

The Rice Papers



Volume 2 • 2007

The Rice Papers

A Student Journal of Asian Studies

Volume 2 • 2007

Brigham Young University
Provo, Utah

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Preface

This is the second issue of *Rice Papers* student journal and it continues in the same strain as the first, presenting a collection of academic essays discussing various aspects of Asian Studies. The purpose of this publication is to provide readers with the opportunity to become better acquainted with issues concerning the culture, religion, politics, history, and art of Asia. We continue to hope that *Rice Papers* provides a forum for students to publish scholarly papers that will not only inform the student body here at Brigham Young University but also encourage students to seek a deeper understanding of the nations and cultures of the world.

Once again this publication would not be possible without the generous donations of the David M. Kennedy Center for International Studies and constant support and advisement of Dr. Steven Riep in the Department of Asian and Near Eastern Languages. Serving as faculty advisor to the journal, he has served to keep the journal on schedule and moving efficiently as possible through the editing and printing processes. We also gratefully thank those members of the faculty who assisted with editing. The final edits, layout and all that comes with printing and publishing fell largely on Kennedy Center Communications staff, and we thank them for their valuable assistance.

In this edition, a broader representation of Asian Studies topics were chosen, ranging from personal essay to socio-political treatise. The first issue dealt mainly with literary issues, and although we are fortunate to have a solid representation of literary analyses in this issue, we also have a few essays concerning politics and social issues. The first paper presents select folk tales and stories gathered in fifteenth-century Japan by Ihara Saikaku. A personal essay follows, concerning the struggle of a Korean American to find her identity somewhere in between the cultures of the U.S. and Korea. The third essay explores the sacred nature of four key animals in Confucian thought and their representations in Chinese culture. Following that, the fourth essay shows the stylistic progression of Korean poet Kim Chi-ha following the Park Chung Hee coup in 1961. In the fifth essay Herman Hesse, utilizing the Indian epic *Ramayana*, criticizes the Third Reich, giving voice to a war-torn Germany. The last two essays analyze the narrative styles of two signature literary figures: Izumi Kyoka in Japan and Liu Na'ou in China.

We hope readers will enjoy *Rice Papers*, and we anticipate its continued annual publication. We desire to continue providing a forum for students to publish in the area of Asian Studies and hope *Rice Papers* is a place where new and accurate information concerning the fascinating cultures of Asia will be found. Please send any feedback to Dr. Steven Riep at steven_riep@byu.edu.

Saikaku's *Tales from Various Provinces*

by Josh Dalton

In 1685, Ihara Saikaku published his *Tales from Various Provinces*, a five-volume collection consisting of thirty-five short stories. Saikaku explained: "I went throughout the provinces in search of subject matter for my writings." The result was a compilation of humorous and bizarre local legends. "Reflecting on the experience," Saikaku wrote, "I can only conclude that people are all spooks." By interweaving his own wit and imagination into the tales he gathered, Saikaku closed the gap separating fantasy from reality. As a result, he simultaneously emphasized both the unique nature of the human experience and the universal aspects that everyone can relate to in one form or another.

Tales from Various Provinces is unique among Saikaku's fictional prose works. Unlike his previous prose—such as *Life of a Sensuous Man* (1682) and the *Man Who Spent His Life in Love* (1682), which catered to the rising merchant class with their focus on the "pleasure quarters"—*Tales* principally avoids the urban centers of Edo, Osaka, and Kyoto, and is set in sub-urban and rural Japan. Instead of wealthy merchants, the characters in the stories are hunters, performers, wizards, *tengu* (demons), and *rounin* (masterless samurai). Especially prevalent are stories about common townsfolk, farmers, and samurai, reflecting the dominant social structure of the time. Though "foreign" subject matter to his mostly merchant-class audience, *Tales from Various Provinces* was not alienating; rather, Saikaku's depiction of rural Japan and its mystical quality likely had an exotic appeal to urban readers unfamiliar with rural Japan.

Saikaku wanted a title for his collection that would convey his purpose in traveling, collecting, and writing the stories. It appears that he debated between several titles before settling on the current one, as evidenced by the two subtitles included in each volume. A brief examination of each considered title provides insight into the author's motivation for writing *Tales*. The first title, *Dismounting from the Horse* (*Ōgeba*), has reference to the custom of travelers dismounting from their horses when riding through town, creating a sense of equality and closeness between both traveler and townsfolk. Saikaku wanted to speak *to* the people and have them listen, requiring them to dismount from their "horses." The other title, *Recent Tales from Various Provinces* (*Kinnen shokokubanashi*), is also indicative of Saikaku's desire to create intimacy between his audience and the stories in order to make them accessible. Even if they were geographically distant, Saikaku wanted the stories to be temporally close, for proximity in any form lends strength to the effect—the emotional engagement—that a story has on the reader. Some scholars argue that this title was not used because some of the stories are said to have taken place thirty to sixty years prior to Saikaku's travels. However, relative to the centuries-old classics that Japanese authors often allude to—the *Tales of the Heike* and the *Tale of Genji*—half a century is proximate enough for readers to be affected by the stories, so it would seem that scholarly argument is moot.

Given these motivating factors behind his writing, Saikaku's *Tales from Various Provinces* is a testament to the author's profound insight into the existing reciprocal relationship between culture and literature that is constantly shaping people's perceptions of the world around them. Having woven his own fabrications into the tales, it is impossible to know where contemporary culture influenced the literature and vice versa. This indistinct relationship reminds the reader that, in literature, oftentimes it is not separating fact and fiction that is relevant, but it is the ability of a story to connect with the reader and make it "real" to them on an individual basis. The subtle allure of each individual tale is the universal human elements that each reader, regardless of culture or background, can relate to on one level or another. It draws the reader in and connects them with not only the characters in the stories but with Saikaku, and the world around them.

Following are translations of three of the *Tales from Various Provinces*, the first of which is "The Umbrella Oracle" (*Karakasa no gotakusen*)—a tale that comically portrays the introduction of, and subsequent reactions to, completely foreign elements in a society. To the reader, the sheltered villagers' reactions may seem foolish and laughable, but their decisions and actions are not driven by stupidity; rather, it is simply their ignorance—

something under which all people have made assumptions and subsequent errors—that forces them to adapt to the circumstances with which they are faced.

The Umbrella Oracle—A Tale from Higo Province

Thanks to Buddha’s widespread benevolence, people continue to do generous acts for others. One of such acts is the twenty umbrellas that are set out to be borrowed by passersby at the Kakezukuri Kannon Temple in Kii Province.¹ Someone donated the umbrellas long ago, but they have been preserved to this day because they are repapered every year. When it rains or snows, anyone is free to take the umbrellas home with them because when the weather clears, people are honest about returning them. Not a single one had ever gone missing.

That all changed in the spring of 1649, when a villager from Fujishiro borrowed an umbrella for his walk along Fukiage Beach on the shores of Waka Bay. A strong divine wind came suddenly from the direction of Tamatsu Island, and the gust swept the umbrella from the man’s hand into the air and out of sight. The man was distraught over the loss but realized that the umbrella was lost and there was nothing that he could do. Meanwhile, the umbrella was carried to a remote, small village named Ana, deep in the mountains of Higo Province.²

The inhabitants of this village had lost contact with the outside world long ago; it was so isolated that not even Buddhism had reached there. They had never seen anything like an umbrella before, so the wise men and village elders gathered to discuss what was to be done with the foreign object. All were equally puzzled, for in all their years they had “never seen or heard of an object like this.” A man of some learning stepped forward from the crowd. “I have counted the bamboo ribs and there are precisely forty. The paper is also peculiar,” he stated. “I fear to speak a holy name, but I feel this is the incarnate form of the great sun god who has flown to us from the precincts of the Ise Grand Shrine.”³

Struck with amazement and reverence, the villagers immediately rinsed and purified the umbrella with salt-water and placed it on a fresh new mat. Everyone dispersed into the surrounding forest and mountains, cutting down trees and gathering grass. They made a shrine out of the materials and began worshipping the Ise god.⁴ The result was that, by rainy season, the umbrella began and continued to make ominous sounds.

At length an oracle was delivered. “Due to your neglect this summer, the cauldrons in the shrine have been sullied, and even the inner sanctum is defiled because it is rife with roaches. It is ordered that you must rid the

entire province of roaches. Not even one must remain. There remains one more demand. You must employ one of your beautiful young women as the shaman for the shrine. If you do not fulfill these requests, raindrops the size of cart axles will fall, and no one will be left alive.”

Fearful of this divine pronouncement, everyone gathered the beautiful young women of the village together to discuss which was to be chosen.

“How are we supposed to survive if we are chosen?” The unmarried young women wept, staring guardedly at the shape of the folded up umbrella.

A widow of the village known for her wanton nature stepped forward. “Because it is the divine will, I will take the place of the young women.” And so it was decided. That night as the widow waited in the shrine, the umbrella failed to show any interest in her at all. She finally burst angrily into the inner sanctum, and grabbing the umbrella she exclaimed: “Nothing but a good looking face, aren’t you?” She ripped the umbrella and cast it aside.

(*Ihara Saikaku shū*, *Nihon Koten Bungaku Zenshū* 39: 78–80, translated by Josh Dalton)

“The Puzzling Footsteps” (*Fushigi no ashioto*) is the story of a blind man blessed with clairvoyance, a common character throughout literary tradition—the prophet Tiresias of *Oedipus Rex* perhaps being the most prominent of such. The blind man in this tale is not called upon to utilize his remarkable gift in order to make any momentous predictions but rather is brought in as entertainment to make trivial predictions for drunken youths at a party. Through this character, and the final prediction that he makes, Saikaku decisively reiterates the literary motif that physical sight is not always accurate, implying that people’s physical perceptions of the world around them are not always correct either.

The Puzzling Footsteps—A Tale from Fushimi⁵

Gong Zhi Chang⁶ of the land of China could differentiate between the songs of all birds, and Moroyasu Abe of our realm could predict the fortunes of others simply by hearing the tone of their voice. Here in Fushimi, there lived a blind man who made his dwelling within a brushwood fence in the shadow of Bungo Bridge.⁷ His heart was free-flowing and clear like a river. He had become a recluse, though his greatness from long ago remained, for he was no ordinary man. He was able to play a tune on his flute and, based upon the tone, tell fortunes regarding all kinds of things, and he was rarely wrong.

Once in the Toiya⁸ section of Fushimi, there was a moon-viewing party⁹ on the night of the twenty-third day of the ninth month. The youths came

together in the early evening and chanted ballads from puppet plays in the second floor banquet room of a rice shop. It's the same drunken raucous no matter where you find moon-viewing or sunrise-viewing¹⁰ parties.

Overjoyed because of the hermit priest Tamo'nin's promising address to the gods, the host announced to his guests: "Whatever kind of entertainment you want, I will provide it for you."

"If we could be entertained by the man who plays the verses on his flute . . .," the guests requested. The host, ever accommodating, immediately sent for the blind man.

The blind man arrived and played the first request, *Yoshino no yama*.¹¹ The youngster who served the tea was coming up the ladder holding a can of lamp oil. "That boy is going to spill the oil," the blind man predicted. Just as the youngster took special care not to spill, the sliding cedar door that had been removed and set against the wall suddenly fell, and the youngster was accidentally injured.

Everyone clapped their hands, impressed by the blind man's accuracy. The guests further pressed him: "What kind of person is walking down the street right now?" The blind man listened to the tone of the approaching footsteps. "There is a man; he has a worried look on his face, and he is dragging an old woman behind him," he said. "Based on the frantic footsteps, I would say that the old woman in tow is a midwife." Everyone wondered if it was true and sent someone to go listen. Upon returning, the man sent reported: "The man was saying: 'If she experiences labor pains, I'll help support her back. If it's at all possible, please make sure she gives birth to a boy.'" The people in the room laughed in delight and amazement. Again, they asked about the next person walking on the street.

"There is only one set of footsteps, but there are two people." When they sent someone to look, it was a maidservant carrying a little girl on her back.

"And the next person coming down the street?"

"Those footsteps are no doubt that of a bird, but he is making sure to step carefully." The guests looked again and saw that it was a beggar quietly walking the street on stilts.¹²

"My, my! You are a man with a gift!" they acknowledged. "Please, sir, make one more prediction for us," they pled, opening the second floor window. As they were waiting, unable to see the street very well, the first evening bell rang,¹³ whereupon a pair of travelers, looking as if they were hurrying not to miss their boat to Osaka, stepped into the faint light of the second-story lantern. One of them, wearing a black overcoat and a sedge hat, was carrying a long and a short sword. The other man had a *sake* barrel hanging from

a trunk he was carrying and was close behind the first. “What kind of people are out there now?” The guests asked, turning to the blind man.

“There are two people. One is a man. The other, a woman.”

“Well,” the guests said. “Out of all the people that have passed since the evening, he was only wrong this once. Look, we can see the man’s swords with our own eyes. He even has a long and short one: There is no doubt that he is a samurai.”

“You are wrong. It has to be a woman. Are you sure you’re not all mistaken?” the blind man insisted.

So again, the guests sent a man to go eavesdrop on the two passersby. “Be careful with that barrel when we get on the boat. It’s silver coins, not *sake*. I take the precaution of dressing up as a samurai every time I go out at night to shop in Osaka,” The man overheard the master whispering to the servant carrying the barrel. As the eavesdropper continued to listen, it turned out that the woman was the owner of a rice shop on Kyoto’s Gojō Street.¹⁴

[Ihara Saikaku *shū*, Nihon Koten Bungaku Zenshū 39: 80–83, translated by Josh Dalton]

“The Flea’s Escape” (*Nomi no kagonuke*) relates the misfortunes of a rounin samurai, Hayato, who is wrongfully imprisoned for the murder of a fellow villager. He subsequently spends years in prison, and is eventually transferred to a prison in Kyoto. There he overhears two other prisoners boasting of their exploits and realizes that they are the two whose crime he has spent years of his life paying for. The subsequent dialogue and actions following this revelation are surprising, lending an endearing quality to the rounin for his obedience to the guiding principles of a samurai. Special attention should be paid to parallels between Hayato and Jesus Christ as viewed from the traditional Christian perspective.

The Flea’s Escape¹⁵—A Tale from the Province of Suruga¹⁶

The winter winds coming down from Mount Fuji swept violently across Suruga plain. It was the twelfth month of the year, when every household in the village of Fuchū was on guard against fires and robbers. In this village there was a rounin by the name of Tsugawa Hayato who was from a great samurai house. He lived a relaxed life, yet he continued to carry the weapons¹⁷ characteristic of a samurai. No one really understood what was running through his mind—he employed no servants and lived alone in a tiny rundown house.

In the middle of the night of the eighteenth, several robbers broke into this tiny rundown home. Hayato started awake, and, grabbing the sword he

kept near his pillow, cut down four or five of the robbers and scared the rest off. Because nothing was stolen, Hayato decided not to wake his neighbors by sounding an alarm and left things as they were.

