently found himself staring in on life from the perspective of death—and admitting that, in many ways, that was infinitely harder to accept.

The story, 'The Moment of Departure Never Came', also illustrates the unseverable link between Shimao's war stories and the three other types of story that populate his oeuvre: those dealing with home, dreams, and travel, all of which can be seen as products of his August 1945 experience. All can be seen as literary attempts to explore the inner being by placing protagonists under extreme circumstances. But in what ways do these too reflect his experience of postponed death in August 1945?

The brief answer to this question is that every Shimao protagonist has an inverted perspective on life. Just as the distinction between war and peace had been eroded, so too his non-war stories are populated by characters who have lost all sense of black-and-white distinctions. Most significant in this regard is the protagonist, Toshio, in *Shi no toge* (*The Sting of Death*, 1977), a novel that is all too easily dismissed as a rather turgid and realistic depiction of a marital breakdown.

What is important to note here, however, is that the work belongs to a series of 'sick-wife stories', a body of stories that focus on the period in the author's life after he had moved back to mainland Japan and married the girl, Miho, he had met during his two-year stint on the island of Amami Ōshima—only for his wife to succumb to mental-health issues and for the couple to spend the next decade or so frequenting a series of psychiatric clinics. As the author is the first to acknowledge, however, the situation is exacerbated—if not directly caused—both by his ongoing awkward attempts to 'work through' his traumatic wartime experiences and by his marital infidelity. The sense of guilt—both towards his military comrades who had not escaped their moment of destiny and towards Miho for having occasioned her illness—is palpable in this and the other 'sick-wife stories'. The result, however, is a body of works marked off by their emphasis on absolute faithfulness to the mundane reality that confronted Shimao following his return to 'peacetime reality'. As with the war stories, here too the future holds no meaning: Toshio has to live for the present moment. And so he records the mundane detail of his daily life—and, in so doing, he gives voice to the torment he was still experiencing ten years after his initial traumatic experience of near-death.

On the surface, therefore, *The Sting of Death* portrays in graphic detail one marital tiff after another, with the only saving grace being the couple's determination to stay together at all costs. And yet, as suggested by the fact that the film was to take both the FIPRESCI Prize and the Grand Prize of the Jury at the 1990 Cannes Film Festival (where it was also nominated

for the Golden Palm), there is also a beauty here that enables the reader to discern a sense of optimism, a Rembrandt-like ray of light shining through the darkness.

So how does Shimao achieve this paradoxical effect? Here too the answer seems to lie in the author's experience of suspended death in 1945: he manages to elicit our sympathy for Toshio on the grounds that he never fully re-integrated back into society—and, in this regard, it is interesting to note that the film version includes many flashbacks to the war, episodes which are not overtly present in the novel.

The home Shimao portrays here is one enveloped in ambiguity. On the one hand, it appears as a very fragile institution, devoid of life and mutual understanding. At the same time, though, Toshio is attached, almost pathologically, to the home and family—as shown by the ending where he finds himself tempted to abandon all his responsibilities and to escape alone, but ends up, in spite of himself, once more drawn to return to the psychiatric clinic where his wife is confined, an act that has been seen by many as the ultimate act of atonement and self-effacement. The result may be a portrait of confusion—of one struggling to make sense of events for which he is partly responsible but is powerless to control. At the same time, however, there is a sense of hope, even of optimism, with the future, however uncertain, nevertheless offering the potential for new beginnings. And, in this sense, *The Sting of Death* can be seen as a very powerful metaphor for post-war Japan itself.

There is, however, one final aspect to Shimao's art that I see as central to an understanding of his literary depiction of traumatic events. This relates to his tendency, predictable in many ways, to transform reality into fantasy, and vice versa. It is this that leads to the series of 'dream stories', another significant contributor to his posthumous reputation.

It is hardly surprising that the events of 1945 came to appear to Shimao as part of a dream—and the reader is struck by the number of his stories that see his protagonists move from the real to the surreal world. Here, the author can be seen using dreams to explore the unconscious—and consequently to depict deeper truths than would be possible through objective realism. In short, in classic Freudian manner, he uses dreams to portray the chaos of human existence at a basic level. The best example of this trait is the short story 'Yume no naka de no nichijō' ('Everyday Life in a Dream', 1948), a work whose very title can be read as a powerful image of reality turned upside down, a perfect mirror of Shimao's situation in 1945.

For the protagonist of this story, everyday life has come to assume an air of unreality: just as the protagonist of the war stories is trying to make

sense of his reprieve from death, so this protagonist becomes embroiled in a conscious attempt to fathom the nature and contents of his dreams. As he does so, he is shown penetrating ever further beyond an exterior façade—until he eventually confronts his inner being. This takes the form of the protagonist becoming embroiled in heated discussion with his own mood—until he eventually succeeds, quite literally, in exposing his inner self:

> Hardening my resolve, I thrust my hand into my stomach. Then, still scratching my head vehemently with my left hand, I tried with my right hand to dig out the contents of my stomach. My hand alighted on something clinging tenaciously to the pit of my stomach like a hard kernel, and I tried pulling on it with all my might. The result was incredible. My flesh was pulled upwards with that hard kernel on top. I continued pulling desperately. Eventually, I felt that my whole body had been pulled inside out, like a sock. My head no longer itched and the stomach ache had dissipated. (ibid 2: 209)

The image symbolizes, in dramatic fashion, the two conflicting worlds the author had discerned at the end of the war when, with his unexpected reprieve, his own entire world had indeed appeared turned inside out.

In all this, one conclusion remains irrefutable: as an author driven by personal experience to consider in his literature fundamental questions about life and death, Shimao was never to waver in his attempt to come to terms with the events of 1945. In preserving this experience as the catalyst for all his subsequent literary production—by initially 'acting them out' and subsequently 'working through' them—he has left us a set of texts remarkable not only for their ability to plumb the depths of his own inner being, but also in their consistent attempt to find new ways of asking old questions, such as 'What is man?' and 'What is war?'

By way of a second case study of Japanese literary engagement with traumatic material, let us now turn to another author, Shiina Rinzō, who also came to literary prominence shortly after the cessation of Pacific War hostilities. As with many other Japanese, Shiina has been described by his friend and fellow author, Saitō Suehiro, as having listened to the imperial radio broadcast of surrender 'with little emotion' (1980: 254). In this, he was not alone: as John Dower suggests in *Embracing Defeat*, his extended study of the period, the Japanese of the time experienced a sense of *kyodatsu*: they were physically 'drained'. For Shiina, however, the ongoing struggle for daily survival was nothing new: ever since his arrest in September 1931 for violation of the Peace Preservation Law (which outlawed left-wing political activity), his subsequent torture, and his

eventual release from imprisonment on the back of his agreement to put his signature to a *tenkōsho* (document of political apostasy), he had been confronted with the need to make the most of whatever mundane opportunities and employment he was offered by the military police. As with so many of his peers, the decision to commit *tenkō* may have led to release from physical incarceration;[4] however, it did little to assuage the feelings of guilt he consequently harboured towards his comrades who remained imprisoned; nor, given the military build-up of the time, did it lead to any immediate reintegration back into society.

Largely as a result of the vagaries of translation, Shiina's oeuvre has not established for itself an international reputation; indeed, his works are unfamiliar to all but the most committed of literary scholars in Japan. For all this neglect, however, it is not without reason that his friend and critic, Takadō Kaname, chose to describe him as the "literary voice of the masses" (1989: 250). Shiina is arguably the representative author of the *Sengoha* (après-guerre) literary coterie, a classic example of the alienated individual in Occupation Japan. Indeed, a case can be made for describing him as the unofficial spokesman for an entire generation of alienated, 'deracinated' individuals.

Central to Shiina's entire corpus is the image of an individual struggling to come to terms not only with the big national issues of the day (responsibility for defeat in the war, guilt, the position of the imperial institution, etc.), but also, far more immediately, with the need to survive—or, as Shiina would have it, to "*taeru*" (endure) in the "*haikyo*" (ruins) of post-war Tokyo. Thus, as Takadō Kaname noted:

> Both physically and spiritually, it was ruins that molded Shiina inexorably into a unique writer. Unable to look down on these ruins from above, he was forced to crawl around hopelessly within them. But the knowledge that he had escaped the calamities of the war alive would have made every day precious and yet, paradoxically, totally empty. (Ibid: 8)

It is significant to note that Takadō is here referring not only to the physical ruins of Occupation Japan but also to the ruins that pervaded Shiina's spiritual being, one devoid of a past or a future, existing merely as an empty present. Indeed, as Shiina himself acknowledged as he emerged from the war, he was obliged to confront the ultimate question:

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[4] Here it is important to note that all but a tiny minority of the 57,000 arrested for leftwing activities between 1928–34 succumbed to the various pressures to commit *tenkō*; cf. Steinhoff 1988: 84.

> Why am I alive? That is the stubborn question with which I am continually confronted. I have lost all hope in the history of mankind and cannot believe in its future. All I can believe in is the end of mankind…. When I hear such words as the "happiness of mankind" and "peace", I just want to burst out laughing. (Shiina 1970–79 [hereinafter *SRZ*], vol. 14: 34)

The issue lies at the heart of Shiina's early prose narratives, most notably in the portrayal of the first-person narrator, Sumaki, of the early novella 'Shin'ya no shūen' ('The Midnight Banquet', 1947), with which Shiina announced his arrival on the literary scene. Sumaki's evocations of his abject circumstances are among the most poignant on record for this period. As he suggests,

> I have no future and the past has been destroyed. I am merely a solitary ruin. My heart is weighed down by the realization that I was destroyed in the very process of my birth. I was destroyed the very moment I received my destiny. All that remains of me is a solitary ruin that is living for a concrete death. (ibid 1: 98)

For all that we should be aware of the necessity to maintain a clear distinction between Shiina and his literary alter ego, Sumaki, Shiina is at constant pains to stress his self-identification with his protagonist. And there can be few more honest literary portrayals of the depths plumbed by so many in Japan in the immediate post-war period. Thus, although there may be many examples in the literature of the time of the individual devoid of anything in which to place his trust except himself, it is significant to note that, for Shiina, even such trust in the self is lacking.

There is, then, a fundamental oxymoron underlying Shiina's work—in the attempted fusion of the subjective depictions of the circumstances of ruin and his objective analysis of existence within such ruins. To the writer himself, this was an inevitable consequence of his own past. The point was taken up by Shiina's colleague in the *Sengoha*, Haniya Yutaka, who remarked:

> For Shiina—as well as for me—all literature stems from a continuing challenge to attempt to say that which cannot be said, to transmit that which can never be transmitted, to describe the impossible as if it were possible. (cited in Takadō 1989: 16)

The comment echoes the exhortation, issued by the Emperor, in his famous radio broadcast of 15 August 1945 accepting the terms of the Potsdam Declaration, for the citizens of Japan to "endure the unendurable". The challenge for Shiina and his compatriots was to capture the essence of

this paradox—to give literary expression to this opposition. But how were they to do this?

Perhaps Shiina's response to this challenge can best be encapsulated in his oft-stated belief that there can be no depiction of hope without consideration of its inverse, absolute despair: as he suggested, "[d]espair is impossible without hope and, equally, hope is not possible without despair" (*SRZ* 20: 23–4). Similarly, the brightness which, I am arguing, does ultimately permeate his texts, is a brightness premised on a knowledge of darkness. Shiina may have been dismissed by many as merely depicting the despair and emptiness of existence in Occupation Japan. But such depictions, I suggest, fall short of the mark—in missing the carefully crafted dichotomy, the hope beyond the despair, the Rembrandt-like light beyond the darkness.

This trait is clearly evident in 'Midnight Banquet', where we see Sumaki living in an old, bombed-out warehouse, converted into the most rudimentary of apartments. The atmosphere evoked from the outset is one of unmitigated gloom—to the extent that Sumaki recalls with nostalgia his days in prison before committing *tenkō*:

> Now, when it rains all day long, I feel stifled. Even when in prison, I could inhale the spray from the rain through the window and could watch thoughtfully as the tall, red brick wall gradually changed hue to an ugly mud colour. When spring came, I could see, beyond the iron bars and iron grillwork, begonias blossoming along the edge of the wall. But all I can do in this room is pace back and forth. (ibid 1: 4)

Thereafter, struggling to endure such meaninglessness, Sumaki not surprisingly finds himself questioning the very purpose of his present life:

> I am devoid of all memories…. And not for me the dreams of a shining future. All that exists is the unendurable present. But, to one forlorn of hope, just because the present is hard to endure, does not mean any hope of improvement. What can be improved? And how? … All that remains for me is to endure the unendurable present. (ibid: 11)

Again echoes of the imperial broadcast to the nation are evident in the word 'endure'. And, based on such passages, it is hardly surprising that Shiina has been categorized by critics such as Yamagata Kazumi as an "author of despair" (1988: 68); in many ways, the reputation was self-inflicted. Almost immediately, however, comes evidence of more than meets the eye, of a narrator determined to penetrate beyond the immediate pain and misery—by drawing attention to the fact that Sumaki is not simply succumbing to his despair, but seeking to work through it. The

inversion is first evidenced in Sumaki's response to his 'depressing' neighbours:

> All [my neighbours] incite in me a profound sense of despair. They reduce the various yearnings of my heart to a sense of hopeless despair. *And yet*, I am content. I have begun to love my despair. Of course, that is a melancholy sort of love. *And yet*, my melancholy affords me the same kind of pleasure as that one feels when climbing into bed at night. (*SRZ* 1: 11; my italics)

The stark opposition incorporated into such portrayals is clearly not designed to mitigate the extent of Sumaki's despair: this remains as real and abject as ever. The protagonist is, however, moving on; he is 'acting out' past experience—and this will eventually bring him to an acceptance that such despair and suffering are not meaningless, painful emotions that must be endured for no apparent reason, but rather natural feelings through which he will ultimately be enabled to confront a deeper level of his being. The experience is invaluable and, by the end of the novella, Sumaki is in a position to unravel some of his confusion, to make some sort of sense of that which has earlier been presented as irrationally conflicting emotions—in short, to begin the process of 'working through' them.

In 1950–51, Shiina experienced another form of *tenkō* (conversion), albeit this time of a spiritual dimension, as he sought baptism into the Christian faith. At much the same time, he published *Jiyū no kanata de* (*On the Other Side of Freedom*, 1954), set up as an attempt to stress the fundamental distinction he discerned between his current self and his earlier self 'on the far side of freedom'—with literary portrayals of his former self as, for example, 'a corpse', as 'a betrayer', and as 'God's clown'. Significantly, however, the past is not dismissed as an irrelevance; it is seen as an essential prerequisite for the process of 'working through' certain salient events in his life journey to which his attention now turns.

It is here, I would suggest, that one can find the essential difference between Shiina's earlier and later narratives. The former, epitomized by *Midnight Banquet*, conform closely to Shoshana Felman's template for narratives that "bear witness to the trauma and the implications of survival" (Felman & Laub 1992: 165)—that 'act it out'. The latter, by contrast, written at considerably greater remove from the events in question, ask instead 'How does one survive the witnessing?' Or to use the lexicon of this discussion, 'How does one "work through" it?'

But what does this mean in practice as we read the more mature texts? In the first of these, *On the Other Side of Freedom*, Shiina draws in greater detail than ever before on autobiographical material—chronicling a series

of events that relate closely to his own life experience, with his decision to leave home at age 15, his *tenkō* experience in the early 1930s, his consequent release from prison, and the gruelling experience of freedom he undergoes working in the match factory to which he is assigned by the Military Police. In all this, it is difficult to avoid the sense of the author, Shiina, as omnipresent, frequently casting judgment on his protagonist, here named Seisaku, from his current perspective on 'this side of freedom'. This, in and of itself, is strong evidence of an author 'working through' his material, as opposed to simply 'acting it out', as he was earlier.

The trait is even clearer in the novel *Unga* (*The Canal*, 1956), written immediately after *On the Other Side of Freedom*, and deliberately picking up where the former leaves off—with the protagonist recently arrived in Tokyo and seeking to re-establish himself in society through hard work and attempting to establish some meaningful relationships with those around him.

To this new protagonist, Senkichi, the only escape from his miserable circumstances is through searching. And during the course of the narrative, this quest leads to the discovery not merely of the world of former colleagues who had hitherto rejected him as having betrayed them but also of a greater affinity with the mundane and harsh reality of the masses.

Significantly, however, this search does not take place in a vacuum—and an integral part of this process relates to Senkichi's ability to acknowledge and come to terms with his own traumatic past and to 'work through' these events as the only means of moving forwards. As such, he is consequently dogged by frequent reminders of his past, with several early incidents acting as the 'trigger' for flashbacks to the trauma surrounding his *tenkō*. For example, right at the outset, after crashing his bike and losing consciousness, he returns in his mind to the experience of being tortured by the Military Police:

> Senkichi recalled the large *dōjō* (auditorium) on the second floor of the police station. There was a long, thin, plain wood desk in the middle behind which sat a young prosecutor and clerk. Senkichi was made to sit in front of them, with an old, slow-moving military police officer (*tokkō*) stood behind him. He was ordered to tell them the names of the local Party members who had contacted him—and of those in his cell. When Senkichi said that he knew none, the officer passed a bamboo between Senkichi's hands, now tied behind him, and his back and then pulled it up towards his shoulders, with a shriek. He felt as though both arms were being ripped from their sockets. Every time the pole was forced up, he let out a pitiful scream and broke out into a sweat. He endured this; but the officer just carried on and on with the torture. Unable to resist the pain, Senkichi fell to the floor. But the officer made no attempt to pick him up—and just carried on forcing his arms up with the sword. (*SRZ* 6: 531–2)

For all the distance, the memories are still raw—and they inspire Senkichi, once more, to relive the events. But, in sharp contrast to the absence of portrayal of any of the intense interior dialogue of the earlier works, *The Canal* represents the first concerted effort by Shiina's protagonist to analyse these events—and, more specifically, to consider the paradoxical consequences of his *tenkō*. On the one hand, he did succeed thereby in securing his release; but, at the same time, he sees the act as a betrayal of himself—and of those around him.

The overall depiction is of Senkichi confronted—and increasingly troubled—by what he describes as his own "overwhelming wretchedness" (*ibid*: 586). Significantly, however, the narrative then proceeds to an important admission: "Never before had Senkichi been confronted by the ugly contradiction inherent within his being to this extent" (*ibid*: 587). And strangely enough, this thought was linked to a sense that he was betraying the entire world. Here, as if for the first time, we have the sense that Senkichi is finally making some headway with his attempts to reconstruct his *tenkō* experience. Having failed, to date, to integrate this as an integral element of his life history, he is now in a position to move from resistance and denial to a greater degree of acceptance; he is ready, in short, to 'work through' the experience—and this is marked in the text by his encounter with one of his former colleagues whom he had 'betrayed'.

In this sense, his meeting with his former colleague, Anami Reiko, is the real cathartic moment here:

> Reiko didn't smile. She simply stared at him with an expressionless look in her eyes, and replied in the Kansai dialect, 'Yes.'
>
> The sweet sensation of nostalgia drained visibly from Senkichi's being; there was a distinct tone of powerful criticism in Reiko's voice. The past, which he had long since tried to bury, came flooding back; he was even aware of the weight on the palm of his hand of the ten fifty-*sen* coins he had received from Reiko when she had been working in the small café in Kobe to cover the 'rent of an agitator'. There had even been a time when he had experienced feelings of love towards her.
>
> 'When did you come to Tokyo?' he asked out of desperation.
>
> 'Only about a month ago,' she replied. (ibid: 605)

The earlier narratives would doubtless have left things there, with the Shiina protagonist unwilling—or unable—to delve deeper into the cause of Reiko's evident anguish. Senkichi, however, is ready for further probing, and the ensuing narrative raises several of the issues he had been mulling over for so long:

> 'You [were tortured] too?' he eventually asked hesitantly.
>
> 'Yes,' she replied brusquely.

> ‘I suffered terribly at the hands of the military police. I was moved from one cell to another for about two years,’ Senkichi began to explain. ‘They eventually let me out on parole.’
>
> ‘Why did you run off without telling anyone?’ she eventually asked.
>
> ‘I didn’t. I told my colleagues it was dangerous and ordered them to escape.’
>
> ‘I never heard that,’ she said in a monotonous voice. ‘Everyone on the trains was mad with you. Even those who weren’t in the union got caught up in it. Everyone’s convinced that you informed on them to the police before running away.’
>
> ‘That’s a lie,’ he found himself shouting. ‘Are you crazy?’
>
> ‘In which case, why didn’t you come back to be with your former colleagues on leaving prison?’ (ibid: 606)

In its portrayal of Senkichi determined to live for the future, not simply by expunging the traumatic past from his consciousness but by seeking consciously to move on, the incident is decisive. On the one hand, he may be left bemoaning the fact that “that horrible moment under torture had destroyed any bridge back to the past” (*ibid*: 631); on the other, however, he has now reclaimed at least some semblance of control over his life and its future direction.

By way of conclusion to this discussion, therefore, I would suggest that the political perspective may not always be overtly foregrounded in either of these authors’ works. However, even where the texts are not dealing directly with the traumatic experiences they had undergone, these ‘omissions’ cannot be totally ignored. Given the circumstances, one might well ask, should we not just read the novels for the richness of what is there, rather than for what, if anything, has been excluded? But at this point, it is surely important to remember the rejoinder offered by the critic Edward Said, who reminds us not to read texts “stripped of their affiliations with the facts of power which informed and enabled them” (1994: 195). Shiina and Shimao may not be household names in Japan. Still, I would argue, their works are an invaluable resource, not just for the literature aficionado, but also for the historian, and for the politicians and diplomats trying to move on from the issues that continue to cast long shadows on international relations in East Asia.

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Circle within Walls: A Comparative Study on Poets of Leprosariums[1]

Robert Ono

Abstract

Many forms of literature are nurtured in circles or salon-like environments, where participants with mutual interests serve alternately as creators, readers, and critics. This was especially true with *waka*, a poetic form with 31 syllables, during the Heian period, which had an immense impact on the formation of Japanese literature. Since the modernization of Japan, mainstream writers have formed a much more large-scale and sophisticated literary establishment called the *bundan*. However, it must not be overlooked that many writers were active outside such mainstream currents. Literary circles within leprosariums, to which this paper pays special attention, are a good example. A dozen or so leprosariums were home to tens of thousands of patients who were forced to leave their families. In such facilities many sought refuge in literature; they expressed themselves freely through *tanka*, the modern version of *waka*, in intramural magazines, and strived to enrich the culture of their very own "leprosy literature." Using magazines such as *Kikuchino*, *Kaede*, and *Aisei* as primary sources, this paper clarifies that many patients were eager to express their identities through depicting their illness, but were at the same time mindful not to go against authority, since the magazines were scrutinized by staff members of the leprosariums. It must also be noted that for some patients who were seriously committed to literature, the fixed verses of *tanka* were considered insufficient as a means to express one's true self, compared to more highly regarded forms such as the novel.

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Keywords: leprosy literature, *tanka*, literary circle, Hansen's disease, leprosarium

Introduction

Writing is often done alone, but at the same time, communication is the essential factor in the art of writing, or perhaps any form of art. What is written must be read by the *other*, and what is read, in turn, becomes the source of the next writing. It is, therefore, natural to see literature flourishing in tandem with the development of social ties among writers who cherish similar values, sharing and critiquing each other's works and forming what is often called a salon culture.

For those familiar with French history, it is a well-established fact that it was in such salons, especially during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, where poems, plays, and novels developed dramatically. Poems and prose fiction now came to be recognized as important parts of intellectual discourse (Craveri, 2005). In the salons of notable women, such as the Marquise de Rambouillet and Madeleine de Scudéry, many gathered to exchange their works and ideas, thereby building a refined corpus of poetic language.

Something similar happened in Japan much earlier. It was during the ninth century that aristocrats began to gather and exchange their *waka* (和歌) poems, short but rich texts of 31 morae (syllables) that often deepen their semantic value when aligned with poems prepared by other participants present at the session (Shirane, 2012). [2] Such gatherings, called *uta-awase* (歌合), were crucial for *waka* to reach the position of a means of artistic and even philosophical dialogue among sociopolitical elites. In 905, over a thousand *waka* was compiled into the *Kokin wakashū* (古今和歌集), or *Anthology of Ancient and Modern Waka*, an official volume of poetry commissioned by Emperor Uda.

Naturally, different genres of literary arts also flourished in the following centuries. In terms of verse, *waka* developed into *renga* (連歌), or linked verses, a form which reached its height during the Medieval period (roughly 1185–1568), while *haikai* (俳諧), another form of linked verse with shorter blocks of 17-syllable *haiku* (俳句), came into fashion during the Edo period. Traditional *waka* was still appreciated then, but it was often composed in the style of *kyōka* (狂歌), or satirical and parodic verse. As

[2] Verse with more syllables, such as *chōka* and *sedōka,* may also be included in *waka*, but these forms will not be discussed in this paper.

Ikegami claims, these forms of verse played an important role in the "surprising number of hobbies and interest groups" that emerged in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Japan, which covered a wide range of topics from "*haikai* and *kyōka* poetry to appreciating and competing to grow perfect morning glories" (2015, p. 45).

After the Meiji Restoration in 1868, in now-modernized Japan, Western-style novels quickly became the central form of creative writing. Forms of prose such as *ukiyo-zōshi* (浮世草子, lit. "books of the floating world") and *kusazōshi* (草双紙), or illustrated literature, circulated widely during the Edo period, but the torrent of new ideas and cultures that flooded Japan in the early Meiji period inevitably and overwhelmingly impacted Japanese writing. As Ivan Morris argues, the changes Japan went through in such a short time caused "a major break with the past that has no parallel in any of the important literatures of the West" (2005, p. 11).

Aspiring writers who sought fame in the new literary world strived to publish their tours de force in magazines with nationwide circulation. Prizes were given out to promising talents, and successful writers were now celebrities. The literary circle has now evolved into a much more sophisticated and large-scale literary establishment, or *bundan* (文壇), which definitely played a significant role in Japan's artistic and intellectual domains until the late Showa period (1926–89).

It must not be overlooked, however, that many writers were also active outside such mainstream currents. Of course, there were many who just did not make the cut; but for some, it was simply impossible to join the mainstream. A good example of the latter would be literary circles within leprosariums.

Leprosy has been documented throughout Japanese history. The *Kojiki* (古事記), the earliest book of history, compiled in 712, recounts emperors accommodating patients in temples to save their souls; leprosy was widely believed to be a result of bad karma, and salvation could only be achieved through prayers. Because of this, many patients lived as hermits, and were often treated as untouchables.

During the Meiji and Taishō periods, a number of leprosy colonies were established by Christian missionaries. However, instead of enlightening the public to the scientific fact that leprosy is neither deadly nor highly contagious, the government labeled leprosy as a hindrance to the nation's development. As the Second World War approached, the government was more inclined to eugenics, as was Nazi Germany, and stressed the importance of a leprosy-free nation. In 1931, the Leprosy Prevention Law was enforced, and this allowed the police to send patients to colonies by

force, with virtually every prefecture in Japan competing to realize a leprosy-free community, in a movement labeled the *muraiken undō* (無癩県運動). During the next five years, the number of patients residing in these colonies tripled, and by 1940 there was a total of 8,855 patients living in designated colonies in each region of the country (Ōtani, 1996).[3]

Since many patients left their families and moved to colonies with the notion that they would never return, colonies were established as something of a miniature city. Churches, temples, and shrines of various denominations were erected next to each other. There were schools for children, usually taught by adult patients. There were spaces to farm. Colonies even minted their own currency so as to control economic activities within the walls, and to prevent the patients from deserting.

Many patients were occupied with manual labor, nursing of patients in critical condition, and farming, but most of their chores were completed in the morning, leaving ample time for the patients to spend on their own (Aoyama, 2014). Therefore it was only natural for them to form various circles, or gatherings of mutual interests. Some were devoted actors and musicians. Some kept improving their vegetable gardens. Some preferred simpler hobbies such as *shōgi* and *go* games. And many others came to enjoy expressing themselves poetically, especially in the form of *tanka* (短歌), the modern *waka*.[4]

During the 1920s and 1930s, colonies started publishing intramural magazines one after another. Although most of the space was dedicated to articles concerned with reports on current events inside the colonies and essays regarding the lives of the patients, penned by both the patients and resident doctors, a certain number of pages was always allocated to sharing the artistic achievements of the patients.

Tanka in Leprosy Patients' Magazines before 1945

The first magazine to be published was *Yamazakura* (『山桜』) at Zenshō Hospital, one of the largest colonies, located in the Tama area of Tokyo. It was first published in April 1919 as a handcrafted magazine, produced by duplicating manuscripts using a mimeograph machine. The magazine called

[3] A detailed history of policies regarding leprosy, compiled by the Japan Law Foundation in 2005, is available online at the website of the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare. http://www.mhlw.go.jp/topics/bukyoku/kenkou/hansen/kanren/4a.html/.

[4] The difference between *waka* and *tanka* is purely temporal. Any verses created after 1868—the Meiji Restoration—are called *tanka*.

for readers' contributions, ranging from thoughts on religion, essays, and short prose, to *tanka*, *haiku*, anecdotes, and jokes.