That same night, robbers broke into a dyer's shop on the outskirts of town. They plundered the inside of the shop and were about to take off with some silk and ink stones, but the owner of the shop brandished his spear in an attempt to stop them. Seven or eight of the henchmen surrounded the owner, killed him, decided that they may as well take his weapons while they were at it, and then fled.

When morning came, the investigation revealed—thanks to the shop owner's servant—that the “robbers all had beards and each carried long and short swords.” It was precisely at this moment that the villagers discovered that there was blood in the entrance of the rounin's house.¹⁸ He provided a number of explanations to try and prove his innocence, but because he had no solid alibi, the official had no choice but to throw him into prison.

“What kind of work did you do before?” the magistrate asked the rounin.

The rounin smirked resignedly, “Now that I'm a rounin, who I was previously is no longer important.”

However you look at it, it was a difficult case to piece together. It remained unsolved for years.

Seven years passed when the order was given that all of the prisoners in Suruga were to be transported to a prison in Kyoto. Having to live in the capital's harsh prison seemed to mark the end of all good fortune. The rounin had resigned himself to his current circumstances, knowing that he had made a mistake in not raising the alarm the night of the incident. He bore no grudge towards the government, nor did he indulge in self-pity.

One rainy day the prisoners were occupying themselves with various hobbies, relying on the faint light streaming through the barred window. Not one of the prisoners was idle. One was plucking his whiskers with clam shells, another was making Buddhist statues out of tissue paper. Amongst them was an old man with a white curly beard who looked like a wizard. His craft was building bug cages out of yarn from his own sleeping mat. In his cage, he had a thirteen-year-old louse and a flea that was soon to be nine. The old man adored the bugs and allowed them to grow big by sucking the blood from his own leg as food. In turn, the bugs became attached to the old man, performing tricks at the sound of his voice. The louse would do the lion dance¹⁹ and the flea would stage an escape from his cage.²⁰ Despite the depressing environment he was in, these two bugs brought amusement to the old man.

Besides the prisoners already mentioned, there were two robbers telling of their adventures to a captive audience. One was claiming that he had been introduced to the secret craft of day-robbery by Ishikawa Goemon,²¹ and the other, a man named Shinkichi, was relating to the others why he had no right ear: “I’ve faced death forty-three times in my life, but I was never injured, not once. However, one time in Suruga, we broke into a rounin’s house. He was skilled with a sword, killing some of us, and the rest of us had to run for our lives,” Shinkichi recounted. “Never in my life have I come so close to dying. Not learning from that near-death experience, we broke into a dyer’s clothing shop that same night and killed the owner. . . .”

The rounin had been listening to the robber’s story and said “That rounin was *me*. Because of what you did, I’ve suffered greatly and am now as you see me today . . . But I’ve never pitied myself. What I *do* regret is dying as a samurai with a bad reputation. Please, I want you to help me clear my name.”

The two robbers consented. “The two of us have done far more than what happened that night in Suruga. This recent trip, we killed a woman and for that we cannot avoid the death penalty. We’ll explain your situation to the official.” The prisoner called the guard and told the story. The long unsolved incident had finally reached a resolution. The magistrate, taking into consideration the afflictions that Hayato had suffered, summoned him and declared “Whatever you desire, I will grant it to you.” Hayato, glad of heart, replied: “I wish for the lives of those two who have cleared my name to be spared. I suffered hardships for them before, but because of them I now have the reassurance of not losing my honor as a samurai. Please, release them.” Thus, Hayato saved the lives of the two men.

(*Ihara Saikaku shū*, Nihon Koten Bungaku Zenshū 39: 119–122, translated by Josh Dalton)

Though by no means an exhaustive study or commentary on Saikaku’s *Tales from Various Provinces*, this paper has attempted to spark the reader’s interest in one of Saikaku’s lesser-known works by showing both the humor and relatability. Saikaku’s fascination with the strange experiences of people as both individuals and groups lends strength to his observation that “there is nothing that you won’t find in the world.” Truly, there is no more fascinating study than human experience, and Saikaku has provided a humorous, accessible collection that can serve as a foundation for any reader wishing to learn more.

NOTES

1. In the city of Wakayama, modern-day Wakayama Prefecture.
2. An area in the southern mountain region of modern-day Kumamoto Prefecture.
3. Shinto shrine located in modern-day Mie Prefecture, arguably the most important Shinto shrine.
4. Amaterasu, or the sun goddess.
5. A district south of Kyoto.
6. A character from *The Chronicles of Lu*, a Chinese Confucian text.
7. A bridge spanning the Uji River; in the time of Toyotomi Hideyoshi, it was repaired by the Lord of Bungo Province, thus bearing its name. Currently, it is called Kangetsu Bridge and is a traffic route between Kyoto and Fushimi.
8. On the west side of Fushimi, comprised of rice, lumber, and firewood shops.
9. Japanese: *tsukimachi*. Held on the nights of the third, seventeenth, twenty-third, and twenty-seventh days of the month, when the participants wait for the moon.
10. Japanese: *himachi*. An event that is held on the first, fifth, and ninth months of the year. People gather and make offerings, and wait through the night for the sun to rise.
11. Lit. Yoshino Mountain. A well known ballad of the time.
12. Japanese: *toriashi no geta*. Tall wooden sandals in the shape of bird's feet.
13. The first toll of the evening bell was at about 8:00 P.M.
14. A market street in lower Kyoto, running east-west.
15. Japanese: *Nomi no kagonuke*, a type of Japanese acrobatic move. A two-meter long cage with an opening four to five centimeters wide is placed sideways on top of the ground. A man wearing a sedge hat would jump into the tube, wiggle his way out of the tight quarters and then stand before the audience.
16. Modern-day Shizuoka Prefecture.
17. Armor, helmet, short sword, long sword, bow, and arrow.
18. Carrying long and short swords was characteristic of samurai, as was growing a beard. These factors, coupled with the blood in the doorway, point all evidence to the *rounin* as the robber.
19. Japanese: *Shishiodori*. A very active and exciting dance performed by beggars on the main streets of cities and also in theatrical performances.
20. See Note 13.
21. A famous thief of the Momoyama Period (1573–1603)

Writing Over Silence: The Asian-American In-between Identity

by Amy Scott

It's easier to tell someone's story than to let them have their own voice.

—Lydia Minatoya¹

To speak is to begin to trust.

—Traise Yamato²

My daily routine is pure ritual and thus pure theatre. A routinely perfect production of a comfortable unwritten script: stage dark, save for a dim morning light; spot on tousseled black hair, white pillow, and a blanket nest. Wake up, pad into the bathroom; mise-en-scène a student's sanctuary. In the bathroom, suit up: costume, makeup/mask, deliberately casual—as if any day could become a beach day. Flip on Elvis and dance while pouring milk onto cold cereal. The door opens, and the play begins *en force*.

Of course, my life is theatre. Because what is theatre, really? Continuous, unscripted action interspersed with dialogues that make up scenes that make up acts—life, which can be a theater of the absurd. It can be a classic, too, pulsing with the audacity of hope. In “Different Silences” Traise Yamamoto writes, “You ask me to speak” (46). I must ask her, *Who is this “You”?* Is “You” a friend, a cashier, a classmate, a professor? You. Whoever this “You” may be, you do not demand my speech, you simply ask. It is at once easier and more difficult to tell someone else's story in your own words because they are not, as Minatoya observes, their words. And yet, it is at once

easier and more difficult to tell your own story in your own words *because* they are your words. You ask me to speak. This is my response:

It's my eyes. Smooth butterfly wing lids rimmed with stubby black lashes that refuse to stay curled, no matter how much Maybelline I use on them. The wings close slowly, and I can feel them jump and flicker under the weight of irregular memory. The wings open to drink in the thundering relief of a pocked ceiling and whispering fan. Open, close, open, close, the strong crease dividing each wing folds in and out over itself and I lay silent, barely breathing. It's the eyes, I tell myself, it's the eyes.

How many times has this story been told?

More and more I find myself standing frozen in the middle of a river of people. They pass around me on all sides, a steady confident rush of life, and I wait. Varied expressions work their eyes and brows and still I wait. I wait and wait and wait and wait. I am very patient. I become invisible. Then, and only then, do I allow myself to stare openly. I search the faces of the people swimming by, hoping to see a familiar feature hidden somewhere between their stock features and cropped jeans. I concentrate and compare myself to their delicately formed bone structures and easy grins, trying to find something to connect me to them.

Anything. Nothing.

All I can see is my reflection in the mirror: flat facial contours that peak at a small forehead, bow around neat ears, and end in a soft, stubborn, pointed chin. Flat nose with upturned nostrils, childish cupid lips, sketched eyebrows raised in perma-question, heavy black hair going limp, vast expanse of pink cheeks, scars that no amount of makeup can hide, three freckles dotting like a constellation around my jaw—the eyes.

I think about Yamamoto's essay. How she reads, interprets, and defines silence into a litany of terms. Silence, to her, is boundaries, self-containment, resignation, passivity, habit, and protection (46–8). At the same time, because of its sometimes articulate nature, it is “not always a bad thing” (47). Thus speech, though it demands “a risk” (48), may be a vehicle to establish trust. However, she says that in asking her to speak, you are also “asking [her] to repeat . . . without getting anywhere . . . to say and not be heard, to be spoken, to be made invisible in a skein of language not her own” (48).

Therefore, in writing to respond, I am both trusting others and condemning myself to tautology. I ask myself, *How many times have our stories been told?* Constantly, insistently, repeatedly. Ironically, there is a sense of futile hope in a story's repetition. I recognize the schism between writing and speech—the privileging, oftentimes, of speech over writing. Yamamoto herself writes, “The act of writing [for Asian-American women] becomes the

broadest stroke towards speech” (48)—implying that voiced speech is the ultimate goal. Though writing is a move towards speech, it, in its voicelessness, gives the reader a false sense of security. Readers finish a book, article, or whatever believing that they have “heard” what the writer has to say. In actuality, the reader has not. We insist on speaking about style in terms of voice. This voice we speak of is a metaphor for physical speech, something that does not literally exist in writing. What we mean is that we like or dislike the style, the way of framing and explaining things. Writing, indeed, is an expression of language but it is not speech. It is an activity done in silence, a product that is consumed in silence.

Note, then, the irony of this essay’s existence.

My brother tells me this story. He lives in a farm town about an hour north of Salt Lake City. It’s a close-knit family kind of town that grows sweet crunchy white corn and gorgeous vine tomatoes. He drives a sleek new Audi, a car that he monitors and protects with the ferocity of a newborn’s mother. He speaks fluent Korean and draws pretty little symbols that sound out my old name if I listen closely: Yung Hwa Lee. He’s Korean. I am, too.

He and his Audi get pulled over on a regular basis, racial profiling alive and well in the good Beehive state. A scrawny white motorcycle cop, hiding behind a four-inch badge and a loaded semiautomatic, saunters over to his window.

License and registration.

My brother moves slowly to retrieve them from the glove compartment. The cop reels back, blatant prejudice and fear staining his words.

Whoa, there! You just settle down, China Boy, take it easy. That’s it, real nice and easy. Where’d you get this car? You steal it? I bet you stole it.

Like hell I did.

Sure.

I can prove it.

Sure.

My brother keeps his hands on the wheel, knuckles turning white and dangerous with the strain. He stares straight ahead, straight ahead, right at the stooped farmer surrounded by dust and tractor exhaust. The same stooped farmer who once pushed his hat back and squinted his eyes to get a closer look. He took the piece of grass out of his mouth, held it between two calloused dirt encrusted fingers and drawled, “What are you, boy, Ornamental?” My brother has to laugh. He stares unseeing at five and a half feet of cold tinted lenses and tight pants meticulously tucked into combat boots. Today he is. Today he is just another ornamental rug lying flat and

vulnerable in front of this scrawny white motorcycle cop's four-inch badge and loaded semiautomatic.

My brother's story is not mine. But it has been, in less blatant but no less humiliating ways. Like the time when that kid cocked his head in a way that recalled an overgrown parakeet, stared into my almond shaped eyes with their peculiar Caucasian creases and said, "So . . . what kind of Asian do you speak?" He was completely serious. And I just stared at him with unbelieving eyes, walking the fine line between laughing and dying, and said, "Um . . . English? What kind of Asian do you speak?"

That these stories even exist, whether in spoken or written language, infuriates me. That these stories are repeated—well, I do not know how to explain why I feel violated every time. They just do not get it. I am as white a suburban girl as they come, your quintessential banana—white on the inside, yellow on the out. And yet, I find myself wondering why I feel so torn between my white family's culture and my Asian face.

Similarly, Asian-American writers often discuss the tensions wrought by duality, the seemingly irreconcilable gap between the heritage of their biology and the heritage into which they are grafted. On a daily basis, ethnic minorities must recognize and adapt to the fact that they have either knowingly or unknowingly been *adopted* into the culture of a majority group. This realization often creates confusion about identity. Steve Chan-No Yoon's short story "Stoplight" asks an important question: "What does being yellow mean? The best answer I can come up with is an in-between" (19). The anxieties concerning duality most clearly manifest themselves in the idea of in-between.

I am in-between on too many levels. To complicate things more, I do not believe that the in-between can be defined; rather, it exists as the feeling that results from various situations. For me, it results from the following factors: being an Asian woman growing up in a white, male society; Asian growing up in a white, Jewish community; Asian growing up in a white, LDS family; Asian attending a predominantly white, private university. Identity-wise I am fragmented and split across various political labels. It is often difficult to choose or discern who I am. True, many if not all people feel the same way. We all have different personas that we don in certain situations; it has to do with language registers. However, the in-between applies to identity registers.

It seems that the in-between brings inevitable anxiety. It is also one of the driving forces in my life. It pushes me to explore the space between moments, mindsets, ideologies, theories, and experiences. In the *Strangeness of Beauty*, Minatoya writes, "This was Nihonmachi, Seattle's Japantown.

A strange, in-between place where, by day, the streets were filled with American-style industry . . . yet at dusk Nihonmachi became suffused with Japan—with lantern light, the aromas of soy sauce and the restful sight of neighbors heading home from public baths” (14). The in-between for her is a “strange” place that mixes and matches various cultural customs and objects. Though they coexist, she suggests that the cultures only manage to offer a reciprocal balance when engaging in “secret-door gambling clubs with knifings at blackjack and mahjong tables; hurried transactions of prostitution” (15). These “faster and darker” things are some negative consequences of the in-between. However, Minatoya also uses writing as a vehicle to examine the in-between of Japanese and American.

Do I privilege speech over writing? It appears to be so. After all, silence bothers me; I always wonder if I should be speaking and, if so, what I should be saying. It frustrates me, especially how people go on about “marginalized” people and their voicelessness, the silence surrounding their existence. Unfortunately, for a long time, I agreed with this viewpoint: *Oh, my! Just look at how I have been silenced as a woman by the patriarchy, as an ethnic minority by the hegemonic majority, etc.* But it is not this, completely. I do not exist in a vacuum where sound, so the theory goes, gets sucked out leaving something so big and terrible in its place (silence) that no life can survive in it. No, I exist here, as an Asian-American, LDS, female, student. Obviously, as such, this establishes problems that multiply with every combination of my biological, religious, ethnic, and economic credentials. Historically, even presently, each of my labels—whether socially, politically, or personally deigned—have, despite efforts on the contrary, been drafted to “Team Marginalized!”