In the first issue, we can only find five *tanka*. One of them is composed by a certain Kakotsu (鹿骨), an avid writer contributing to almost every volume in the earlier issues of *Yamazakura*. One of the *tanka* reads:

畑打てば今年も此所の畔の樹で鶯か何か物語るらし
While working on the fields I hear …
A bush warbler perhaps?
Telling a story
On the tree by the furrow
It is that time of the year again[5] (Kokufūkai, 1919a, p. 19)

Here it is clear that the poem focuses on nature and the changing of seasons, which are the central topics of traditional *tanka*. Although we do not see any direct expressions pertaining to the poet's illness, we can still sense, through the serene scenery depicted here, the happiness of the poet to have lived through another year.

In some poems, however, we see more straightforward expressions. For example, here is a *tanka* by Majima Rika (間島梨花), published in the July issue of the same year:

罪重く世の道登る老の坂是に乗れやと極楽の籠
With my heavy sins
I climb the worldly path
The hills of my old age
Then someone offers me a ride:
The palanquin of heaven (Kokufūkai, 1919b, p. 13)

We must note that it was commonly believed that leprosy was the wrath of the gods, or was karma from one's doings in a past life. Here the poet is finally greeted with salvation, although it is quite clear that salvation signifies death.

In January 1931, another magazine, *Aisei* (『愛生』), was established in Nagashima Aisei-en, a colony on the island of Nagashima in Okayama Prefecture. Again let us take a look at a couple of *tanka* from the earlier volumes.

[5] All English translations are my own. The original Japanese text for sources other than *tanka* will henceforth be provided in footnotes.

海を背にたたずみ仰ぐ島の山かすめる如し眼は病みてけり
Standing with my back to the ocean
I look up to the mountain
The mountain on the island
It appears to be covered with mist
For my eyes are sickened (Oguma, 1931, p. 15)

Here the poet Katsumata Iwao (勝俣巖) depicts the landscape of the colony, now his home, and observes it through his failing eyesight, a typical symptom of leprosy.

足病の子ら見てゐしがそのあまり淋しくなりて吹くことをやめり
I was watching the children
With their withered legs
Soon I became so lonely
And stopped blowing
My harmonica (Oguma, 1935, p. 37)

Regarding the *tanka* above by Ōtake Shimao (大竹島緒), we can learn from the preface that the poet was cheering for the children at a sports event hosted at the school inside the colony; however, his mood starts to decline when he notices the poor physical condition of the children.

The last magazine I would like to introduce from this period is *Kaede* (『楓』), established in May 1936 at Oku Kōmyō-en, the second colony on Nagashima, opposite Aisei-en.

純といふ名のごとく子よいつまでも純であれかし罪の世に出て
Jun, my son
Stay pure my child
Even though you are born
Into this sinful world;
For your name is “pure” (Harada, 1936, p. 33)

This *tanka* by Tsunoda Kazuo (角田和夫), from the very first issue, also references the notion of sin, which we have seen in the earlier example. But here the poet seems more confident because he sees a light of hope in his son. The poet knows that the sin is not in his son, but is in the world that surrounds him.

It is most likely that his son was born in the colony. This means the poet probably married in the colony to a fellow patient. The patients were allowed to marry, but only each other. Also, having a child was not something the

doctors recommended. On the contrary, sterilization was often enforced in the colony to keep the genes of patients from being carried down—an astonishing injustice given that doctors were well aware of the fact that leprosy is not hereditary. Such background, albeit ironically, adds to the hopeful message of this poem.

> 罹りたる病ひは古りて悲しくも指次ぎ次ぎと蝕みてゆく
> The illness has aged
> And so have I
> Oh how it makes me sad
> To see my fingers
> Eroding away one by one (Kameyama, 1936, p. 30)

In this *tanka* by Miki Jakuka (三木寂花), from the July issue of the same year, the poet counts the years of his sickness. However, it is not easy to count, because tissue loss, another typical symptom of the disease, has deformed his fingers.

By the end of the Second World War, ten intramural magazines had been published in colonies all over Japan.[6] These magazines have similar structures, with all magazines allocating some space to poems and prose written by the patients. Also, it is important to note that these magazines were available to the patients of other colonies, so literary enthusiasts were aware of the talented poets scattered throughout the country. Some magazines, like *Yamazakura*, published a special volume featuring larger numbers of poems and prose every year, dubbed *bungei tokushū-gō* (文芸特集号), and called for works from other colonies as well. In this way, patients from different colonies could communicate through their literary expression, and share their hopes and struggles. The patients of each colony formed their own circles within walls, but these walls were never completely exclusive.

Post-war Magazines

With the discovery of new drugs such as Promin, leprosy became curable, at least medically, in the late 1940s. Although most of the patients stayed in colonies and remained segregated from society, at least they no longer had to fear an untimely and gruesome death. But it would be too optimistic to

[6] Many of the documents pertaining to the disease are indexed in the database managed by the publishing house Kōseisha, the publisher of *Hansenbyō Bungaku Zenshū* (Collected Works of Hansen Disease Literature). http://www.libro-koseisha.co.jp/cgi-bin/libro/raisch/raisch.cgi.

state that the end of the Second World War also marked the beginning of a hopeful era for the patients.

It was also after the war that patients began to stand up for their rights; they deemed the Leprosy Prevention Law to be unwholesome and discriminatory, and requested the government to abolish it. This battle would end only in 2001, with the total annulment of the law in 1996 and the subsequent lawsuit that resulted in the victory of the patients. The government has admitted that their policies were not only wrong but also unconstitutional, and they have publicly apologized to all the patients and their families.

Under such circumstances, writing remained an important part of their lives. The magazines, including new ones, were regularly published, and little had changed in terms of their content. Let us take a look at few examples.

院内重監房設置反対の訴へも弱々しかりき警官の前に
The voice is raised
To protest against
The new maximum-security cell
The voice is weak, however
In front of the police officer (Nakano, 1955, p. 32)

This *tanka* by Usami Akira (宇佐見章), who lived in the Suruga colony in Shizuoka Prefecture, was published in the October issue of *Kikuchino* (菊池野) in 1955. It was a special issue, or *bungei tokushū-gō*. Since it is unlikely that a maximum-security cell was to be built anew in the 1950s, he is perhaps remembering the 1930s, when the colony in Gunma housed such a notorious facility (Miyasaka, 2006).

Something similar regarding the conflation of eras can be said about the following *tanka* by Araki Sueko (荒木末子) in the same issue:

手足捕え検束されしと慄ふ声真を伝へ呉れよと寄りぬ
I approached
To hear the voice
The voice that is telling the truth
It is shaking
Her hands and legs are tied (ibid.)

The last line refers to the practice of *kensoku* (検束), a right reserved for the doctors to physically detain or imprison patients at their will. This too must have been practiced more strictly before or during the Second World War.

Of course, not all *tanka* look back into the past. Some discuss daily life with a tranquil, and often sad, tone:

忙しき勤めの中に点字習ひ我等に便りくれたまふなり
They have sent letters to us
They are written in Braille
They have learned it
Amidst their busy work
So they can write to us (Ōmura, 1960, p. 15)

This *tanka* by Tanikawa Akio (谷川秋夫), published in the New Year's issue of *Aisei* in 1960, expresses the heartfelt thanks of a blind patient, thirsty to communicate with the outer world.

黙々と萎えし足あゆますにふさはしけれ明暗に冬の月照る
The winter moon
Shines in the darkness
A becoming scene
Through which to walk silently
On my withered legs (Kameyama, 1959, p. 39)

And finally, this *tanka* by Ōmichi Tadashi (大路匡), in the March issue of *Kaede* in 1959, depicts the serene state of a patient's mind through nature.

Discussion

With the series of *tanka* we have considered, it should be safe to say that patients were eager to express themselves through poetry, and they were not afraid to share the painful state they were in. While some patients chose to use straightforward phrases such as "illness" and "sin," others resorted to euphemisms. Both styles, however, demand that readers connect with the health issues and struggles of the patients. As Burns (2004) has argued with the case of more successful writers who suffered from leprosy, such as Hōjō Tamio (北條民雄 1914–37), who we are going to take a closer look at later, the illness constituted an important part of their identity.

The poetics accumulated through *waka*'s long history naturally offered patients an ideal starting point. When Kakotsu uses the bush warbler to express his joy at having lived through another year, for example, the reader is simultaneously reminded of the negative aspect of the motif. Although the bush warbler, which chirps enthusiastically in early spring, was usually

used in *waka* to celebrate the commencement of a new year, it was also used to express desolation, since the phonetic value of the Japanese word for bush warbler, *uguisu* (鶯), is closely associated with that of the adjective *uku* (憂く), or melancholy (Katagiri, 1999). A classical example for this would be the poem composed by Ariwara no Muneyana (在原棟梁), included in the *Kokin Wakashū* (vol. 1, no. 15):

春立てど花もにほはぬ山里は物憂かる音に鶯ぞ鳴く
Here in the mountains
We smell no flowers
Although the Spring has risen
Only the bush warblers
Chirp in languorous tone (Ozawa and Matsuda, 1994, p. 36)

This classical association adds duality to Kakotsu's *tanka*; the poet is happy in the sense that he has survived another year, but at the same time he feels lost because the illness is also here to stay.

What makes the *tanka* of the patients more unique and relevant is, however, an entirely new semiotic layer pertaining to leprosy that was added to the existing sets of poetic resources. It should be noted, for example, that the poets are almost unanimous in dealing with leprosy with some sort of resignation, since the illness is seldom the result of the choices they have made. In this sense leprosy was preordained, and therefore had to be accepted as a god-sent ordeal. As a matter of fact, the Chinese character for leprosy, *rai* (癩), already entails the meaning that the disease is imposed by heaven, since while *yamai-dare* (疒) signifies illness, *rai* (頼) often implies that something is heaven-sent (Shirakawa, 2007).

Such a view of leprosy should further clarify the connotations of the word "sin" or *tsumi* (罪) that is often used by the poets. As Majima deplores in his tanka, the sin was obviously an unbearable burden. However, like all sins, there is a chance that its weight could be lifted. In Majima's case, the salvation took the form of death; but in Tsunoda's work, his immaculate son sheds a ray of hope on the otherwise darkened world. Sin, like the disease itself, will not let go of the poet, but would not necessarily affect the next generation. In other words, it is possible to break the karmic cycle.

Although the handling of leprosy as a sin in Japan largely has its roots in Buddhism and Shintoism, a similar view was held by Christian patients as well. In the collection of *tanka* composed during the years 1933–43 by Ito Tamotsu (伊東保), who resided in Kikuchi Keifu-en in Kumamoto Prefecture, there is the following piece:

病む身契りて看護りあひつつ睦めればわが主イエスの許し給ふべし
However diseased I am
Jesus our Lord shall forgive
With my resolution to nurse the sick
And to befriend them
Out of our mutual respect (Ōoka, 2006, p. 107)

Although modern scholarship suggests that what was thought to be leprosy depicted in the Bible may refer to other medical issues (Pilch, 1981), it could, however paradoxically, encourage the patients to endure their illness, since in the end God will wash away their sins and save their souls. Regardless of religious beliefs, therefore, patients have manipulated the notion of "sin" in their works to better cope with the reality and, if possible, to give a sense of mission to their struggles.

One difference between poems from before and after the war would be that post-war poems are less afraid to challenge authority, as we have seen in the works of Usami and Araki. Up until this point it would have been impossible for the patients to compose a poem that would criticize the colony's policies. Before the end of the war, especially during the 1930s, censorship was enforced both inside and outside the colonies (Arai, 2011). Any negative sentiments against the government, especially ideas even remotely related to communism or socialism, were thoroughly expunged from the text (Maki, 2014). So even when the patients were supposedly expressing themselves freely, they had some bottom-line rules to abide by.

On top of this, even though the patients did play a major role in the editing process of the magazines, we must not overlook the fact that they were carefully supervised by the doctors. As a matter of fact, many of the colony doctors themselves contributed articles about their views toward leprosy and their recent findings about the disease. Some doctors were also casual poets, and these doctors played the role of editors; many of the poems published in the magazines were, in fact, chosen by none other than the doctors (Tanaka, 2015).

One example is Hayashi Fumio (林文雄 1900–47). A doctor and a devout Christian, Hayashi served in three different colonies. While working at Aisei-en colony at Nagashima, he was the editor of the *tanka* section in the magazine *Aisei*, under two homophonic assumed names romanized as Oguma Sei (小熊生 and 小熊星). When he left Aisei-en in 1935 to serve at Keiai-en, a colony in Kagoshima Prefecture, patients of Aisei-en contributed an article in the November issue to thank Hayashi for his guidance, and even dedicated a series of *tanka* to him, of which one by Horikawa Sunajirō (堀川砂二郎) reads:

若き師が力のかぎりうち拓く薩摩の国は住みよからまし
Oh how nice it should be
To live in the land of Satsuma
For the land shall be doubtless
Cultivated by our young master
With all his might! (Nagashima Tanka-kai, 1935, p. 65)

So what did the colony staff think about the literary endeavors of the patients? In the August 1934 issue of *Yamazakura*, Ishibashi Ihachi (石橋伊八), a superintendent of Zenshō Hospital, writes in an article that "it is nice to have a hobby or two," and literature is an especially admirable pastime, because:

> Literature has the capability to let us stay within certain norms, and it allows us to introduce to the reader elegant and wholehearted thoughts, which would move their hearts along with ours. That is why literature is so intriguing, and that is why having a hobby is valuable. (1934, p. 5)[7]

In other words, Ishibashi believes that writing can serve as a spiritual training of sorts, and it will, in a way, improve one's nature. Allowing some freedom of expression was no doubt a great way to vent the frustration of patients, and at the same time it could serve as a catalyst for communication between patients and staff members.

Let us also take a look at a patient's opinion. Mitsuoka Ryōji (光岡良二 1911–95), one of the few poets in Zenshō Hospital who would actually gain some popularity outside the colony, shared his thoughts about *ryōyōjo bungei* (療養所文芸), or "colony literature," in the July 1934 issue of *Yamazakura*. On *tanka*, he says the following under the pseudonym Kishine Mitsuo (岸根光雄):

> I see that the *tanka* section is the most powerful in all magazines. We do love this short form of poetry, which we have carried down for more than 12 centuries, from the time of the *Manyōshū*. On top of that, it is natural for the patients, weakened by the disease, to hide behind the flower bed of fixed

[7] そうして我等は苟且にも常軌を逸するが如きことなく、常に品性を陶冶し真心から出た、偽りのなき思想を紹介し、そうして自分を動かし、人を動かすだけの努力をしたい、其処に文学の興味津々たるものがあり、又趣味を持つ人の生活として価値があると言へやう。

> verses; one needs so much more energy to write prose. (Kishine, 1934, p. 11)[8]

As a young writer with ambitions, Mitsuoka was more concerned with the literary movements outside the colonies. Therefore he wishes that more patients would work on freestyle poems or prose, rather than on traditional genres. From his viewpoint, intramural magazines with a strong focus on short, fixed poems, which sometimes seem to be too easy, and often seen as a hobby rather than serious work, were not sufficient as a platform for expression. However, his tone is moderate compared to the radical voice of his close friend, the writer Hōjō Tamio.

Hōjō is arguably the only Japanese short-story writer diagnosed with Hansen's disease who has won significant critical acclaim and popularity among contemporary readers. Right after he hospitalized himself at Zenshō Hospital, Hōjō, 19 years old at the time and full of ambition, joined the *Yamazakura* circle. His debut in the magazine was in the July issue of 1934, where he contributed a short piece of prose.

But apparently, he was promptly disillusioned by the small scope of the intramural magazine. On August 27, 1934, he wrote this in his diary:

> In this kind of atmosphere, literature should be fed to dogs! That is why literature at the hospital is so detached. And decent enthusiasts take refuge in the world of verse; they have lost the passion for struggling in the world of fiction (the novel). (1980, p. 154)[9]

Like Mitsuoka, Hōjō considered fixed verse like *tanka* or *haiku* rather out-of-date, and insufficient as a means to express the true struggle of one's spirit. And perhaps this is why he decided to form a smaller circle within the circle of *Yamazakura*, with friends such as Mitsuoka and Tōjō Koichi (東條耿一 1912–42).

In the following year, Hōjō would achieve large acclaim outside the colony thanks to his short stories "Maki Rōjin" (「間木老人」, Old Maki)

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[8] 各誌とも短歌が最も盛んなことが目につく。実際万葉以来千二百年の間私達の祖先の血の中を流れて来た此の少詩形への愛着はなかなか根強いものらしい。散文の世界よりは、瞬間的抒情を、もるにふさはしい此定型の花園に隠れ家を求めるのは全く自然なことなのであらう。

[9] この雰囲気の内部では文学など糞喰えだ。だからこそ、こうこの院内の文学が断れ断れなんだろう。そして本気でやっているものは詩か歌の世界に遁れて、創作（小説の）世界に戦おうとする熱意は消失してしまっている。

and “Inochi no Shoya” (「いのちの初夜」, The First Night of Life). Backed up by Kawabata Yasunari (1899–1972), a prolific writer who was in his late thirties at the time, and already a prominent figure in the literary world, Hōjō became the central figure of so-called *rai bungaku* (癩文学), or “leprosy literature.”

Such success of a patient, however, was a bit of a nuisance in the eyes of the colony’s authorities. Hōjō was now in a privileged position of being able to share his views with possibly thousands of readers outside the colony. He could easily tarnish the reputation of the colony and its doctors by simply depicting his life at the colony in a melancholic manner. The authorities, therefore, had to keep a keen eye on his manuscripts and, if necessary, make corrections.

The censorship, of course, enraged Hōjō. He wrote in his diary on September 4, 1936:

> I have finished my thirty pages for Kaizōsha, so I have passed them over to the censorship office. No matter how you look at it, the idea of censorship irritates me…. He is a lovable character at heart, but he makes me *** once I look at him as a ***. By censoring our works, he feels ***. What kind of a *** man would *** working at the censorship office? (ibid., 253)[10]

Note the erasure of proper nouns and harsh words. This was probably done after Hōjō’s death in 1937, when the diary was passed on to Kawabata. It is an ironic example of censorship of a document that deplores censorship.

But Hōjō’s achievements also brought on a positive change, at least in the eyes of fellow patients in the colony. Renowned authors and critics were now joining the community, and started to serve as editors of intramural magazines. This meant that the circles within walls were now less secluded; the walls were still there, but at least they were lowered a little.

Shikiba Ryūzaburō (式場隆三郎 1898–1965), a psychiatrist and a critic, was one of those “outside authorities” who joined the community of “colony literature.” In January 1936, he served as an editor for another *bungei tokushū-gō*. Perhaps he was greatly interested to participate in a magazine full of poems and prose composed by leprosy patients, given that he was

[10] 改造社からの依頼の原稿三十枚が昨夜書き上がったので、今朝検閲に出した。どう考えて見ても検閲は腹立たしい。［中略］根は可愛い男なので憎めないのだけれども、××としての彼を見ると××を覚える。我々の原稿を検閲することに彼は××を満足させているのだ。検閲官であることに××を覚えるとは、××の男であろう。

also a member of the medical community. Let us excerpt an essay he contributed to the same issue:

> Not only works of leprosy patients, but also those of people with health issues in general, have a tendency to become masterpieces that surpass the works of professional writers, because of their peculiar material and rich experience…. I truly hope to see many more intellectual achievements, even those outside the realm of creative writing, among leprosy patients. (1936, p. 67)[11]

Although his statement can be viewed as empowering for the writers within walls, we must note well his bias against the patients. It is very much possible to interpret his words as suppressing voices of power. That is to say, he sees value in the writings of the patients only because they *are* ill. In other words, Shikiba might not have found their works intriguing if they were written in such a manner that no reader could associate them with leprosy.

Here lies the greatest paradox of "leprosy literature." It is as though the patients can only be an asset to the world of literature as long as they are ill. But how can artists freely express themselves if they are only expected to produce works with a single theme? Hōjō, though unable to escape such paradox, was very much aware of it. As early as July 4, 1935, he wrote this in his diary:

> Most importantly, our lives here have no sociality. Therefore, our works, written in such an environment, also lack sociality. Does society even need our works? Even if it did, on what terms? This is what I think: people will be interested because of the peculiarity of "leprosy," before anything else. (1980, p. 206)[12]

Even before his stories were published, he already knew that, to some extent, his "market value" as a writer depended on the fact that he suffered from leprosy.

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[11] 癩者の文学ばかりでなく、病者の文学は、その材料の特異さと経験の深さによつて、職業的文人の及ばない傑作が生れるものである。［中略］私は文芸のみならず、もつと多方面な知的作物が癩者の中々からも続々生れるやうに希望する。

[12] 先ず第一に僕達の生活に社会性がないということ。従ってそこから生れ出る作品に社会性がない。社会は僕達の作品を必要とするだろうか？　よし必要とするにしても、どういう意味に於てであろうか。僕は考える。先ず、第一に「癩」ということの特異さが彼らの興味を惹くだろう。

Even after the war, professional artists, both famous and obscure, often supervised poems and prose written by the patients. And most of them, although perhaps unintentionally, kept segregating the patients. For example, Maruyama Yutaka (丸山豊 1915–89), who advised on freestyle poetry in the October 1955 issue of *Kikuchino*, made the following comment:

> If your poems are good, then your physical illness should jolt our souls; and your healthy spirits should hit us hard, for it exposes our pretended health. Perhaps you live in a more serious world than we do, where people deceive each other less. That is where you should train your critical spirits. (1955, p. 31)[13]

Note the constant use of "you" and the exclusive "we." To Maruyama, the poets of the colonies are denizens of a different world; the fact that they are poets, just like Maruyama himself, does not convince him that they are on the same side. Similarly on the same issue, the poet Nakano Kikuo (中野菊夫 1911–2001), who served as the editor of the *tanka* section, writes thus: "Winter is just around the corner. You should all take good care of yourselves" (1955, p. 35).[14] While there is no reason to doubt his warm consideration for the patients, his words remind the poets that it is almost their duty to stay frail. They are the weaker half of society, and have to be protected by authority, even in the supposedly free realm of self-representation. The circles gave the patients hope, but the walls were never torn apart.

Conclusion

In this paper I have analyzed several *tanka* composed by the residents of different leprosariums in Japan during the years 1919–59. Many poets, within their circles, strived to express themselves through the traditional form of *tanka*, and shared their views toward the world. However, there has been limited scholarship concerned with the works of patients, especially those who never attained a certain amount of fame amongst the writers and critics of the mainstream literary establishment.

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[13] 詩がすぐれて居れば、あなた方の病患はわれわれの魂の疾病をゆりうごかし、あなた方の精神上の健康は、われわれの見せかけの健康を痛打するはずです。たぶん、われわれよりはごまかしの少い、真剣勝負の世界で、きびしい批評精神をきたいあげて下さい。

[14] すぐ冬です。一層、からだを大切にして下さい。

Although many poets recount their struggles and illness rather straightforwardly, poems that would question the authority of the colony staff or the police appear only after the Second World War. This was inevitable given that the magazines were constantly under the supervision of the officials, and here we can see the limits to the freedom of expression the poets enjoyed.

It must also be noted that for patients with a serious commitment to the art of literature, such as Mitsuoka and Hōjō, *tanka* seemed to be insufficient as a means to express one's true self, because young and enthusiastic writers tended to believe that stories and novels were now the central forms of fiction, while short, fixed verse like *tanka* could not fully convey the agony of the serious situation they were forced to endure. However, we must not underestimate the therapeutic value of creation the patients enjoyed, regardless of the degree of social impact their works have had. There is no doubt that the poets of leprosariums glimpsed a sense of salvation when they were given a voice, even though they were aware that their voice would seldom reach outside the walls.

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Consumerism and the Possibility of an Authentic Self in Haruki Murakami's *Hard-Boiled Wonderland and the End of the World*[1]

Burcu Genç

Abstract

With reference to Jean Baudrillard's theory of consumerism embedded in his scrutiny of power, this paper investigates the possibilities of an authentic self in Haruki Murakami's novel *Hard-Boiled Wonderland and the End of the World* within the context of Japanese consumerism in the 1970s and early 1980s. By alluding to the Baudrillardian discourse, I argue that the protagonist's choice to abandon his shadow at the very end of the novel is closely linked with his attempt to find an authentic self: in other words, an attempt to liberate himself from the power consumerism exerts on him.

Keywords: contemporary Japanese literature, Haruki Murakami, consumerism, Japanese society, Jean Baudrillard, power

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Critics such as Matthew Strecher, Micheal Seats and Chiyoko Kawakami have already established a possible correspondence between Baudrillardian discourse and Murakami's works. Strecher, in *Dances With Sheep: The Quest for Identity in the Fiction of Murakami Haruki*, suggests an affinity between Murakami's employment of historical elements and Baudrillard's simulacrum. He argues that popular-culture icons in Murakami's works cross-reference to historical periods as an alternative to overt mention of major past events. Through such cross-references, Strecher claims, the past masked and reduced to the level of simulacrum by media is recovered in the realm of the fiction:

> Indeed, one can go even further, as Baudrillard does, and argue that "reality" in the hand of the mass media has been erased, its replacement with the so-called "simulacrum" only partially hidden from us. There is no particular reason why this argument should be limited to present reality; if mass media can "mask" its (re)construction of a simulated reality, why not also a history? Indeed this is precisely what has occurred in postwar Japan with the mass media's ever-delicate handling of Japanese war responsibility in the Second World War. (2002, p. 165)

Seats limits his Baudrillardian analysis to the very early works of Murakami in *Murakami Haruki: The Simulacrum in Contemporary Japanese Culture.* In contrast to Strecher's argument, he puts emphasis on Murakami's deliberate utilization of a simulacrum, in lieu of exposure of reality through less significant events, in his early works by way of literary devices and tropes in order to achieve a critique of contemporary Japanese society. For instance, in his investigation of *A Wild Sheep Chase*, Seats states that the photo, by means of which the narrator searches for a rare breed of sheep, reveals itself as an allegorical element and thus reduces reality to a signifier through the lens of a camera: "the copy of the artificially constructed photograph of the pastoral idyll is synonymous with 'the real', and the modalities of the camera lens and xerox machine are implicitly confirmed as the basis of a way of seeing which faithfully and accurately reproduces the object seen" (2006, p. 216).

In addition to these Western critics, independent Japanese scholar Chiyoko Kawakami applies Baudrillard's simulacrum to Murakami's *Hard-Boiled Wonderland and the End of the World* in "The Unfinished Cartography: Murakami Haruki and the Postmodern Cognitive Map" (2002). Kawakami particularly highlights the power relations and how the city as an urban space in Murakami's works turns into a sphere of hyperreality, full of signs and simulations. For instance, the elevator scene, she argues, yields to the Baudrillardian idea of disappearance of meaning

and representation through the protagonist's use of language and immediate fictionalization of the scene: "a still life: Man in the Elevator" (Murakami, 2003, p. 3). According to Kawakami, the protagonist, in his choice of words in this particular scene, puts a distance between the real and the imagined experience. In this way, he takes the role of a cameraman, who surveys the scene through the lens of a camera with a third point of view. Thus, in the novel, Kawakami suggests, reality is frequently turned "into an object of his detached gaze. Real situations are thus constantly transformed into pictorial representations" (2002, p. 324).

With reference to Baudrillard's notion of simulacrum, it seems that the primary concern of Strecher, Seats and Kawakami is the representation of reality under the influence of the political in Murakami's works. In the selected early works of Murakami, while Strecher raises the controversial issue of representation of history with regard to the topic, Seats and Kawakami focus on the urban space as a medium for pictorial representations of the reality. In all their analyses, an allusion to the Baudrillardian notion of simulacrum is unequivocally instrumental in emphasizing the role of any form of power through the disclosure of the gap between reality and an idealized account of that reality. However, I argue that manifestation of any power structure, particularly that concerning political economy, is enunciated in more thorough and definite terms in Baudrillard's theory of consumerism. Thus, an analysis of *Hard-Boiled Wonderland and the End of the World* through the theory of consumerism allows for an understanding of the individual's engagement in power relations on multiple levels.

In *The Consumer Society: Myths and Structures,* consumerism, defined as "the immediately social function of exchange, of communication, of distribution of values across a corpus of signs" (Baudrillard, 1998, p. 78), extends beyond goods and services to include various concepts such as leisure, history, labour and family. With such a definition, Baudrillard separates himself from the 19th-century consumption Thorstein Veblen (1992) describes in *The Theory of the Leisure Class.* Veblen interprets consumption as a conscious purchasing process that allows individuals to fashion themselves in a certain way in their societies. Particularly, in the fourth chapter of *The Theory of the Leisure Class*, he underlines that "the utility of consumption … as an evidence of wealth is to be classed as a derivative growth. It is an adaption to a new end, by a selective process, of a distinction previously existing and well established in men's habits of thought" (p. 61). Since consumption is as a result of a consumer's careful choice regarding his/her appearance and social relations, it is also simultaneously grounded on the determinate conditions regulating the

individual's position in the social hierarchy: in other words, the antagonism of the elite, middle and working classes.

Baudrillard's theory of consumption, however, denotes a form of power that is no longer a uniform ideological institution. Rather, he identifies authority as a non-representational entity permeating and determining the social structure and relations with regard to the dissemination and exhaustion of values and standards such as leisure, labour, history and the arts. Thus, Baudrillard seems to derive his definition of consumption from his examination of Michel Foucault's description of power as a non-representational entity in the first volume of *The History of Sexuality*: "power is not an institution, and not a structure; neither is it a certain strength that we are endowed with; it is the name that one attributes to a complex strategical situation in a particular society" (1990, p. 93).

Although Baudrillard's non-representational definition of consumption seems to be closely associated with Foucault's interpretation of power, two distinctively crucial aspects inform his examination of consumerism implanted in his understanding of power. First, Foucauldian discourse does not dismiss the determinate conditions or antagonistic forces such as production and consumption, terrorist and hostage, or the wealthy and the poor. Foucault considers such determinate conditions as existing on the level of the real. Under these determinate conditions, resistance, he explains in *Politics, Philosophy, Culture: Interviews and Other Writings, 1977–1984*, is equally achievable with a meticulous scheme: "as soon as there is a power relation, there is a possibility of resistance. We can never be ensnared by power: we can always modify its grip in determinate conditions and according to a precise strategy" (Foucault, 1988, p. 123). Baudrillard, in *Symbolic Exchange and Death*, quite the contrary, claims that antagonistic forces or determinate conditions are nullified within a vicious cycle of signification:

> there is still an illusion in thinking that the capitalist system, at a certain threshold of increased reproduction, passes irreversibly from a strategy of shortage to a strategy of abundance. The current crisis proves that this strategy is reversible. The illusion still comes from a naïve faith in a reality of shortage or a reality of abundance, and therefore from the illusion of a real opposition between these two terms. (2012, p. 33)

Second, highly pertinent to the reversibility of the antagonistic forces, Baudrillard observes a discontinuity concerning the political economy and

referential reason[2] in the period before, during and after the Second World War. For instance, he assesses the 1929 crisis, "resolved by regulating demand in an endless exchange of finalities between production and consumption" (ibid), as a real one resulting from the social limitations of consumption. Conversely, preventative action against a possible shortage, he asserts, precedes a real shortage today. More precisely, reversible shortages and abundance, under an illusionary antagonism, duplicate society on a Marxist model "in order the better to mask the system's real law and the possibility of its symbolic destruction" (ibid, p. 31). Therefore, in a society circumscribed by such a mask, "social function and social organization far surpass individuals and impose themselves upon them by way of an unconscious social constraint" (Baudrillard, 1998, p. 78).

As a culmination of the above-named two propositions' playing a pivotal role in the formation of Baudrillardian consumerist discourse, the relationship between any antagonism, such as highbrow and lowbrow in literature, or revolution and conformity in politics, can be deciphered in a similar fashion to how that correlation between shortage and abundance is understood. In other words, today any binary opposition, on the level of the real, acts as a substitute for another and ultimately leads to production: "other societies have known multiple stakes: over birth and kinship, the soul and the body, the true and false, reality and appearance. Political economy has reduced them to just one: production" (Baudrillard, 2012, p. 38). From such a standpoint, consumption as a concept not only covers goods and services but is expanded into a wide range of areas, in particular media, fashion, sex and family.

Similarly, I shall investigate the representation of labour and leisure in *Hard-Boiled Wonderland and the End of the World* in line with Baudrillard's theory of consumption. It is my argument that the antagonism between the protagonist's labour and non-labour/leisure activities, playing a crucial part in understanding the self, is invalidated under the influence of the policies of Japanese political economy and its consumer society. As the title suggests, *Hard-Boiled Wonderland and the End of the World* has two distinct storylines: one is the hard-boiled land set in a futuristic urban Tokyo converted into a centre of advanced information technology. In this high-tech urban setting there are workers called 'Calcutecs' serving a quasi-governmental institution named 'the System' by processing and encrypting data through their subconscious. The second narrative is the end of the world, or the Town, as it is frequently referred to by its inhabitants. Life is

[2] By "referential reason", Baudrillard refers to the disappearance of the link between the word, meaning and referent.

conversely idyllic, and the Town's inhabitants perform jobs that do not really require any high technology. While the narrator is a certain nameless 'Calcutec' only known by his profession and consumption habits in the hard-boiled land, he tries to understand his significance in the Town through his profession as a dream-reader. Since the only information regarding the protagonist is his consumption habits and profession, it is his labour and non-labour activities, as a result, that impart the means through which self is understood in both narratives. Put another way, any meaning the protagonist attaches to the self is delineated either through his labour activity—his profession—or leisure activity—shopping and sightseeing. Thus, despite the apparent differences between the hard-boiled land and the Town, the protagonist in both narratives is under the leverage of policies of political economy as an apparatus of production through his labour and seemingly non-labour activities.

The nameless narrator of the hard-boiled storyline, who defines himself as a born shopper, is indeed a typical consumer of 1970s and early-1980s Japan. Conforming to Baudrillard's rejection of determinate conditions, he equally serves the system through his shopping or consumption, adhering strictly to a time span outside the labour hours. Any system, such as political economy or the arts, Baudrillard underlines, is deprived of antagonistic forces cancelling one another out. Neither, likewise, does non-labour time manifest itself as an opposition to the labour time. Rather, it establishes itself as the allotted span bought through one's wage, and the individual is "given a wage, not in exchange for labour, but so that you spend it, which is itself another kind of labour" (Baudrillard, 2012, p. 41). Thus, so long as "the system is charged with neutralising the symbolic retaliation *by buying it back through wages*" (ibid, p. 41, original emphasis), its domination over the individual never ceases. By comparing each ordinary day to that of "a squirrel in November, with mounds of little things" (Murakami, 2003, p. 71), the narrator of the hard-boiled land reveals himself as an object of such domination:

> At eleven o'clock, I left the apartment, headed for the supermarket near the station, stopping next at the liquor store for some red wine, soda water, and orange juice…. Then to the bookshop for two magazines, the electrical goods store for light bulbs and cassette tapes, the photo store for a pack of Polaroid film. Last, it was the record shop, where I picked out a few disks. By now, the whole back seat of my tiny coupé was taken up with shopping bags. (ibid, p. 71)

The narrator's depiction of his daily shopping experience might at first seem a series of indiscriminate choices. However, when his justification for

buying a car is taken into account together with his postulation about the sofa in the old man's room, it also becomes palpable to what extent his consumption habits are in line with two significant concepts shaping the advertisements and shopping habits of consumers in the post-war miracle years: namely, rationalisation and lifestyle status. Regarding these habits, in "New Tribes and Nostalgia: Consumption in the Late Twentieth Century and Beyond", Penelope Francks (2009) writes, "in the post-war and miracle years the purchase of new goods—a large proportion of them electrical consumer durables—could be based on their functionality and 'rationality', [and] by the 1980s Western-style furnishings had become more a matter of status and lifestyle choice" (p. 201).

The narrator, as a typical consumer of his day as portrayed by Francks, seems to be balancing these two concepts, the rationalisation of goods and goods as a sign of status and lifestyle. This born shopper chooses his car based on its functionality, ironically grounded on a justification of his excessive shopping: "I only wanted a car for shopping" (Murakami, 2003, p. 72). Much as he rationalises his consumption habits, the narrator equally considers evidence of lifestyle philosophy essential: "Procuring a good sofa … requires style and experience and philosophy. It takes money, yes, but you also need a vision of the superior sofa. That sofa among sofas" (ibid, p. 45). Therefore, when Junior and the Big Boy smash everything in his 'cosy and tasteful' house, the scene yields to the example of the Kwakiutl's potlatch. A potlatch is, according to the definition provided in the OED, "an opulent ceremonial feast (among certain North American Indian peoples of the north-west coast) at which possessions are given away or destroyed to display wealth or enhance prestige." Under this local tradition, the destruction or distribution of goods is equally emphasized as a manifestation of wealth and prestige. Therefore, Baudrillard, who argues the value of objects in consumer societies lies in their destruction as much as it does in their accumulation, refers to potlatch tradition in *The Consumer Society: Myths and Structures* to explain the illusionary opposition between these two terms. According to him, the destruction and accumulation of objects are indistinguishable in their effect, prompting the very same consequence—that is to say, '"tell me what you throw away and I'll tell you who you are'" (Baudrillard, 1998, p. 42). Correspondingly, the Calcutec revels in how his apartment, a symbol of his lifestyle and status, is being destroyed: "Big Boy was bringing *a new meaning* to the word destruction in *my cozy, tasteful apartment*. I pulled another can of beer out of the refrigerator and sat back to watch the fireworks" (Murakami, 2003, p. 142, my emphasis).

Much as the narrator is under the sway of the system as a typical consumer, he is equally controlled by the same system as a member of the labour force. This is because, as Baudrillard puts it, "a man must die to become labour power. He converts this death into a wage. But the economic violence capital inflicted on him in the equivalence of the wage and labour power is nothing next to the symbolic violence inflicted on him by his definition as a productive force" (2012, p. 39). In other words, the system robs the individual of any other value and reduces him/her only to productive force while the difference between his labour and non-labour activities is concurrently being negated. In similar fashion, although the narrator, as a Calcutec, can gain access to wide range of information, he is only permitted to receive and decode it in line with the System's needs and purposes. Moreover, depending on the type of data encryption, he can even be driven into the position of a mere container as in the case of 'shuffling'. He describes it as "nothing I can pride myself on. I am merely a vessel to be used. My consciousness is borrowed and something is processed while I'm unaware. I hardly feel I can be a called a Calcutec when it comes to shuffling" (Murakami, 2003, p. 115). Thus, it would not be an exaggeration to say that the narrator can claim his labour, whose productive results are denied to him, only through his wage and consumption habits. Moreover, despite the fact that he "can only follow the prescribed order of business" and "despite the meddling and raised eyebrows at the System", the narrator knows "no line of work that allows the individual as much freedom to exercise his abilities as being a Calcutec" (ibid, p. 115). While this further demonstrates the impossibility of an authentic self in the hard-boiled land, the narrator's physical death, on grounds of an experiment carried out on him as a work requirement, ironically highlights him more as a worker alienated from his own labour.

The Town, where the power of consumerism is also imposed on the narrator, can equally be seen as an aspect of 1970s and early-1980s consumer culture, particularly in connection with the Japan Railways 'Discover Japan' project. In her thorough article "Formations of Mass Culture" (1993), Marilyn Ivy characterizes 'Discover Japan', an outcome of a concentration on nature and self-reflection after Nixon and the oil shock exposed the fragility of the Japanese economy, as the most extensive project in Japanese history. The most significant result, according to Ivy, was that such a large-scale project "reorganized the entire cultural topography of Japan according to a continuum of "tradition" and "modernity"' (1993, p. 252). The outcomes of the project are particularly crucial because its launch coincided with the Nixon-era oil shock, a period that indicated a possible shortage after the affluence of the post-war miracle years.

From the Baudrillardian point of view, such simultaneity is closely linked with a need for shortages as a result of mythic accumulation of production and labour: “Capital, to avoid the risk of bursting from these liquefied values, thus becomes nostalgic” (Baudrillard, 2012, p. 32). In other words, it seems that a turn towards nature as a result of excessive accumulation of wealth and production became necessary to reverse the possible negative effects of excess after the Nixon-era oil shock. Hence “ecology, where the danger of absolute scarcity reinstates an ethic of energy conservation” (ibid, p. 32), becomes the solution in the form of the Town after the attack of the INKlings. In this sense, the seemingly hostile INKlings, a destructive force causing shortage through data erasure, indeed work towards the benefits of the system in the novel: “it’s a strategic move…. [T]he government doesn’t mind INKlings and INKlings don’t mind the government” (Murakami, 2003, p. 138). Therefore, the attack of the INKlings, interpreted as cooperation with the System, together with the narrator’s death, evokes a yearning for nature and the past by marking the end of the hard-boiled land.

Contrary to the very high-tech and urban depiction of the hard-boiled land, the narration of the Town—following both Ivy’s and Baudrillard’s arguments—begins with a reference to a sphere strictly outside the urban: “this is the time when instinct compels the males to clash—after they have shed their winter coats, a week before the females bear young. They become so fierce, wounding each other viciously” (ibid, p. 17). Yet allusion to nature is not the sole aspect categorising the Town as a domain outside the modern. Time can be treated as another major element dissociating it from the modern or hard-boiled land. The depiction of a fight among golden beasts for the female—being repeated at a certain season each year—is a reminder of cyclical time, a notion analogous with the past and nature. In addition, the clock tower, a product of industrialisation and symbol of modernity, fails to function in the Town: “the clock has long forfeited its original role as a timepiece” (ibid, p. 38). The narrator of the Town, as revealed towards the end of the novel, is the Calcutec of the hard-boiled land and thus can be taken for the domestic urban traveller in the Town, the latter portrayed as against the hard-boiled land.

On account of having a living shadow, the narrator distinguishes himself from the inhabitants and fulfils the role of newcomer/non-member in a group. The narrator’s existence in the Town as a newcomer/non-member conforms to the primary principle of tourism or travel warranting a destination outside home. Following this primary principle, all journeys, regardless of the destination and length of the stay, presuppose eventually going back home. Thus, the shadow not-so-surprisingly encourages the

narrator to escape the Town as it simultaneously resorts to the discourse of "us" and "them": "We're the ones who are right. They are the ones who are wrong absolutely" (ibid, p. 248). In addition, John Clammer discusses in "Sites and Sights: The Consuming Eye and the Arts of the Imagination in Japanese Tourism" that it is not so infrequent among Japanese domestic tourists to visit a rural town in order to experience the 'natural' life as it once was. On such trips "one can visit the countryside, stay in a traditional inn, eat wholly natural foods" (Clammer, 1997, p. 150). Similarly, Murakami's narrator, like the domestic tourist Clammer mentions, stays in the Town and experiences life as its inhabitants live it. He consumes food different from what he is used to: "The food here is different than elsewhere. We only use a few basic ingredients. What resembles meat is not. What resembles egg is not…. Everything is made in the image of something" (Murakami, 2003, p. 224).

According to Clammer, domestic trips to rural areas not only promote economic growth but also lead to "a dual activity of construction: identity construction on the part of tourists and of the construction of the countryside on the part of urbanites with the complicity of the ruralites" (1997, p. 150). Through his dream-reading job and experience of Town life, the narrator tries to understand not only the peculiarities of the Town but also the meaning of his own existence. Although the narrator acknowledges that it makes more sense to go back to his former world, he feels that the Town is a key to his existence and decides to stay: "I have discovered something that involves me here more than I could have thought" (Murakami, 2003, p. 398). The narrator's wish to stay implies a deviation from the standards the 'Discover Japan' project aimed at. The project "targeted Japanese desires for a simpler rural past, yet its recuperation of that past indicated all the more clearly the difficulty of escaping the managed society of the 1970s" (Ivy, 1993, p. 252). In other words, 'Discover Japan' was a project intended to evoke a sense of past and nostalgia not as a result of the traveller's independent experience but rather as "a system which secures the ordering of signs and the integration of the group" (Baudrillard, 1998, p. 78). As a natural consequence of a pre-decided experience, "the whole recent ecological turn … [is] no longer a crisis of overproduction as in 1929—[but is] the involution of the system, recycling its identity" (Baudrillard, 2012, p. 32), as in the case of the 'Discover Japan' project. Therefore, the narrator's decision to abandon his shadow and stay in the Town, in order to find an authentic self through his own unique and independent experience, can be regarded as an attempt to set himself free from the limits consumer society exerts on him.

As a matter of fact, the narrator's experience of the Town life is also governed by the system in spite of his wish to stay at the end. Initially, the narrator learns how to live in the Town according to the instructions given to him by the gatekeeper upon his entrance. More crucially, for the narrator to perform his dream-reading profession the same gatekeeper blinds the narrator's eyes. Both the act of blinding the eyes and the instructions can be interpreted as an exertion of power on the narrator by the system. This is because they encourage the narrator to read the dreams and experience the Town life as desired by the system. As a result, both the information he can access through his dream-reading job and his leisure activity as a tourist are simultaneously manipulated and eventually converted into a means of production. However, the narrator, who tries to learn about the Town as much as possible in order to reunite with his shadow and plan an escape together with it, decides to stay in the Town at the very end. As opposed to his life in the hard-boiled land, where he renders up everything and emerges only as a productive force aligning with the system and its needs, the narrator unexpectedly finds something fundamental to his existence in the Town. Yet he does not try to persuade his shadow to stay together with him. The shadow, who makes a clear distinction between the narrator and the inhabitants of the Town, seems to belong to the hard-boiled land rather than the Town. With the adoption of an invidious approach to the inhabitants of the Town and its attempt to urge the narrator to leave the Town, the shadow seems to be a part of the system like the INKlings are. Therefore, much as the narrator's experience and self are shaped by the pre-decided consumption patterns in the hard-boiled land, so long as his shadow remains attached to him, there is no actual freedom as a domestic traveller in the Town, either. Under such circumstances, detachment from the shadow becomes a means of escaping the managed society Baudrillard talks of, as well as an emancipation of the self. In this way, the narrator hopes to recover an authentic self, although he is not certain himself whether such a deed is within the reach of possibility.

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MURAKAMI AND THE CELEBRATION OF COMMUNITY[1]

ANDREW J. WILSON

Abstract

In *An Account of My Hut*, a 13th-century classic of Japanese literature, Kamo no Chōmei honors the Buddhist practice of non-attachment, of stripping down to the basics and releasing one's illusions that physical comforts, especially a large home with servants and multiple rooms, will bring permanent happiness. Whirlwinds and earthquakes remind Chōmei of the fragility of the world, and in beautiful prose he tells of his retreat from the planet's material lures. At last, at the age of 60, he leaves virtually everything and everyone behind to build a simple mountainside hut, a human "cocoon," a place where he is less afraid to face unpredictable natural disasters and a constant lack of solidity. He asks for nothing; nor does he want for anything. Centuries later, another great Japanese author, Haruki Murakami, also offers counsel to a nation in the wake of disaster, the earthquake that struck the city of Kobe in 1995, killing over 6000 human beings. Though it is fiction, Murakami's *After the Quake* is as well an attempt to provide real-life Japanese with a way forward, though his argument seems contrary to Chōmei's sense that since nothing beneath our feet is solid, all must be forsaken. In fact, Murakami worries that Japan has lived for far too long in the Chōmei-like spirit of distrust (however understandable) and isolation; he counsels a new beginning, one steeped in the hope of community and in the beauty of family.

Keywords: Chōmei, earthquake, family, Japan, Murakami, trauma

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In *An Account of My Hut*, written in the year 1212, Kamo no Chōmei[2] recalls a series of natural disasters that destroyed pockets of Japan across his life-time: a great fire, a whirlwind, a famine, and "the great earthquake of 1185, of an intensity not known before. Mountains crumbled and rivers were buried, the sea tilted over and immersed the land. The earth split and water gushed up; boulders were sundered and rolled into the valleys" (1955, p. 203). The physical world, Chōmei explains in his *Account*, might at any moment rise up like a living nightmare and, in a relative instant, kill the life-long efforts of men and women—and smash to pieces the men and women themselves.

As Japanese-literature scholars know, Chōmei's old-age response to that lack of stability is to renounce the world, retreat, and embrace seclusion. He had spent the early years of his life in a palatial ancestral home, which he eventually lost to political upheaval. Chōmei thereafter lived in a modest-sized cottage, but in his declining years—when he writes *Account*—he chooses at last to accept what he calls "the fragility of . . . [his] life" (ibid., p. 206): he builds and moves into a hut, "like the cocoon spun by an aged silkworm. This hut is not even a hundredth the size of the cottage where I spent my middle years" (loc. cit.):

> Only in a hut built for the moment can one live without fears. It is very small, but it holds a bed where I may lie at night and a seat for me in the day; it lacks nothing as a place for me to dwell. The hermit crab chooses to live in little shells because it well knows the size of its body. The osprey stays on deserted shores because it fears human beings. I am like them. (ibid., pp. 209–10)

One could describe Chōmei's pessimistic reaction to a life-time of disasters as the maudlin depression of a Thoreau-like curmudgeon, a man who bears the mark of crushing disappointment. In fact, some of my Chicago-area students contend that Chōmei looks like a modern-day sufferer of post-traumatic stress disorder. He is, those students claim, like a U.S. soldier freshly back from the front lines of Iraq or Afghanistan—but disengaged, morphine-like, permitting no one and nothing to approach his heart.

I try in those teaching moments to point out the Buddhist-minded beauty of Chōmei's *Account*, and of course my students listen with respect. Some are even persuaded to agree, but another part of me privately, silently suspects that my students' initial skepticism of Chōmei is not entirely off the mark. Chōmei is no nihilist, but his detachment unsettles the soul—or at

[2] 『方丈記』*Hōjōki*, 鴨 長明 Kamo no Chōmei.

least it seems not to apply to the complicated lives so many of us experience in the twenty-first century. Chōmei's retreat into mountainside privacy works for him, perhaps in part because he has, as he says, no family, "no ties that would make abandoning the world difficult," nothing "to cling to" (ibid., p. 206). But many or most of us do indeed have "ties." For example, as students respectfully like to remind me when we read and discuss *Account*, I have a wife and two small children; no matter how weary I might be of the world, I cannot retire to a mountainside hut, and I understand this to be true, as well, of virtually everyone I know. And thus does a thinking reader of Chōmei's "Account" wonder: how should one respond to disaster, even a life-time of it? If we are without the luxury of building a simple hut, ten feet square, and spending the remainder of our days in a state of divorce from the world—if, for example, we have family members and loved ones and friends who depend on us—what can we reasonably feel, and what can we sensibly do?

Those, I believe, are the questions that Haruki Murakami confronts in his small collection of stories titled *After the Quake*, first published in Japanese in 2000.[3] *After the Quake* is of course not the only book in which Murakami wrestles with how one might continue to live (with at least a modicum of passion) in the wake of disaster—he pursues that theme, or a cousin of it, in much of what he writes: especially, and aggressively, in his most remarkable novel, *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle,* a veritable labyrinth in which the main character, Toru Okada, or Mr. Wind-Up Bird, "must move beyond escapist detachment" (Welch, 2002, p. 58). But Murakami's *After the Quake* was principally triggered by the earthquake that rocked Kobe, Japan in 1995, and "Murakami's reaction to the … Kobe earthquake was real—its epicenter, in fact, was directly under his neighborhood in Ashiya" (Strecher, 2002, p. 213). In other words, *After* is Murakami's ostensible "earthquake book," perhaps his most succinct investigation into how we must, in the wake of the kind of trauma that Chōmei laments, continue to build and live meaningful lives. In *After*, a small but electric collection, Murakami offers advice that transcends the spirit of Chōmei's *Account*. It will not do, Murakami counsels at last, to recoil from the world, especially as the world has a way of continuing to pester one's door, regardless of whether he or she retreats. Murakami understands and even sympathizes with the post-earthquake, post-traumatic temptation to surrender to solitude, even emotional anesthesia—but he asks gently that

[3] 『神の子どもたちはみな踊る』, *Kami no kodomo-tachi wa mina odoru*, 村上春樹 Murakami Haruki. Translation published in 2002: note that the author insisted that the English title be all-lowercase (*after the quake*).

we resist this temptation. Most of all he predicts that we can find little or no true peace in a state of disconnectedness. Though he offers no guarantee, Murakami suggests, rather, that we might locate something as grand as salvation, modest in form, in reconnection not only with nature but also, and especially, with our fellow human beings.

In that spirit, and in the interest of space, let us look at three of the six stories that make up *After*—the first, the third, and the last.

"UFO in Kushiro"

The opening paragraph of "UFO," the collection's leading story, provides a clear portrait of disengagement and emotional paralysis:

> Five straight days she spent in front of the television, staring at crumbled banks and hospitals, whole blocks of stores in flames, severed rail lines and expressways. She never said a word. Sunk deep in the cushions of the sofa, her mouth clamped shut, she wouldn't answer when Komura spoke to her. She wouldn't shake her head or nod. Komura could not be sure the sound of his voice was even getting through to her. (Murakami, 2002, p. 3)[4]

The Kobe earthquake has just occurred, and the narrator, in that passage, describes its numbing effect on a young Tokyo couple, Komura and (especially) his unnamed wife, who is entirely drugged by the earthquake's television coverage and non-responsive ("mouth clamped shut") to her husband's attempts at communication. Even her physiology seems comatose: "she stayed rooted in front of the television from morning to night.[5] In his presence, at least, she ate nothing and drank nothing and never went to the toilet. Aside from an occasional flick of the remote control to change the channel, she hardly moved a muscle" (p. 3). Before a full page passes by, and as spouses sometimes do in Murakami's fiction,[6] Komura's

[4] Hereinafter citations consisting only of page numbers refer to this work.

[5] Television in general fares poorly in Murakami's writing, not only in *After the Quake* but, as well, in his larger novels: *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle*, for instance, in which a malignant brother-in-law (Noboru Wataya) deftly exploits television for purposes of demagoguery, to lull viewers into a kind of semi-consciousness—and television also permits the same character to deliver encoded messages meant to terrorize the novel's protagonist.

[6] One of Murakami's interviewers claims that the author's work contains "two distinct types of women": "those with whom the protagonist has a fundamentally serious relationship—often this is the woman who disappears and whose memory haunts him—and the other kind of woman, who comes later and helps him in his

wife vanishes from her husband's life: she returns to her parents, who live "way up north in Yamagata" (p. 3), taking most of her things and leaving her husband an ice-cold good-bye note:

> *The problem is that you never give me anything*, she wrote. *Or, to put it more precisely, you have nothing inside you that you can give me. You are good and kind and handsome, but living with you is like living with a chunk of air.* (pp. 5–6; original emphasis)

Komura's wife's catatonic fixation on the earthquake's after-effects remains a puzzle. The narrator tells us that "she had no friends or relatives who could have been hurt in Kobe" (p. 3), and there is little evidence that she is an especially sympathetic soul, one who weeps at the suffering of strangers. The above-quoted note suggests, indeed, that for her it is not difficult to be blunt to the point of semi-cruelty, but in fairness there are no suggestions that she is fundamentally vicious. We know little of her at last: only that her relationship with her parents and siblings is strong, that she spent a good portion of her courtship and marriage wearing "a sullen expression" (p. 5), and that she cheaply values her bond with Komura, abandoning her life with him with the apparent ease of a phantom. It is possible that Komura's soon-to-be ex is, in the earthquake's aftermath, beset by a Chōmei-like existential crisis: the sense that there is no solid footing in the world, nothing of any permanence or substance; thus, she moves backward to the nuclear family of her childhood, the only semi-solid "space" upon which her heart can depend. But once more, we know little about her past, her present, or the reason(s) why she loses herself so completely in the television coverage of the earthquake's destruction.

Of Komura, we know somewhat more, but not a lot more—Murakami's narrator is careful to keep the reader largely unfamiliar with him. After his wife's disappearance, Komura is at the center of each page of "UFO," though he himself seems to have no "center," no purpose or rootedness. In real-life terms, his wife's above note is likely too harsh; it seems unfair to conclude that he or any person is little more than "a chunk of air." However, Komura does in fact strike the reader as being somewhat ineffable (i.e., as difficult as air to pin down): he is a salesman in the neon intensity of

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search, or to do the opposite—to forget. The second type ... tends to be outspoken, eccentric, and sexually frank" (quoted in Murakami 2009, p. 353). I feel that that oversimplifies and ignores, for example, *After*'s "Thailand," in which the lonely, embittered female lead fits neither of those categories. (See Hansen, 2010, for more on the diversity of female characterization in Murakami.) At any rate, Komura's wife clearly belongs to the first type, the type that "disappears."

Akihabara, but we do not learn that he is committed to the products he sells or to his customers, whose "wallets were bursting with ten-thousand-yen bills, and everyone was dying to spend them" (p. 4)—and thus does he illustrate the disembodiment (from product and public) that Marx (2017) warns us of in his *Manifesto*. He has a likable personality, but there is no evidence of even one close associate or intimate friend. He puts "a small amount of sugar in his coffee" (p. 10), but he tastes almost nothing. He is due for a vacation, and even requests one, but we find that he has no particular place to go.

And since he lacks a destination, a co-worker—"a bachelor, three years younger than Komura" (p. 7)—asks Komura to hand-deliver a mysterious package to Kushiro, in Hokkaido. Having nothing better to do with his week-long vacation, manifesting a kind of drifter's indifference, Komura blandly agrees: "Hokkaido in February would be freezing cold, Komura knew, but cold or hot it was all the same to him" (p. 8). He lacks any noticeable agency, even the small initiative required to account for his own airfare and accommodations, which the aforementioned co-worker, named Sasaki, both arranges and pays for. Instead of *going* to Kushiro, in other words, Komura is carried or directed there—and he is content to abide by that direction and to deliver the package, which weighs "practically nothing," a box somewhat "like the ones used for human ashes, only smaller, wrapped in manila paper" (p. 8), to Sasaki's sister and her friend, who are waiting for him at the Kushiro airport. Soon, but not because of any initiative on Komura's part, the three of them—Komura, Sasaki's sister, and her friend Shimao—find themselves at "a nearby love hotel. It was on the edge of town, on a street where love hotels alternated with gravestone dealers" (p. 16). The stage is set for the story's eerie final scene.