To counter these labels, the silence that many believe surrounds the minority experience must be viewed as a fallacious rhetoric that fosters passivity and complacency. Currently, Asian-Americans are pigeonholed into the “model minority” stereotype. Though this sounds like a “better” stereotype than, for instance, the thug-African-American-youth, it is just as condescending and ignorant. What it overlooks, as stereotypes tend to do, is the individual experience of many Asian-Americans, who do not fit this model. In his introduction to *Asian American Literature*, Shawn Wong writes, “America celebrated and encouraged a cultural confusion and cultural silence by inventing a [model minority] stereotype in movies, radio, television, and print. . . . The price paid for this acceptance has been a cultural silence and the sacrifice of an Asian American sense of self” (3). The rhetoric of silence prescribed by history, canon, and media makers allows others to prescribe characteristics to individuals and groups that may not align with their lived realities.

The danger of silence lies in its ability to perpetuate cycles. Minatoya writes, “I have noticed that once we determine what sort of person somebody is, we often absorb no further information” (128). To discuss in admittedly restrictive binary terms, we are told by others that we, as marginalized people, should be silent. Perhaps unconsciously, we respond with silence. I am anything but silent. This was not always case. Notoriously shy as a child, my silence attracted other kids. It had something to do with my “exotic” looks, and with silence’s implied vulnerability. They treated me as a vulnerable, doll-like object, and I responded in kind—with a silence that consequently, depending on interpretation, sustained their misguided construction of me.

I have since reformed, learning that if silence is noiselessness and voicelessness, a humanless existence in a vacuum, then I want no part in it. I, like history, abhor a vacuum. If parallel logic stands, I abhor a silence. This distrust of silence manifests itself in both myself and my peers—be they students, women, other Asian Americans, or my white, teenaged sister—we, as you well know, rarely shut up. We are talking, debating, fighting, reconciling, communicating, writing, listening, thinking. The silence that surrounds our, and other marginalized people’s, existence is not reflected by the group. It is not ours. The silence is a myth, even the “silence” of the written word. The words, as another facet of language, speak. As Yamamoto says, “[Nothing] can dampen the pleasure of articulation, the sensual satisfaction of words on a page and, most of all, the sense that to speak is necessary—because the alternative is the silence that . . . cannot speak through fear, frustration, doubt, and the words of the other” (49–50).

Over the past couple of weeks, I have come to a tentative conclusion that there is no such thing as silence. This stems directly from the idea that complete silence terrifies me. It is, to push it to an extreme, an empty void signified by the absence of God. I think about Christ in the Garden of Gethsemane. For a brief but somehow infinite moment, God withdrew. I get anxious, just imagining this silence: stars frozen in place, wind shocked into nothing, sky heavy and closed. For that awful moment, God left His son horribly alone kneeling, crying, bleeding over soft juniper leaves. Even with God’s absence, there were still bones creaking at the joints, tears rolling down a pale cheek, blood pricking from pores. Silence does not exist. Why would you want it to?

Before I horrify you any more, let me clarify: I am not saying that *quiet* does not exist nor that quiet terrifies me; in fact, it is quite the opposite. To me, quiet means peace, calm, grace. It is entirely different from silence, which I connote (perhaps illogically) with totality and completeness, terms that scare me with their narrow rigidity.

As I watch a slideshow of memories flash uncensored through my head I can think only one thing: It's not the eyes. It's not anything. It's not a question of race or culture or prejudice, it's a question of being. I am Asian, I am Korean, I am a white, suburban girl. I am socially inept, confident, passive, easy to laugh, easy to cry, hard to hate, harder to love. I am loved. I am adopted. I am relaxed and witty and terrified. I am not America. I am not my friends. I am not so much different than you. I am ambitious, lazy, a walking inhibition, a free spirit. I am lonely. I am a living, breathing human paradox. Just like you. I am learning.

I am.

How many times has this story been told?

You asked me to speak. I wanted to respond. In writing, and thereby telling, my story, I am trying to find the "odd kind of music" that flows from the mundane (Minatoya 350). I am attracted to the fragmented style suggested by Minatoya's "bare undertones of a tune" (351). To me, life never reaches a totalized whole, though it might create a cohesive body. There always exists yet another expansion upon another fragment. Fortunately, when strung together these fragments achieve Minatoya's strange beauty that is sometimes dissonant, "random . . . or ragged" (351). When viewed in a larger context, they have the power to build into an "intoxicating" expression of life.

I think, like Eduardo Galeano eloquently wrote, that identity "is no museum piece sitting stock-still in a display case, but rather the endlessly astonishing synthesis of the contradictions of everyday life" (125). I believe in the beauty of the fragment, the incomplete. So much of music, poetry, and language deal with the quiet this implies, the space reserved for breathing. So much of life depends upon, not a red wheelbarrow,³ but the dialogue between presence and absence.

I am attracted to this fragmented style, because it is how I see my life: a series of fragmented experiences bound together by a series of spaces. Paradoxically, these spaces bridge and define my identity. I think about myself: Asian American, female, student, twenty-one. Not even at a quarter-life crisis and my heart has been fooled, soothed, and moved into love too many times. But I am realizing that growing up is beautiful and tragic and strange and good. That happiness exists because silence does not; that quiet, like speech, can be articulate and lovely. That I, like Michael Ondaatje, write to find "the shape of an unknown thing" (190); that words are needed to give form to the without-words moments. Most of all, I am realizing that speaking allows me to bridge gaps in order to form my identity.

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NOTES

1. *The Strangeness of Beauty* 90.
2. "Different Silences" 48.
3. Williams, William Carlos. "The Red Wheelbarrow," the *Collected Poems of William Carlos Williams*, Vol. 1: 1909–1939, New Direction Publishing Corp., 1986, p. 224.

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Confucian Creatures

by Sarah Cutler

From the tortoise shells used in ancient divination to the colorful camels of Tang tombs and from companionable oxen of the rice fields to singing birds in their cages, animals have been a significant part of Chinese culture. Perhaps most intriguing to the Western mind are the fanciful mythological animals of China adorning temple roofs, tomb walls, and traditional stories. Study of these creatures reveals a deep insight into Chinese culture for not only do the traditions about them indicate the ideas humans have about the animal world, but also the animals themselves are symbolic of various ideas maintained by the Chinese.

The animals in China, more than simple beasts of burden, sacrificial offerings, or future meals, “served as symbols and metaphors in the creation of social models of authority” (Sterckx 3). Because the Chinese have a strong sense of the didactic and because much of their literature and art focuses on the Confucian concepts of ideal government, Chinese mythological animals that survived in the arts were highly symbolic of these ideals. The Chinese attached “moral significance . . . to real or imagined characteristics of animals or plants” (Birrell 231). The use of animals to portray these Confucian concepts was a popular one because, with the legends and discussions surrounding them, “a great deal of textual information could be suggested by a simple image” of a mythical animal (Powers 237). The mythological creatures grew out of the legends surrounding them, and as they were used, the legends and symbolism of each animal became increasingly set until

ultimately an animal could not be used in art without implying what it represented (Sowerby 103).

All of the mythological animals held symbolic significance to the Chinese. Among these mythological animals, the four sacred animals—the tortoise, dragon, phoenix, and unicorn—are particularly interesting. They were “the superior members of the species they represented (hairy, feathered, scaly, and armored)” (Sterckx 153). These four sacred creatures, as recorded in the *Huainanzi*, were held by legend to be the ancestors of all common animals (Sterckx 84). In a Confucian society valuing ancestors and age, these ancient ancestors of the animals were also the finest examples of animal specimens. Not only were they physically outstanding creatures, but they were also more moral than their descendents, “being the most refined exemplars of their species” (Sterckx 153). By examining these animals and what they symbolized, many ideals are evident—especially the Confucian concept of government by morality and ritual rather than force and law.

The mythological tortoise, one of the four sacred animals, had “a pentachromatic texture, a snake’s head, and the neck of a dragon,” and according to the *Shiji* it “transform[ed] its colors according to the seasons (spring-azure, summer-yellow, autumn-white, winter-black)” (Sterckx 178). The tortoise lived a long life, much longer than a human’s, and so came to symbolize longevity. Longevity is one of the greatest pursuits of the Chinese, for they honor old age according to the Confucian standard of “precedence of old over young” (Dawson 89). Longevity also links the tortoise to Taoism, for which longevity is “one of the fundamental aspirations” (Birrell 241). Because of its great age, the honorable tortoise understood the matters of heaven and the past. This, too, originates in the Confucian promotion of education as the way to cultivate wisdom and, thus, virtue. This idea of a wise, aged tortoise is connected to the ancient tradition of using tortoise shells to divine answers to difficult questions. Thus, the mythical tortoise was a recurring symbol of longevity and wisdom, two of the most dearly held Chinese ideals.

The dragon may be the greatest of the Chinese mythological animals. So prominent was the dragon in Chinese culture that during Manchu times the Imperial flag depicted a dragon against a red background (Sowerby 104). The symbolism the dragon held was no secret: dragons were displayed everywhere as symbols of the imperial nobility, who wore them on robes or badges (Rawson 199). As opposed to the common dragon, however, the mighty five-clawed dragon was reserved as the personal symbol of the emperor, and dragons most accurately symbolized the emperor himself (Dorn 28). The dragon came to be associated exclusively with the emperor

in the Song dynasty, when emperors began using the dragon “as their special emblem and everything relating to imperial use—including clothing, banners and hangings, architectural décor, furnishings, and vessels—began to incorporate the dragon design” (Bates 24).

Dragon symbolism was associated with everything the emperor did. On his accession, the emperor “was said to ‘mount the Dragon Throne’” (Sowerby 104). The emperor’s clothes were embroidered with dragons, his palace was decorated with them, and their depiction was on everything he used (Sowerby 104). The emperor’s belongings were given dragon designations: he “sat on a ‘dragon throne,’ wore a ‘dragon robe,’ rode in a dragon cart,’ and slept in a dragon bed” (Zhao 84). Of all his symbols, the most prominent was the dragon: “Traditional Confucians consider the dragon the foremost of the four imperial symbols: Dragon, horse, gold, and jade” (Zhao 84).

The emperor, ideally the greatest of men, was well symbolized by the dragon, the greatest of animals. The dragon symbolized the ideal emperor’s ability to understand and sympathize with all peoples of his kingdom, for the dragon understood all animals: though descriptions of the anatomy of the dragon conflict, it is universally described as a composite creature. According to Wang Fu, “The head of a dragon was like that of a camel, with eyes like those of a devil, ears like those of an ox, and horns like those of a deer” (paraphrased in Bates 5). As described by others, the dragon had the “horns of a stag, head of a camel, eyes of a demon, coils of a serpent, scales of a fish, feet of a vulture, claws of a tiger, ears like a bull, and the viscera of a tortoise [with horns] as sensitive as the antennae of a snail” (Dorn 28). As the dragon incorporated so many animals into itself, it was truly the ruler of them all. Because the dragon’s body was made of parts of “all other animal species, and its habitat and forms of locomotion encompassed those of swimming, winged, and running creatures alike,” it was able to comprehend all the lesser animals (Sterckx 180). The dragon symbolized the emperor’s significance to all, for just as the emperor was the Son of Heaven and ruled not only his nation but also all under heaven, so the dragon ruled not just the scaly creatures but all animals. According to the *Shuo Wen* dictionary of A.D. 200, “of the 369 species of scaly reptiles, such as fishes, snakes, and lizards, the dragon is the chief” (paraphrased in Williams 132). It was “an all-encompassing animal that influence[d] all species” (Sterckx 85).

The dragon also symbolized the emperor’s close connection to natural phenomena. The moral emperor with the sanction of heaven brought bounteous crops and prosperity to his people, and the dragon, too, was connected to the fertility of the earth, for he had power over rain. The Chinese “be-

lieved that a dragon could move clouds around and bring rain. This belief was reinforced by the observation that the appearance of a dragon, of which there were many, was usually accompanied or followed by a great down-pour” (Bates 20). Just as the Confucian emperor ruled through benevolence, the dragon, too, was “a benevolent creature, the controller of rain, without which everything on earth must perish” (Sowerby 104). The dragon was powerful among animals because of his virtue, just as the ideal emperor maintained power because of his moral example. Chinese emperors’ choice of the dragon as their symbol clearly captured the greatest values of Confucian government.

The phoenix was also a prominent mythical creature. Though some have attempted to link the phoenix with the empress, “like the lion and the unicorn in English heraldry,” such an image of “a connubial association between the dragon and the phoenix is largely one developed by Western writers who have romantically and unrealistically assumed that there was affection and equality between a Chinese imperial husband and his wife” (Bates 55, 66). The phoenix is more consistently associated, not with the empress, but with the scholar: if the Confucian emperor found his symbol in the dragon, the Confucian scholar saw himself in the image of the phoenix. Knowing the importance of instructing through all aspects of life and art, no educated Chinese “viewing an image of phoenixes would not think for a moment that the form represented merely a splendid bird” (Powers 241). The phoenix was closely related to Confucian ideals. Even Confucius himself was called a phoenix, as in the *Han shi wai zhuan* (paraphrased in Powers 238).

So much was written about the Confucian values and their connection to the phoenix that as early as Han times the phoenix “could call to mind a rich body of literature bearing upon questions of personal conduct, official recruitment, and legitimate governance” (Powers 237). The phoenix “is said to have appeared about the time that Confucius was born” (Notices 251). It was “a swan at the front and a unicorn at the rear with the neck of a snake and the tail of a fish . . . having the texture of a dragon, body of a turtle, and the beak of a swallow that pecks like a chicken” (Sterckx 178). Richly symbolic, this bird was so far analyzed that even each part of its body corresponded to some Confucian value so that “the pattern on the head says ‘virtue,’ the pattern on the wings says ‘righteousness,’ the pattern on the back says ‘ritual deportment,’ the pattern on the breast says ‘benevolence,’ [and] the pattern on the belly says ‘trustworthiness’” (Sterckx 158). The embodiment of Confucian virtues, the phoenix was “purely social ideals packaged inside a bag of feathers” (Powers 241). So powerful a symbol

of Confucianism was the phoenix that “any image of phoenixes . . . would advertise the Confucian ideals of decorum, restraint, and wise rulership just as poignantly as a portrait of Confucius” (Powers 241).

Such a strong symbol of Confucian ideals could only represent the ideal Confucian: the scholar-official (Powers 242). Like the bird, whose every part symbolized a Confucian value, so the scholar sought to rectify every part of his life to the ideals of Confucianism. Just as the Confucian scholars traveled throughout the country, spreading their morality but having no home, so the phoenix “hover[ed] distractedly with nowhere to alight” while the “common birds all ha[d] their roosting-places” (Sterckx 186). Just as the phoenix could fly on any wind, the *Hanshu* explained, the scholar-official was prepared, because of his education and morality, to accept any situation (Sterckx 185). The most significant parallel between the scholar-official and the phoenix, however, was symbolized in the phoenix’s habit of appearing only when “virtue reigns in the land” (Wang Chong quoted in Powers 239). Scholars, too, were expected to appear in the land only when virtue prevailed, for Confucius had advised his followers: “When the Way prevails under Heaven, then show yourself; when it does not prevail, then hide” (Dawson 77). The phoenix was a symbol of the Confucian “scholar who serves a good ruler but retires in times of political trouble” (Powers 239).

Like the phoenix, the *qilin*, or Chinese unicorn, “appears to mankind only when a king of the highest benevolence sits upon the throne, or when a sage is about to be born. The unicorn envelopes itself with benevolence, and crowns itself with rectitude” (Notices 213). Also symbolic of the scholar-official, it was “a humane creature,” powerful because of its morality rather than its strength (Powers 250). It was so closely associated with Confucian ideals that some Chinese writers “go so far as to affirm that the mother of Confucius became pregnant of him by stepping into the footsteps of a unicorn, when she went to the hills to worship” (Notices 213). As described by the *Shuoyuan jiaozheng*, the unicorn had “the body of a deer, the tail of an ox, and a horn on its round crane” (Sterckx 178). Again, its anatomy symbolizes important Confucian principles. Though it had its horn for a weapon, the unicorn is described in the *Er Ya* as having the tip of its horn covered in flesh to show its dedication to civil leadership rather than militant rule (paraphrased in Powers 250). The unicorn has “all the good qualities which are to be found among all hairy animals: it is invested with a skin of the gayest colors, endowed with a disposition of the kindest feelings; and a discriminating mind, that enables it to know when benevolent kings or wise sages are to appear in the world” (Notices 212). The unicorn represented “wise administration”; its “predominant characteristic . . . is

its perfect goodwill, gentleness, and benevolence to all living creatures” (Williams 414). The scholar would have been pleased with his comparison to the unicorn, which according to legend, “brings blessings to a kingdom by its very presence, but it retires when cruelty is exhibited toward its own kind” (Powers 250).

In the same way, scholars refused to bless states in which tyrants oppressed their own kind: the moral and upright followers of ritual (Powers 250). Together, the phoenix and unicorn aptly portrayed the ideal scholar, for the unicorn, phoenix, and scholar all bore “witness to a ruler’s virtue by appearing at court or refusing to appear altogether” (Powers 226). Only in the presence of moral leadership would they gather to the government. Otherwise they would remain hidden away, the scholar in his study, and the animals in their haunts.

Appearances of mythical animals were closely associated with times of good government in China. Wang Chong (A.D. 27–97) wrote that because these animals are moral creatures, when “virtue reigns in the land, they appear; when virtue is lacking, they abscond . . . there being nothing but virtue to attract” them (quoted in Powers 239). Thus, when people “saw” a mythical animal, it was taken as evidence that the government was moral. In fact, as early as the Han Dynasty, the appearance of the mythical unicorn was “virtually synonymous with the arrival of a virtuous reign” (Sterckx 9). Because of this popular belief in mythical animals as omens, emperors throughout Chinese history reported sightings of the unicorn. For example, the founder of the Han Dynasty, Liu Bang, owed much of his success “to rumors about auspicious omens attached to his person” (Powers 227). In contrast, the sighting of a dangerous monster was held as a symbol of tyrannical government. Like natural disasters, these were taken as evidence that the government had lost its morality and therefore upset the balance with heaven and nature, causing havoc.

Just as Liu Bang’s regime came to power with the heralding of signs, many regimes lost their power through the evidence of evil omens. Omens of mythical animals were “a barometer of the dialectic of decline and prosperity in the history of humankind” (Sterckx 138). How does one explain the sightings of these mythical animals, or how much the people actually believed in such mythical animals is difficult to determine. However, they continued reporting them, perhaps motivated by the fact that sometimes “the throne would grant boons to the citizens and officials of that region [that reported a sighting of a mythical creature]—tax relief or gifts of wine and meat” (Powers 227). There may also be more sightings of these mythical animals recorded in history than actually occurred, for in the writing of

histories, “numinous animals had gradually become rhetorical devices used by the historiographer to mark out the alternating phases of prosperity and decline in the course of a dynastic history” (Sterckx 10).

Over time, the role of these mythical animal symbols was somewhat inverted. Rather than observing a corrupt government and then noting the signs of unusual natural occurrences as further evidence of heaven’s withdrawal, people began to observe unusual appearances and then look for fault in the government that could cause such an unnatural incident. The signs of mythical animals became not only a symbol of Heaven’s sanction or warning, but also “an integral part of political action” (Powers 226). In this environment, politicians and citizens alike used sightings of these creatures as justification rather than ratification for their actions.

No matter their effect on the politics of Chinese life, the mythical animals of China profoundly represent the Confucian belief that human morality had an impact on the entire universe. When men were righteous, the weather would also be benevolent, the animals would follow ritual, and the sacred animals would appear. These mythical animals would gather “in response to human goodness because nature is inherently moral” (Powers 242). Confucius taught that human behavior is integral to the workings of nature and so “human cultivation of virtue would cause animals to behave in a moral way” (Sterckx 124). The Son of Heaven, the Dragon ruler, if he followed Confucius’ teachings of ritual, propriety, and humaneness, demonstrating “virtuous human conduct and exemplary rulership exerted a transformatory influence in the animal world and the cosmos as a whole” (Sterckx 137).

The mythical animals of China have maintained an important place in Chinese culture, led by the tortoise symbolizing wisdom and longevity, the powerful dragon symbolizing the emperor, and the phoenix and unicorn symbolizing the scholar-officials. Together they represent the Confucian ideals of human morality and their presence has served to illuminate the Chinese understanding of their own government.

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Kim Chi-ha's Poetry of Yesterday and Today

by Gerrit van Dyk

In the 1970s, the Korean poet Kim Chi-ha was perhaps the most internationally well known Korean artist. During this time, Kim wrote many poems speaking out against the Park Chung Hee regime which began with Park's coup in 1961. One of Kim's most famous works, "The Five Bandits" (*The Golden-Crowned Jesus and Other Writings*) was so politically charged that it began a series of incarcerations of the poet on allegations of communist sympathies. Many international organizations and dignitaries defended Kim and called on Park to release the poet from prison. After Park's death, Kim was released, and the democratic society Kim promoted began to be realized. Today, South Korea enjoys many freedoms that were unheard of in the 60s and 70s.

After his release, Kim continued to produce poetry, but he was no longer read as much outside of Korea as he was during his imprisonment; internationally, scholarship about him suffered. Despite his drop in international popularity, Kim did not abandon his political and social message. Instead of directing his verses to his homeland of South Korea, his recent works are more universal in content. When read out of context, Kim's early work can seem radically different from his later work. After reading some of his early works and then some of his recent poetry, it would be easy to imagine each set of works had been written by two different poets; however, Kim's messages today and yesterday are not as disconnected as they may seem. I argue that Kim Chi-ha's poetry is as useful a tool in understanding East

Asian culture today, as it was in the 70s, particularly with regard to Korea. This paper will discuss Kim Chi-ha, the Korean poet, and the evolution of his aesthetic.

Early Poetry: The Sword

Because of his disappointment in how South Korean governments oppressed the common people, Kim Chi-ha concentrated his literary work on Korean socio-political satire and criticism. Born in Cholla Province in early 1941, Kim grew up during the Korean War and the subsequent government under Rhee Seung-man. Rhee used his political power to get reelected four times, despite charges of corruption. After his last unfair reelection, nationwide student protesting led to Rhee's voluntary resignation in 1960, thereby ending his rule of over a decade.

With sincere hope that a new age of democracy would arise, many, including Kim, were shocked when Major General Park Chung Hee took over the government in 1961. Jaded and embittered, Kim wrote his most biting poems and satires during the next decade. In 1974, Park issued the Emergency Decrees, effectively banning all negative press against the government. Accused of being a communist, Kim was arrested and tortured for his condemnation of the government. He was not released until after Park was assassinated in October of 1979 by Park's own head of the Korean CIA, Kim Chae-gyu.

At the time of Kim Chi-ha's imprisonment by the Park government, his poetry was widely published and a sort of "Political Kim Chi-ha" scholarship developed in which critics focused on his satirical style. Kim wrote his most politically charged work during this time, but he did so for the benefit of the Korean people—hoping his works would be a catalyst for change. Internationally, his work became a window into Asian and Korean culture. In Kim's socio-political allegory for the stage, *Golden-Crowned Jesus (The Golden-Crowned Jesus and Other Works)*, Kim explores the pains of the impoverished and downtrodden, or the *minjung*, and the hypocrisy of the wealthy self-proclaimed Christians. The aforementioned "The Five Bandits" is nothing more than a satire of Park's government.

One of Kim's most widely anthologized poems, "The Story of a Sound," follows a peasant, a member of the same *minjung* class, named Ando to the city where he is overwhelmed by the fast pace of modernity and, in a fit of frustration, vents his feelings vocally only to be arrested by the corrupt government. Tried, condemned, and mutilated, Ando monotonously slams his torso against the bars of his prison day in and day out. The sound of Ando's pounding body is like a gadfly, reminding the officials who sentenced him of their own hypocrisies.

These works promoted the rise of Kim Chi-ha scholarship in the 70s and early 80s. One critic wrote of his political activism, “[Kim Chi-ha] has wrought his anguish into shaped cries that hang in the air as if they were palpable iron, rusted with blood, and remain before our eyes to shame us” (*The Middle Hour* viii). Kim’s use of vulgar and base things grips his readers and forces them to see the “shame” of modernization and political oppression not only in Korea specifically but also in the world.

Ko Won, one of the critics who wrote of Kim in the 70s, stated that his poetry at that time was filled with “the imageries of blood, of fire and burning, of the sword (or blade), and the gun” (21). The poem “Seoul” (McCann 73) supports Ko’s reading. Seoul, the capital of South Korea, symbolizes the center of all that is wrong with the country:

Swamp, accursed capital:
 your skies are filled where that sword stands.
 At last to defeat you, to defeat you, Seoul,
 I have offered up my life
 with no part of it kept back
 to your blade. (Translated by David R. McCann)

The imagery of the sword and sacrifice forms a malediction which not only defames the city but simultaneously promotes the speaker. Kang Sug-won, another Kim scholar, stated that the last lines represent “the sacrifice of the prophet who must show us the way” (6). Kim, a Catholic, uses the violent imagery to elevate his status to poet-prophet who is willing to sacrifice everything for the benefit of the minjung and his country.

In another poem about the capital, “The Road to Seoul,” published in his book of poetry, *Yellow Earth* (1970), Kim uses the symbol of prostitution to discuss the crisis of sacrificing freedom for the sake of modernization and economic growth. The concluding stanza reads:

I’m going.
 Don’t cry—I’m going
 Over those dried-up hills even the heavens worry about
 Down the dirt clod road to Seoul.
 I’m going to sell my body.¹

Although Kim is primarily a free verse writer, he employs a particular form when it suits him. “The Road to Seoul” is such an occasion. David R. McCann, a Kim critic and translator, wrote that the poem uses “the form and refrain of a folk song popular during the early part of [the twentieth] century, when Korea faced both the West and Japan” (*The Middle Hour* 75). This type of folk song is called a *p’ansori*, a genre that questioned con-

temporary ideals of Confucian virtue (*The Middle Hour* 75). Again, Kim is working in a tradition; he has evoked a genre in Korean fiction exemplified by such works as Yi Sang's "Wings" (1936) or Kim Dong-in's "Potatoes (1925)." Each story depicts the degradation of morals brought on through the acceptance of Japanese occupation, particularly through the use of prostitution as a motif. "The Road to Seoul" likewise questions the justification of economic progress for loss of culture and freedoms.

Between 1910 and 1945, in what later became known as the Japanese Period, Japan enacted a series of laws that affected Korea's culture and politics. Naming Korea a military protectorate in 1910, Japan took over the military affairs of the Korean Peninsula, effectively annexing Korea. Japan's cultural influence increased over the next three decades bringing Western culture and luxuries into Korea. Some Koreans embraced the new way of life and prosperity; others were afraid that the Japanese would erase Korean culture. Authors like Yi Sang and Kim Dong-in were among the latter. They wrote short fiction directed at the Korean populace in order to educate them.

These stories attempted to awaken readers to the Japanese agenda which eventually banned the use of the Korean language in 1937 and forced Koreans to assume Japanese names. Drawing on the prostitution allegory of the 30s, Kim Chi-ha contemporizes his message by making the place of atrocity Seoul, the capital of Park's regime in 1970, instead of Japan. The speaker of "The Road to Seoul" is representative of the *minjung*, telling loved ones that prostitution is the only solution to poverty and social marginalization. Kim uses the poem ironically to condemn the politics of Park Chung Hee who employed the phrase "Economy now, democracy later" (Kim Djun kil 168).

Elaborating on the Korean masses, or *minjung*, Kim Chi-ha wrote the following in a famous letter sent to the public from prison:

I want to identify with the oppressed, the exploited, the troubled, and the despised. I want my love to be dedicated, passionate and manifested in practical ways. This is the totality of my self-imposed task for humanity, the alpha and omega of my intellectual search. I hope my odyssey will be understood as a love for humankind (18).

Lest anyone examine Kim's political writings and label him a misanthrope, Kim clarified his motive behind his condemnation of Western modernization and government oppression—to show "love for humankind." Kim believed that eventually "oppression itself could be ended by the salvation of *both* the oppressor and the oppressed" (19). Kim wrote his satires to glorify the oppressed *minjung*, but also to promote positive change in their oppressors as well.

Throughout his imprisonment, Kim continued to associate himself with this personal “love for humankind.” When he was liberated, this “love for humankind” continued to be an intimate part of his poetic style even though he altered his subject matter.

Recent Poetry: The Heart

After he was released from prison, Kim’s poetry began to change. In a 1998 article in the *Daily Yomiuri*, a Japanese newspaper, he discussed the reasons behind this change. “South Korea has been democratized to a certain extent,” he said, “and freedom of the press is guaranteed now. Thus, there is no need to be absorbed in the kind of radical resistance that I pursued in my poetry before” (3).

Since Korea had begun to enjoy democratic freedoms, Kim reevaluated his task as a poet. “How do I realize the cosmological life within me?” he asked himself, “How do the cosmos within me and the cosmos within others spiritually meet with one another? How can I spiritually meet with grass and water?” (295). Searching for a universal truth through the cosmos, Kim’s poetry gradually shifted from national politics to global connectivity. Instead of “blood, fire and the sword,” Kim’s poetry of the last two decades focuses more on life, nature, and humanity. In a dialogue he held with Japanese writer, Oe Kenzaburo, Kim said:

What today’s world demands is to find a new order that will interconnect [...] human beings and nature, human beings and society, and human beings in conflicts—between communities and between nations, as well as between each other (304–5).