Komura and Shimao are alone in the hotel room (Sasaki's sister has exited the stage, taking with her the package that Komura delivered). The two are lying on an "absurdly big bed" after trying unsuccessfully to have sex (p. 16). An instance of sexual dysfunction "had never happened to him before," the narrator explains, but it appears that Komura's potency has been compromised, somehow, by images of the earthquake's destruction:

> what he had been thinking about was the earthquake. Images of it had come to him one after another, as if in a slide show, flashing on the screen and fading away. Highways, flames, smoke, piles of rubble, cracks in streets. He couldn't break the chain of silent images. (p. 20)

There is of course good news there: Komura, who earlier on seemed untouched by the "far-off monotonous echos" of the news reports concerning the earthquake (p. 9), is human after all. He is penetrable—a feeling,

complicated human being who cannot remain unmoved by the mass suffering in Kobe, and who is gradually less consumed by his own problems: namely, his wife's departure and her painful good-bye note. Therefore, the reader is perhaps not altogether displeased to learn that Komura is unable to have sex with Shimao, but when the latter tries to soothe his ego with well-meaning teasing—and especially when she interprets the mysterious, almost weightless package that he has just delivered to Sasaki's sister as "the something that was inside of you" (p. 22), the yet-unidentified essence of him that, given away, cannot be gotten back—Komura experiences an adrenaline-rush of rage:

> Komura lifted himself from the mattress and looked down at the woman. Tiny nose, moles on the earlobe. In the room's deep silence, his heart beat with a loud, dry sound. His bones cracked as he leaned forward. For one split second, Komura realized that he was on the verge of committing an act of overwhelming violence. (pp. 22–23)

He does not attack Shimao, thankfully. Murakami has a penchant for easily overlooked, quietly decent and finally non-violent male characters, and Komura is one of these: "He closed his eyes and took a deep breath. The huge bed stretched out around him like a nocturnal sea" (p. 23).[7] But beyond that, there is little in the way of concrete resolution. As Shimao correctly tells him, "you're just at the beginning" (p. 22), and the reader, too, is "at the beginning," unsure of precisely how to unpack the ending of "UFO." We can be guardedly certain of but one thing: that a little growth, a bit of healing, does occur in Komura's heart: but no more than a bit. He remains alone, even in the physical company of Shimao. On the over-large bed, he is very small and only beginning to find his way, which is dark and yet-uninterpreted ("nocturnal"), vast and potentially fatal (a "sea").

To be fair, "UFO," notwithstanding its blatantly depressing overtones, does feature glimpses of the redemptive power of human connectedness; it is not merely confusion and disconnection. Komura's wife's return to her parents is a subtle invocation that something—namely her original family—still matters to her, even after her near-bodily plunge into the 24-hour news cycle. As well, Komura, the main character, is described early on as a kind

[7] All of the principal male characters in *After* are fundamentally decent; equally, all are either somewhat or exceedingly lacking in confidence. All possess rather decidedly non-aggressive natures. Matthew Carl Strecher (2002) speaks to the like-minded heroes of Murakami's novels, but the same could probably be said of the protagonists of his short fiction: "If one has encountered the Murakami hero in one novel, one knows something about most other Murakami protagonists as well" (p. 213).

of former playboy, "tall and slim and a stylish dresser," a "salesman at one of the oldest hi-fi-equipment speciality stories in … 'Electronics Town'" (p. 4); yet, he prefers his quiet marriage to an "ordinary"-looking wife (p. 5), and perhaps this, together with the collective gravitas of the earthquake's widespread damage, helps to explain his failure to experience an erection with Shimao, a woman whom Komura has known but a few hours. To put it another way, Komura does not lament the loss of his free-styling youth: he is happy to have concluded his bachelor days. He "always felt his tension dissipate when he and his wife were together under one roof; it was the only time he could truly relax. He slept well with her, undisturbed by the strange dreams that had troubled him in the past. His erections were hard; his sex life was warm. He no longer had to worry about death or venereal disease or the vastness of the universe" (p. 5). Actually, and somewhat conversely, the mere fact that Komura even tries to have sex with Shimao is arguably a positive sign that the main character is not solely an embodiment of isolation. Sex is plentiful, sometimes strange, but often life-affirming in Murakami's fiction (see Hurlow, 2015). Sex, says Murakami, is "a kind of soul-commitment. If the sex is good, your injury will be healed, your imagination will be invigorated. It's a kind of passage to the upper area, to the better place" (2009, p. 353).

But more generally, "UFO" obviously begins Murakami's collection in a state of malaise, with many questions and few or no answers—and, as well, in a state of detachment, with an abandoned husband, otherwise virile, who is suddenly unable to communicate sexually with another woman: unable, that is, to take the just-referenced "passage to the upper area, to the better place." Yet at the same time, for a brief moment, he seems all too capable of extreme violence (the ultimate form of non-communication) against that same woman. While that violence does not occur, nothing particularly redemptive fills the void, and the hopeful reader is eager to turn the page.

"All God's Children Can Dance"

One way of coping with loneliness and despair, or the despair of loneliness, is of course to give way to substance abuse—to binge. And that is precisely how the curtain rises on a young man named Yoshiya, the main character in "All God's Children Can Dance," *After*'s third story, which in this writer's view is as good as any piece of short fiction across space and time. "Yoshiya woke with the worst possible hangover," the narrator begins:

> He could barely open one eye; the left lid wouldn't budge. His head felt as if it had been stuffed with decaying teeth during the night. A foul sludge was oozing from his rotting gums and eating away at his brain from the inside. If he ignored it, he wouldn't have a brain left. (p. 47)

By drinking so heavily (and repeatedly), even to the point of memory loss, Yoshiya might be hoping to dodge a handful of concerns: his weird, hyper-Freudian relationship with his youthful and beautiful mother, for instance. His mother's sex appeal is frequently referenced in "God's Children." She is profoundly enigmatic: a Christian believer who is, in the story's present tense, on an altruistic missionary venture to Kobe to assist the victims of the earthquake. However, she also "walk[s] around the house wearing skimpy underwear—or nothing at all," her "great figure" fully on display (pp. 49–50); and "whenever she felt lonely at night she would crawl under … [Yoshiya's] covers with almost nothing on," thereby confounding her grown son: "He would have to twist himself into incredible positions to keep his mother unaware of his erections" (p. 50).

There is no doubt, again, that Yoshiya's messy co-existence with his mother—at once innocent and disturbingly sexual—is partly what induces him to drink so heavily. But he faces another, more pressing difficulty: "Yoshiya had no father" (p. 51). His mother—with the help of a well-meaning but distracted family friend and surrogate father-figure, Mr. Tabata—has informed him that God, literally, is his father: he could not (his mother argues) have been fathered by the obstetrician whom she had been dating at the time of Yoshiya's conception: "His contraceptive methods were absolutely foolproof!" (p. 56). She casts herself as a kind of modern-day Japanese Virgin Mary, and Yoshiya as an actual (not merely symbolic) child of God, telling her son, "your father is our Lord. You came into his world not through carnal knowledge but through an act of our Lord's will!" (p. 56). She adds, bizarrely, that Yoshiya's large penis is supposed proof: "'Your big wee-wee is a sign,' his mother used to tell him with absolute conviction. 'It shows that you're the child of God'" (p. 65). But even as a child, even while he loves his mother too much to debate with her, Yoshiya quietly disbelieves that he was immaculately conceived. "His mother's faith was absolute," Murakami's narrator reasons, "but Yoshiya was just as certain that his father was the obstetrician. There had been something wrong with the condom. Anything else was out of the question" (p. 56).

As so many of Murakami's characters do, that obstetrician possesses a physical attribute that sets him apart. He is missing a right earlobe: "A dog chewed it off when he was a boy" (p. 54). And Yoshiya, after forcing himself to rise and spend a day at work on "wobbly legs" (p. 49), is astonished to see an older man with a missing earlobe later in the evening,

as he returns from work (the story's present-tense plot-line spans less than 24 hours). Knowing the tale of his probable biological father's damaged right ear, Yoshiya aggressively begins following the man, confident that the latter is indeed his father. He follows him on the train. He follows him in a cab. At last, he follows him on foot, past scrap yards and through the byways and alleys of a deserted Tokyo district. He does not know what he might say to the man, should he catch up with him. But he finds himself unable to stop his pursuit, and the entire second half of the story becomes both an interior Jungian journey toward the parental archetype and, more literally, a suddenly invigorated young man's hot, maze-like search for his real-life father.

Iconically speaking, at least, few things capture the father–son bond with its joys and its losses more than the game of baseball, so it is unsurprising that this is where Murakami ends "God's Children": with baseball, very late on a freezing February night. Just as he failed to catch fly ball after fly ball as a non-athletic, clunky youth, Yoshiya fails ultimately to catch the man without a right earlobe. Chasing him through a gap in a sheet-metal fence, Yoshiya finds that the man has vanished "without a trace" (p. 63), and that he himself is standing "in a baseball field, somewhere way out in center field amid a stretch of trampled-down weeds" (p. 62). He is disconcerted and deflated—and for a moment, so too is the reader. It is another familial breakdown; Yoshiya is another semi-orphan in a (very) long line of children without parents in Murakami's fiction,[8] another permanent break in the chain. For that instant, in fact, he is a poster-child of orphanhood: a now-solitary son whose well-intentioned mother is too immersed in her religious convictions to be of much emotional help to him, and whose father leads him to but then abandons him at the ballpark. Yoshiya seems no better off than Komura: far from home, stranded, surrounded by the vastness of yet another "nocturnal sea" (p. 23).

But then, after approaching the pitcher's mound, Yoshiya begins—first slowly, then with increasing intensity—to dance. He feels certain that

[8] The majority of *After*'s characters are noticeably separated from their parents. Junko, the young female protagonist in "Landscape with Flatiron," has run away from home, apparently because his daughter's pubescence triggered her father "to look at her in a strange new way" (p. 33). Moreover, Miyake, the middle-aged gentleman who artfully builds beach-fires and platonically befriends Junko, has abandoned his wife and children, who may or may not have survived the recent quake in Kobe (Miyake shows little interest in finding out). The childless female protagonist of "Thailand," *After*'s fourth story, also lacks a healthy connection with her mother (her father passed away in her youth). And as I discuss below, the protagonist of "Honey Pie," *After*'s final piece, is decidedly cut off from his parents.

somebody (perhaps the man with no earlobe, the man who might be his biological father?) is watching him: "His whole body—his skin, his bones—told him with absolute certainty that he was in *someone's* field of vision" (p. 66; original emphasis). But he does not care—"Let them look if they want to, whoever they are. All God's children can dance" (p. 66)—and this, again, is precisely what he does:

> He trod the earth and whirled his arms, each graceful movement calling forth the next in smooth, unbroken links, his body tracing diagrammatic patterns and impromptu variations, with invisible rhythms behind and between rhythms. At each crucial point in his dance, he could survey the complex intertwining of these elements. Animals lurked in the forest like trompe l'oeil figures, some of them horrific beasts he had never seen before. He would eventually have to pass through the forest, but he felt no fear. Of course—the forest was inside him, he knew, and it made him who he was. The beasts were ones that he himself possessed. (p. 66)

In "God's Children," and especially in the outstanding passage just above, we see that Yoshiya somehow possesses the agency that Komura lacks: Yoshiya wills himself to follow the man with a missing right earlobe; and when he cannot catch up with that man, he wills himself to dance, despite the fact that his college-era girlfriend told him, once upon a time, that "he looked like some kind of giant frog when he danced" (p. 65). There is no Disney-style ending to "God's Children": Yoshiya is alone throughout, and likely fatherless forever, but his ability to self-direct seems to leave him grounded (quite literally: he is in step with the "rhythms" beneath his feet) rather than adrift. As he dances, he understands that there is trouble in abundance in his future: he must "pass through the forest," walk a gauntlet of "horrific beasts" he has never before seen—as each of us, at one time or another, must. Moreover, Yoshiya is aware that the ground beneath his feet could break apart and swallow him and everyone and everything he knows: "it struck him what lay buried far down under the earth on which his feet were so firmly planted: the ominous rumbling of the deepest darkness, secret rivers that transported desire, slimy creatures writhing, the lair of earthquakes ready to transform whole cities into mounds of rubble" (pp. 66–67). Yet, the hopefulness of the last pages of "God's Children" once more signals a rootedness on the part of the formerly rootless Yoshiya: a clear departure from the gloominess that concludes "UFO." Frog-like Yoshiya—who "tr[eads]," but who is also "graceful" (p. 66), one of Murakami's numerous Faulknerian paradoxes—is finally in sync, in his middle twenties, with the music of the unpredictable earth on which he dances; and he begins to impose his own improvisations onto that music: his own "diagrammatic

patterns and … variations" (p. 66). Like an emerging jazz artist, in other words, he is beginning to find a voice of his own. He employs trauma, as Strecher (2002) astutely observes, as a means of forging a "radical transformation of identity" (p. 214).

So the ending of "God's Children," especially when considered alongside "UFO," features a positive trajectory and more than a glimpse of optimism in the form of a young man who begins to accept his allegedly clumsy body and his lack of a biological father—and who begins as well to make peace and even identify with the too-often-inexplicable, sometimes-unjust universe. That universe is "inside him, he knew, and it made him who he was" (p. 66). Though over-optimism is unwise, one does not suspect, upon finishing "God's Children," that Yoshiya is about to build a mountain-side hut and renounce the world.

"Honey Pie"

Despite those improvements in Yoshiya's psyche, however, he is strictly speaking still alone—as my above-mentioned students, ever on the lookout for a palpably happy ending, complain. The ending of "God's Children" marks the halfway point of *After*; by now, there has been real progress toward community (a young man's re-communion with both himself and the earth), but there is more development needed, and more ahead: development that is most apparent in the book's final story, "Honey Pie." The Kobe-born protagonist—a 36-year-old fiction writer named Junpei, a man who has coveted the warmth of family all of his adult life—finally seizes human connectedness in its fullest form, intending never to let go.

The title, "Honey Pie," refers to a story that the creative Junpei fashions to soothe four-year-old Sala, the precocious child of his long-time best friends, Takatsuki and Sayoko. Sala's dreams are haunted, eerily and almost nightly, by the television coverage of the Kobe earthquake: "Sometime after midnight she gets these hysterical fits and jumps out of bed. She can't stop shaking. And I can't get her to stop crying," explains Sayoko, Sala's mother:

> "I think she saw too many news reports on the earthquake. It was too much for a four-year-old. She wakes up at around the time of the quake. She says a man woke her up, somebody she doesn't know. The Earthquake Man. He tries to put her in a little box—way too little for anyone to fit into. She tells him she doesn't want to get inside, but he starts yanking on her arm—so hard her joints crack—and he tries to stuff her inside. That's when she screams and wakes up." (p. 119)

Sayoko, whose marriage to an unfaithful Takatsuki has recently ended, now relies upon Junpei as "the only one who can calm … [Sala] down" with his make-believe tales (p. 118). The story that Junpei tells Sala, this time, involves two bears, Masakichi and Tonkichi: Masakichi is an expert at collecting honey; Tonkichi, Masakichi's best friend, has a talent for turning Masakichi's harvest into "crisp, delicious honey pies" (p. 147), though circumstances sadly force the two bear-friends apart.

"Honey Pie" begins, then, with yet another reference to divorce (Takatsuki and Sayoko's); it begins, as well, with yet another sign of the psychic after-tremors of the Kobe earthquake, the television coverage of which chills the blood of adults and children alike. But even from the outset, there is a new mood compared with *After*'s previous stories: we see that each principle adult in "Honey Pie" possesses a native appreciation for friendship and intimacy, platonic and romantic. They fail as much as they succeed in realizing that appreciation, but the fact that it is present, from beginning to end, signals that *After*'s sixth and last story, even prior to its redemptive conclusion, is peopled by healthy souls, and that it therefore departs from "the general malaise" that characterizes much of the rest of the book (Strecher, 2002, p. 214).

The story's three adults—Junpei, Takatsuki, and Sayoko—have been close friends since their freshman year of college. In a chunky flashback, Murakami's narrator explains that years before, upon first meeting Sayoko at Waseda University in Tokyo, Junpei "knew that this was the girl he had been searching for. He had never fallen in love until he met Sayoko" (p. 122). However, the assertive and outgoing Takatsuki, who remains Junpei's closest friend, "was the first to make a move" (p. 123). Initially, the loss of Sayoko plunged Junpei into zombie-like despair, to the point of skipping classes and nearly dropping out altogether; but he gradually adjusted. Already inclined to view himself over-critically, he began to accept his friends' love affair. He even, with time, experienced his own relationships with women who could not, in his mind, compare with Sayoko. Similarly, he accepted Takatsuki and Sayoko's post-graduation marriage, resigning himself to a lifetime of second place. And later still, a bachelor and hard-working writer gaining better-than-average reviews, Junpei gladly welcomed Takatsuki and Sayoko's charming daughter, Sala, into his life: "The four of them were an odd pseudo-family" (p. 134).

But now, Takatsuki and Sayoko's marriage has ended, Sayoko is a single mother, and Junpei's thus-far barely passable bachelorhood is becoming emotionally untenable. When the earthquake strikes, the latter is too estranged from his Kobe-based parents to call them, to see if they have survived ("[t]he rift was too deep" (p. 138)), and he worries in a near panic

that he has no one to protect, perhaps no one, even, for whom he owns the right to grieve: "Junpei felt an entirely new sense of isolation. I have no roots, he thought. I'm not connected to anything" (p. 138). In fact, and in important ways, he is reminiscent of Komura (from "UFO"): Junpei is far more defined, but both are men without women,[9] and men without families; both are compliant (at times exceedingly so) rather than dynamic when it comes to conducting their lives. But what sets Junpei apart at last is that he, unlike Komura, perceives the destruction in Kobe as a call to action, and his urgency reaches a pitch when his first-ever, long-awaited sexual interlude with Sayoko is abruptly interrupted by four-year-old Sala, whose night-terrors have grown worse: the "Earthquake Man" who visits her dreams is now attempting to stuff not only her but "everybody" into his box:

> "He came and woke me up. He told me to tell you. He said he has the box ready for everybody. He said he's waiting with the lid open. He said I should tell you that, and you'd understand." (p. 145)

Sala's nightmares, brought on by reports and images of ruin from a real-life box (i.e., the television); the recently divorced Sayoko's lonely, transparent desire; his own creeping desolation, coupled with the shame of knowing that he himself, in his passivity, is chiefly responsible for his lack of "roots" (the story makes it clear that Junpei could have had Sayoko all those years before, when they first met: Sayoko preferred him over Takatsuki, but Junpei "just didn't get it" (p. 144))—these things, together, send an electric charge coursing through Junpei. He decides at last, nearly 20 years after meeting her, to ask an obviously willing Sayoko to be his wife:

> As soon as Sayoko woke in the morning, he would ask her to marry him. He was sure now. He couldn't waste another minute. Taking care not to make a sound, he opened the bedroom door and looked at Sayoko and Sala sleeping bundled in a comforter. Sala lay with her back to Sayoko, whose arm was draped on Sala's shoulder. He touched Sayoko's hair where it fell across the pillow, and caressed Sala's small pink cheek with the tip of his finger. Neither of them stirred. He eased himself down to the carpeted floor by the bed, his back against the wall, to watch over them in their sleep. (p. 146)

For Junpei, the earthquake therefore prompts positive rather than neutral or backward action. As the story (along with the larger book) concludes, he is poised to create a family—a non-traditional family to which he is already

[9] This, *Men Without Women*, is the title of Murakami's 2014 collection of short stories—and the well-known title of a Hemingway collection, too.

fiercely committed, a family already firmly grounded upon years of friendship and genuine love: a family "to watch over." Perhaps my only gentle dispute with Strecher, an invaluable Murakami scholar, is rooted in his contention that the stories in *After* are "really about darkness, alienation, and flight from Kobe" (2002, p. 197). It is true that the Kobe-born Junpei has no intention to return to his hometown, and no intention, sadly, to rekindle relations with his parents or even to check on their post-quake well-being. It is not quite true, however, to say that Junpei (or the larger collection, *After the Quake*) embodies "flight from Kobe": Junpei does not seem to be running in fright or drifting away from person-to-person connectedness after the fashion of Kamo no Chōmei. Rather, he flies *toward* that connectedness; and, albeit briefly, before the two are interrupted by Sala's report of another earthquake-man nightmare, he literally, sexually connects with Sayoko—an improvement over Komura's sudden sexual bankruptcy at the end of *After*'s first story, "UFO." Junpei is poised, even, to become a somewhat different writer, and he begins this effort straight away by imagining a fresh and happier ending for the bear-friends he devised for Sala, an ending in which "Tonkichi and Masakichi never had to separate again: they lived happily ever after in the mountains, best friends forever" (p. 147). The very last passage of "Honey Pie" reads as a near-manifesto of newfound agency and grit, the likes of which the reader of *After* has not seen in any earlier story:

> Sala would be sure to love the new ending. And so would Sayoko.
>
> I want to write stories that are different from the ones I've written so far, Junpei thought: I want to write about people who dream and wait for the night to end, who long for the light so they can hold the ones they love. But right now I have to stay here and keep watch over this woman and this girl. I will never let anyone—not anyone—try to put them into that crazy box—not even if the sky should fall or the earth crack open with a roar. (p. 147)

* * *

I have argued that *After* was composed with a lesson in mind, something to teach the Japanese people, just emerging at the time of the book's appearance from the "lost decade" of the 1990s, suffering from Strecher's "general malaise", stricken by the bubble economy—and oppressed most of all, perhaps, by a Chōmei-like sense that the ground beneath their feet might at any moment liquefy, that they might be swallowed whole by something mammoth and disastrous, like the hell-bent Worm featured in *After*'s most well-known story, "Super-Frog Saves Tokyo." What remains, then, is to address any doubt my reader may have that literature can play a role,

however small, in soothing a nation and suggesting to its people that agency is preferable to passivity, that meaning can be found in community, despite the enduring paralysis of Japan's economy in the 1990s, despite the Kobe earthquake, despite the baffling terror of Aum Shinrikyo's mid-1990s "doomsday" attacks[10]—and more recently, despite the 3.11 quake that birthed the tsunami that devastated the Tohoku region, claimed thousands of lives, affected millions more, and generated infamous nuclear havoc in Fukushima. What remains, in other words, is the matter of whether art has any influence at all in actual experience—whether Murakami's message in *After* can, at last, sink in and reverberate across Japan.

While it will never do to deify the Shakespeares and Tolstoys—the Kawabatas, Ōes, Murakamis, and all the rest—neither will it do to surrender entirely to a categorical distrust of such writers or of literature more generally, to give way to a trendy dismissal of artists across the Humanities as little more than fallible products of their places and times. Murakami offers, in *After*, a message worth heeding; more than that, I believe that readers of *After* are capable of and sometimes intent upon locating that purpose—or, at least, that upon cracking the spine of *After* or any other work, a reader does not solely pursue historical or theoretical understanding or a chance to unearth the author's biases and deconstruct the author's efforts, as important as these ventures surely are. The act of reading occasionally ministers to the spirit; perhaps it taps Jung's collective underpinnings and does so no less than does music at its pinnacle, a stunning work of visual art, or a deeply moving film. That writers as capable as Murakami can and do offer sound advice, advice regarding how one might navigate the path toward becoming a complete human being, is well known. Still, it sometimes bears repeating.

Turning to the related matter of whether literature is reflective of or influential in life, I find that I cannot trace this question to an unimpeachable conclusion. It is true enough that for close to 30 years of college-level teaching, I have borne witness to literature's power, its resonance in what my students call "real life." I have watched so many students grow—I have seen them expand their world-views and even their moral compasses—from reading, thinking about, and finally writing about the likes of Faulkner,

[10] Murakami devotes an entire work of nonfiction to the 1995 sarin-gas attacks: *Underground: The Tokyo Gas Attack and the Japanese Psyche. Underground* features interviews with victims and with members of the apocalyptic cult that launched the attack.

Baldwin, Morrison, Murakami, and more.[11] My students have wrestled the destructive effects of alcoholism, and they are children who have been betrayed by sometimes-narcissistic parents, as is oppressively the case in Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury.* They have lost and then regained siblings, as is beautifully the case in Baldwin's "Sonny's Blues." They have never been slaves, but many have felt the stings of racism and in some cases even the enduring scars of rape and dehumanization, as befalls so many of the characters in Morrison's *Beloved.* They have found, lost, and re-found love, covering actual and psychic miles along the way, as is the case with the persistent main character of *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle*. Those students have located deep connections and paths of healing through reading, considering, and responding to literature.

Yet that is anecdotal; it cannot stand as scientific proof of literature's connectedness to life. Besides, most of my students, even the best and most openhearted among them, have been more or less compelled—by their parents, the arc of traditional American education, the specter of a future without a college degree, or all of these and more—to take my classes. The point is, how many of them would have freely stepped into my classrooms? How many were dying in the first place to read plays, poems, and stories and then unpack these in seminar-style discussions and in essays and exams? I will not say none at all; but my reader might understandably resist an over-emphasis here on what students at any level can gain from literature, since students almost everywhere are not necessarily, or not always, in Humanities-driven environments by choice.

Of course the real question is whether literature, which for better or worse is largely ensconced in the global academy, has much to say to those who dwell beyond academia. I think it does; I believe again that the arts possess spectacular potential for anyone truly receptive to them. But I grant, too, that there is a divide between the academy and the larger populace. For example, poet and critic Dana Gioia (2002) laments that most Americans are sadly unfamiliar with poetry, past and especially present. Speaking primarily of verse in the U.S., Gioia points out that there is an abundance of creative writing going on, perhaps more than ever before. But poets, he says, write mainly for other poets, and thus there is "little coverage of poetry or poets in the general press", a steep decline in "general readership", an increasingly "inward" focus (2002, p. 2), and, at last, a kind of "clubby feeling" in which poetry matters, yes, but too frequently only to those

[11] And by the way, all of the just-mentioned Western writers are, like Murakami, proponents of community; all expose the dangers, either physical or psychic or both, of a life of isolation—and this suggests that Murakami, in *After*, takes up and expands upon a Western (or global?) literary theme.

residing squarely within the aforementioned subculture (ibid, p. 7). Once more, Gioia's argument ostensibly concerns a single genre, poetry, and his contention seems confined to North America, but one can perhaps extend his remarks to fiction and the other genres—and one might also apply his remarks, making necessary adjustments along the way, to other nations, including Japan.

Yet Murakami does not easily fit the type of writer that Gioia has in mind: the product (and the property, so to speak) of the academy's many outstanding MFA/creative-writing programs. Murakami seems indeed to be difficult to categorize. There is a uniquely broad Murakami appeal—and yet he is also a recent Nobel finalist, unequivocal evidence of how respected he is in the highest echelons of the global intelligentsia. There is, in other words, a well-known and diverse international popularity where Murakami's works are concerned. And of course he is exceedingly popular in Japan, even while Japanese book sales in general have softened in recent years. Consider, for instance, reports of devotees lining up outside Japanese bookstores on the release dates of Murakami's books, including his 2013 novel, *Colorless Tsukuru Tazaki and His Years of Pilgrimage* (which, by the way, responds to another national event, the 3.11 crisis that led to the Fukushima disaster):

> Just after midnight on April 12 [2013], when the sales embargo was lifted, some people were seen reading copies on a street outside a Tsutaya bookstore in the Daikanyama area of Tokyo, while the social-networking service Twitter was abuzz with fans' thoughts on the long-awaited story. ("Mystery fuels", 2013)

Similar accounts are abundant, suggesting that Murakami fires imaginations across varied spheres of class, education, occupation, age, national identity, and more—and this seems important here. Somehow, even in translation, Murakami speaks in a literary language that millions can understand. Gioia's argument is that excellent literature is still being produced, but few outside an elite, academia-informed community are listening—few are even offered the *opportunity* to listen. But something else, something unique, seems to be at play with respect to Murakami. And to varying degrees, depending on the book, that has been the case since his literary arrival several decades ago. Many are clearly listening to him; and my hope is that they are listening carefully, and listening especially to his celebration of community.

Conclusion

Holocaust survivor Viktor Frankl (1984), in *Man's Search for Meaning*, underscores human beings' responsibility, both during and after trauma, to *choose* a way forward: to refuse to surrender to despair no matter how difficult the circumstances.[12] That, I argue, is the spirit that emerges, gradually, believably, in Murakami's *After the Quake*, a book that departs from the self-imposed isolation that characterizes Chōmei's "Account." Psychologically speaking, *After* is a Frankl-like book that begins and ends with worrisome boxes: first, the television set that renders Komura's wife bodily and emotionally lifeless in "UFO in Kushiro"; then, the unidentified, seemingly empty box that Komura himself hand-delivers to a co-worker's sister in a far-away city; last, the "Earthquake Man's" macabre, coffin-like, "crazy box," which waits ominously for bodies in "Honey Pie"—although the latter box, as I have argued, is finally repudiated by a newly inspirited Junpei. A box is an enclosure, a way of preserving dystopia, a way of containing, but *After* is about emancipation from enclosures—leaving the hut, rejecting surrender, venturing into the vulnerable open space of human feelings, *choosing* to risk human connectedness, similar to the way in which Murakami himself, who had been living abroad through the first half of the nineties, "decided to return to Japan permanently and face the ghosts of Japan's past through a variety of works that considered the contemporary cultural vacuum" (Welch, 2005, p. 58). For Patricia Welch, Murakami's "protagonists are ordinary individuals" who "can do extraordinary things if they live their lives meaningfully" (ibid., p. 59). And Welch seems to have Junpei in mind when she adds that Murakami creates characters who are "finally alive to their emptiness and the interconnectedness of being," and are finally prepared to "take the tentative first steps that might enable them to conquer their emptiness within and reach out to others". They are characters "whose struggle, though lonely, is not in vain—characters who do, in fact, try to forge meaningful connections in their lives and with others around them" (op. cit.). Strecher, who is otherwise a bit more bleak than Welch about the Murakami landscape, adds that after the mid 1990s, Murakami's work is populated by characters who become "more demanding, more insistent on having answers to the pressing questions in their lives" (2002, p. 213).

None of the above is meant to disparage those who cannot find a way out of post-traumatic despair. Frankl, in *Man's Search*, is firm on that point;

[12] Frankl decidedly stresses the power of choice and argues boldly that the most imprisoned, most victimized, among us can still choose what to do, psychologically, with suffering.

most Holocaust victims, he says, succumbed to lassitude and never found a way to exercise their humanity, their power to choose. It is cruel indeed to withhold extraordinary compassion for them or to over-critique those who cannot "forge meaningful connections," to hold at arm's length the innumerable souls who cannot find a path beyond trauma. The point, instead, is to celebrate Haruki Murakami's life-affirming portrait of "ordinary individuals" who *do* find that path, since they provide a hopeful lesson for us all.

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SECTION THREE:

JAPAN IN THE INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT

Power in Modernization of Language and Literature in Eighteenth-century Britain and Modern Japan[1]

Noriyuki Harada

Abstract

In the process of modernization, we can observe in general a shift of the written form of each language to adapt to the written culture of the new society. Both in eighteenth-century Britain and in nineteenth-century Japan, the initial phase of the shift was carried out by private individuals like authors, journalists and translators. Then, the written form invented by them became public and contributed to making canons through print culture and education. Examining comparatively the process of modernization and the shift of written language in both countries, this paper will discuss the transformation of the power of individual men of letters and some of the damage accompanying modernization of society and language, taking the post-modern situation of the twenty-first century into account.

Keywords: modernization, written language and culture, private and public spheres, eighteenth-century Britain, nineteenth-century Japan

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In teaching classes of English language and literature in Japanese universities, I often refer to some characteristic aspects observed both in the history of the English language and that of Japanese, in order to encourage in students an objective view of their mother tongue. In particular, the shift of the written form of each language in the course of modernization is of special interest. Without the shift or improvement of the written form of language, the products of modern language—accurate documentation of political, economic, historical, or scientific events and phenomena, journalism, novels, biographies, and encyclopedias—that all feature in modern society would have been impossible to be effectively expressed, described, and accumulated. In this paper, I'd like to examine comparatively the shift in the written form of language in eighteenth-century Britain and that in mid-nineteenth-century Japan, and discuss the nature of the power of modernization of language and society, taking the post-modern situation of the twenty-first century into account.

1. The Power of Written Language—Modernization and Print Culture in Early Modern Britain

It was in the late seventeenth century that print culture obviously came to be influential in Britain after the revolutions. Certainly, as Keith Thomas states, "oral communication remained central" even in this period, "whether as speeches in parliament, pleadings in the lawcourts, teaching in the schools, or preaching and catechizing in church." "Despite their reliance on the Bible and the Prayer Book," he goes on, "the clergy still expected their flock to learn their article of belief by heart and to listen to spoken sermons" (1986, p. 113). The importance of orality in modern society is also mentioned by Jürgen Habermas in association with the concept of the "public sphere." Tracing the progress of British print culture in *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, Habermas claims the importance of oral culture observed, for example, in coffeehouse discussion in early eighteenth-century London (1989, p. 42). However, the emergence of print culture was not so unnoticeable, nor was it so harmonious with "oral communication." In fact, it should be noted that the Royal Society of London, founded in 1660, held up the improvement of written English as one of its most urgent tasks and intended to make a new written form. Thomas Sprat, a founding member of the society, records the society's enthusiasm:

> And, in few words, I dare say; that of all the Studies of men, nothing may be sooner obtained, than this vicious abundance of *Phrase*, this trick of *Metaphors*, this volubility of *Tongue*, which makes so great a noise in the World. . . .
>
> They [the members of the Royal Society] have therefore been most rigorous in putting in execution the only Remedy that can be found for this *extravagance*: and that has been, a constant resolution, to reject all the amplifications, digressions, and swellings of style; to return back to the primitive purity, and shortness, when men deliver'd so many *things*, almost in an equal number of *words*. They have exacted from all their members, a close, naked, natural way of speaking; positive expressions; clear senses; a native easiness: bringing all things as near the Mathematical plainness as they can; and preferring the language of Artizans, Countrymen, and Merchants, before that, of Wits or Scholars. (1667, pp. 112–13)

Similar to Italian and French royal academies, the Royal Society of London was well aware of the necessity of improving written English. Without a written language that can bring "all things as near the Mathematical plainness as they can," the basis of modernization—the progress and accumulation of knowledge in natural sciences as well as in social sciences—could not have been formed at all.

Unfortunately, however, the Royal Society suffered in the plague and the great fire of London in the 1660s, and the royal or national project died out. The task of the improvement was naturally given into the private hands of eighteenth-century British authors, journalists, scholars and lexicographers. This is one of the characteristic points observed in the process of the improvement of written English; different from the situation in France and Italy, written English was substantially improved by the strenuous efforts of individual talents.

2. Improvement of Written English—Power of Private Hands

So then, what problems did eighteenth-century British people commonly have with their written English? We can point out at least two serious difficulties. One of them is, as Thomas Sprat claims, the stylistic problem of "amplifications, digressions, and swellings" with which we can easily characterize the euphuistic prose in the seventeenth century. But the other was more serious for basic writing and communication: the chaotic situation of orthography. A story from *The Tatler*, one of the most popular periodicals at the origin of British journalism, aptly shows the situation:

> Many a Man has lost his Way and his Dinner by this great Want of Skill in Orthography: For, considering that the Painters are usually so very bad, that you cannot know the Animal under whose Sign you are to live that Day, How must the Stranger be misled, if it be wrong spell'd, as well as ill painted? I have a Cousin now in Town, who has answer'd under Batchellor at Queen's College, whose Name is Humphrey Mopstaff . . . . This young Man going to see Relation in Barbekin, wander'd a whole Day by the Mistake of one Letter; for it was written, This is the BEER, instead of, This is the BEAR. He was set right at last, by enquiring for the House, of a Fellow who could not read, and knew the Place mechanically only by having been often drunk there. (vol. 1, pp. 145–6)

The author of this article is Richard Steel, a Whig statesman and essayist, and his narration is even humorous. But the problem was serious; without established orthography, we cannot communicate properly by written language. Written documents, records, journalism, novels and print culture are virtually impossible without orthography.

After the failure of the project of the Royal Society, the improvement of written English was finally left in the hands of individual authors and lexicographers. English dictionaries published in the early eighteenth century show that the problematic orthography was gradually settled; authors and journalists like Daniel Defoe, Jonathan Swift, Samuel Richardson and Henry Fielding were all trying hard to find a suitable style in their works. Different from France and Italy, where prerogative authorities promulgated refined written forms of the language, modernization of written English owes much to the collective power of individual authors and scholars. And in this process, the language seems to have acquired diversity, flexibility, and popularity, different from prerogative-oriented standardization. Written English in private hands was now ready as the apt tool for written communication that was essential for modernization of the society.

3. Private to Public—Accumulation of Knowledge and Formation of Canon

Print culture based on the modernized, or improved, written English was now an important driving force for accumulation of knowledge in the collective forms of printed texts. The rapid development of written culture in eighteenth-century Britain took a unique route and helped to form the social and literary canons, having a great impact on the modernization of British society.

As mentioned above, we can regard *The Tatler* and *The Spectator*, both of which were published in early eighteenth-century London by Joseph Addison and Richard Steele, as the most important origins of British periodicals, or journalism.[2] Their neutrality of content and language, and their objective distance from the twists and turns of the actualities of society, attracted a wide readership. Interestingly, these qualities that *The Tatler* and *The Spectator* offered for journalistic publication were succeeded not by private hands but by a collective form of individual authors. *The Gentleman's Magazine*, published from 1731 to 1914, is one of the most typical periodicals that used such a collective form. Edward Cave, the founder of the monthly periodical, states in the preface to the first issue of the magazine that he dares to transform the meaning of the word "Magazine," which originally meant a storehouse or a warehouse, into a repository, or a collection, of various subjects and information. And what Cave tried to do for the publication was not to write an enterprising article by himself, nor to imitate simply the neutrality and objective distance observed in Addison's and Steele's essays, but to collect the articles appearing in other periodicals, select, and edit them in a well-balanced way. Though it seems quite simple, Cave's method substantially improved upon the merits of *The Tatler* and *The Spectator*, and came to be the basis of the modern journalism on which John Walter's *The Daily Universal Register* (later *The Times*) was based upon its first publication in 1785. We can observe here an interesting route for creation of knowledge in modern society—knowledge created by accumulation of information.

Needless to say, accumulation of knowledge can be observed in many other genres of eighteenth-century British print culture; among them were modern editions of Shakespeare's plays, which were published one after another from the early eighteenth century to the first variorum edition of 1821; Samuel Johnson's *Dictionary*, which was, as mentioned above, considered to be an arbiter of the long controversy of English orthography; *The Encyclopedia Britannica*, whose first edition was published in 1771; and Alexander Chalmer's famous anthologies of British essayists, novelists, and poets, which were published in the early nineteenth century. And what should be noted in those many examples is that the accumulation of knowledge gradually forms canons or criteria for knowledge, learning, and literary or aesthetic works. Samuel Johnson's *Lives of the English Poets*,

[2] According to the *OED*, the word "journalism" does not seem to have been used in English until 1833, though the word was described as "sadly wanted" in its first example.

published from 1779 to 1781, is, for example, a production of Johnson's idiosyncratic writing, but nevertheless is regarded as the first collection of critical biographies of English poets, and greatly helped to form English literary canons. Alvin Kernan says of this that "Johnson's real achievements in *The Lives*" is to combine "the hitherto scattered pieces of English literary lore" and to work them "into a structure of biography, social history, and criticism sufficiently firm to constitute for the first time a history of English letters" (1987). And we should not forget that, in concurrence with the trend of publication of language dictionaries, literary anthologies, and encyclopedias, national, regional, private, and circulating libraries were built one after another; they well symbolized the importance of accumulation of knowledge and formation of canons. Now, the improvement of written English wrought by private hands or individual talents had a great influence on the public sphere.

4. Language and Modernization in Nineteenth-century Japan

The publication of collective forms thus became an influential direction taken by British society in the late eighteenth century and nineteenth century. Interestingly, Victorian Britain was one of the important Western models that the people of a certain Far Eastern country tried to introduce in the process of modernization. Japan secluded itself from the world for more than two centuries, from 1639 to 1854, and it was when Japan reopened the country that its people really got involved in international contacts.

One of the biggest problems Japanese people faced when they tried to communicate with Western people and modernize the country in step with Western countries was undoubtedly the language. Japanese language is in many ways unlike every language of the Indo-European family; its vocabulary is different and the grammar is quite distinct. And yet, the improvement of the written form was the most urgent task in Japan at the time, as in early eighteenth-century Britain, because written language played a more important role in the explanation of a great variety of imports and documents.

Unlike the confusion of orthography in early modern Britain, the most serious problem in written Japanese was to fill the gap between its written and spoken forms. The writing systems of Japanese language chiefly consist of *kanji* and *kana*, both of which were based on Chinese characters

that came down to Japan in the early fifth century. There had been no substantial written system indigenous to Japan before the import of Chinese characters. As the Japanese language was quite different from Chinese in terms of pronunciation and grammar, Japanese people, first of all, needed to give their pronunciation to each Chinese character. Then, in the process of assimilation of the Chinese characters, Japanese people divided the function of the characters mainly into two parts: one for simply expressing Japanese pronunciation and the other for substantives of things and concepts. The characters for the former function gradually shifted into *kana* and those for the latter continued to be used as *kanji* in Japan as in China, though their pronunciation was different and their meanings were gradually Japanized over many centuries. Japan's close relationship with China of course continued after the introduction of Chinese characters; Buddhist scriptures, political systems, and many products of culture were imported from China. Throughout the relationship, *kanji* characters were convenient: Buddhist scriptures, for example, were directly introduced in the form of Chinese characters, and Japanese Buddhists simply gave them Japanese pronunciation and some grammatically supportive alterations in order to make them understandable for Japanese people.

Thus, until the middle of the nineteenth century, two writing systems had been used in Japan: *kanbun*, which mainly consists of *kanji* characters, and the *wabun* of *kana*. The former was used in the main in scriptures, philosophical (and mainly Confucian) writings, laws, edicts, official documents, and histories, and the grammar of *kanbun* was, though fairly Japanized, yet different from spoken Japanese. In other words, many people could read *kanbun*, but sentences in *kanbun* were quite different from their spoken language. Some children learned famous passages of *kanbun* by heart to absorb highbrow culture, but the passages were spoken only as quotations in daily conversation. Therefore, *kanbun* was a typical written language and, in a sense, it was like Latin for modern Europeans. On the other hand, *wabun* was used as the written form for daily conversation and popular culture. What many children learned in academies was *wabun*, sufficient for their daily life, and the number of children who moved up to the education of *kanbun* was limited. Of course, over many centuries, the two writing systems were gradually mixed, and in particular, from the early nineteenth century, popular stories written in the form of *wakan-konkōbun* (a mixed written form of *wabun* and *kanbun*) were successively published by popular novelists like Ikku Jippensha and

Bakin Kyokutei.[3] And yet, *kanbun* still remained persistent at the time of the reopening. In fact, the language owed its enormous vocabulary of substantives, ideographic visibility, and the capacity to invent new words to *kanji* characters; *wabun* could not fully express the religious, philosophical, and political concepts and entities that had been highly dependent upon *kanji*.

However, the situation was clearly disadvantageous when Japanese people tried to absorb new sciences, technology, and culture of Western origin. It is certain that *kanji* has an excellent capacity to be configured into new words for new concepts, making use of existing characters, but *kanbun* is different from spoken Japanese, and making *kanbun* for each newly imported event and thing was obviously inconvenient. *Kanbun* had been convenient partly because Japanese people could import the contents of Chinese books, keeping them intact. But the situation had now changed.

The most practical solution to the problem was to establish a new written form by harmonizing *kanbun* and *wabun* with reference to *wakan-konkōbun*, which was increasing its power among popular stories and the early stages of journalism. This movement is now called *Genbun-itchi-undō* (the movement for the harmonization of spoken and written language), and we should notice here that the movement was carried forward at least in its early phase not by governmental enforcement but in the private hands of individual authors, scholars, journalists, and translators. After the short period of frantic scrambling to imitate and adapt *wakan-konkōbun* before and after the reopening, Shōyō Tsubouchi, who was a novelist and translator and became a professor of Waseda University, newly founded in 1882, published *Shōsetsu-shinzui* (*The Essence of the Novel*, 1885–86) and showed the importance of a written language that reflected the daily conversation of the common people. Consulting with Tsubouchi about possible Japanese written forms, Shimei Futabatei published *Ukigumo* (*Floating Clouds*, 1887–89) and other novels, referring especially to some spoken narratives of *rakugoka* (popular storytellers) like Enchō San'yūtei. Following Futabatei, Bimyō Yamada, Kōyō Ozaki, Ōgai Mori, Sōseki Natsume, and many others successively published novels and translations in a new written form and contributed to the establishment of the new written Japanese.

[3] Ikku Jippensha published *Tōkaidōchū-hizakurige* (*Travels of Tōkaidō*) in 1802, and Bakin Kyokutei published *Nansō-satomi-hakkenden* (*The Adventures of the Eight Samurais of Nansō*) from 1814 to 1842. Both were called *gesaku* (popular novels) and spread widely among common readers.

It is interesting to note here that, though written Japanese finally changed into a modern style, the route was complicated and filled with the twists and turns of individual authors and translators. For example, Samuel Johnson's *Rasselas* (1759), one of the popular stories read among the students of high schools and universities at the time, was translated into Japanese six times from its first translation in 1886 to the fairly readable version in 1905. In the progress of the translation, we can clearly observe that each translator groped for a suitable written form; old forms like *kanbun* and *wakan-konkōbun* were sometimes used, and other times strange new forms different from normative Japanese grammar appeared. The 1905 version is undoubtedly the result of every translator's desperate trial and error.[4]

After the initial stage of the *Genbun-itchi-undō* in private hands, new written language came to be used officially in the government and the authorized form was widely spread through the textbooks of primary education. In other words, the new written form became public, as in Britain.[5] However, its amazingly rapid development entailed some problems. As the new written Japanese was invented under the necessity of the quick absorption of the items, technology, and concepts of Western origin, it inevitably included some unnatural words newly invented for translation. Japanese people in general now use the word *jiyū*, which was newly invented in the process of the *Genbun-itchi-undō* for the English words "freedom" and "liberty," but they do not usually differentiate them. The concepts of Western "society" and "individual," too, were introduced

[4] For more details, see Noriyuki Harada, "Translation and Transformation: Japanese Reception and Adaptation of Eighteenth-Century English Literature," in *Essays and Studies in British and American Literature* (Tokyo Woman's Christian University) 58 (2012), pp. 1–22.

[5] It should not be overlooked that the swift change of printing style was helpful for the wide spread of the new written form. Although woodblock printing was popular before the reopening of the country, Japanese printers succeeded in changing their system to movable-type printing, accommodating many *kanji* characters. Woodblock printing had a limit to the number of copies printed by one typesetting; printers needed to repeat typesetting many times, especially for bestsellers like popular novels and textbooks. In order to satisfy common readers' curiosity and desire for new knowledge and information of Western origin, printers now needed to print a large number of copies in one typesetting. As an example of the number of printed copies of a book, *Saigoku-risshihen* (1872), a translation of Samuel Smile's *Self-Help* (1859) and one of the most popular books of the time, is often mentioned; it sold one million copies up until the end of the nineteenth century.

in the middle of the nineteenth century and the equivalent Japanese words were hastily invented, but they were separated from traditional concepts in Japan. Certainly, these are examples of problems of Japanese vocabulary itself and not of the written form, but it is not too far from the truth to say that the Japanese modernization of written language caused serious simplification of vocabulary. Scientific inventions can be exhibited in general as the actual things; people can deliver things "almost in an equal number of words," as the Royal Society of London thought in the late seventeenth century. But if we translate new ideas and concepts of society into a thoroughly different language, we cannot avoid simplification or substitution to some degree.

More serious for modern Japanese people was that the new written form involved separation from the long history and products of traditional written language. In fact, almost all Japanese classics, not only in *kanbun* but also *wakan-konkōbun*, produced before the modernization are now unintelligible for many people. It is certain that new knowledge was accumulated in numerous books, periodicals, and textbooks printed in the new written form, but such accumulation was made at the expense of traditional culture fostered by books and documents in the old written form. In particular, as the scientific aspect of modernization was instrumental in the *Genbun-itchi-undō*, the new written form was fatally defective in inheriting sentiments written in the old form. Mitsuo Nakamura, one of the twentieth century's leading Japanese critics, criticizes the *Genbun-itchi-undō* and says that the movement "corrupts the tradition of the written Japanese itself" (1971, p. 17).

Changes in written language can be observed as common to many countries in the process of modernization. In particular, both in Britain and in Japan, a large number of private individuals took the initiative of the movement in its first phase, and then the new written form became public through print culture and education. However, the modernization of Japanese written language also caused damage to the language, partly because it was carried out under the necessity of Westernization and partly because of the exigencies of scientific and technological demands. Both of the causes might be due to the timing of the modernization of society: Britain achieved modernization comparatively earlier than other countries, while Japan was a latecomer. But before drawing such a hasty conclusion, we need to hear the voice of an early eighteenth-century Anglo-Irish author.

5. An Irony—The Power of Individuality in Modernization

In the modernization of written language in Britain and in Japan, one of the important points to note is that the product of the strenuous efforts of private individuals became public and formed a new canon. In other words, the diversity observed in making a new written form was finally brought together into an authoritative uniformity. Thus in the process of modernization, does the power of individual talents finally come down to that of its public manifestation? Further, is the initial diversity produced by the power of private individuals forced to fade away?

Jonathan Swift, an author famous for his *Gulliver's Travels*, would answer "no" to these questions, for he was always critical about compelling the standardization of culture and society and hated the absurd rationalization, or integration, of various humane idiosyncrasies. In language, too, he loved diversity rather than uniformity, and made great satirical works with complicated allusions. In *Gulliver's Travels*, he severely criticizes the attempts of language professors at the academy of Balnibarbi, which obviously overlap with the advocacy of the Royal Society of London:

> The first Project was to shorten Discourse by cutting Polysyllables into one, and leaving out Verbs and Participles; because in Reality all things imaginable are but Nouns.
>
> The other, was a Scheme for entirely abolishing all Words whatsoever: And this was urged as a great Advantage in Point of Health as well as Brevity. For, it is plain, that every Word we speak is in some Degree a Diminution of our Lungs by Corrosion; and consequently contributes to the shortening of our Lives. An Expedient was therefore offered, that since Words are only Names for Things, it would be more convenient for all Men to carry about them, such Things as were necessary to express the particular Business they are to discourse on. . . .
>
> Another great Advantage proposed by this Invention, was, that it would serve as an universal Language to be understood in all civilized Nations, whose Goods and Utensils are generally of the same Kind, or nearly resembling, so that their Uses might easily be comprehended. And thus, Embassadors would be qualified to treat with foreign Princes or Ministers of State, to whose Tongues they were utter Strangers. (2012, pp. 270–73)

But the new scheme of the professors of the academy was obviously unrealistic. Swift does not fail to describe the results derisively:

> [The new Scheme of expressing themselves by Things] hath only this Inconvenience attending it; that if a Man's Business be very great, and of various Kinds, he must be obliged in Proportion to carry a greater Bundle of Things upon his Back, unless he can afford one or two strong Servants to attend him. (ibid, p. 272)

The description is humorous, but Swift's skepticism toward the easy equation of language with things was deep. Of course, as a distinguished man of letters he disliked "amplifications, digressions, and swellings of style" in written English. But at the same time, he also disliked standardization, or reduction, of the ample ambiguity that language can express. We have discussed the standardization of written language in the process of modernization and have observed that this standardization was advanced by private individuals and then became public and formed the basis of canons. But now we can hear an important objection from an author whose work has been beloved continually since from its first publication in the early eighteenth century. If the ending of *Gulliver's Travels*, Gulliver's expulsion from the Huyhnhnms' land, suggests the author's misanthropy, an ending foretelling a catastrophe, genocide, or collapse of human society after modernization, as some critics actually point out,[6] diversity, rather than uniformity, was for Swift the real power, and the modernization observed in the standardization of language and culture was only a degradation of the power of individuals.

Swift's satire reminds us of early voices of skepticism about modernization of language. And yet, modernization in general advanced in spite of his fear, and Japan desperately tried to catch up with the modernized countries. In the process, Japanese people were impelled to harmonize their written and spoken language, or to simplify their written language, but the *Genbun-itchi-undō* came to damage the written language; in Swiftian terms, we may say, the damage was in the end one of the inevitable consequences of modernization itself. Thinking of Swift's satire in *Gulliver's Travels*, we need, first of all, to reexamine the complicated, and sometimes contradictory, relationship between the power of private individuals and that of public standardization in the process of modernization. An ideal form of power in the modernization of language and culture will be found in the harmonization of individual efforts and

[6] See, for example, Claude Rawson, *God, Gulliver and Genocide: Barbarism and the European Imagination, 1492–1945* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2001).

their effective organization, something to which the postmodern world should give careful consideration.

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The Neutral View: Roland Barthes' Representations of Japan and China[1]

Piers M. Smith

Abstract

Roland Barthes visited Japan and China in the 1970s. He recorded his travel experiences in two contrasting books, *Empire of Signs* (1982) and *Travels in China* (2012). The second book is written in notebook form, which, as such, was not prepared by the author for publication. The first book can be seen as a highly polished 'fictional' or aestheticized rendering of Japan and Japanese culture; the latter, on the other hand, is largely unmediated by the same aesthetic and aestheticizing concerns. This essay reads the two texts through the perspective of another of Barthes' texts, *The Neutral* (2005), which deals with the subject of conflict-free or non-judgemental modes of discourse in linguistic and cultural theory. I aim to show how a Neutral take on a region or people can offer a fairer or less prejudicial view than has happened hitherto in travel writing and travel narratives.

Keywords: travel writing, Barthes, representation, Japan, China, the Neutral, blandness

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Most representations of others are self-representations, both in the individual sense and the larger cultural one. It is almost a truism of Western travel writing, for example, that the travel writer can never unpack his cultural baggage completely; there will always be a photo of Mum, an Argyle sock or a patented Sheffield Steel toenail clipper left tucked away in a side-pocket of his tote. What the writer sees and writes is compromised at the outset. He may strive to erase traces of cultural bias in his narrative, but will almost certainly fail, if not through the domestication inherent in the organizational impulse (Youngs 184), then through inter-discursive promptings and maskings.[2]

Roland Barthes argues that it is impossible to know the other because the writer can never be free of what he calls doxa, public opinion, received ideas, the prevailing viewpoint (*Roland Barthes by Roland Barthes* 70–71; Herschberg-Pierrot passim). He even suggests that such knowledge is undesirable (*Empire* 3): for knowledge of the other demarcates; it reduces and confines, eventually providing the template by which all others may be known (Blanton 109). This can lead to the colonialist tendency, for example, to see Europe as the repository of Civilization, Africa as the scene of the tribal and pre-modern and East Asia as a metaphor for the hypermodern in all its dimensions.

In cultural theory, the standard response to this has been, at least since the 1980s, as follows: if we could see cultures "not as organically unified and stable monoliths but as negotiated present processes" (Clifford 273), then we might avoid generalizing, stereotyping, exoticizing, or simply 'othering' what is alien to our world (Clifford and Marcus; Pratt; Taussig; Youngs; Blanton; Thompson). Experiencing and then writing difference could become two-directional and even multi-directional, rather than purely one-way. The writing subject may not only write and be written by the written subject: she and her subject may also be re-written within a larger dynamic of cultural exchanges. Ideally, domestication would give way to the transactional. Such a response to time, place, people and knowledge might not only help to blur the steadfast focus on the truth of a representation but also, by its tentativeness and dialogicality, allow for what seems, in an increasingly inter-meshed global setting, a way of writing that, if not a fair and accurate representation, is at least a more empathetic one.

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[2] The reference is not just to Foucauldian discourse but also to Jean-François Lyotard's argument that no testimony, and implicitly, no representation, can ever do justice to the original experience or subject. See *The Differend: Phrases in Dispute*, translated by Georges Van Den Abbeele, Minneapolis, University of Minneapolis Press, 2011.

The crisis of representation will not go away. But it isn't as serious as it sounds. While I might be unsure that a travel narrative is an accurate, true, just representation of reality, I'll always be able to see it as an interpretation of that reality. Rather than feeling that a representation is always false and therefore unjust, I should simply be cautious about its claims; I should, in other words, not think of it as innocent and unmotivated. But is that as good as it gets?

Perhaps there is a way out of this sort of representational impasse that doesn't lead to qualified or hesitant readings. If the writer or reader could stop seeing the whole in the part, and start looking elsewhere, or just glance at the part itself without implying a whole, he or she need not become bogged down in issues of truth to reality or the whole business of truth-claims at all. Why make any claims in the first place? Why not just look askance?

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In what follows, I discuss Roland Barthes' two travel books on Japan and China, one published in 1970, the other posthumously in 2009. I consider each through the medium of Barthes' own thoughts on what (following Structuralist thought generally) he calls the Neutral (*Le Neutre*). The book on this subject was first published in 2002 but formed the body of a series of lectures at the Collège de France from 1977 to 1978.

In Barthes' book,[3] the Neutral displaces the neither/nor, either/or type of opposition that Saussurian linguistics finds at the heart of meaning-production in Western discourse (7–11). If I say one thing, it will only be because I didn't say another. While this sort of approach has been shoved to one side in recent years, in favour of more flexible sets of relational distinctions, Barthes' argument for a Neutral that "dodges", "baffles" or "outplays" (*déjoue*) the contrastive machinery of meaning-production, which he calls "unshakeable" (41), still seems pertinent.