Moreover, in his analysis of Neo-Confucianism Kim stated that the East Asian ideology “speaks of a unified self connected to heaven and earth” (297). Connection could be a key word to describe Kim’s poetry today, but “human beings” are still a fundamental part of that connection. Kim has not abandoned his “love for humankind.” Kim’s poetic aesthetic simply migrated from political agitation for the benefit of “humankind” to spiritual connection.

In his poem, “A Memory,” Kim illustrated this idea of connection between two people:

Once I touched her,
I can never forget
Her white skin.
Her skin is gone,
But the white hue still lingers in the air.

It leads me to mountains,
To rivers blazing in the sun
And to fields.

Finally it rests
In my heart

And burns

The night white. (Translated by Song Song-min)

The woman so affects the narrator that her “white hue still lingers in the air” after she is gone. The experience “leads” the narrator to explore other beauties in the world (the natural landscape), but in the end it is the poet’s heart that keeps her memory alive. The poem shows how the life of a person can be influenced by another. Not only does this agree with Kim’s personal manifesto to show “love for humankind,” but it also reflects his later theory of connection. The energy of the affectation can only be related to the sublime: great mountains and “rivers blazing in the sun,” suggesting that connection with another human being is an organic relationship and recalling the Neo-Confucian link between “the unified self to heaven and earth.” This relationship of a human being connecting to the greater environment and other living things also shows Kim’s concept of “the cosmos within [the speaker] and the cosmos within others meet[ing] with other.”

In “Gaps,” a poem published in another book of poetry, *Heart’s Hardship* (1994), Kim further explored the relationship between the outside world and “love for humankind”:

A chilling spring wind blows
through the empty gaps
between apartments.

In the heart of each person
in each apartment
the bud of a flower sprouts.

Spring comes
through the empty gaps
because of those poor trapped souls.

People are
Gaps.

New things always
come from gaps.

Here again is the mention of the human heart and its relationship to the natural world. Spring comes to the “poor trapped souls” in the world of endless concrete. Yet in the heart of each person is a flower bud, a symbol of new life and rejuvenation. The potentiality for “new things” to grow is not found in the spring wind that is “chilling” and uninviting, but through the people themselves. “People are / Gaps / New things always / come from gaps.” The vacuum in each person is a catalyst for the creation of “new things,” new ideas, new concepts, and desires.

Kim’s idea of interconnection and the image of a gap may seem to be self-contradictory at first. However, the poet offers a clarification through his definition of the modern Western literary movement of Deconstructionism. Kim describes Deconstructionism as:

the process of dismantling, which keeps falling into nihilism without being able to offer alternatives. [. . .] the rich legacy of East Asia suggests a possibility of *connecting* life and text even as they leave a big hole in life or text—this is a kind of East Asian aesthetic notion of empty space—and as such, provide an open space (308, emphasis added).

Unlike Western thought, Kim maintains that in an East Asian context the gap is not destructive and alienating. The gaps represented by humans emphasize potential rather than negation. Kim’s gaps are “open space,” open for new possibilities and growth.

This same idea can also be found in “Nothing,” another poem from *Heart’s Hardship* (1994):

Out of emptiness everything stirs.

Out of hunger

I

loved you.

The grass and the insects of the earth,
the neighborhood streets,
the sun, moon, stars and clouds, everything—
Everything is dying on this bright day.

A new love, a celestial love
buds like the wind
inside me
inside the void.

I see it
blush.

Out of emptiness
Out of emptiness everything stirs.

The seeming forlorn image of “emptiness” does not focus attention on the absence itself, but what is produced in it. “Everything stirs” from emptiness; it is from nothing that all things begin. As in “Memory,” the speaker discusses a grandiose global environment first then reduces the subject of the poem to conclude with the human heart, returning to Kim’s “love for humankind.” The cosmological imagery of universal death, “everything, / Everything is dying,” contrasts with the miniscule bud in the heart of the speaker which produces “a new love” and new life. Not even death can prevent rebirth in the heart of a human being.

Another poem, “Magnolia,” from Kim’s *Look Up to the Starfield* (1989), reinforces this same model of death and rebirth in human thought and its connection “to heaven and earth”:

When I open my eyes
I breathe my life away
with the jet-black tree stump.
A dazzling magnolia
from somewhere in my body
dimly comes the sting of sprouting life
that dazzling, dazzling magnolia.

Death, signified by the form of a tree stump, does not defeat the speaker, rather, new life is produced in her heart. This ecological poem endorses Kim’s notion of East Asian thought which contrasts with Western modernization. Speaking of the Information Age and Western modernity, Kim has said,

Today, information technology has developed as a kind of extension of human consciousness, and human beings are engulfed by machines and physical forces. Today, human beings find it difficult to discover their self-identity and have lost the ability to communicate with each other (297).

Technology, “machines and physical forces” have dulled the senses of humanity, Kim tells us. “In this way,” Kim continues, “the present civilization created by Western modernity has arrived at a very serious crisis” (297). Because of his “love for humankind,” Kim alerts his readers to this concern through his poetry. Kim has been referred to as an Ecopoet, a poet concerned with environmental issues, because of poems like “Magnolia.” His poetry can be read in this way, because he is writing to an audience he hopes will be “connected to heaven and earth,” rather than alienated from

the “cosmos.” An idea he believes can be found in *Tonghak*, or Eastern Learning, returning to East Asian thought (297).

The beginning of Kim Chi-ha’s career propelled the poet into the limelight of political turmoil and controversy. As the grievances of the time were slowly resolved, Kim’s aesthetic changed with it. His style changed from satire and national lamentation to self-exploration and individual spirituality. Looking at Kim’s early work and comparing it to his more recent work can be a surprise. However, his early motivation, his “love for humankind,” can still be found throughout his new work. To detach the Kim Chi-ha of today from that of yesterday would be to do a disservice to the poet.

After the early 80s, Kim left the international limelight. Since then, very little has been written about the poet in international arenas. In the 70s, people from around the globe looked to him as a voice for democracy and freedom in Korea and Asia in general, especially after the Korean and Vietnam Wars. Speaking of Asian culture, Kim has said:

When we view the long history of Northeast Asian culture, there are many pragmatic and materialistic elements. But what occupies the quintessential part of Northeast Asian culture is still a discovery of the universe as a spiritual order, a discovery of the human being as a kind of spiritual network, and other such possibilities (301).

Kim explored this spiritual universe in his poetry of yesterday and today, promoting East Asian thought. Today his work can still be valuable to an international readership. Kim’s current poetry shows how modern East Asian theory can transfer into art. With his use of Neo-Confucianism, *Tonghak*, and other East Asian theories, Kim Chi-ha is still a useful poet to examine concerning Asian literature and Korean literature.

NOTE

1. Unless otherwise attributed, translations are my own.

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Valmiki and Hesse: *Maya* Through the Ages

by Kevin Blankinship

Introduction

The Vedic poet Valmiki could hardly have imagined that, with his discovery of *shloka*, or poetic meter, and the subsequent advent of literature as a separate aesthetic genre, Hindu notions of reality would lend expression of outrage to war-weary Germans thousands of years later. Or perhaps he did: Brahma's benediction provided that, "so long as the mountains and rivers . . . stay on the face of the earth / So long will the story of Rama endure / So long will your fame remain."¹

This apt prologue to the classical Indian epic *Ramayana* sets a context for the discovery of self, a *Bildungsroman* long before the term existed. The tale tells of Rama, a noble prince who exemplifies the Hindu ideal of *dharma*, or virtue untarnished by earthly illusion (*maya*). His destiny is to defeat Ravana, the Demon King and incarnation of *adhharma*, or that which is immoral.

In the course of the epic, the hero prince wrestles with his identity. Not only must Rama defeat evil to comply with destiny, he must also become aware of his true nature: avatar of Vishnu, model of *dharma*, savior of all from Ravana, and the illusion of carnal reality, or *maya*. This paper will focus on the latter, which, in addition to being a basic tenet of Hindu faith, Valmiki uses throughout the *Ramayana* as a literary device. Coupled with sight as a metonymical construct, *maya* becomes the force that blinds and binds alike, obfuscating and separating knower from the known; Rama

must overcome this purely mental barrier in order to realize that “nothing is forever except [him]self.”² Through a hyperbolic portrayal of *maya* as a physical manifestation of supernatural power in malevolent characters such as Indrajit and Ravana, Valmiki symbolically asserts the spiritual quest for the moment of enlightenment (*moksha*)³ where Rama, in overcoming these characters, realizes that he is inseparable from the entire universe.

Enter Germany over two thousand years later. The rise of Nazism in the mid-1930s required painful soul searching on the part of all thoughtful Germans. Withdrawn intellectuals in particular came to represent high culture’s inability to stem the tide of war. Writers like Thomas Mann and Hermann Hesse sought out appropriate metaphors for their disdain of the Third Reich and scholarly impotence to halt its march, and Hesse for one seems to have found it in Hindu concepts of reality and illusion. What Valmiki didn’t anticipate was a largely negative interpretation of traditional Hindu *moksha* (enlightenment) on the part of Hesse. His *Glass Bead Game* criticizes the withdrawn absolutism of *moksha* and Nazi Germany alike, through a reinterpretation of *maya*.

Maleficent *Maya*: Illusion and Reality in the *Valmiki Ramayana*

Valmiki’s narration of Rama’s adventures makes very clear the barriers between good and evil. The opening scenes portray King Dasaratha’s love for his firstborn son Rama, the incarnation of Vishnu, and with good reason: “Whatever [Rama] did, he ennobled it by how he did it. Rama’s way was noble.”⁴ His is the way of *dharma*, the precedence of moral law over ostensible reality. Indeed, all of King Dasaratha’s sons exemplify *dharma* in accordance with traditional Hindu ideals such as filial piety, duty, and social decorum. In response to Kaikeyi’s demand for his exile, Rama complies with deference befitting his nobility.⁵ And at the end of the *Ramayana*, as Sita retreats (in one version of the tale) to the earth’s center to leave Rama alone for the remainder of his mortal existence, Rama recognizes that *dharma* has been fulfilled, and he will once again reunite with his queen in Brahma.⁶

In contrast, the demonic *rakshasas* embody moral equivocation and shiftiness. In seeking out Rama, the sage Viswamitra laments, “The Night-Wanderers strut and swagger and pull apart *Dharma*.”⁷ Incompleteness, carnality, and darkness form their misshapen realm, which has been throughout history a “thorn in the world’s side.”⁸ Rakshasa king Ravana—“blacker than a heap of soot and fit to horrify the Universe”⁹—embodies this deception and thus is a foil to Rama’s unswerving righteousness and *Dharma*. He takes the daughter of *Maya* himself to wife, an interesting metaphor in the

Ramayana's portrayal of maya, since the narration emphasizes Ravana's intimate relationship (and indeed that of all the dark forces) with maya as a familial bond.¹⁰ Ravana passes this on to his son Indrajit, who inherits the ability to manipulate illusion from the rain god Indra; this fact plays a key role in portraying maya later in the story.

In Hinduism, maya generally has a negative connotation. The term itself is actually composed of two separate words: "ma," meaning "not," and "ya," meaning "which," together becoming "that which is not."¹¹ Maya is largely responsible for the karmic separation of the *atman* (true, eternal, unified Self) from the *jivatman* (perceived, egoistic self).¹² It also distracts the soul from obtaining moksha, a term synonymous to *nirvana* in Buddhism: the basic meaning is one of enlightenment or discovery of true Self, the deeper connotation being liberation from earthly ignorance.¹³ Radhakrishnan describes it as "the mental deformity of the finite self that disintegrates the divine into a thousand different fragments."¹⁴ Ultimate reality, thus, consists of this finite self being subsumed by Brahma.

Moreover, in addition to maya as a physical force able to be manipulated like magical powers, Hinduism also suggests that it blinds because it comes from within. In this way, maya acts as a psychological inability to deal with the abstract and universal nature of things. Our perception, thus, gives power to maya, which exerts no more real force than any other subjective thought upon a person. "It is in this sense that illusion is unreal . . . [it] is just a mind blockage, a refusal to see reality."¹⁵ In the *Ramayana*, a flashback to the war in Heaven demonstrates this vividly: Brahma frees Indra from the prison of Indrajit's allusion simply by sending the thought "*I am free*—and so annihilate[s] the jail walls."¹⁶

In the *Ramayana*, maya appears throughout as the rakshasa tool to obfuscate and mock dharma (virtue). One of the most significant of these instances comes during Rama's forest exile with Sita and Lakshmana; the latter is left to guard Sita while Rama goes to capture a golden deer which "seems to shift and change around the edges."¹⁷ When Rama pierces the deer with one of his arrows, he discovers it to be a rakshasa, who then changes its voice to sound like Rama and lets out a scream, which Sita and Lakshmana hear. Sita insists upon Lakshmana's going and rescuing Rama from perceived danger. Sita remains alone, allowing Ravana to capture her (using maya again, he disguises himself as a holy man, or *brahman*) and take her to Lanka. This episode is a classic example of maya and its diversionary properties; it distracts from the true, undifferentiating nature of ultimate reality, or *neti neti* ("not this, not this").¹⁸ The golden deer episode represents, through a physical manifestation of maya, the struggle between

dharma and adharma, virtue and vice, as propagated by the illusion of sensory reality.

Through his capacity to harness maya as a supernatural power capable of physically manifesting false visions and illusions, Indrajit figures as a key player in the war between Rama and Ravana. Near the end of the war, Indrajit drives his chariot out over Rama's armies and, invisible to their sight, commences the wholesale slaughter of bears, monkeys, and men alike. He hews down Rama, a surprising yet momentary twist on the expected outcome. This temporary defeat represents the transience of maya, in that Rama is destined to win and Ravana to fail. The battle between Lakshmana and Indrajit later in the tale illustrates this same point: though Indrajit (illusion and adharma) had his victory on the battlefield, Lakshmana (dharma) comes off conqueror on the battlefield.

Through these and other instances of hyperbole and physical blindness, Valmiki weaves an unflattering tapestry of maya since it distracts from the ultimate spirit of Brahma. Maya pulls the atman further away from its true place in ultimate reality and distracts it from attaining moksha, or liberation. He also depicts it as being closely associated with adharma, or that which goes against traditional Hindu concepts of virtue, and is thus a moral barrier to obtaining enlightenment. Rama's quest, then, involves overcoming maya by destroying its most avid representative, Ravana, and restoring dharma to the Universe.

Hesse's Maya: Felling the Ivory Tower

Germany did not enjoy the long history as a sovereign nation had by other western European political entities such as England and France. Indeed, Germanic nation-states remained united primarily by a common language up until 1872, when Europe began to see the spread of Romanticism and a newfound interest in local cultural heritage. This late nineteenth-century period in Germany also exhibits an explosion of interest in foreign cultures as germane to Occidental practices. Intellectuals became fascinated with Eastern culture and, especially, India.