Barthes stresses the conflictual nature of meaning-production (7). One term will always lose out. The Neutral does not seek to recover that term; it does not aim at an equality of terms; it is not even an area of greyness between terms (9–11). The Neutral is an attempt to step outside the play of power and hierarchy intrinsic to any form of oppositionality; it is an evasion, bodily and affective, that thwarts the game, displacing conflict and the supervention of one term or set of terms over another by, for example, the writer/speaker/observer oscillating, retreating, being indifferent, remaining

[3] Unattributed page numbers throughout this paper refer to this work.

silent, or simply falling asleep. The Neutral way of writing offers signs-in-themselves or "twinklings" (*scintillations*), as Barthes calls them (10), shimmers on the surface—fictions that by their refusal to assert one thing over another escape the snap and crush of judgement.[4]

In *Empire of Signs*, Barthes constructs a system, which he calls 'Japan', that seeks not to represent or analyse any cultural or historical reality—the "major gestures of Western discourse" (4). His Japan, he claims, is an invention, created out of a reserve of real cultural and historical features, to be sure, but without using them as veridical indices of the reality elsewhere. For Barthes, reading these features leads to something like the Zen notion of *satori*, a moment of awareness or vision that causes the subject and knowledge itself to vacillate. He takes certain cultural elements that recur in Western discourse's perception of Japan in the 1970s (or, indeed, today)—tea ceremonies, chopsticks, sukiyaki, bowing, pachinko, packages, bunraku, haiku, sumo—and treats them as phenomena stripped of history. Sukiyaki, for example, becomes a spectacle rather than a meal (19–20), pachinko is both a voluptuous exercise and a type of diarrhoea (29), sumo is "a certain hefting, not the erethism of conflict", heaving rather than struggling (40). In this treatment, surface supervenes over depth**,** the object of discourse is not transparent, not a glass behind which meanings are discoverable. Shimmerings are what the eye (or the sensate body) enjoys. The haiku does not encode anything. It is an impression, a surface without depth, an "apprehension of the thing as event and not as substance" (78); it does not accumulate significations. Where Western discourse must mean something, or is read, necessarily, for its meaning, the haiku, all surface and immediacy, baffles meaning. To make his point, Barthes gives several examples of haikus and the way Western discourse might strive to dig meaning out of them.

This is his example from Joko:

> *How many people*
> *have crossed the Seta bridge*
> *through the Autumn rain?* (71)

Typically, in the West this will be read as an image of "fleeting time" (71). Autumn precedes winter; it presages a landscape of death; its rain stands for tears; it is a metaphor for aging and sadness. The Seta bridge becomes a

[4] I am indebted to Rudolphus Teeuwen's "An Epoch of Rest: Roland Barthes's 'Neutral and the Utopia of Weariness'", *Cultural Critique*, 80, Winter 2012, 1–26, for much of this summary.

symbol for the passing of humanity. For the Westerner, all such words entail "symbol and reasoning, metaphor and syllogism" (71).

The syllogistic, Barthes says, is often applied to Basho's famous:

> *The old pond:*
> *a frog jumps in:*
> *Oh! the sound of the water.* (71)

In a Western reading, the last line concludes the other two, which effectively reduces this haiku to an exercise in logic. For Barthes, the haiku should suspend language, not provoke it, which is the Way of the Neutral. This Neutral might better be understood by thinking of it as *nuance*, that which lies to one side of an assertion, inarticulate but there, whose ultimate effect is to disturb and preclude logic and conclusiveness. The sound of the old pond's water can be heard even now, concluding nothing.

Yet, far from suspending language, Barthes' use of Japan-the-faraway-place only seems to amplify it, provoking more and more words. In fact, his whole book is a lingual provocation, a proliferation of nuances, often in line with Western discursive procedures. It is also, despite its disavowals, a representation of Japan. He writes:

> In the West, the mirror is essentially a narcissistic object: a man conceives a mirror only in order to look at himself in it; but in the Orient, apparently, the mirror is empty; it is a symbol of the very emptiness of symbols…. [T]he mirror intercepts only other mirrors, and this infinite reflection is emptiness itself…. Hence the haiku reminds us of what has never happened to us; in it we recognize a repetition without origin, an event without a cause, a memory without person, a language without moorings. (79)

Barthes clearly wants to turn this faraway place into a play of surfaces whose effect is to free him from the near-compulsive search for meaning and plenitude.

I want to look at this passage more closely. First, Barthes is talking about a Western need for enlightenment, for knowledge; second, he is talking about Japan (which he conflates with 'the Orient') and its system of signs without meaning (note the delicacy of that qualifier 'apparently', which remembers the earlier disavowals, even as it enables the locutions, the assertions, to follow), gestures without depth. But third, he is ultimately not doing either of these things: he is talking about the Neutral, that which escapes the implicit opposition of the previous two. I take him at his word. While I could dismiss the first two approaches as oppositional and imposed, the third seems transactional and dialogic to the extent that it escapes the

sorts of cultural codifications that conventionally, in the West at least, impose themselves on the nation known as Japan.

For this is how he wants to view his 'Japan'—as a sort of pretext for a Neutral view of things as he encounters them on his travels. This Neutral, this vagrancy in the streets of meaning-production, is a pretext, in turn, for "the possibility of a difference, of a mutation, of a revolution in the propriety of symbolic systems" (3). I take the Neutral, then, as Barthes subtly works it through his own texts,[5] as an enabling strategy for responding to other cultures, communities and people with as little judgement, assertion, generalization or reductionism as possible. Accordingly, I will look at his own account of his 1974 visit to China, recently published as *Travels in China*. The book is made up of Barthes' notebooks; it is neither a finished account, in the sense that Barthes might have understood it, nor a redaction. It has not been overly domesticated, or twisted into shape by discursive constraints. As such, it affords me the opportunity to recover a Neutral view of China.

*

Travels to China is unfinished in that it is composed of the three diary notebooks Barthes compiled during his visit, which he had intended to use for a book (195–6). The visit lasted from 11 April to 4 May, a matter of just over three weeks.

At around this time, French intellectuals were galvanized by China's Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution. The radical journal *Tel Quel* had broken from the French Communist Party to declare its support for Maoism. The editorial team, which included Barthes, Philippe Sollers, Julia Kristeva, François Wahl and Marcelin Pleynet, visited China as guests of the Chinese state travel bureau. The odds were stacked against free and open reportage from the start. The tour was tightly organized, with almost no opportunity for unsupervized interaction with the people or country.

Barthes' notes are terse, impressionistic and yet heavily annotated with second thoughts or bracketed asides, and often accompanied by pencil sketches. The style is dry and tart, almost immediately so as boredom and disillusion kicks in. In Beijing, he writes: "Smells. Cabbages on the Square. Palace Museum. Wet dog, cheesy manure, sour milk" (11). Eighty pages later, in Luoyang, he notes with no change of tone or pace: "Stifling. Waited for the others outside the tomb, as well as a hundred and fifty people [*sic*].

[5] See particularly *Roland Barthes by Roland Barthes* (1977) and *The Neutral* (2005), passim.

Lovely weather. Peonies" (96). When his plane takes off for home, he writes "Phew!" and draws a square round the word (193).

Near the beginning, at a printing works in Beijing, an aside states: "It's always the same: the proles are good-looking—heart-melting, needing help—but as soon as they become Cadres, their faces change (our guides, the Official). It's insoluble" (17). Insolubility is thematic. Barthes cannot get beyond doxa—or party-line, if you like—which he says, in a key image, is spread over China like a tablecloth with no folds in it (43).

The text lacks the rapture of *Empire of Signs*. It is busy with assertions of the author's boredom, weariness, discomfort (he suffers insomnia and migraines) and his constant irritation at not being able to interact with the people. The places he visits are uniform, policed by government minders, and there is no surprise and no interruption to the daily itinerary. One of the works on China that had excited him before his departure was Michelangelo Antonioni's film *Chung Kuo, Cina* (1972), which was criticised by the Chinese for focusing on busy street scenes and casual activities (kids running, old men exercising, women chatting, wind blowing leaves along the Great Wall's walkway and grainy close-ups of faces and heads turning in tea shops), rather than the State's industrial developments. The very elements that the Chinese authorities objected to were the ones that caught Barthes' eye. He laments that he wouldn't be able to produce a finished book without offending China's sensibilities in the same way as Antonioni had done (29). He also means that he wouldn't be able to produce a book like the one that had come out of his earlier Japan trip.

The best he can do, he says, is to write a book about 'us'—meaning the West of his time: "Any book on China cannot help but be exoscopic" (81). And indeed *Travels in China* is studded with comparisons—to the West, particularly to France, French cuisine, French landscape and French people. In Shanghai, an emaciated writer reminds him of Michel Foucault (26). On the way to Nanjing, the flat countryside and fields of rape are French (57). In Xian, peasant paintings evoke those by Henri Rousseau (125). This China offers little in the way of nuance. It becomes a place where French intellectuals and emblems of French culture spring up from fields and cities like jack-in-a-boxes.

Barthes says that there are two conventional ways of looking at China: "a gaze coming from the inside" is from the point of view of China; the second comes "from the point of view of the West". Both gazes are wrong: "The right gaze is the sideways gaze" (177). Towards the end, as he re-reads his notes, in order, he says, to make an index, he observes that if he were to turn his notes into a finished book, he would have to write either on the 'in' side, which is "approving", or 'out', which is "criticizing" (195) Both are

impossible. He is left with the Antonioni approach: phenomenological (195)—which the Chinese hosts will, he jokes, condemn as "Criminal!"

So what is involved in a sideways gaze, in a phenomenological or criminal look? How does it anticipate or coincide with a neutral view? The first way of writing China is through what Barthes calls the "double-glazed window" of 1970s Chinese doxa, which is in turn composed of "bricks" (*briques*) or blocks, thick, impenetrable, sound-proofed, opaque (19). His approval will forever be implicit. But on the Huang-po River, under a rough sketch of a sampan, Barthes writes:

> Boats, all sorts of boats.
> And now the naval dockyard where we were yesterday (on the right).
> Very beautiful: the big boats, at anchor, halted in the middle of the river, sometimes two by two, for kilometre after kilometre. And always sampans, sails with Brechtian colours.
> After an hour and a half (at 3 p.m.) we reach the confluence with the Yangzi (after 28 kilometres, practically, of port, and boats of every kind). It widens out until the continuous line of real Ocean: blue grey, boat in the distance placed against this immensity. (45)

This is the second way of writing China, from the outside, though here its criticism is tacit**.** It is a view that first drew Barthes to China: land of sampans, Brechtian sails, the impressionistic, an aesthete's idyll, the sort of panoramic 'vision' of the Huang Po that Antonioni had offered in *Chung Kuo, Cina*.

Barthes again refers several times to the haiku, which he equates with the incident, or fold or crease, to return to the earlier metaphor of the tablecloth, and which surprises. Doxa can be taken by surprise: an incident that 'falls', that intervenes, like a leaf (because it is fragile and tenuous) between the viewer and the doxical spectacle, re-focussing vision—much like haiku (205). An open-air cinema in Luoyang has that effect: a Romanian movie, which is showing, seems incongruous, the weather is mild, the place doesn't feel artificial, street boys playing cards smile (96–97). Normally this sort of scene is blocked by prevailing doxa. It is a criminal view.

Doxa can be self-imposed. Barthes' sexual interest in Chinese males is an area of folding or creasing (or criminality) within the tablecloth of his own doxa. For it is certain that had he published the Notebooks as they stand, he would have censored such references.[6] He was fastidious in

[6] And there are many. He claims, not unreasonably, that no one can know a people without knowing their sex (100). Writing, he says, is dry and sterile, without joy,

keeping his homosexuality closeted throughout his life. At the beginning of *Travels in China* he mentions his male lover whose hand he kissed "furtively" at Paris-Orly Airport. Barthes faithfully records the episode. The friend wonders if he's scared of being seen. Barthes gives his reply: he's only afraid someone might see how "old-fashioned" the gesture is and that the friend would be "embarrassed" (5). The reader cannot know if Barthes was being disingenuous, but the unedited claims elicit a frisson of transgression intermixed with perplexity and the incommunicable. That the lover should wonder if Barthes is scared of being seen draws us back into a harsher time, a world of homophobic judgements, while the furtiveness of Barthes' kiss (as a result of fear that the gesture might seem dated to his lover and that the lover would be embarrassed by it) seems to draw attention to the act, rather than conceal it. This works to grant his observations both a sideways engagement with sexual otherness and a certain edgy neutrality in his reading of China.

How then do the Chinese twinkle, how do they become neutral, nuanced, eluding truth, depth and the doxical arrangements of both themselves and the Western visitor? How do the people and the place become not just paradoxical but also sidelong? How does Barthes create a just representation? Precisely, it seems, by not finding the folds, surprises and haiku-like incidents he seeks. By annotating the different doxas (Chinese, Western and his own) instead, and the stranglehold they have on his perceptions, and in so doing, experiencing frustration and weariness, he finds the very conditions of non-judgement, or, at least, a dodging of judgement, that marks the Neutral.

Barthes' sideways gaze is as an invitation. Traditional Chinese aesthetics, which Barthes' own thought tends towards, is hospitable to this. In his Collège de France lectures, Barthes equates the Neutral with the Taoist *wu-wei*, inaction, non-choice or abstention: it is "structurally, a Neutral, what baffles the paradigm" (176). *Wu-wei* abstains from belief, or a position; it is philosophical abstinence (180). Its most strenuous modality, indeed its highpoint, consists in sitting, which, for Barthes, recalls the standard Zen (*zazen*) position in meditation: to be sitting (184). If this *wu-wei* were applied to poetry or painting it would suggest *dan*, or blandness.

For François Julien, blandness is the "embodiment of neutrality" and "lies at the point of origin of all things possible" (23). In another text, "Alors

jouissance (75). *Jouissance* underwrites his travels both to China and Japan, indeed, but not in the same way. A satisfied erotic interest seems to account for the successful completion of *Empire of Signs* and a frustrated one the failure, or silence, of *Travels in China*.

la Chine?", written and published on his return from China,[7] Barthes mentions his sense of a suspension (of meaning, sense, ardour), and notes that what was revealed to him was a "delicacy, or, better yet (I venture using [*sic*] this word, at the risk of having to take it up again later) blandness" (28). Barthes teeters on the verge of the negative connotation of the word but rescues the observation from judgement with the parenthetical qualifiers. Julien, whose quoting of this passage I am merely repeating, suggests that here Barthes writes two discourses at the same time, and that the secondary one struggles to put into words what the first would obliterate: a sense that blandness really is the right word (29).

Blandness represents nothing. In Julien's reading it actually "de-represents" connoting a "beyond" that is not symbolic (116). In traditional Chinese poetics, blandness is the ideal the poet must aim for: too much flavour and the poem overwhelms its subject; too little and there is no subject. The poet should strive for balance and harmony, which, once accomplished, lead the reader or auditor away from the sorts of polarizing oppositionality or conflicting viewpoints that Barthes had striven to avoid in his travel texts. The bland sign does not indicate another meaning, or suggest a hermeneutics of discovery; it is not interested in depth, fullness, or truth. On the contrary, blandness "invites us to free ourselves from the differentiating nature of meaning"; it "creates ease" (122). There are no messages, only silence (123).[8]

Barthes travels to the hot springs of Huaqingshi. The others, Sollers, Kristeva, Wahl and Pleynet, climb the mound above the tomb of Qin Shi Huang Di, Emperor of the Legalists. Barthes scribbles a note:

> I stay by myself and sit on the ground in an orchard, above the wheat field, in front of the vast, floating, green horizon. A few brick buildings in a powdery pink-beige, distant music. A brown beige field, with wide undulating furrows. Trees here and there, in the background. Noise of an invisible motorbike. (135)

Wonderfully bland! Barthes sits in an orchard. He does not stand surveying the landscape from a vantage-point, like the colonialists of earlier travel narratives, or, indeed, like the others in his party. He sits apart, detached, in the manner of *wu-wei*, in front of a vast floating green horizon, registering

[7] Paris: Christian Bourgois, 1975.

[8] Traditional Chinese poetics is traceable back to Confucius and early Daoist thought. While Confucius does not develop a theory of representation, he does caution against the transformative power of language; the Daoist foundational text *Laozi* advises the sage to adopt an attitude of 'lucid non-action' (Julien 157–9).

colours, shapes, music, the sound of a motorbike, little else. There is no imposition, not even a hint of judgement. Barthes is at ease. In traditional Chinese thought, blandness "is this experience of transcendence reconciled with nature —and divested of faith" (Julien 144). And this, I think, is what Barthes has achieved.

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How Should We Read Literature from a Certain Area from the Viewpoints of Other Language-speaking Areas?[1]

Akiyoshi Suzuki

Abstract

The concept of "world literature" can be viewed as insisting on returning to reading a text without the mechanical use of literary theory. This means, as Zhang Longxi notes, referring to Kermode, "tak[ing] whatever theoretical help you fancy, but follow[ing] your nose" (Zhang 2010, 7; Kermode 2004, 85)[2] and reading literature through multidimensional interpretations. If I can regard the reading of a text put in the framework of literary theory as a kind of paternalistic and dogmatic "check-up," then I will label the alternative, reading literature in a kind of follow-your-nose way, Rogerian empathy—the understanding of the "voice" of a text from its internal framework of references. However, this raises a simple question: How should we read literature from a certain area from the viewpoints of other language-speaking areas? "The deconstruction," Paul de Man says, "constituted the text in the first place" (1979, 17), but if so, meanings of sentences are defined on the basis of a reader's socio-cultural background—such as traditions, ways of thinking, and laws—and emotion. A person's reading of literature in another language might always result in misreading in a sense. However, we cannot simply call it misreading, because "I feel, therefore I am." From a neurological perspective, intelligence and emotion are united. Intelligence and feeling link to the faculty of reason, and emotion has a critical role in enhancing one's faculties. As brain scientist Antonio R. Damasio mentions, "Emotion, feeling and biological regulation all play a

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[2] The page number in Zhang comes from the Japanese translation.

role in human reasoning" (2005, 8). In our global society, we should empathize with and understand voices, or *interpretations*, in the world, and discuss them together on a world scale in order to cross-culturally understand each other and promote peace.

Keywords: world literature, comparative literature, literary theory, cross-cultural

1. Introduction

Currently, as scholars of world literature, such as Zhang Longxi, Haun Saussy, and David Damrosch, insist, critics should not just put a framework of literary theory onto a literary text and make a rigid distinction between a good text and a bad text, or an oppressive and a non-oppressive one. First, we should read a text, and then, if there is some problem we cannot overlook, we should use theory. Otherwise, we do not need to read or think or have our own viewpoints: We just blindly follow a theoretical hegemony.

Still, how can we read literature from the viewpoint of another language-speaking area? Also, what is the significance of such an act? In this paper, I develop my current answer to the questions by referring to readings and studies of English and Japanese literature for Japanese readers, which I hope can be applied to the cases of readers in other areas.

To this end, let me start by referring to Miyazaki Yoshizō, a famous Japanese scholar of literature in English. He says in the conclusion of his book *The Pacific War and Anglicists*:

> In my mind, academic research has to do with a scholar's own way of life. I want to be who I am in my life. As long as one is who one is, naturally one's own viewpoint will be born. I say that the mind without one's own viewpoint is in a preceding stage of thinking. So is the mind of the author of *The History of British Literature*. (1999, 145)[3]

The History of British Literature was written by Saitō Takeshi, who is known as a pioneer of academic research on literature in English in Japan. The reason for Saitō's being in a "preceding stage of thinking," according to Miyazaki, is that "the methods used in research on British literature in Japan were clearly different before and after the publication of the book in

[3] All the quotations from Japanese books including Miyazaki's are translated by the author.

the sense that Saitō used the same methods in his book as British scholars did" (ibid., 42–3). This means that Saitō simply imported the methods used in the United Kingdom. From Miyazaki's viewpoint, Saitō merely imitated British scholars, and hence, he and his book are in a preceding stage of thinking. Miyazaki thinks that at the core of academic research on literature in English, there should be an individual way of thinking and behaving born from the tensions between oneself and a situation that one is put in—for instance, the particular region of Japan, the times of war, or individual experiences one goes through. Miyazaki continues,

> [i]f a scholar cleanly cuts off himself or herself from the world, closing his or her eyes to tensions in the world, thinking "This is this, that is that," he or she will lose himself or herself as a whole, split off. As a familiar case, a scholar who has lost him- or herself faithfully attends to the introduction of research in foreign countries, or to stretch the point, is led by a general trend, without stopping and thinking. (ibid., 143)

Yoshio Nakano, another famous Japanese scholar of English literature, asserts that when one is who one is, "no matter what the government authorities and the society say, he or she never loses himself or herself, or anything" (ibid., 102). This means, of course, not completely cutting oneself off from the world, but fighting against conformism. He wrote this during World War II under very unusual circumstances. English teachers and scholars of literature in English were branded as public enemies who taught the language and literature of hostile countries. In order for scholars to maintain their integrity under the scrutiny and urging of government authorities and the world, says Miyazaki, individual thinking power is critical (ibid., 120).

There are no thought police or days when people are frightened about aerial bombing in contemporary Japan. However, Japanese government authorities and society are insistent, intoning "Practical English! A good TOEIC score! Abandon literature!" or, more subtly, "Do not interpret literature. With a brand-new western literary theory, censor the representation of a text or analyze the mechanism of the text!" In such a situation, Miyazaki, Nakano, and Fukuhara would still say that a scholar should "not lose himself or herself" and "has his or her own viewpoint," which "has to do with his or her own way of life" (ibid., 145).

However, here a question arises about reading literature. When the Japanese—who live their lives immersed in a Japanese socio-cultural background, social reality, ways of thinking, habits, traditions, religion,

language, and so on—read English literature or literature based on other socio-cultural backgrounds, how can they do so while "not losing oneself" and "having one's own viewpoint," which "has to do with one's own way of life"? If people immersed in a Japanese socio-cultural setting read English literature by aligning their "eyes" with those of people living in English-speaking countries, then does it not mean "cleanly cutting off oneself from the world" and "thinking 'This is this, that is that'"? On the other hand, if Japanese readers read English literature without any assimilation to the perspectives of English-speaking countries, their reading might always result in misreading. If Japanese readers did assume the perspectives of English-speaking countries, however, their study of English literature would be reduced to orientalism. At what point do Japanese perspectives and ways of life chime with the reading of English literature? In short, the question is quite simple: what should we do when we read literature in a language from the perspectives of other languages and their cultures, and what is the significance of this act?

2. The Japanese Literary World and Western Centricism[4]

Now, let me confirm that Japanese literature and concepts of literature in Japan have been strongly influenced by the West, and that western thought has been on the horizon of writing, reading, and interpretation of literature since the Meiji era (1868–1912).

Modern Japanese novels originated with the importation of western novels, and with the prevalence of these translated versions in Japanese, the Japanese modern novel also established its position.[5] According to Hirata Yumi, the circulation figures of translated western novels and those of Japanese modern novels increased in tandem. On the other hand, those of Japanese traditional fiction—taking the form of a "factual story" that described an incident, especially a juicy story such as adultery—decreased.[6] A major reason is that intellectuals and newspapers insisted on revolutionizing

[4] For convenience, I will use the term *the West* repeatedly, but *the West* means areas and people that have economic and political power in the international world: in other words, a kind of hegemony. As a result, *the West* means here Europe and America. When I use the phrases "literature in English" or "English literature," they mean literature written in English-speaking areas, such as the United States and the United Kingdom.

[5] With regard to the material in the succeeding paragraphs, see Suzuki 2013, "Cross-Cultural Reading of Doll-Love Novels in Japan and the West," 110.

[6] Cf. the chart in Hirata 1996, 179.

fiction in Japan after the importation of western novels. Additionally, newspaper writers strove for "improvement" in their readers and emphasized the "benefit" of reading western novels, including those of Charles Dickens, which "can abolish evils in this world" (*Eiri Asano Shinbun*, Jan. 10, 1884. Hirata 1996, 176–7). Another newspaper, *The Yomiuri Shimbun*, echoes this insistence with the following:

> Recently, we read a few Western novels. All of the authors of the novels are genuine scholars who represent their countries; they have high scholastic abilities. Hence, their novels are totally different from our novels in their contents and qualities. Western novels are philosophically fruitful, but our novels are not. The reason lies in the difference of scholastic abilities of the authors. (Nov. 9, 1884. Hirata 1996, 177)

Thus, translated western novels became popular in Japan because of their emphasis on scholarship and philosophy. With their popularity, Japanese authors, readers, and critics also started thinking seriously about scholarship and philosophy in literature. Following the view of Franco Moretti, who has a bird's-eye view of literature in the world with reference to Immanuel Wallerstein's World-Systems Theory and Frederic Jameson's law of literary evolution, it can be said that Japanese literature and concepts of literature have been developed as a compromise between the local styles of peripheral countries and the metropolitan culture of core countries in Europe (Moretti 2000, 54).[7]

Since then, the scholarly emphasis on western literature has remained unchanged. After World War II, scholars in Japan, primarily those of western literature, have written numerous literary surveys. Japanese literature has always been dismissed by conventional literary standards, especially in English, with critics citing its shortcomings and calling it "less advanced" and "wonky" (Satō 2005, 43–4).

Had Japanese literature and its reading been developed with an emphasis on the aspect of philosophy under the influence of western literature, Susan

[7] Still, to my mind, such a view is Euro-centric. Jameson's "Third-World Literature in the Era of Multinational Capitalism" is its prime example. In addition, the influence of literature does not move in a single direction. We cannot decide which areas comprise metropolitan and peripheral cultures. In fact, in France, or what Moretti calls "metropolitan" culture, the Impressionist school, post-impressionism, and Pablo Picasso were strongly influenced by Japanese *ukiyoe* woodblock prints and *shunga* pornographic paintings. Picasso drew his inspiration from African art as well, and had an impact on American authors such as John Dos Passos.

Sontag's insistence in her book *Against Interpretation and Other Essays* to cease the interpretation of philosophy and thought in a text could have liberated Japanese and Japanese literature from western standards of literature. Sontag's opinion was, however, connected to post-structuralism, and the situation produced literary theory where literary works came to be called literary texts, and the dynamics and representation in the text started being evaluated, with denial of the very acts of reading and interpretation.

What we should pay attention to is that what we now call "literary theory" was mainly born in western countries. Whether Japanese use literary theory or not, the study of literature in Japan has been based on western concepts of literature. It is not by accident that literary theory was linked to post-structuralism. Tracing back the history of western literary theory, we will arrive at the literary perspectives of Plato and Aristotle: namely, mimesis. As Jacques Derrida used literature in his study of the general theory of language, he focused on the issue of mimesis in the world of language. However, the view that the basic question in literature stems from mimesis is itself a western perspective. There is no such perspective, at least, in China, as Ming Dong Gu points out (2006, 3–4), and neither does it hold in Japan. Additionally, it would be strange for literary theory to be synonymous with western literary theory. Literary theory has been developed in China, as well, for a long time. As long as we think of it as reasonable to examine Japanese literature using western literary theory, it is also logical that we examine western literature using Chinese literary theory. In addition, both before and after the westernization of Japan, Japan has represented itself in Chinese characters.[8] Japan is a hybrid area between the West and China, and hence Japanese literature should be analyzed by western and Chinese literary theories, equally. As far as I know, however, nobody has argued for Japanese literary texts in such a way. Furthermore, I have not read any fruitful and serious comparative discussion on western and Chinese literary theories by Japanese scholars. If, without such discussion, Japanese literature is examined just with western literary theory, it follows that a prejudice holds that western literary theory is a universal tool, a prejudice

[8] Some say that *hiragana*, Japanese syllabary characters and one of three scripts used in Japan, was created by the Japanese around the end of the 8th century, but some *hiragana* can be recognized on the cover of *Dàbàotiē*, allegedly written by Wang Xizhi in the 4th century. Hence it is doubtful that *hiragana* was created by the Japanese. It is true that Japan adopted much from China: calligraphy, the tea ceremony, martial arts, drama, music, instruments, annual events, law, religion, certain habits, and other things that many people see as Japanese traditions.

without any discussion of whether western literary theory is much more progressive than Chinese, or a firm conviction that Japan is a western country. However, this amounts to orientalism.[9]

Is it the case, then, that we can read literature in English only using western literary theory, literature in Chinese only with Chinese literary theory, literature in Japanese only with Japanese literary theory, and so on? In order to consider this matter, I shall start by addressing several issues related to applying (western) literary theory to literature.

3. Theoretical Suppression

In Japan, when western literary theory became popular, there was much criticism that no matter who discusses a literary text, their viewpoints resemble each other too much. People opposed to the theory seemed to support Miyazaki's view that "a scholar should 'not lose himself or herself' and 'has his or her own viewpoint' which 'has to do with his or her own way of life'." Certainly, it sometimes happens that someone reaches the same conclusion as others. The criticism was not directed to the same conclusion itself, but to the point that the scholars make rigid distinctions between a good and a bad text just by employing a theory created by another scholar and without reading and discussing the text well from their own perspective. Moreover, such scholars insist that only such theoretical analyses are correct. In other words, the criticism was directed at the notion that only some types of thoughts can dominate in the academic world. This criticism reflects the framework of reference of Zhang Longxi, a leading scholar of world literature. Zhang opposes the supremacy of politics in criticism of literature, in contrast to John Guillory's insistence that a literary work is a cultural work and that "our new cultural critic" talks about or engages in "progressive politics," where "the encounter with a cultural work becomes an occasion for confirming or contesting the belief systems expressed in the work" (Zhang 2010, 5; Kermode 2004, 67), and Frederic Jameson's argument that "*ideological analysis*" (emphasis in Zhang) is "the appropriate designation for the critical 'method' specific to Marxism" and "political interpretation" is not just one interpretive method among many, but "the absolute horizon of all reading and all interpretation" (Zhang 2010,

[9] Scholars recently have been noting concrete problems born from the results of western literary theory being used for non-western literature. See Damrosch (ed.) 2003, *Teaching World Literature*, and Suzuki 2013, "Cross-Cultural Reading of Doll-Love Novels in Japan and the West."

6; Jameson 1981, 12, 17). Drawing on his own experience during the Cultural Revolution, Zhang points out that in times of the supremacy of politics, a literary work "is useful insofar as it can be seen as a document that houses certain 'belief systems'" (ibid., 6). In times such as these, the work of *litterateurs* is to "endorse or condemn in a political interpretation," and a literary text "can … express 'belief systems' that are either with us, or against us" (ibid., 5–6). Literary works such as texts that only can express political belief systems are approbated, and then free and intellectual activities disappear (ibid., 6). This was not only true at the time of the Cultural Revolution in China, however. Zhang was echoing a sentiment of George Orwell's during the "political season" in Europe in the 1930s. Mentioning the similarities between Communists and Catholics, Orwell states:

> The Catholic and the Communist are alike in assuming that an opponent cannot be both honest and intelligent. Each of them tacitly claims that "the truth" has already been revealed, and that the heretic, if he is not simply a fool, is secretly aware of "the truth" and merely resists it out of selfish motives. In Communist literature, the attack on intellectual liberty is usually masked by oratory about "petty-bourgeois individualism," "the illusions of nineteenth-century liberalism," etc., and backed up by words of abuse such as "romantic" and "sentimental," which, since they do not have any agreed meaning, are difficult to answer. … [T]he Communist party is itself aiming at the establishment of the classless society…. But meanwhile, the real point has been dodged. Freedom of intellect means the freedom to report what one has seen, heard, and felt, and not to be obliged to fabricate imaginary facts and feelings. (1961, 312)

The point to keep in mind is that Orwell and Zhang do not take a hostile view toward politics itself, nor toward Marxism or Catholicism. Rather, what they criticize lies in that in the beginning there is the truth, and reading from the truth, as if it were self-evident, makes too sharp a distinction within a literary text between "this side" and "the other side" in politics and deprives readers of free, intellectual activities.[10] As Paul de Man noted, if "[t]he deconstruction … constituted the text in the first place" (1979, 17), it means that intelligent freedom to decide on a meaning must be guaranteed in order to avoid aporia, where the meaning is not defined. Even if so, as J. Hillis Miller cautioned in his book *The Ethics of Reading*, reading requires

[10] See: Suzuki 2012, "In the Times of Supremacy of Politics."

readers' all-the-more-responsible responses to a text as an ethic for freedom, but not carefree interpretation (1987).

Of course, there has not been an innocent moment without literary theory, including New Criticism and formalism. In addition, certainly, a theory gives us fresh eyes. However, if a certain theory created by another person is simply blindly accepted as absolutely correct and good practice of that theory is praised, this would be equivalent to worshipping the theory, as pointed out by Japanese scholar Mishima Ken'ichi, since such an attitude is exactly like devotion to a religion (2006, 4–5). This view is based on the assumption that a theory is neutral and universal. In addition, as Ueno Chizuko, a leading Japanese scholar on feminism, argues, "Theory is a tool, and a tool is something we use. But we should not be used by theory, and hence, when a theory does not correspond successfully to a reality, it is not the reality but the theory that we should adjust or change" (2005, 324). All theories—not only theories of literature but also theories of education, psychology, and other fields—have merits and shortcomings in principle. As long as a theory has its merits, we cannot deny the theory itself. As Ueno says, "Any theories were, have been, and will be created by the efforts of people who have a motivational condition to need them" (ibid., 318–9).

On the other hand, as long as any theory has shortcomings in principle, it cannot be good for everything. For example, Walter Benn Michaels points out that postmodern theory, which takes notice of identity, criticizes oppressive definitions of the agency of "I," the reader, in society, where everybody should have a right to achieve self-actualization without any oppression, but it overlooks the problem of poverty because the poor are not victims of oppressed cultural identity but rather of capitalism (2004, 180–1). From a similar perspective, Miura Reiichi also argues that postcolonialism, trauma theory, and Queer theory contribute to neo-liberalism and oppress the working class (2013, 124). Theories, as Heidee Kruger argues, cannot be transferred to different contexts as if they were neutral "instruments" that can simply be "applied" to a given object of study, regardless of whether this object of study is part of the same temporal, spatial, and cultural configurations as the theory or whether it is instead far removed in time or space from the original context of that theory (Kruger 2012, 93). It is natural logic that theory is also generated with the various background features of each area. As Ueno says, "Any theory is born in a socio-historic context" (2005, 34). If a theory is mechanically imposed on a literary text in the world as a framework, it becomes a kind of dogma, and the reader tends to easily overlook various things, or alienate the text. Edward Said also made the following observation:

> It is the critic's job to provide resistance to theory, to open it up toward historical reality, toward society, toward human needs and interests, to point up those concrete instances drawn from everyday reality that lie outside or just beyond the interpretive area necessarily designated in advance and thereafter circumscribed by every theory. (1983, 242)

What Said and others request is not so difficult. They insist that we should first listen to the real "voice." We should not analyze or judge others from some theoretical framework, but listen to their "voices" and analyze them from their internal framework of reference or from the perspective of their own logic, emotion, socio-cultural background, and so on, multi-dimensionally. When I say "let's listen to the 'voice' in a literary text," some might insist that the "voice" in a literary text is just a fiction and hence not worth listening to. Still, in my mind, a literary text is nonfiction in a sense, while mass media, such as newspapers and television, is fiction. If someone is brutally honest to the media, the media edits, attacks, or ignores what that person says, or sometimes even suppresses him or her. When what one really feels and thinks is written as a fiction and read in a private space, it can be communicated to others.[11] Such a *fiction* includes bias and ideology, of course, but the voice of the fiction is nonfiction.[12] Otherwise, for example, there is even a possibility that the voices of suppressed females and minorities, which appear in various literary texts of various eras and countries, would not yet have been heard. Reading literature is not to learn something lofty, noble, or elegant, but to address matters touching the Earth.

Certainly, we cannot deny that literature is a system supporting a nation. It is needless to recapitulate British literature's use in governing India, or that Japanese traditional thirty-one-syllabled verse is rooted in the annual New Year's poetry reading held by the Japanese emperor. However, if the poetry is regarded just as "a product of the system supporting a nation" (Murai 1999, 66) and as something whose voice is unworthy of close listening, the voice of Japan's poor in the poem "Dialogue on Poverty" edited by Hiedanoarei in the 8th century, for example, would be politically ignored.

As another example, Henry Miller was strongly attacked in feminist criticism. Indeed, we can point out that his descriptions of female characters

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[11] Cf. Wright 1988, *Theology and Literature*. Wright argues that literature is the most powerful means to describe the actual world.

[12] On this point, I agree with Beauvoir's argument on literature. See Moi's comments on Simone de Beauvoir in Moi 2009, "What Can Literature Do?"

are malicious, but if we simply make a theoretical judgment on Miller's text, we will overlook an important point: Almost all of the protagonists in Miller's texts are poor. They oppose capitalism and do not care about identity. In other words, they are indifferent to wealth or class. They oppose the fetishism of capitalism and hate to identify themselves with something because they believe that identity is an essential part of capitalism and commodity fetishism (Marx), and feel happy to consider themselves a "non-identity" (Adorno). [13] Miller's literary texts tend to be considered unorthodox in American literature, in part because the protagonists are unconcerned about wealth or class. They diverge from the protagonists in *The Great Gatsby*, *Sister Carrie*, *American Tragedy*, *Absalom, Absalom!*, and so forth. Gatsby and the others are obsessed with class and identity. [14]

Of course, the "voice" in a literary text has a socio-cultural background. Thus, if we use others' perspectives as a framework of reference for a text, we will suppress the "voice." For instance, Patricia Meyer Spacks, who analyzes much literature in English, insists that writing a story and a diary with correct and detailed dates stems from the intention to free oneself from boredom (1995). Spacks's opinion may be correct, because it is a result of her listening to many voices in literary texts in English. The blind acceptance of such a view would misinterpret Chinese texts, however. Chinese culture has a traditional tendency to see a person in a historical context, and thus writes histories with detailed dates of events to describe that person. Moreover, Donald Keene argued that diaries as literature are peculiar to Japan (2003, 73). [15]

It is hence important to read a text, listen to the "voice" there, and interpret it from multidimensional viewpoints, such as culture, tradition, language, law, social reality, way of thinking, and region. On the other hand, when we say western literature, the West itself is varied and cannot be identified; hence, we need to think of a literary text along with its local background. Literary theory is not a neutral or universal tool. It sometimes overlooks or distorts "voice," which reveals a true problem: What "voice" has been overlooked or distorted by theory? Let us consider this now by returning to reading literary texts themselves.

In fact, if we do not read a literary text or listen to the voice in the text, but rather censor the representation in the text and make too sharp a

[13] Cf. Suzuki 2010, "Understanding Henry Miller's Literary Text as 'the Poor's'."
[14] Cf. Suzuki 2011, "Putting Identity into the Gap between the Rich and the Poor."
[15] For another example, see Suzuki 2013, "Cross-Cultural Reading of Doll-Love Novels in Japan and the West."

distinction between "good" and "bad," then it means that we contribute to paternalism, contrary to the insistence of some literary theories. As for the significance of reading literature, Cristina Bruns calls it an interactive change of the agency of "I" the reader from the viewpoint of Gestalt psychology on the basis of Winnicott's theory (2011, 26–36). Rather, however, when we confirm the goal of a reading of literature from multidimensional viewpoints, it reminds us of criticism of Freudian psychoanalysts by American psychologist and educator Carl Rogers, who levels two critiques against them: One is their dogmatization of Freudian theory, and the other is, consequently, their tendency to try to understand a patient within the framework of the theory.

Rogers, who valued clinical practice more than theory, thought "blind adoration of theory could lead to the distortion of the reality of a patient by adjusting this reality to the theory without any review of the problems in its theoretical disadvantages in principle" (Kuwamura 2010, 15). Rogers hence insisted on listening to the patient's voice and empathizing with the patient from the perspective of his or her own feelings and logic—in other words, from his or her internal framework of reference. By doing so, one can understand the facts of the patient's suffering, instead of judging mental condition by imposing a theoretical framework. At the same time, "Rogers did not want anybody to dogmatize his own counseling theory in the same way as the Freudian theory; he believed his own theory has some problems in principle and some points that could be misunderstood by others, and hence it should continue being improved" (ibid., 15).

According to Teresa Kuwamura, a scholar of humanistic English education, Rogerian hearkening to others' voice—empathic understanding of others—and its practice have a social meaning of counter-argument to traditional authority, or authoritarian paternalism of secular Protestantism (ibid., 264). "Paternalism," Kuwamura continues,

> is a protective stance for others: On a benevolent basis, someone intervenes in a situation that a person cannot handle for himself or herself, in the same way parents approach their child. The reason why paternalism is sometimes criticized is that it authoritatively appropriates a right of self-decision. … Against authoritative paternalism and for a democratic society, Rogers insisted on sharing authority and making an individual decision autonomously and proactively. (ibid., 264)

In order to practice this, Rogers emphasized empathic understanding of others' internal framework of reference.

Evaluation of others' "voice" from the perspective of a dogmatized theory is itself a structure of paternalistic society. On the other hand, listening to others' "voice" and empathizing with and understanding the voice from others' internal framework of reference reflects opposition to paternalism. Estimation of others' "voice," or literary texts with a dogmatized theory, hence contributes to the strengthening of the paternalistic structure of a society and that of the academic world. If critics follow an authoritative theory just because it is considered authoritative, without imposing any of their own viewpoints or thoughts, it follows that what they practice reinforces paternalism. Miyazaki asserted that reading and studying literature by "not losing oneself" and "having one's own viewpoint," which "has to do with one's own way of life" or individual reading of literature as current world literature suggests, is a Rogerian hearkening to others' voice and for democracy in academia. Naturally, readers sometimes face a literary text in which they do not feel anything. But this is a phenomenon from reading a text with readers' own "nose," as Zhang says, referring to Frank Kermode:

> "My present answer to the question how to be a critic is one I borrowed long ago from William Empson: take whatever theoretical help you fancy, but follow your nose," says Kermode. The analogy is to wine connoisseurship—"Not everybody has a nose in this sense—there is an enological analogy—and in either case, if you do not have one, you should seek some other form of employment". (2010, 7)

4. Is It Possible to Read Western Literature from a Japanese Perspective?

However, if we read literature in other areas, following our noses, how should we handle misreading? If we seek correct reading, does it not follow that only Japanese can correctly read Japanese literature, only Chinese can correctly read Chinese literature, and only English native speakers can correctly read English literature?

Regarding this question, Miyazaki argues the following:

> In my mind, an effort to pursue academic research on literature in English is an effort to yield a research which passes for authentic British scholarship, and naturally Japaneseness in the research is destined for elimination. Of course, academic research goes beyond national borders: it possesses properties in essence to take that direction. The reason for this is that the job

> done by a researcher who is enthusiastic about his or her own work moves in a direction in which its national border finally disappears. (1999, 46)

However, is what Miyazaki claims possible in a literal sense? Miyazaki recommends that Japanese critics should make their Japaneseness disappear from their reading of literature. What Miyazaki finally concludes is the paradox that the Japanese can study literature in English when they become native English speakers, and thus only an English speaker can read literature in English.

Why must literature in English be read only from the perspectives of English-speaking cultures? Is it meaningless for the Japanese to read literature in English from their own perspectives? Is it possible for the Japanese to become English-speaking westerners? Is it really possible to make the "Japaneseness in their research" disappear and ensure their "own work moves in a direction in which its national border finally disappears"?

People in Japan tend to regard everything in this world as having life like they do. They celebrate the girls' festival on March 3rd and the boys' festival on May 5th, and return to their hometowns during a period called *Obon* to visit their ancestral graves. They even perceive themselves to be living in this world with the souls of the dead. In the Japanese psyche, the border between living organisms and inorganic substances is ambiguous.[16] For this reason, they issue residence certifications to *manga* or animated characters as if to humans,[17] and even hold funerals for dolls, figures, needles, and so on.[18] In addition, they tend to consider themselves simply part of nature, rather than as having dominion over the Earth and all its creatures; they do not have a disposition to accept that reason was specially gifted to human beings, as Descartes and other western philosophers insist (Kida 2010, 45). Additionally, Japanese Buddhism is a philosophy based on the idea that everything, even each plant, *is* Buddha. No matter when and in

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[16] This is a kind of animism. Jean Piaget regarded animism as a tendency of the infant mind, but this is also a Euro-centric viewpoint.

[17] Note that some animals living in Japan also have residence certifications.

[18] Through the funeral rite for needles, the Japanese express their appreciation when discarding them, because in their minds the needles helped and supported them. Some Japanese simply discard needles and other objects, but they are looked down upon. In Japan, traditionally speaking, a kind and warm person not only cherishes people but also appreciates every creature and thing. Funeral rites for a doll stem from the Japanese belief that discarding a doll without a rite or any feeling of appreciation may cause the doll to curse them. See Suzuki 2013, "Cross-Cultural Reading of Doll-Love Novels in Japan and the West," 113–7.

what area the Japanese read literature, they must unconsciously do so with an attendant Japaneseness.

Nonetheless, if, as Miyazaki insists, Japanese scholars should "get rid of Japaneseness in their research" and that their "own work moves in a direction in which its national border finally disappears," then the Japanese must abandon their own language. The Japanese sense of language and the configuration of the Japanese language are very idiosyncratic. They do not care so much about the connection between Chinese characters and pronunciation. The most important point for the Japanese is the image. For example, the name of one of my friends is 陽. Japanese dictionaries say that it means "the Sun" and "bright," and that it must be pronounced *yō* or *hi*. However, the pronunciation of his name is *Kiyoshi*. Nobody can read it so. The pronunciation *Kiyoshi* usually reminds Japanese of the Chinese character 清, meaning "clean" or "cool." I asked his parents why they chose such a strange combination of Chinese characters and pronunciation. They replied that they wanted him to become a bright person like the Sun, who always laughs. If he simply always laughs, however, he will look stupid. That is why they decided on the combination of the Chinese character 陽 and pronunciation of *Kiyoshi*, which is associated with "clean" and "cool." The Japanese language often employs such double images.

Japanese words evoke various meanings and images that are not easy to decode. Additionally, the Japanese prefer images to consistency in pronunciation and characters. Such a culture and a sense of language has to influence the Japanese way of thinking. Indeed, according to Jacques Lacan, the agency of "I" is structured by *le symbolique*. In addition, as brain scientist Antonio R. Damasio asserts, "Emotion, feeling and biological regulation all play a role in human reasoning" (2005, 8). Humankind can feel something and thus think of it, and can think of something and thus feel it, and they express it in language; I feel, therefore I am. J. Hillis Miller, in his book *The Ethics of Reading,* also considered "sensibility" as an obligatory requirement for the criticism of literature in the times of groundlessness of episteme.

Regarding sensibility, some feelings do not transcend national borders and times, but some do. We can hence share feelings with others in this world. When we read a poem about a beloved person's death (for example, Edger Allan Poe's "Annabel Lee"), it evokes sadness, not laughter. This is why literature transcends national borders: We can share problems. Goethe was impressed by a Chinese novel, and he left us his famous compound word, Weltliteratur, "world literature," even though he might not have responded to the novel in the same way as a Chinese reader, because the

translation from Chinese to German could not fully capture the original form. Nonetheless, it is wrong to say that only readers completely integrated into the society where a literary text was born can feel, understand, and share anything in the text.

Let me take another example. I have read *The Great Gatsby* with students from China, Korea, the U.S., and Japan. American students read the novel as a story of the American dream or of the oppressed identity of the female gender. Japanese students read the novel as a story of pure love. On the other hand, Chinese and Korean students criticize the novel for its portrayal of illicit love and say that they could not accept the novel. The Chinese and Korean students are strongly shaped by Confucian thought; for them, *Gatsby* is a story of ethics. The Japanese students, who live in a society where Confucian thought is not as influential as before, take notice of Gatsby's single-minded passion for Daisy. The Americans, who value self-actualization in a capitalistic world, pay attention to class identity and liberation from gender oppression. One cannot say which is right and which is not. As David Damrosch relates, "when a text goes beyond a national border, the text itself transforms" (2003, 281). However, there are opportunities for a text to transcend borders without any transformation. All of the students, despite having developed their discussion about the text from multidimensional viewpoints, empathize with Gatsby's loss of love and criticize those who benefited from Gatsby but failed to attend his funeral.

Incidentally, the argument that I have been developing does not deny Walter Benn Michaels' criticism: "When differences in interpretation are both explained and defended by reference to the differences between readers, the very idea of an interpretive dispute disappears" (2004, 116). My point affirms supporting the interpretation of authors' intentions, along the lines of what Michaels endorses: "If you think that differences in belief cannot be described as differences in identity, you must also think that texts mean what their authors intend" (ibid., 10–1). Naturally, even if we neither defend readers' standpoints nor tolerate any variation in interpretations, none of the readings of literature will ever come to only one conclusion, as Michaels also admits. Rather, Michaels advocates that, rather than ascribing the differences in interpretation to the reader's identity, we should develop arguments on the basis of the differences. Otherwise, we are only saying, "This is your story and this is my story, but they do not affect each other." This will mean a failure in mutual understanding.

In conclusion, we should cultivate differences in interpretation as a world-wide discussion, with empathy and understanding of the text's and readers' internal framework of reference. To my mind, Michaels's

insistence on complete denial of the reader's identity is only intended for readers in English-speaking areas who read literature in English. But if we fail to accept any differences in readers' socio-cultural backgrounds, non-English speakers' readings of literature in English will always be a misreading in a sense.

The point is that there is no such law that literature in English must be read only from the perspective of English-speaking cultures. This does not mean that I recommend that Japanese or Asian readers should avoid western perspectives. Nor do I mean that Japanese readers should ignore the social reality, laws, culture, or regional characteristics of the West and always follow the thinking unique to Japan. However, even if we defend readers' intelligence and interpretation rather than their experience, readers feel something before interpreting a text from their own socio-cultural perspectives, and hence it is unrealistic to defend the opinion that reading literature in English can only be correctly done from the perspective of English-speaking cultures. The Japanese can read a literary text in English because they can respond emotionally to it from their own socio-cultural background, even if they cannot completely assimilate a western reader's perspective. Feeling something in a text precedes thinking about it. Readers from every part of the world may respond similarly or differently. Regarding the latter, if someone says that a particular reading is a misreading or close to subjectivity, he or she should give up his or her native language and culture, first of all, and adopt the language and culture of the area where the text they read was born. This is a matter of bravery rather than realism; and if the person cannot commit to such bravery, he or she cannot assert misreading or subjectivity in a certain reading.

Does this mean there are no misreadings? From the viewpoint of Derrida, all readings are misreadings, and hence the significance of interpretation and reading itself must be discarded, though such a logic itself is a misreading of Derrida's theory (cf. Miller 1987, Chapter 1). As noted earlier, "[t]he deconstruction … constituted the text in the first place" (de Man 1979, 17), and metaphorical thinking such as metonymy decides the meaning of a text. If so, a text is based on differences between readers' socio-cultural backgrounds and individual emotions as well as those among humankind in general. In this sense, misreading must be regarded not as an opportunity for readers to separate themselves from the text but as one of the differences in readings that contribute to international understanding among the people of the world. Of course, it is not enough for readers to read literature only according to their feelings. Intelligence requires, as argued by Yamauchi Shirō, in his fascinating study of philosophy as the history of misreading,

"feeling a little bit strange about Japanese scholars studying philosophy in Japan, because philosophy is the ideology for the formation of western culture" (2013, 15).

5. Global Response to the "Voice" of Literature

Now, let me take an example of a Japanese critic writing on the standard of western intelligence, from a review of Tsutsui Masaaki's *Seeking a True Self.* The book develops the discussion that American novels after World War II describe states of mind, such as loss of self, seeking of self, and self-actualization, and that their fundamental theme is human existence, which is fused into the life of the universe and thus never dies, since it is unified with it. For his discussion, Tsutsui employed transpersonal psychology, but Japanese scholars dismissed his book as irrational because of his commitment to mystical experiences in Buddhism.

What we should take notice of is that such criticism is based on western epistemology, or Freudian theory and rationalism. Sigmund Freud dismissed Buddhism's mystical experiences as "primary narcissism" (Tanaka 2010, 222). For Freud, Buddhism's mysticism is synonymous with the state of a baby's mind just before the cutting of the psychological umbilical cord. It thus indicates immaturity. Some Japanese scholars have noted similarities between Freudian theory and Buddhism, but as long as Freudian theory disregards the legitimacy of Buddhism's mystical experiences, a large gap remains between them.

On the other hand, transpersonal psychology was influenced by eastern thought, and criticizes western rationalism. Abraham Maslow and Carl Rogers, who established humanistic psychology, which is based on transpersonal psychology, view Buddhism positively. Other psychologists, including William James, Carl Jung, Karen Horney, and Erich Fromm, also view Buddhism favorably (Tanaka 2010, 223–5). They affirm mystical experiences in Buddhism, which Freud dismissed as primary narcissism, as supreme experiences (ibid., 225). However, Jacques Lacan endorsed a "Return to Freud," and his theory became as popular as a scientific one. At the time when psychoanalysis returned to Freudian theory, it became anti-Buddhism or anti-East. Some critics in Japan note the similarity between Lacan's theory and Buddhism, but since Lacan prefers the Freudian theory, which dismisses both the state of mind Buddhism affirms and its mystical experiences, their view is problematic.

In Japan, psychologists insisted before that the Oedipus complex was not applicable to the Japanese, favoring instead the Ajase complex, or

feelings of guilt towards one's mother. Some Japanese critics have even articulated a difficulty in understanding Lacan's theory. On the other hand, Japanese tend to be comfortable with the theories of Maslow, Rogers, Jung, and Fromm. The reason is that theories of psychoanalysis divorced from Freud affirm the state of mind that Buddhism affirms. Murakami Haruki's fiction is also sometimes read from the perspective of Jungian theory. Of course, we cannot say that Freud's and Lacan's theories are wrong. Their theories are, however, oriented toward western cultures to the extent that they fail to accept the state of mind Buddhism affirms. The dominant state of mind seems to equate to primary narcissism for westerners; on the other hand, it seems to be the best state for those living in a Buddhist culture, and Japanese readers can easily evoke the latter when reading literary texts. As long as an English literary text is born in the West, it is appropriate to employ the psychoanalytic theory of Freud and Lacan to interpret it. Maslow, Rogers, Jung, and Fromm are, however, also products of western cultures, and hence employing their theories in reading literature in English is also relevant. Further, when a Japanese reader approaches a literary work while "not losing oneself," it is not unnatural that this reader hear a "voice" containing Buddhist elements.

One may still want to dismiss Buddhist mysticism as irrational; however, the idea that being rational is always right is western-centric. The idea of the "rational" itself is a western epistemology. As Alfred W. Crosby notes, western epistemology is characterized by breaking down an object perceived as a continuous phenomenon into elements and units, and then describing them in the form of a quantitative model based on measurement of "ration" (amount). Division into quanta and the possibility of measurement by "ratio" form the basis of western epistemology, and being "rational" is highly valued.

From this perspective, it would be too hasty to conclude that Tsutsui's argument is irrational. Western culture, including rationalism, was criticized in the U.S. after World War II, especially within the counter-culture, New Age, and anti-war movements. Assuming a literary text reflects the time in which it is born, American literature after World War II must echo the "voices" in movements running counter to western culture. No matter how irrational some American literary texts appear, they simply can be said to contain non-western elements as long as rationalism forms the basis of western epistemology, as referred to in Crosby. Furthermore, we cannot simply deny Tsutsui's work because of his perspective from Buddhist mystic experiences. His work can be said to historicize American literature after World War II. From this perspective, if we seek standards for reading

and interpreting literature in English only through the ways of thinking of English-speaking cultures, we will misread literary texts.

Now it is important to read a text with one's own "nose," and then, as necessary, criticize the oppression of the agency of "I" in a text, and discuss interpretations and criticisms on a world-wide scale, as Michaels suggests, to overcome problems in theoretical reading. For example, many westerners and information sources assert that *The Great Gatsby* is a story about the American dream. We should note, however, that such a reading and definition is born in a context in which nobody critically thinks about what American capitalism itself is. We should accept the readings of cultures under the socialist systems and other socio-cultural backgrounds, especially in a globalized world, for, as Legendre and Nancy note, globalization is global westernization, and the West's occupation of the world expropriates the means of counter-argument in such a world (Legendre 2004, 16–22; Nancy 2007, 34).

Therefore, we do not have to think that the western way of thinking is the absolute horizon of all reading and interpretation of literature in English. We should read a literary text from each perspective and then fashion an overview of readings from around the world. Each reader in China, Korea, the U.S.A., the U.K., Australia, France, Brazil, Russia, India, and all other regions reads a literary text following his or her own nose, interprets it from multidimensional viewpoints, and discusses it with others, listening to others from his or her internal framework of references. In doing so, readers hold a global discussion to cross-culturally understand both literary texts and each other, and, I hope, to promote peace as long as the study of humanities should contribute to peace in the world.

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Decision-Making and Disambiguation in Japanese-to-English Literary Translation: An Application of Game Theory[1]

Richard Donovan

Abstract

Jiří Levý's 1966 paper 'Translation as a Decision Process' applied game theory to translation studies in an attempt to characterise and explain the decision-making processes of the translator and the linguistic and socio-cultural forces that inform these processes. The current paper employs some of his conclusions in the context of Japanese-to-English literary translation, addressing in particular the vexed issue of disambiguation. It draws upon examples from Kawabata Yasunari's novella *Izu no odoriko*, and its published English translations *The Izu Dancer* by Edward G. Seidensticker and *The Dancing Girl of Izu* by J. Martin Holman.

Keywords: game theory, literary translation studies, disambiguation

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Introduction

Deciding among possible renderings is at the heart of the act of translating, deeply embedded as each choice is in the paradigm–syntagm relationship of selection and combination of lexical elements. Disambiguation is a special subset of the decision-making process in translation, and becomes critically important when translating out of a language that discourages explicit grammatical subjects and objects (such as Japanese) into one that positively demands them (English). Game theory has a helpful role to play in situating the issue of disambiguation in Japanese-to-English literary translation (hereafter 'JE translation') in a normative sociolinguistic context by tracing the ramifications of differences in conventions and rules between the two languages.

An image from Kawabata Yasunari's novella *Izu no odoriko* may help to set the scene for this context. Halfway through the story, the student narrator is spending the evening at an inn playing the Japanese board game *go* with an elderly merchant. At one point, the troupe of travelling entertainers comes into the room, and immediately he begins to lose concentration on his game, and soon loses the game itself. (Most likely this is on purpose, so that he can turn his attention to the visitors, in particular the dancing girl who is at this point in the story the object of his amorous intentions.) Eventually the merchant retires for the night, and the student ends up using the *go* board to play a simpler game, *gomokunarabe*, or five-in-a-row, with the entertainers.