A few scholars assert a Teutonic thirst for exotic culture even further back in history: Friedrich Wilhelm points to Eastern influence as far back as Middle High German literature, where utopic references to India and Greece appear in such works as "Herzog Ernst" and the Alexander novel.¹⁹ Late eighteenth-century Germany owes much of its renewed interest in Classical Vedic culture to Johann Gottfried Herder, whose work on the *Shakuntala* influenced such German literati as Goethe, Heine, and the Schlegels.²⁰ Friedrich Schlegel (1772–1829) in particular had a tremendous

influence on the German view of India, which he regarded as the “cradle of mankind.”²¹ His groundbreaking *Über die Sprache und Weisheit der Indier* (*On the Language and Wisdom of India*) affirmed above all else the need to explore other cultures as relevant to one’s own.²² Indeed German literary figures would, 140 years after Schlegel, use this shared cultural knowledge to express disgust and contempt for war, Nazism, and intellectual apathy.

Throughout the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, German Indology was primarily a political and linguistic endeavor. Rather than following a Schlegelian model of religious, philosophical, and aesthetic comparison, post-Romantic scholars such as Haug, Geldner, and others undertake analyses of Indian castes and patriarchy, Sanskrit grammar, comparative linguistics, and so on. A notable exception to this general trend is German Indologist and mythologist Heinrich Zimmer. Thomas Mann names Zimmer’s work *Maya* as a source of inspiration for *Die vertauschten Köpfe*, “The Transposed Heads,” Mann’s short story version of the *Ramayana*.²³ Zimmer’s work on Indian mythology continues to inspire future German literati. The philosophically and spiritually minded German Indological tradition thus continues into the mid-twentieth century, indebted to the work of nineteenth-century linguists but also aware of the need for further reinterpretation.

The rise and fall of the Third Reich from 1933–45 proved to many German intellectuals the need to overhaul their national identity. Bertolt Brecht arguably composed his best plays in response to Nazism. Mann, among others, launched vociferous attacks against the Nazi Regime: in addition to his various articles, essays, and lectures denouncing the Third Reich, he encouraged the working class struggle against Nazism in his 1930 public address in Berlin, “An Appeal to Reason.” Many of his novels, notably *Buddenbrooks*, were burned by the Nazis.²⁴ Hesse also advocated the anti-Nazi struggle, alienating friends and close relatives with his vehement denunciation of the party. The German press became especially incensed with Hesse’s insistence on reviewing the works of Jewish authors, while simultaneously calling attention to immoral Protestant and Catholic writers.²⁵ As one journalist noted, “Hermann Hesse is taking over the traditional role of Jewish literary criticism of yesterday. To oblige to the Jew and the Bolsheviks of culture, he is helping to spread notions abroad that are false and damaging to his fatherland.”²⁶

Interestingly, Hesse maintained throughout his career that an artist has no role in politics; rather, he asserted, intellectuals were to preserve ideals rather than reform society, to act not as policymakers “but [as a cultural] conscience.”²⁷ As the narrator of the *Glass Bead Game* indicates concerning the quasi-monastic Castalian order, “We Castalians, though very civilized and

quite clever people, are not suited to rule. . . . We are the constant checkers of all alphabets, modes of calculation and methods.”²⁸ Hesse scholars such as Theodore Ziolkowski, Joseph Mileck, and others also affirm that his fascination with the East was always primarily aesthetic, rather than philosophical and spiritual. Mileck does concede that it was during his “Rousseau-esque experiment” in Gaienhofen that Hesse began to give up his idealistic notions of Hindu asceticism. Having moved with his wife from the city to the quaint German countryside by Lake Constance, Hesse looked forward to the isolation from society he saw promised by Gaienhofen’s gentle verdure.

However, the solitude served primarily to worsen Hesse’s spirits, if anything. Disenchanted with the prospects of complete detachment from society, “India’s spirit eluded him[;] he found no cradle paradise.”²⁹ He ultimately decided that introspection and separation from people go only so far, and human interaction complements meditation. On into his late career, Hesse, despite an outright refusal to dabble in any arena not dealing with art, kept in touch with political affairs and continued as a prolific public intellectual, maintaining his contacts with the socio-political world and voicing his concerns over European politics in numerous articles and correspondences.³⁰ A curious discrepancy pervades the modern portrait of Hesse: his desire to abstain from socio-political issues on the one hand, and a need to take part in such outward-reaching activities on the other.

The answer to this dilemma begins with Hesse’s portrayal of Hinduism and especially maya in the *Glass Bead Game*. In the novel, central character Josef Knecht is chosen at a young age to join Castalia, a state-maintained order of cloistered scholars dedicated entirely to the formalist study of virtually every academic discipline. Their goal as members of the order is to synthesize these disciplines according to the grammar of the glass bead game, an intellectual exercise originating from abacus-esque tools used to study individual subjects. Scholars eventually synthesized these devices into one unit (itself long since discarded) to develop the final universal language. For a time, Castalian officials appoint Knecht as defender of the order against Plinio Designori, an honorary Castalian and outspoken champion of service to real people over the Castalian ideal of transcendent study.

With time, Knecht begins to see Plinio’s point. The narrative makes this point most clear during Knecht’s diplomatic mission to the Benedictine monastery of Pater Jacobus. There, Knecht sees that Castalia’s lack of historical understanding and service to humanity will be its downfall:

Now as regards our present-day spiritual arrogance, we stand towards world history . . . in almost the same position as the ascetics and er-

emites of early Christianity stood towards the world stage. History seems to us a battleground of urge and fashion . . . ravages and wars . . . and we forget all too easily that this is only one of its many aspects. We forget, above all, that we ourselves are a fragment of history, something that has become and something that is doomed to die out should it lose the capacity for further progress and transformation.³¹

In other words, introspection and abstract reality are not the end but the means. They must complement an ideal of outreach and service, or else succumb to obsolescence. In the end, Knecht defects from Castalia and its hermetic isolation, resigning from his post as Magister Ludi (the highest attainable position in the Castalian hierarchy) and becoming a private tutor to Tito, Plinio's son.

Hesse portrays maya in the *Glass Bead Game* as a foil to the dangers of excessive abstraction and as a representation of the need to serve. The most obvious occurrence of maya in the novel lies outside the main narration, appearing in Josef Knecht's three "Lives," which the narrator releases "posthumous[ly]."³² Required by the Castalian order of all its members, these lives are a meditative exercise and represent introspection about life and self: Castalians must write their thoughts from the perspective of a central character, whose "life" should reflect "certain potentialities [the student] feels to be inherent in himself."³³ According to the narration, Knecht wrote his "Lives" before rejecting and leaving Castalia. This presents the reader with a challenge, being that these lives in no way anticipate Knecht's philosophical change. True, they focus on service as an ideal; but as Ziolkowski points out, the service is "specifically isolated from the realm of life and consecrated to the eternal spirit."³⁴

Knecht's third "Life," the "Indian Life" of Dasa, especially embodies this principle. Dasa, a prince bent on indulging in earthly delights, has an intimate connection to the *Ramayana*, as told in the opening frame story of the "Life":

When Vishnu, or rather in his avatar as Rama, fought his savage battles with the prince of demons, one of his parts took on human shape and thus entered the cycle of forms once more. His name was Ravana and he lived as a warlike prince by the Great Ganges. Ravana had a son named Dasa.³⁵

Here we see the lineage of maya and of the hero prince of "Indian Life." Ravana, the demon bent on destruction and whom Rama must defeat, begets Dasa, a son who attains liberation (moksha) from the machinations of his very father. Prince Dasa eventually discovers his carnal exploits are

but “Maya! Maya!,”³⁶ the old veil of dissonance and discord, and his earthly ties must therefore be rent. The “Life” ends with Dasa’s enlightenment and devotion to spiritual aestheticism as he lives out the rest of his days meditating in the forest with his yoga master. Withdrawal from empirical reality and dedication to the eternal spirit, concepts from Hinduism eventually inherited by Buddhism, is shown here by Hesse as appealing to the novel’s hero, Josef Knecht.

Why the divergence between this “Life,” written by Knecht, and Knecht’s ultimate rejection of an isolated life? Ziolkowski explains that Hesse wrote the “Lives” prior to his idea of Knecht’s leaving Castalia, and in accordance with an entirely different plan for the narrative. Even then, the “Lives” still occupy a logical niche in the organic progress of the novel: “they represent young Knecht’s faith in the realm of the spirit and in the ideal of service to the hierarchy, in which the personality of the individual is effaced and subjugated to the needs of the whole.”³⁷ The latter echoes Hindu notions of enlightenment (moksha): the absorption of self by universal reality, or Brahma. Dasa’s moksha is nothing more than a literary manifestation of Knecht’s youthful naivete.

By the end of the novel, Knecht rejects this blind devotion to abstract reality. Now, Knecht says, it is the enlightened ones who cannot see:

If we [Castalians] examine our real feelings, most of us would have to admit that we don’t regard the welfare of the world, the preservation of intellectual honesty and purity outside as well as inside our tidy Province, as the chief thing. In fact, it is not at all important to us. . . . We must no longer rely on a constant influx of the best from the schools outside to help maintain our Castalia. More and more, we must recognize the humble, highly responsible service to the secular schools as the chief and most honorable part of our mission.³⁸

Castalia and its inbred aestheticism thus become maya for Hesse, who repudiates pure intellectualism in favor of the “realm of life.” For this reason, Knecht leaves Castalia and begins tutoring Tito, the otherwise menial task of private tutelage taking front seat to futile introspection. In light of Josef Knecht’s ultimate decision, Hesse shows that the main character of Knecht’s “Indian Life,” Prince Dasa, is still his father’s son: blind to reality, not by attachment to the carnal and illusory but through detachment from human relationships. Knecht, thus, rejects the idealism he himself expressed through Dasa as a Castalian initiate.

Despite Hesse’s deliberate revision of the text to generalize and move away from things particular to Germany, some assert that an implicit

criticism of the German philosophical tradition pervades the *Glass Bead Game*.³⁹ Hesse scholar Siegfried Unseld avers, “For the very reason that there are no solutions and no prescriptions in Hesse’s work but merely descriptions of processes, the problems he depicts . . . give his books their lasting impact.”⁴⁰ Hesse uses Castalia and maya as convenient metaphors for what he perceived as his own inadequacy as a scholar and artist to intervene in political affairs during the Third Reich. More than this, many scholars attribute Hesse’s objections to cold, cerebral introversion in the *Glass Bead Game* to an apathy among the German intellectual community concerning Nazism. For Hesse, the novel as a genre in German culture becomes a representation “of that lack of thoroughgoing concern with practical affairs and political facts which had so bedeviled the German nation.”⁴¹ He takes issue with this representation from within the genre itself, leaving deliberate aesthetic flaws in the *Glass Bead Game* as a metacriticism of artistic apotheosis.⁴² Hesse rejects German intellectual sovereignty as separate from the rest of the world, as well as the result of its refusal to intervene, *i.e.*, Nazism. This rejection has its literary counterpart in Knecht’s repudiating the maya of withdrawn aestheticism: Knecht argues in his resignation letter that Castalians must not imagine themselves to be separate from the real world, lest history repeat itself through ignorance and war.⁴³

Conclusion

The *Valmiki Ramayana* portrays maya, or the illusion of temporal reality and attachment, as associated with adharma and an obfuscation of the true nature of reality; in other words, a baneful force to be defeated and stamped out in order to attain enlightenment (moksha). However, Hesse takes that notion and reverses it. He shows the abstracted reality of moksha, as it appears in the form of indifferent aestheticism, to be contradictory to the spirit of history and society. To Hesse these work not in generalities but one individual at a time. This he uses to criticize inward-looking German artists and intellectuals as epitomized by the introspective Bildungsroman literary tradition.

A response to the ostensible disparity lies in the notion of individuality. The message of the *Glass Bead Game* is not without some contradictions: Knecht comes to the conclusion that we must devote ourselves to the “realm of life” only after decades of cloistered introspection at Castalia. In the same way, moksha works by drawing the individual further into herself and away from earthly cares, only to realize that she is a part of everything else. Hesse doesn’t reject moksha out of hand so much as he adds to it: enlightenment demands both service to humanity and abstract isolation.

As Mileck explained, “This realizing of the self now involves an ultimate self-justifying transcending of the self in a spiritual-intellectual *and* social commitment.”⁴⁴

Both the *Valmiki Ramayana* and the *Glass Bead Game* illustrate this paradox between abstract reality on the one hand and humanity as an inseparable body on the other. Friedrich Schlegel suggests as much about reality when he wrote of true poetry in 1798: “It can so lose itself in what it describes that one might believe it exists only to characterize poetic individual[ities] of all sorts; and yet there is still no form so fit for expressing the entire spirit of an author.”⁴⁵ To Hesse, Valmiki’s notion of maya must return again to daily human existence, thus uniting the general with the individual in a pragmatic enlightenment capable of improving concrete human existence.

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1. Lal, P. Trans., *The Ramayana of Valmiki*, New Delhi, Vikas Publishing House PVT Ltd., 1981, p. 5.
2. Buck, William. Trans., *Ramayana*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1976, p. 349.
3. Stroup, Herbert. “The Person,” *Like a Great River: An Introduction to Hinduism*, New York, Harper & Row, 1972, p. 130.
4. Buck, p. 59.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 79.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 417.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 47.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 19.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 28.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 31.
11. Pachori, Satya S. “Emerson’s Essay on ‘Illusions’ and Hindu Maya,” *Kyushu American Literature*, 18, 1977, p. 46.
12. Fowler, Jeaneane. “Veda,” *Perspectives of Reality: An Introduction to the Philosophies of Hinduism*, Brighton, Sussex Academic Press, 2002, pp. 54–5.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 55. “To lose the egoistic perceptions of the world, the dualities which that perception engenders, and the desires that create the ego, are the goals of *Upanishadic* thought. It is a *liberation* from all that restricts, binds, and holds humans in ignorance. The term for such liberation is *moksha*.”
14. Radhakrishnan, S. *Indian Philosophy, Vol. 2*, Delhi, Oxford University Press, 1994, p. 575.
15. Fowler, Jeaneane. “Advaita Vedanta,” *Perspectives*, p. 253.
16. Buck, p. 47.
17. *Ibid.*, p. 167.
18. Fowler, p. 51. “Any differentiation between this and that fails to understand the nature of ultimate reality that is *neti neti*, “not this, not this.” So Reality is non-differentiated, that is to say, when we differentiate between this and that we obscure the real which is not one or the other.”