Within this scene we can discern an analogy relevant to translation studies. There is the transition from one *game* to another, with a corresponding change of rules, but the *board* remains the same—a nineteen-by-nineteen matrix of lines with 361 points of intersection at which pieces, or stones, can be placed. This immutable board provides the context for and regulates the moves of both games.

We can view the student narrator as a translator of sorts, a mediator between the two cultures of the well-off merchant and the impoverished entertainers, represented by the games *go* and *gomokunarabe* respectively. And we can equally use the image of the uniting element, the *go* board, to stand for a sociolinguistic aspect of translation studies: what sociologist Pierre Bourdieu referred to as a *textual grid*. Gentzler sums up this notion as "the collection of acceptable literary forms and genres in which texts can be expressed" (Bassnett & Lefevere 1998: *xiii*).[2] This grid thus represents

[2] Gentzler goes on: "For example, Chinese novels have their own set of rules, rules

the overall system of interdependent structures that constitute what is commonly accepted as 'literature'. No matter what game—in other words, culturo-linguistic duality—may be played out on the grid, a similar set of universal human expectations about literary norms applies. Thus whatever language it may appear in, *Izu no odoriko* can be uncontroversially described as a first-person coming-of-age novella, divided into seven sections.

While the board-as-textual-grid analogy begins to break down when pressed further—after all, the way the second game is played bears little resemblance to that of the first, whereas it is expected that any translation will bear some resemblance to the original story—it is a useful opening gambit, as it were, for considering game theory itself in the analysis of the translating process.

Translation and Game Theory

In his 1966 paper 'Translation as a Decision Process', the Czech theoretician Jiří Levý drew upon the branch of applied mathematics called game theory to elucidate the decision-making process that translators enact at the moment they choose within the possible set of word choices relevant at a particular point in the translation. It is worth quoting Levý directly on his rationale for this approach:

> From the point of view of the working situation of the translator at any moment of his work […], translating is a DECISION PROCESS: a series of a certain number of consecutive situations—moves, as in a game—situations imposing on the translator the necessity of choosing among a certain (and very often exactly definable) number of alternatives. (Levý 1966: 1171; original emphasis)

The possible alternatives delimited by the textual grid are what he calls "definitional instructions". The criteria the translator employs to make a choice from within this set he calls "selective instructions" (1966: 1173). These criteria may be linguistic, cultural or in some cases personal. Reinvoking the central image, one can state that the definitional instructions indicate all *possible* moves at a given moment in the game, while the

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which differ from the ways in which novels in Europe tend to be constructed. These 'grids' cause patterns of expectations in the respective audiences, and both practising translators and in particular literary historians need to take into consideration such grids in order to better produce and/or analyse translations." (Bassnett & Lefevere 1998: *xiii*.)

selective instructions suggest the *optimal* moves based on the context.

Another way to define definitional and selective instructions is as linguistic *rules* and *conventions* respectively. Merton talks of the "four modalities of normative force": "prescriptions, proscriptions, preferences and permissions" (Hermans 1999: 83)—in other words, what you must do/say; what you must not do/say; what you can or are recommended to do/say; and what you may or are tolerated to do/say. Prescriptions and proscriptions define the rules of a language (for example, set grammatical structures that cannot be altered), while preferences and permissions form a loose set of conventions, which *may* be ignored, but probably should not be, depending on one's audience. Paradigmatic and syntagmatic examples from Japanese and English serve to illustrate the distinction:

Table 1: Rules of the 'games'

Japanese	English
Paradigmatic	
No explicit grammatical subject required. Example: 昨日鹿を見た。 *Kinō shika o mita.* *'Yesterday […] saw […] deer.'	Explicit grammatical subject required. Example: Yesterday I saw a deer. (The ambiguity must be resolved in English.)
Syntagmatic	
In hypotactic (subordinate) sentences or clause sequences, the subordinate clause must precede the main clause. Example: 昨日鹿を見たから嬉しかった。 *Kinō shika o mita kara ureshikatta.* 'Yesterday I saw a deer so I was glad.' *嬉しかったから昨日鹿を見た。 **Ureshikatta kara kinō shika o mita.* *'I was glad so yesterday I saw a deer.'	In hypotactic (subordinate) sentences or clauses, subordinate and main clauses may appear in either order. Example: Yesterday I saw a deer so I was glad. I was glad because I saw a deer yesterday.

Table 2: Conventions of the 'games'

Japanese	English
Paradigmatic	
Keigo polite language (such as nominal prefixes *go-* and *o-* and verbal suffix *-masu*) is used to indicate level of civility and social distance. Example: これはお風呂でございます。 *Kore wa ofuro de gozaimasu.* 'This is the bath.' (But it would not be *grammatically incorrect* to say これは風呂だ。 *Kore wa furo da.* 'This is the bath', only rude in certain circumstances.)	No verb suffixes or nominal prefixes indicate politeness level. (However, the modal verb 'would' can sometimes be used to indicate politeness.) Example: This is the bath. ('This would be the bath.' would have another meaning entirely.)
Syntagmatic	
Paratactic (coordinate) syntax acceptable in expressing causal relations. Example: 昨日鹿を見て嬉しかった。 *Kinō shika o mite ureshikatta.* 'Yesterday [I] saw a deer and was glad.' (But one could also say 昨日鹿を見たから嬉しかった *Kinō shika o mita kara ureshikatta*, as above.)	Paratactic (coordinate) syntax not always desirable in expressing causal relations Example: ?Yesterday I saw a deer and (I) was glad. (But it would be more acceptable to say the following: 'Yesterday I was late for work and I had to run.')

When one recreates an utterance in the act of translating, and moves from one set of rules and conventions to another, the evaluation process must be re-enacted, under a new set of prescriptions, proscriptions, preferences and permissions. The treatment of the novella title『伊豆の踊子』*Izu no odoriko* is an example. I shall ignore the possibility of replacing the original title with something entirely different—a type of

cultural-conversion strategy common enough in itself[3]—and imagine that we are attempting to recreate the original in some form. 伊豆 *Izu*, being a place name, is invariant, and thus the corresponding English translation paradigm set is practically limited to its transliteration, or its omission (Ø).[4] の *no* is a possessive marker, and hence the translation paradigm set contains ' 's ' (apostrophe-s), 'of' and Ø. 踊子 *odoriko*'s translational paradigm set contains, as its most obvious members, 'dancer' and 'dancing girl'. On top of this, English's set of definitional instructions includes the probable necessity of an article, an irrelevance in the original Japanese language, which does not use articles. The paradigm for articles is (at least) 'the' (the most likely choice in the title of a work), 'a', and Ø (unlikely with a singular countable noun such as 'girl' or 'dancer', although titling conventions sometimes allow a zero article for brevity's sake).[5] Finally, another English selective instruction is the convention of capitalisation of the first and main words in titles. These paradigms combined with the relevant selective instructions hence present us with a finite set of combinations, namely:

Table 3: Potential English translations of the novel title『伊豆の踊子』

- Dancer, A Dancer, The Dancer
- Dancing Girl, A Dancing Girl, The Dancing Girl
- Izu Dancer, An Izu Dancer, The Izu Dancer
- Izu's Dancer
- Dancer of Izu, A Dancer of Izu, The Dancer of Izu
- Izu Dancing Girl, An Izu Dancing Girl, The Izu Dancing Girl
- Izu's Dancing Girl
- Dancing Girl of Izu, A Dancing Girl of Izu, The Dancing Girl of Izu

Our set of syntagmatic permutations of possible lexical concatenations has generated a paradigm set for the title, governed by the definitional instructions listed above. Now the translator employs his or her set of

[3] For example, Seidensticker's translation of Tanizaki's novel's title『細雪』 *Sasameyuki* ('Light Snow') as *The Makioka Sisters* (1995).

[4] Occasionally one might observe the substitution of a better-known place-name that is either more specific (hyponymic) or general (superordinate) to the area.

[5] Of course, we could widen this set, with a good enough reason, to include 'this', 'that', 'those', 'a certain', 'some', and so on, but such deictics are more likely to mark the title in a distracting way, and without good reason in this case.

selective instructions, consciously and unconsciously, to make a final choice from within this. Most possibilities will be immediately rejected for their awkwardness or inapplicability to the context of the work as a whole. For example, the selective instruction that is the convention of using "The" in eponymous titles immediately culls the possibilities down to just eight: *The Dancer*, *The Dancing Girl*, *The Izu Dancer*, *Izu's Dancer*, *The Dancer of Izu*, *The Izu Dancing Girl*, *Izu's Dancing Girl* and *The Dancing Girl of Izu*.

One can infer two distinct sets of selective instructions in play from the characteristics of the titles the two professional translators of *Izu no odoriko* have chosen in this case. Edward G. Seidensticker's title *The Izu Dancer* requires more of the TL (target-language) reader, likely unfamiliar with the place name, than *Izu no odoriko* did of the SL (source-language) reader: the simple nominal modifier offers nothing to indicate it is a place name. Similarly, the ungendered 'dancer' is more ambiguous than *odoriko*, whose *–ko* diminutive marks it out as probably female. J. Martin Holman's *The Dancing Girl of Izu*, by contrast, is longer, more expansive and more explanatory than Seidensticker's. The end result is that Seidensticker's rendition is closer to the original in terms of length and syntax, while being more semantically obscure. Whatever their differing sets of selective instructions, the translators therewith allow certain interpretations and preclude others.

The main reason for this ongoing process of exclusion that is the corollary of translating decisions is the simultaneously multilayered and linear way in which language works: the paradigmatic and syntagmatic process of selection and combination discussed above. Without a paradigm, one would have nothing to articulate, and without a syntagm, one would have no way to articulate.

Crucially, such a decision-making process not only affects that discrete point in the translation, but also consequent decisions, creating a decision chain in much the same way that a move one makes in many board games influences all subsequent moves. In other words, one particular translation decision shuts out all other potential alternatives at that point, and further eliminates myriad subsequent choices that could have flowed from the alternatives.

For example, Seidensticker and Holman tend to preserve the diction of their chosen titles in representing the eponymous dancing girl throughout the translated narrative. Seidensticker, having titled the work *The Izu Dancer*, refers to her as the "dancer" on 32 occasions and the "dancing girl" only twice, while Holman, having chosen *The Dancing Girl of Izu* as

his title, favours the epithet the "dancing girl" on 63 occasions, and only invokes the "dancers" (plural) twice.

One implication of such an application of game theory, which Levý sidesteps in his paper by confining the concept of the game to a one-player decision process, is that a game often implies competition: winners and losers. The classic example is the zero-sum game, with a polar combination of win (value +1) and loss (-1) in which the sum always comes out to zero. However, should one, in fact, view translation in this way? Can there be said to be winners and losers?

Well, if one is to retain conventions and standards—in other words to view translation from a normative point of view—then the answer is yes. If 'anything goes', and all that counts is participating (here, creating a text for consumption), how can one judge whether or not a translation is a fair representation of the original?

A set of consequential questions follows. If translation is a competitive game, who is the translator playing against? The original author, who is competing with the translator for recognition of authenticity? Other translators of the same text into the same language, who are competing in the same marketplace?[6] The original text itself (Levý's 'prototext'), which competes with the translation (the 'metatext')?[7] The language and culture in which the text appears, which may resist the 'intrusion' of a text that has extra-linguistic and extra-cultural origins? Literary critics, who may take a translation to task for inadequately representing the original? Perhaps members of the target-language readership, who are ready to reject the translation if it does not appeal to them? Or are translators in fact playing against themselves, fighting the unconscious tendencies and tendentiousness that could colour or even distort the style and content of the original to an unacceptable degree?[8] The answers to most of these

[6] It can hardly be regarded as a coincidence that Seidensticker chose to publish his retranslation of *Izu no odoriko* the year before Holman's version (1997 versus 1998).

[7] See Hatim (2001: 57ff.) for a description of metatexts in translation.

[8] While such normative issues are significant in shaping both translators' metatexts and readers' reactions to them, another productive perspective is to view translation as a so-called coordination game rather than a zero-sum game. In a coordination game, the players work together to achieve a mutually beneficial outcome. If we consider that authors are usually not in an antagonistic position regarding someone who wishes to interpret their work in good faith, then it makes sense to see the translator and original author as collaborators in the creation of a pan-linguistic, pan-cultural work in re-presenting it to a new, otherwise inaccessible

questions depend on the norms within which translators operate. To return to the above example, the selective instructions on which Seidensticker and Holman have based their differing decisions about the novella title constitute equally valid rationalisations for their decisions.

Disambiguation and Game Theory

Among the moves that the translator must make in the translating process, the act of disambiguation is a crucial one. The varying degrees of "lexical segmentation" (Levý's (1966: 1175) term for range and demarcation of shades of meaning) in the two languages ensure that at certain points in the translating process translators must choose among several lexical choices in their target vocabulary,[9] or, even more likely, among several *strings* of lexical elements. This means they must reduce the TT (target-text) readers' range of possible interpretations in a way that was unnecessary for the original ST (source-text) readers.

Ambiguity complicates Levý's assertion that the translating decision process can be defined as a "GAME WITH COMPLETE INFORMATION" (1966: 1172).[10] As we shall see with the below excerpt from *Izu no odoriko*, translating is not in fact a game with complete information. The reason is that, although the original text is invariant, and thus in a sense all the 'moves' have already been made and are there for anyone who can read Japanese to see, the original text presents instances of lexical and sequential ambiguity that make it impossible to ascertain the purpose of the move (i.e., authorial intent) that the original player (the author) made.[11] In this sense, translation differs from a game like chess, where the

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audience, where the goal of their coordination game is simply to complete the decision-making process in a way that observers—bilingual and monolingual readers, critics, and so on—consider acceptable.

[9] When the lexical segmentation of a SL term is narrower than that of the equivalent TL paradigm set, then the translator will need to select among more elements than were available to the original author, which has the potential for mischaracterising the ST.

[10] I retain here Levý's original emphasis: "[T]he process of translating has the form of a GAME WITH COMPLETE INFORMATION—a game in which every succeeding move is influenced by the knowledge of previous decisions and by the situation which resulted from them…."

[11] Here one should distinguish between constructive ambiguity (polysemy) and destructive ambiguity (indeterminacy). The former is likely intended (though of course not all semantic or formal patterning may be conscious on the part of the author), the latter unintended.

purpose of certain moves may be ambiguous at a *particular moment* of play, but subsequent moves resolve this ambiguity. Some textual ambiguities are never resolved, remaining what one might term 'opaque fossilised nodes' in the text.

Another reason why translation is not a game with complete information is that some of the information on both the ST and TL sides changes with time. The original text comes to be viewed differently even in its own cultural context as time passes, and equally the expectations of the target domain change periodically: thus too do the rules and conventions on both sides.

Hence we need to revisit Levý's characterisation of the translator's decision-making process in the light of the literary text's sociolinguistic and temporal contexts, issues that were not as prominent in the 1960s when he wrote. Several points must be considered here that extend the definition of the game from that of the activity simply of translating the words on a page to the players (translators in their context) engaging in the 'game' of translating a text (with both the act of translating and the text itself embedded in their own cultural contexts). Hermans notes that Holmes expands Levý's conception of the decision-making process to include wider issues:

> In considering the relation between a translation and its source Holmes elaborates Levý's idea of translating as decision-making into a two-plane model. His argument is that translators proceed not only serially, making one decision after another as they work through a source text, but also structurally, on the basis of a mental map of the prospective target text. Discussions of translation issues should therefore take into account the interplay between a whole set of factors comprising language, literary tradition or 'literary intertext' (the term is Julia Kristeva's), and socio-cultural situation…. (1999: 25)

The moment a translator fixes a translation in place actually only marks the mid-point of a decision-making chain that began when s/he agreed to take on the translation project, and continued with the translator's research into and cultural contextualisation of the text, including reading and re-reading of the text prior to rewriting it.[12] The

[12] On rewriting, see Lefevere (1992), e.g.: "Translation is, of course, a rewriting of an original text. All rewritings, whatever their intention, reflect a certain ideology and a poetics and as such manipulate literature to function in a given society in a given way" (*vii*).

translating process itself is still in the middle of the chain, because conscientious translators are likely to revisit their versions multiple times to ensure that the translation both closely corresponds to the ST and is readable in the TL. Next of course the text passes to the editor and/or publisher, who are likely to revise it again based on their perception of target-culture expectations.

The decision-making in the first rewriting is informed by a number of factors—Chesterman's "[e]xpectancy norms", which are

> established by the expectations of readers of a translation (of a given type) concerning what a translation (of this type) should be like. These expectations are partly governed by the prevalent translation tradition in the target culture, and partly by the form of the parallel texts (of a similar text-type) in the target language…. They can also be influenced by economic or ideological factors…. (1997: 64)

Expectancy norms, then, are the socio-cultural aspect of Levý's selective instructions. First, through the process of reading the original and possibly perusing biographical information about the writer and his or her national and cultural context, the translator has probably decided the genre of writing that is involved. The editor/publisher may also have characterised the writing, and encouraged the translator to view it within this framework. The simple classification of the writing as literature binds the translator to a higher level of 'respect' for the original form of the writing than might be expected if the work were of some other kind (say, a formulaic page-turner or, more distantly, a computer manual), and constrains his or her diction choices accordingly (Munday 2009: 34). Further, in reading the original text, the translator will have picked up on certain formal cues that might be seen to characterise the original author's prose ('idiolect'). S/he will have come to certain conclusions about the feasibility of conveying these characteristics in the rewriting. If any features are deemed untranslatable *in toto*, a number of choice pathways will have already been occluded before the first phrase is rewritten in the target language. The translator will have assessed the best way to render the remaining 'translatable' features, and will attempt to achieve this in his or her first rewriting act. At the same time, however, the translator will be conscious of the expectations of the new audience: that the text 'read' well; that it come across as as worthy of consideration as the genre 'literature in translation' implies.

In the first translating 'pass', translators are likely to focus on choices that nail down the superstructure of the whole, constructing a solid base that can be more finely sculpted in subsequent passes. Less attention to formal details, or, at least, their *consistency*, will be paid at the early stages, unless the style of the original is overtly unorthodox, and hence crucial to conveying the prose. One can posit that as translators lock in the form, they close off alternatives at the microlevel that can contradict the macrolevel (though this may not be fully achieved).

This section has considered how the 'moves' the original writer and the translator make are circumscribed, and to some extent constrained, by the "interplay" (Hermans 1999: 25) of rules ('definitional instructions') and conventions ('selective instructions') of the literary 'game' peculiar to each language and culture within which the (re)writer operates (Levý 1966: 1173). Now it is time to observe the implications for such differing rules and conventions in disambiguation in the JE literary context.

Disambiguation in JE Translation

Kawabata Yasunari was Japan's first Nobel laureate for literature, partly owing to the popularity of *Izu no odoriko* in Seidensticker's first English translation, and his 1968 acceptance speech was famously titled (again through Seidensticker's translation) 'Japan, the Beautiful, and Myself'. When Ōe Kenzaburo became the next Japanese literary laureate a generation later in 1994, he pointedly titled his speech 'Japan, the Ambiguous, and Myself'.[13] The Japanese language is often described as ambiguous or vague,[14] and just as often experts will counter that it is not ambiguous to its native speakers, because context and linguistic cues elucidate meaning.[15] I

[13] Both speeches are available in full on the Nobel Prize website (www.nobelprize.org).

[14] See, for example, a critique primarily of Ōe Kenzaburo's, but indirectly also of Kawabata's, ambiguity, arising from the inherent subjectivity of the Japanese language, in Kumakura (1995). See also Donald Keene and Ivan Morris quoted in Miller (1986: 98).

[15] Miller, for example, severely criticises Western translators and theorists for characterising Japanese as vague and lacking in clarity, claiming in Ivan Morris's case that he "has not considered that the grammar—or the grammatical and syntactic inter-relationship—of the language plays any significant role in the 'literal meaning' of the text" (1986: 98ff.). Thus Miller argues that the grammar of Japanese plays an important role in disambiguating its lexical elements, something one can readily observe in the use, for example, of 'donative' verb forms such as

agree in general (exceptions will present themselves shortly), and point to a parallel tendency in the use of irony in English, something that native speakers are apparently more adept at identifying (although not infallibly so) from context and tone than non-native speakers, often with embarrassing consequences for those who fail to do so. However, a strong case can be made for the contention that Japanese is grammatically more ambiguous than English in certain respects, and this 'semantic gap' is the source of a variety of potential translation issues.

A particularly salient feature of the SL (source language, Japanese) is the lack of necessity in many cases for a sentence to have an explicit grammatical subject marker. Speakers imply subjects (and sometimes human objects) through certain grammatical elements such as verb endings (though the co-text—surrounding utterances—is also important). Thus, 本を買ってあげた *hon o katte ageta* can, in one context, clearly mean 'I bought the book for him', and 本を買ってくれた *hon o katte kureta* 'he bought the book for me', even though the clauses contain no subject (the buyer of the book), nor any indirect object (for whom the book was bought). One can make these determinations with confidence in a given context, because (a) the preceding sentences often provide nominal antecedents for the 'absent' pronouns and (b) the underlined donatory verbs (Martin 1975: 352-354, 598) are selected depending on whether the implied subjects and objects are members of the in-group (within the speaker's own family, work or social domain: *ageta* 'I/we gave) or out-group (outside the speaker's domain: *kureta* 'he/she/they gave').

However, when contextual and grammatical cues become contradictory or insufficient, we enter more tortuous territory, where even native speakers may become disorientated. Such ambiguities may be less problematic when native readers or listeners of Japanese are left to determine (or leave undetermined) in their own mind the provenance of the subject; but translators into English do not have that luxury. English demands an explicit grammatical subject. To extend the earlier metaphor, when playing the English 'game', one must make an unambiguous move with one's piece when it is time to make a 'subject' move. Once one has committed to the move, not only can it not be retaken (except in a retranslation), it directly affects subsequent moves—in other words, the concatenation of lexical choices from then on—until some clear point of separation is reached and the cascade is brought to a halt.[16]

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ageru/kureru, as outlined in this section.

[16] The immediate cascade effect may be localised, often petering out within a few

One sustained excerpt from the ST[17] will serve to elucidate the problematic aspects of ambiguity for JE translation. In this scene, the entertainers call on the narrator in his inn room. The key point of ambiguity is who the speaker of the words is in §314 and 315:

Table 4

ST	Seidensticker	Holman
309. ¶間もなく栄吉が私の宿へ来た。	¶A short time later Eikichi appeared.	¶Before long Eikichi came to my room.
310. ¶「みなは？」	¶'Where are the others?'	¶"Where is everyone?" I asked.
311. ¶「女どもはおふくろがやかましいので。」	¶'They couldn't get away from Mother.'	¶"The old lady is so strict with the girls."
312. ¶しかし、二人が暫く五目並べをやっていると、女たちが橋を渡ってどんどん二階へ上って来た。	¶But the three of them came clattering across the bridge and up the stairs while we were at the Go board, playing the simpler game.	¶However, we had been playing "five-in-a-row" only a short while when the girls came across the bridge and upstairs.
313. いつものように丁寧なお辞儀をして降下に座ったままためらっていたが、一番に千代子が立上がった。	After elaborate bows they waited hesitantly in the hall. ¶Chiyoko came in first.	They bowed politely as always and hesitated, kneeling in the hallway. First, Chiyoko, the oldest, stood up.
314. ¶「これは私の部屋よ。	"Please, please," she called gaily to the others.	¶"This is my room.

sentences or paragraphs, and does not necessarily spread throughout the entire text—but then again, it may have an insidious global effect, particularly when a given word choice is consistently repeated.

[17] The Japanese text comes from the Horupu Shuppan edition (Kawabata 1985); sentence (§) numbers refer to this text. ¶ indicates a paragraph indent.

315. さあどうぞ御遠慮なしにお通り下さい。」	“You needn’t stand on formality in *my* room!”	Don’t be so formal. Come on in,” I said.
316. ¶一時間程遊んで芸人達はこの宿の内湯へ行った。	¶An hour or so later they all went down for a bath.	¶The entertainers stayed about an hour, then went down to the inn bath.

Seidensticker decides the speaker is Eikichi’s young wife Chiyoko, while Holman opts for the narrator. The evidence supporting Seidensticker’s decision partly lies in the propinquity of Chiyoko’s action at the end of the preceding §313. He interprets 立上がった *tachiagatta* ‘stood up’ as “came in”, which is not a direct translation (while Holman’s is), but rather an apparent conflation of “stood up” and “entered”, based on the context and on the echo of the socially formal base verb 上がる *agaru* ‘enter someone else’s place of residence’. In Seidensticker’s interpretation, Chiyoko enters the room ahead of the others, and this initiative is immediately followed by her monologue.

Further, absence of the copula だ *da* before the particle よ *yo* at the end of §314 suggests a female speaker in Japanese sociolinguistic convention (Shibatani 1990: 373). Moreover, the mere fact that the speaker feels the need to indicate whose room it is supports the notion that the girl is speaking. There would be little need for the narrator himself to point out such a thing, as the entertainers have called on him where he is staying, and thus are quite aware whose room it is. If Chiyoko wished to make a joke, pretending to take possession of it, which Seidensticker suggests with his archly italicised “*my* room”, she could have done so in just such a fashion. Seidensticker is so sure of his attribution that he injects the entirely fabricated phrase “she called gaily to the others”, not only providing an explicit subject but furthermore indicating to whom the subject is talking, and in what tone of voice.

Holman, on the other hand, chooses as his subject the narrator rather than the girl. There is no indication in the story as a whole that Chiyoko is the playful sort; indeed, she is largely portrayed as subdued, weighed down by the burden of the death of her baby during the journey. However, the narrator treats the entertainers well throughout their acquaintance, thus it would be in character for him to ask them to abandon formality and enter his room. He is aware that many people have a low opinion of such itinerant performers, but he is charmed by them, and no matter what other

guests at the inn may think of his inviting them in, it is, after all, his room, and he can welcome them unreservedly. But none of this entirely explains why the narrator would feel the need to mention that it was his room.

Other linguistic elements are unhelpful for disambiguation. The 私 *watashi* 'I' subject in §314, while formal, is appropriate for either a male or female speaker in this situation. 御遠慮なしに *go-enryo nashi ni* 'without reserve' is perhaps suggestive of Chiyoko in the sense that 御遠慮なく *go-enryo naku* is the more common, educated form, but this characterisation is by no means definitive.

Both translators thus have valid arguments to support the conflicting disambiguation moves they make here. However, it is questionable whether there is any need to disambiguate in the first place. Although the source text does not attach a subject to the monologue, in this case there is no requirement in English to do so either, as stand-alone quotations with no quotative verb or subject are acceptable in (modern) English prose. The translators are perhaps so used to inferring subjects from context and adding them to subject-demanding English that even in a case where it is not necessary they have done so, consequently creating a new problem for themselves. Here, then, TL expectancy norms are undermining the potential of resolving the issue of disambiguation in a felicitous manner.

Implications for JE Translation

One can see from the above example that the selection/combination process of translating involves the translators' making decisions based on both the immediate linguistic and wider cultural context. Where the Japanese rulebook and English rulebook—what Levý calls the definitional instructions—differ, translators must make use of the personal playbook, or set of selective instructions, that they have assembled over the years, to find a way to harmonise the two. But when English requires a subject that is absent in the original, the translators' first impulse (prompted by expectancy norms) is to make an unambiguous move. That has more immediate implications than the original move, and exposes the translator to the danger of creating a succession of further moves that carry the translation too far away from the original. Venuti references such a hazard in his comments on the imposition of TL norms on the ST, condemning "the violence that resides in the very purpose and activity of translation: the reconstitution of the foreign text in accordance with values, beliefs and representations that pre-exist it in the target language" (1995: 18).

At the same time, disambiguation is an unavoidable part of the JE translation process, and the translator should not be afraid to resolve ambiguity where it helps to preserve the overall integrity of the original by presenting it in a form more acceptable to the target language. Occasionally translators may need to resolve an ambiguity in a way that cannot be justified solely by linguistic and contextual cues in the source text, for the greater goal of textual cohesion in the target text.

Lawrence Venuti resists such fluency strategies as cohesion, instead calling for translators to employ a strategy of "resistancy", using foreignisation to highlight formal and cultural aspects of the foreign text rather than erase them (1995: 20, 41–42, 305ff.), but in practice this seems to amount to little more than suggesting that "contemporary translators of literary texts can introduce discursive variations, experimenting with archaism, slang, literary allusion and convention to call attention to the secondary status of the translation and signal the linguistic and cultural differences of the foreign text" (ibid: 310–11).

Resistancy may indeed have its place in the translator's repertoire of responses to the challenges of Japanese literature, but it seems largely irrelevant to the issue of disambiguation, since while one can perhaps occasionally bend TL conventions to reflect SL conventions, TL grammatical rules, such as the requirement for an explicit subject, are rarely so negotiable. On the other hand, by viewing disambiguation through the lens of game theory, and seeing how oversensitivity to selective instructions, or TL expectancy norms, may distort the translator's response to specific issues, even unnecessarily closing off potentially navigable avenues of approach, the translator may become better at processing the definitional instructions into a translation that not only respects the Japanese source, but also well serves the English-language reader.

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