19. Wilhelm, Friedrich. "The German Response to Indian Culture," *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 81, no. 4, Sept. 1961, p. 395.
20. *Ibid.*, p. 396.
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22. Handwerk, Gary. "Envisioning India: Friedrich Schlegel's Sanskrit Studies and the Emergence of Romantic Historiography," *European Romantic Review*, 9, no. 2, Spring 1998, pp. 241–42.
23. Schulz, Siegfried A. "Hindu Mythology in Mann's Indian Legend," *Comparative Literature*, 14, no. 2, Spring 1962, p. 130.
24. Mundt, Hannelore. Introduction, *Understanding Thomas Mann*, Columbia, South Carolina, University of South Carolina Press, 2004, pp. 11–21.
25. Mileck, Joseph. "The Third Reich: Silence and Defamation," *Hermann Hesse: Between the Perils of Politics and the Allure of the Orient*, New York, Peter Lang, 2003, p. 34.
26. *Die Neue Literatur*, 36, Nov. 1935, p. 686; *Politik des Gewissens*, 1977, pp. 549–51.
27. Mileck.
28. Hesse, Hermann. *The Glass Bead Game*, trans. Richard and Clara Winston, New York, Henry Holt and Company, 1990, p. 545.
29. Mileck. "Introduction to India's Religious Texts," *Between*, p. 130.
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31. Hesse, p. 318.
32. *Ibid.*, p. 385.
33. Swales, Martin. "Hesse: *The Glass Bead Game*," *Bloom's Modern Critical Views: Hermann Hesse*, ed. Harold Bloom, Philadelphia, Chelsea House Publishers, 2003, p. 141.
34. Ziolkowski, Theodore. "*The Glass Bead Game*: Beyond Castalia," *Bloom's Modern Critical Views*, p. 49.
35. *Ibid.*, p. 520.
36. Hesse, p. 536.
37. Ziolkowski, p. 50.
38. Hesse, pp. 550–63.
39. George Wallis Field, *Hermann Hesse*, New York, Twayne Publishers, Inc., 1970, p. 151.
40. Unseld, Siegfried. "Hermann Hesse's Influence: Ethics or Esthetics?" *Bloom's Modern Critical Views*, p. 190.
41. Swales, pp. 149–50.
42. Ziolkowski, p. 73.
43. Hesse, p. 561.
44. Mileck. "*Das Glasperlenspiel: Indischer Lebenslauf*," p. 160.
45. *Athenäumsfragmente*, 116, 1798.

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Exploration of Japanese Gothicism in Izumi Kyoka's World

by Emily Mitarai

Kyoka draws upon his inspiration of the past and seeks, in his own words, “not to portray reality as reality, but to seek beyond reality for some more powerful truth” (Carpenter 154). Izumi Kyoka (1873–1939) was a prolific writer in the Meiji Era of Japan who depicted the literature of his past from the *kusazoshi* (illustrated fiction of the Edo Era), the ghostliness of Ueda Akinari, and the supernatural of the No Theater (Carpenter 154). Although a prolific writer, few of Kyoka’s works have been translated into English. His works are rich with imagery, yet the scenes are not in any particular order. Charles Inouye describes the scenes as “a series of striking moments rather than a coherent work of art.” Although the moments may not be in a particular order, understanding the importance of imagery in Kyoka’s helps the reader understand the structure to his work. Some scholars have viewed his work as “perverse difficulty,” while others view him as one who creates “a mystery that transcends any particular place and time” (Inouye 43). Kyoka draws upon his past to explore roles of women in society, the boundary of life and death, and duty in Japanese society to create a world of transcendent reality.

Born in Kanazawa, Kyoka Izumi was the son of a metal smith. As a child he was exposed to different art of the community, especially the No Theater. Kyoka’s mother passed away when he was only nine years old. The shock of losing his mother influenced his stories as he wrote of women who were mostly kind, generous, and older than himself.

Kyoka's mother had a love for *kusazoshi* (illustrated fiction), similar to a magazine that had woodcuts with stories written within them. As a child, Kyoka spent countless hours looking at the pictures and wondering what they meant. Even after his mother's death, he continued to collect the *kusazoshi* to stay connected to his mother. Kyoka's use of archetypes, such as water, reflects the influence of *kusazoshi* in his writing.

The eighteenth century work of Ueda Akinari helped develop the gothic tradition in Japan. His work as well as Kyoka's reflected images of beauty that created horror as well as "the spectral and spiritual side of life in opposition to the materialism, realism, and martial severity" of their Japanese society (Frank 226). This spiritual side created a sense of ghostliness to the characters in Kyoka's work. Generations of oral and professional storytelling of folktales and legends also created ideas for Kyoka. The No Theater introduced supernatural forces to represent anxieties "restrained, repressed or dismissed in modern Japanese society" (Hughes 12). The No Theater took the folktales of the past and would perform a sequel to the folktales as modern day plays.

Kyoka's Early Works: Responsibility, Morality, and Duty

Kyoka's first success came under the mentorship of Ozaki Koyo, head of the Friends of the Inkstone Society. Kyoka wrote short stories called *kannon shosetsu*, [fiction expounding a single idea] that focused heavily on morality and duty (Carpenter 154). Still one of his most famous stories today, "The Surgery Room" illustrated how a woman used selflessness to overcome a crisis. The Countess Kifune, a beautiful woman, refrained from taking anesthetics because she was scared she "might divulge some secret while in a state of unconsciousness and was willing to face death to protect what was in her heart" (Kyoka 14). The surgeon, Dr. Takamine, obeyed her wish and began to make the incision claiming, "I take all responsibility" (16). Kifune took the scalpel from his hand and "plunged it into her body, just below her breast" (17). The epilogue explains how Kifune and Dr. Takamine had fallen in love with each other long ago after just seeing one another once. All her life Kifune had preserved her secret at the price of hideous pain, not wanting to reveal her "adulterous love for the doctor, her heroic devotion to him precipitates his suicide following the fatal operation on his beloved" (Frank 227). The two had silently loved each other for years after seeing each other only once years earlier.

This story is a commentary on how individuals should be married out of love, rather than social conventions (Carpenter 155). Because of their differing social classes, the two were unable to be married to each other, but

still held a secret love for each other. In order to remain moral and fulfill her social duty as countess, Kifune gave up her life. In Japanese, there is a saying, “*Mi o suttee koso ukaba semo are*” [to throw myself in may be my only chance to be rescued from the water], which means selflessness is the only way to overcome a crisis (Hughes 12). Rather than reveal her secret, the countess performs her social duty, displaying a self-sacrificial devotion.

In “A Night Cop,” as another example of sacrificing oneself in order to perform one’s social duty, a policeman who cannot swim dives into an icy moat to save an old man. This particular old man is the one person hindering the officer’s marriage to his sweetheart. He jumps in to save the man out of duty. This type of duty is a common theme in Kyoka’s early work because it illustrates his respect for authority.

Kyoka uses the theme of duty to show that a person’s public duties “take precedence over their private considerations” in Japanese culture (Keene 211). In the story of “Dispatch from Hai-ch’eng” a Red Cross worker is tried before a court of Japanese laborers because he gave comfort to the Chinese, the enemy, while the Chinese were prisoners. The story is quite controversial because the Red Cross worker was only concerned about saving lives, not necessarily helping the ally. It was controversial to have a Red Cross worker help a Chinese person in a time when nationalism was so strong. Being a Red Cross worker, Kanzaki wants to be neutral. In order to test his neutrality, he has to remain calm when a Chinese woman is killed before his eyes by a mob of Japanese men. Although Kanzaki’s goal is to save lives, he horrifically has to stand there when the woman is killed (211). Kanzaki’s actions address the role of duty and responsibility in Japanese culture. At times, it appears as though his actions are noble; however, the extremes of Japanese society are also addressed. Kyoka’s early work reflects duty and morality but evolves to addressing the boundaries of life and death.

Role of Women: Salutory Archetypes

Kyoka depicted women as ‘salutory archetypes’ to create hope in the conflict of good and evil (Kyoka 3). These beautiful, witty, and graceful women create a sense of relief in response to the dread which existed. These women seduce and save, tempt and chasten Kyoka’s male characters. The heroines in his stories illustrate how Kyoka’s world goes deep to connect everything together in a place of imagination where “emotional territories expand in every direction” (3).

The story “The Surgery Room” exemplifies how Kyoka uses women as an archetype to release the soul into a collective whole, instead of deciding what is good and what is evil. Countess Kifune is a beautiful woman who

gives her life instead of revealing her adulterous desires. The story blurs good and evil as the narrator asks, “Religious thinkers of the world, I pose this question to you. Should these two lovers be found quietly and denied entrance into heaven?” (Kyoka 20). It does not resolve anything about the mystery of the good and evil in the universe, but addresses issues of class separation and forbidden love. The story allows Countess Kifune to give up her life as beauty blends with horror, instead of telling a didactic story of what is good and what is evil.

Kyoka uses modern archetypes in order to teach morals about love and class disparities in Japanese society in stories such as “The Surgery Room.” Women are viewed as tragic heroines because they are usually a part of the proletarian class going against the patriarchal order of the Meiji authoritarianism. Although victims, the women serve as a symbol of rebellion, as they illustrate the social protest of repressed love in society. As they express their repressed emotions, the women make a commentary on the perverse class structure and militarism in Japan. Instead of directly addressing issues of social classes, Kyoka idealizes a woman as a type of goddess who is not afraid to act. Acts of the women in stories such as “The Surgery Room” are violent and grotesque. People once believed the secret to success relied completely on ancestral influences. In Kyoka’s time, however, the self-made individual created his or her own success. Encouraging people to act for themselves, Kyoka rebels against the social construct to illustrate the power of the individual.

Water: Liquid Boundaries

In Kyoka’s work, water connotes danger, metamorphosis, violence, and death (Kyoka 169). The ancestors of Japan believed *haha ga kuni* [land of the dead] as a place that was either at the bottom of the sea or on the other side of the ocean, separated from this world, the sea, and the mountains (Inouye 54). Water is seen as a boundary of the land of the dead and of the living. Kyoka is seemingly obsessed with water as it appears in almost every story depicting a boundary of life and death as well as renewal and rebirth.

In the “Holy Man of Mount Koya,” a monk faces the boundary of the living and the dead. The monk has come on a long journey where he encounters an older woman who is both nurturing and alluring. Crossing a flooded road, the water directs him to go to a mountain wilderness. The beautiful woman not only bathes him, but also cherishes his company in a seductive manner. Bridling his passion for the woman, he prays because he has made a commitment as a monk. He becomes enchanted by a waterfall where he could see the snake woman who treated him so well:

When I remembered how I had bathed with the woman just downstream, my imagination pictured her inside the falling water, now being swept under, now rising again, her skin disintegrating and scattering like flower petals amid a thousand unruly streams of water. I gasped at the sight, and immediately she was whole again—the same face, body, breasts, arms, and legs, rising and sinking, suddenly dismembered, then appearing again. Unable to bear it, I felt myself plunging headlong into the fall and taking the water into my embrace (Kyoka 64–65).

The monk contemplates going into the waterfall to save the woman, who is represented by the waterfall, but he is stopped by an elderly man who tells him the true identity of the serpent woman. At the bottom of the water, she awaited his succumbing to her temptation. The priest going to save the woman in the water would mean his death. Water serves as an archetype for death or danger of Kyoka's characters.

The water in this illustration brings him closer to the woman who is not only alluring physically, but also maternal and nurturing. The representation of the woman as the water bridges the gap he has for the loss of his mother when he was younger. Water serves as a boundary between the living and the dead when Kyoka desires to go into the world of the dead.

Another example of water as boundary is in "A Quiet Obsession" where the river Narai represents danger or violence. The rushing waters are symbolic of a possibility of crossing the border and entering into another world (Inouye 150). Water imagery serves an important function in Kyoka's writing because it establishes a possibility of crossing over to the uncanny and the meeting point of the living and the dead.

One of the outstanding characteristics of traditional societies is the opposition that they assume between their inhabited territory and the unknown and indeterminate space that surrounds it. The former is the world (more precisely, our world), the cosmos; everything outside it is no longer a cosmos but a sort of other world a foreign, chaotic space, peopled by ghosts, demons, and foreigners (who are assimilated to demons and the souls of the dead) (Kawakami 77).

Kyoka's works illustrate how "the world" is considered a place where males belong, and the mountain is the "other world, a foreign, chaotic space" that "ghosts, demons, and foreigners" inhabit and where the females reside is Kyoka's fiction. In Japanese culture there is "a concrete matter of how to bow, how to eat, how to walk, how to use space in clearly prescribed ways" (Inouye Shadows 5).

In stories such as “The Holy Man at Mount Koya,” the monk is taken to a place where he must choose to be with the woman or “the world.” The current world is based on male principles of “order, institution, norm, rationality, logic and so on” (Kawakami 92). He decides to maintain his position as a monk.

Supernatural and Reality Interwoven

From his earlier works of the ghosts in the mountaintops, Kyoka’s later work takes us to a local noodle shop. In “A Quiet Obsession” Otsuya is a ghostly woman who has gone mad with envy. The cook, Isaku, sees her image on the surface of the fishpond. Kyoka takes the reader to a place where the only thing that can be seen is the rippling of waters or the reflections on the mirror. At times there are things which are unattainable, but the appearance of the object is always alluring.

In “The Holy Man of Mount Koya,” the first narrative creates a setting in the real world. Then, there is a contrast with the second narrative which takes the monk on sacred journey in a forbidden territory. The third narrative depicts the monk’s perspective when he meets the enchantress. In this place a hailstorm of leeches falls on him. At first he only notices one leech that “dripped with blood” from his fingertips. But soon he sees they are all over his body and “a cry of terror escaped” him (Carpenter 156). The new horror was a “black rain of leeches, pelting down on top of him” (156). Kyoka makes small but progressive steps from a walk in the woods to a fantastic world filled with leeches.

Kyoka’s works are more descriptions than plots (Keene 204). His work is not necessarily successive scenes of images, but the random order of those images takes the reader to places where he or she blends the natural and supernatural. Using modern language and popular locations of the time, Kyoka easily achieves this combination. This allows Kyoka to not just make an assumption of what is good or what is evil. Japanese gothic plots typically place humans on a “spiritual continuum, a karmic wheel,” rather than in the “plots of Kyoka’s mature novels, especially those of his last period, [which] are difficult to keep straight, but the atmosphere evoked is unforgettable” (Keene 204). Everything is a part of a greater whole. His short stories contain a collection of scenes and the readers’ ability to see how the scenes are all connected will illustrate the power of an overall collective unity.

Kyoka’s “Song by Lantern Light” illustrates the complexity of his writing. There are two stories occurring at the same time, and the narrative jumps back and forth from one story to the other. Amid the chaos of the

story, there is order in the way that Kyoka combines the two stories in the end, “a divided world of good and evil” (Hughes 12).

In “Herb Collector,” the supernatural setting is not in the mountains, but in Tokyo. The ghosts in Tokyo who have no association with the mountains do not maintain their supernatural power. Instead of healing the intellectual “as they did in the mountains, they simply destabilized [the character’s] worldview” (Kawakami 98). The ghost comes out to everyday life, making Tokyo both our world and the world of the dead at the same time.

Theater and Legacy

Kyoka’s ability to create and blend familiar and unfamiliar territory illustrates the importance of gothic literature in today’s society and with regard to human nature. Kyoka was highly exposed to the No Theater drama that passed down folktales by adding on to them in an oral fashion. Supernaturalism of the No Theater was also very popular at the time. Kyoka’s work is seen as a “twilight world where human beings and ghost could interact, where dream and illusions could be—or seem—real. The natural and the supernatural are closely interwoven, so skillfully that the reader is never taken aback” (Carpenter 155). What is real and what is supernatural are a combined whole that one cannot separate.

Kyoka creates a scene where the written text is not just to be read silently but also to be heard (Kawakami 172), utilizing the skills he learned from the No Theater. Kyoka states, “I think writing nowadays merely appeals to the eyes, and does not please the ear. Probably no one even thinks of pleasing the ears anymore” (Kawakami 166).

The narratives of Izumi Kyoka set an example for the works of future writers and scholars. For example, the recent book, the *Ring*, by Koji Suzuki illustrates remnants of Kyoka’s world of a linguistic theater. In the novel, Suzuki describes a lethal video tape with scenes that are produced not by a camera, but by the mind of a young girl, Sadako, who has supernatural powers. After viewing the video tape, a mysterious phone call announces the death of the viewer in seven days. The images on the video tape produced an archetype of the collective memory of Sadako as “random sounds and distorted images flicker on the screen” (Suzuki 75). Scenes in the book are not as distorted as Kyoka’s, however, Suzuki moves from place to place in his novels to imitate scenes from a movie. The images in the video tape are not just a recording but also move from the screen to the living, physical presence of the girl Sadako. Suzuki utilizes modern day technology to create a sense of fear in blurring visual entertainment and reality.

Women, water imagery, and duty address the cultural issues of good and evil, cultural duty, and unrequited love. Human nature is the same but it appears as though these are cultural understandings of unity which help the Japanese gothic gather a collective conscious. Water images illustrate the arbitrary waves of the line between life and death. The generations are different, but understanding the unified archetypes of water, death, and women as well as the importance of duty in Japanese culture will help the readers understand Kyoka's stories. Walking the water boundaries of life and death creates a doorway into the world of the unknown. Kyoka depicts women as figures who address class distinction in the Japanese culture to promote an equal level. Illustrating the ideas such as the supernatural as well as using modern technology creates a fresh view about the gothic. The interweaving of reality and the supernatural are so close at times that Izumi Kyoka creates a door to understanding fear in the Japanese Gothic.

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Liu Na'ou and the May Fourth Tradition

by Katie Stirling

According to Leo Ou-fan Lee, the city was, for Liu Na'ou, “the *only* world of [his] existence and the key source of [his] creative imagination” (191). Liu Na'ou stands among Shi Zhecun and Mu Shiyong as writers preoccupied with the fast-paced life and materiality of the city of Shanghai in the 1930s. Considered to be one of the leaders of the Japanese-inspired neo-sensationist school in China, Liu pioneered the use of descriptions of sensory experiences and experimentations with time in narrative in order to create his cityscapes and develop the tension between fascination and repulsion with the city that characterizes neo-sensationist literature. This is highly evident in his short story, “Two Men Out of Tune with Time,” and although Liu is usually considered to have “depart[ed] radically from the May Fourth tradition” (Lee, 191) this story can be seen as an extension of certain May Fourth goals.

On 4 May 1919, thousands of university students marched to Beijing's Tiananmen Square in protest of the “humiliating terms of the Treaty of Versailles, which would have ceded control to Japan parcels of Chinese territory” (Denton, “Historical Overview,” 291). Though this incident was largely political, “May Fourth” is also used to describe a broader cultural movement (sometimes called the New Culture movement), which rejected tradition and embraced everything modern. On the political front, the movement pushed for a stronger China with a new sense of anti-imperialist nationalism. On the cultural front, intellectuals used the rhetorical devices of

“[a]nti-traditionalism, democracy, science, enlightenment, individualism, evolution, nationalism, and revolution, a hodgepodge of sometimes conflicting concepts derived from a range of Western cultural-historical periods [. . .] to pry themselves and their compatriots from the ‘iron house’ of tradition” (Denton, “Historical Overview,” 291).

May Fourth writers and intellectuals such as Hu Shi and Chen Duxiu called for the adoption of the modern vernacular language in literature in order to throw off the hegemony of classical language, the perpetuator of tradition. In this way, literature could reach the less educated masses kept ignorant through the use of classical language and perform its most important task—to re-infuse society with “its principal dynamic force” (Denton, *Modern Chinese Literary Thought*, 114)—the individual. This force, intellectuals argued, had been suffocated by Confucianism, which “[glorified] a political and familial authoritarianism that shackled the individual” (114).

The literature coming out of the May Fourth movement in the early 1920s promotes the individual as a changing force in society, though it does this in diverse ways. The realist school, often represented by Lu Xun, attempts to demystify the “naturalness” of the world created by traditional ideology by showing its effects on individuals. The romantic school, represented by authors such as Yu Dafu and Guo Moruo, focuses on the importance of individual self-expression. In both schools, which aren’t always as neatly distinguishable as I have suggested above for the sake of summary, the individual is validated and advanced as a changing force in society. Closely tied to this liberation of the individual is the liberation of women. According to Denton, “Women writers emerged on the May Fourth literary scene to a much greater degree and in a much more public way than ever before” (“Historical Overview,” 292). In addition, the liberation of woman “was for May Fourth male writers something of a metaphor for the larger goal of the liberation of humankind from the deadening oppression of [Confucian] tradition” (*Modern Chinese Literary Thought*, 119).

Beginning in the late 1920s and flourishing in the early to mid-1930s, the neo-sensationist school consisted of a small group of writers in Shanghai, one of the largest and most modern cities in the world at that time. These authors, namely Liu Na’ou, Mu Shiying, Shi Zhecun, and Dai Wangshu, attempted to create language that would account for the new sensations of modernity. Exposure to Japanese and European literature introduced them to “the psychological themes of repression, obsession, and the erotic, which allowed them to probe the loneliness, anxiety, and alienation of the metropolis” (Riep, 419). Their work expresses both fascination and repulsion with the modern city, its fast-paced lifestyle, and its materiality. They are typi-

cally considered to have broken with the May Fourth call for literature to change society because they focused primarily on finding innovative ways to express the diverse sensations of the modern world.

Through the use of devices similar to those used by Mu Shiying in “Five in a Nightclub,” namely the layering of sensory experience, and the use of various modern fascinations, such as dance and jazz music, to mark time, Liu gives readers a glimpse into early twentieth-century Shanghai in “Two Men Out of Tune with Time.” Yet, what sets this work apart from Mu Shiying’s, and, I contend, relates it to the larger May Fourth tradition, is the way in which Liu portrays woman. In his work, woman, whose liberation, as stated above, “was for May Fourth male writers something of a metaphor for the larger goal of the liberation of humankind from the deadening oppression of [Confucian] tradition,” comes to embody both the sensory and temporal experience of the modernized and Westernized city, and thus represents the extreme liberation of the individual from Confucian tradition that could be achieved most easily in the city.

“Two Men Out of Tune with Time” begins with first the shortest and then the longest paragraphs of the entire story, both of which help to re-create a sensory experience of the fast-paced and materialistic nature of the horse racetrack in Shanghai. The first paragraph simply states, “A fine and clear afternoon”(329). The next paragraph begins by positioning the large pasture of the racetrack within the skyscrapers of Shanghai and describing the types of people attending the races, all of whom hope to obtain fast money by betting on fast horses. We then come to what almost seems an overload of sensory images describing the final race of the day’s competition. “Dust, foaming mouths, dark tears and the smell of horse excrement spreads through the stagnant air, and with people’s determination, nervousness, lost hope, falling courage, surprise, and joy, create a saturated atmosphere” (329). This is not a languid setting. Emotions change with the speed of the horses’ hooves. Betters can go from wealthy to broke or vice versa almost instantaneously. With this sentence, Liu places readers in the racetrack among the olfactory images of the smell of dust and horse excrement mingled with emotions of excitement, lost hope, joy, and anxiety of those betting on the races. This saturated sentence re-creates a saturated atmosphere that feeds on speed and money, both icons of city life in neo-sensationalist work.

Liu uses a similar technique of sensory descriptions to introduce readers to the female character in this short story. The protagonist, simply called “H,” has decided to try his luck and place his winnings from that day on the final race. He is ardently focused on the race, to the point that the conversa-

tion of other gamblers around him does not reach his ears. But suddenly, he is almost forced to turn his head by the scent of “Cyclamen” (334, English in the text), a perfume made from a small European plant with heart-shaped leaves and white or pink flowers. When he turns his head to follow the scent, his eyes focus on a “Sportive” (334, English in text) modern woman, whose muscles seem to tremble under her glossy French silk. He sees her cherry lips break with a small smile, and he feels as though he cannot turn his eyes from her white knees slightly hidden by her opera bag and grey-black stockings. Here again, Liu layers sensory experiences—in this case very visual images of color and texture—to re-create the image of a modern Shanghai woman.

When H meets this woman, the sensory descriptions continue and become entangled with images of speed and money. The horse H bets on wins and as he presses through the noisy crowd to retrieve his winnings, he is stopped by the sound of “a pleasantly cool voice” (335). With eyes that contain a look of already being his good friend, the woman who moments before had drawn his attention away from the race asks him to retrieve her winnings for her. Although H is at first taken back by this somewhat rude request, he quickly accepts, retrieves her money, and finds that same cherry-red smile waiting for him in a less crowded space. She smoothly and unabashedly offers him a date and they walk together to an American café where he buys her ice cream. This modern woman’s forwardness and appearance reflect the speed and materiality of the modern city. She does not wait for H to find her or ask her for a date, but moves quickly, luring him with her friendly eyes, inviting movements, and fashionable attire to spend his money on her. Her speed works on H, who thinks to himself “taking this bundle of money won through good luck and giving it all to her really isn’t anything” (332). The sensory experiences H has with this woman—her voice and her appearance—coupled with the speed with which they come together are both tied up in materiality and the winning and spending of money, and thus, the speed and materiality of the city.

Though time and speed are obviously evident in the setting of the racetrack, they come to play an even more important role in the latter half of the story with dance and music shaping the images of time. After going for ice cream, H takes the woman for a walk to display her on the busy commercial streets of the market district. While walking by large department stores, H is distracted by a fast and expensive car but doesn’t forget the “Fair Sex” (333, English in the text) on his arm. They soon run into a man called “T,” who apparently also has a date with this woman. The three of them continue, on her recommendation, to a dance hall. T does not waste time and takes the

woman out to dance at the first chance. They dance to blues music, while H, feeling blue at having his girl taken from him, looks on and decides that he must not waste time in letting this woman know his feelings for her. The next dance is a waltz, ironically appropriate to the odd trio of H, T, and the woman with its three-count beat. Perhaps more significant though, the waltz is a slower, more traditional dance and thus reflects what will soon be shown as H's inability to keep up with the speed of this woman, and by analogy, the speed of the city.

During the waltz, H tells the woman that he loves her and has loved her from the moment he saw her, and then asks her to leave T at the dance hall and go with him. She quickly crushes his profession of love by revealing his inability to keep up with her fast-paced lifestyle. Shih Shu-mei aptly translates her response:

Ah, you are just a child. Who told you to be so clumsy and slow with your hands and feet? What's with eating ice cream and taking a walk, what a bunch of nonsense! Don't you know that *lovmaking* should be done in a car amidst the wind? There is green shade outside the city [to park the car under]. I have never spent more than three hours with one *gentleman*. This was already an exception! (italics English in original text) (Shih, 295)

The three hours she has spent with H are, for her, three hours of a slow and old-fashioned three-count waltz. H's idea of a date—ice cream and a walk—appear outdated to this woman, who instead values fast men and fast cars. The woman soon leaves both H and T, the two men “out of tune with time,” because she has an evening date and must first change her clothes. The two men are left stunned and bewildered by their inability to keep up with the pace of this woman.

By making the woman a repository of both sensory experiences and notions of temporality also portrayed in his representations of the city, Liu turns her into an embodiment of the city. She is up-to-date in her fashionable clothes, European perfume, and opera bag; she radiates the materiality of the city. Her unwillingness to spend more than three hours with a single man reflects the speed of the city, with its bustling businesses, horse races, and fast cars. Shu-mei Shih states about Liu's prototypical heroine, “Lodged in her are the characteristics of the urban culture of the semicolonial city and its seductions of speed, commodity culture, exoticism, and eroticism. Hence the emotions she stimulates in the male protagonist—helpless infatuation and hopeless betrayal—replicate the attraction and alienation he feels toward the city” (qtd. in Lee, 205). Liu gives us a modern girl who, because

she has the same qualities as the city, has the ability to decide which man is up-to-date enough to “survive” her requirements, and the power to control the amount of time she chooses to be with him. Just as H and T are at the mercy of the materiality and speed of the city, they are also at the mercy of this woman.

Whereas traditional Confucian ethics places the woman in subjection to her husband or her sons, the woman in Liu’s work controls her own situation. She is a far cry from a woman such as the protagonist in Ling Shuhua’s “Embroidered Pillows” whose marital status, and thus happiness, is reliant on traditional art forms and courting rituals. Liu’s woman is more closely related to Xu Dishan’s protagonist in “The Merchant’s Wife,” who becomes completely independent of men, who in her past had sold her as a commodity and owned her as a prized object. The men in “Two Men Out of Tune with Time” are not “knowing subjects” that can exert their desire on a female object. Rather, they become the woman’s playthings (Lee, 205). Shumei Shih asserts that Liu “saw the Westernized ‘modern girl’ as a desirable embodiment of anti-patriarchal, autonomous, urban, and hybrid modernity” (277). In this sense then, Liu, though often considered very different from other May Fourth authors, falls in line with them by setting forth the same ideals of traditional anti-patriarchalism.

If “Confucianism was seen as glorifying a political and familial authoritarianism that shackled the individual, thus depriving society of its principal dynamic force” and if May Fourth intellectuals viewed the Confucian ethical system “as a monolithic force that had prevented China from progressing in the manner of the Western powers” (Denton, *Modern Chinese Literary Thought*, 114), then by creating a thoroughly modernized and Westernized woman that embodies the speed and dynamism of the modernized and westernized city of Shanghai, Liu in turn creates a microcosm of the liberation of the individual from the grasp of tradition. Though H, who considers himself in synch with the rhythms of the city, believes he is in control as he spends his money and promenades the woman through the streets like a trophy, he soon realizes his ways are “out of tune” with, and basically traditional in comparison to, the modern times of feminine and individual liberation. Her power and control as a woman can thus be seen as a “metaphor for the larger goal of the liberation of humankind from the deadening oppression of [Confucian] tradition.” Though Liu does choose to use different styles and techniques than other May Fourth writers, the liberation of the individual female represented in this work is a reflection of the larger goals of the May Fourth movement.

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