INFORMATION TO USERS

This manuscript has been reproduced from the microfilm master. UMI films the text directly from the original or copy submitted. Thus, some thesis and dissertation copies are in typewriter face, while others may be from any type of computer printer.

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted. Broken or indistinct print, colored or poor quality illustrations and photographs, print bleedthrough, substandard margins, and improper alignment can adversely affect reproduction.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send UMI a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if unauthorized copyright material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.

Oversize materials (e.g., maps, drawings, charts) are reproduced by sectioning the original, beginning at the upper left-hand corner and continuing from left to right in equal sections with small overlaps. Each original is also photographed in one exposure and is included in reduced form at the back of the book.

Photographs included in the original manuscript have been reproduced xerographically in this copy. Higher quality 6" x 9" black and white photographic prints are available for any photographs or illustrations appearing in this copy for an additional charge. Contact UMI directly to order.

UMI®
Bell & Howell Information and Learning
300 North Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106-1346 USA
800-521-0600
Loanwor(l)ds: Delineating English in Japanese

by

George Fogarasi

A thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements for the
Degree of Master of Arts in the Department of Curriculum, Teaching and Learning
Ontario Institute for Studies in Education
University of Toronto

©George Fogarasi 1998
The author has granted a non-exclusive licence allowing the National Library of Canada to reproduce, loan, distribute or sell copies of this thesis in microform, paper or electronic formats.

The author retains ownership of the copyright in this thesis. Neither the thesis nor substantial extracts from it may be printed or otherwise reproduced without the author's permission.

L'auteur a accordé une licence non exclusive permettant à la Bibliothèque nationale du Canada de reproduire, prêter, distribuer ou vendre des copies de cette thèse sous la forme de microfiche/film, de reproduction sur papier ou sur format électronique.

L’auteur conserve la propriété du droit d’auteur qui protège cette thèse. Ni la thèse ni des extraits substantiels de celle-ci ne doivent être imprimés ou autrement reproduits sans son autorisation.

0-612-40645-8
Acknowledgements

I owe tremendous thanks to my thesis supervisor Jim Cummins. His insight and encouragement enlivened my search. Thank you for joining me along these winding paths and for allowing me to wander. I am indebted to my second reader Tara Goldstein for the integrity, honesty and rigour she bought to this work. Thank you for the relentless critique and enthusiasm; the serendipity of our meeting will forever evoke a smile.

Jumbo arigato to Yukiko Minami. Laughter and deconstruction don’t often go together: add wasabe and friendship, and scholarship never glowed so true.

Whether seeking bougatsa or more improbable destinations, my Master’s experience would have been different without Litsa Tsouluhas. Kitty greetings to Erni Otsuji: tackling nomadic identities on the equator, we shared fish head curry and drank beer with ice, speaking of concerns in this work long before I could corral them in academic confines. To the Japanese speakers who twisted my questions into more questions, I owe an immeasurable arigato gozaimasu. Named and anonymous, you held me to account and took me further.

From Opeongo to Fukui and Comox, Andrew Lochhead has challenged me on two continents. I salute another rogue linguistic imperialist—perhaps the biggest—Andrew Frizzell. Our arguments echo in this work: thanks for going fishing. Shelly Quick made me look at power and privilege; for this and so much more, I thank her. From Planet of the Apes to Ideology and the Image, David Robinson helped me escape Oshawa long before we left it. I thank my oldest friend for his patient explanations of ‘theory’ and especially for how he has ethically put it into practice.

How do I begin to thank Erica Martin for her support? Silly or sublime, a few words from you could snap the nastiest thesis blues. Decades of docks, wine, and sweet bluegrass abandon may acknowledge what can’t be approached on this (or any) page. Erica, you are the best thing a partner can be. A friend.

Finally, I wish to dedicate this work to my family. Their support and love of knowledge enabled me to be the first of the family to attend University. I cannot remember a time without the comfort of politics and cabbage rolls. I am painfully and gratefully cognisant that, in no small way, I write today because my uncles and mother work in the family business I fled. Julius, thanks for the jokes. Frank, thanks for listening to C.B.C. (and much more). The support and care of my mother...how does one begin to thank or conceive of unconditional love? I will leave such attempts to the Hungarian poems I endured on interminable family vacations. To my chagrin and eternal gratitude, they have made me what I am today.

And to my late father...you were right. And I couldn’t without you. Kossonom, apu.
Abstract

Loanwor(l)ds: Delineating English in Japanese

by George Fogarasi

Department of Curriculum, Teaching and Learning
O.I.S.E. University of Toronto
Degree of Master of Arts, 1998

Dove-tailing postmodern explorations of subjectivity with theories of linguistic imperialism and discussions with Japanese speakers, this study examines English loanwords within the Japanese language. I investigate Japanese speakers’ (and my own) meta-understanding of loanwords. Are they “English,” “Japanese,” or hybrids in between? What do they reveal about Japanese and non-Japanese subjectivity (and how they intersect and differ)? What are the implications for larger questions of agency, identity and scholarship?

This research is inspired by my experience of Japanese culture and by the insights and lacunae of scholars probing language, culture, and subjectivity. My thesis strives to be more than an isolated response to their work. The collaborative nature of this project jettisons comfortable academic habits to interrogate assumptions surrounding knowledge, language and identity. I use collage, allegory and hypertext to 1) challenge the linear premise of traditional scholarship, 2) approximate my experience of Japan, and 3) explore/depict interpretations of Japanese subjectivity.
Introduction

The non-linear format of this work is intentional. And, in a sense, impossible: my text cannot escape tradition, or acquit itself from the obligations of bound and numbered pages. This project begs to flee pagination for the interactivity of cyberspace. Aspirations to make this a truly collaborative venture, the desire to recognize multiple perspectives, and a determination to disrupt common sense assumptions pertaining to knowledge, language and subjectivity coax these pages into an approximation of hypertext.

The confines of an academic document—even one that ostensibly refuses linearity—demand a beginning and an end. How does one enter or introduce a text that ostensibly refuses to “begin”? I draw attention to a passage from page thirteen:

To challenge [positivism and patriarchy] I offer collage instead of univocal meaning and linear argument. Because I concur with Okely that “reflexivity forces us to think through the consequences of our relations with others, whether it be conditions of reciprocity, asymetry or potential exploitation” (Okely, 1992, 24) I weave this text with quotations, advertisements, loanwords, dream and a diary.

If the reader were to wind a path through/as this document in cyberspace, setting forth from the equivalent of “page thirteen” would be as legitimate as any other departure. I invite you to consider reading as collaboration.* The structure is a careful decision arising from my research. The (often paradoxical) insights gleaned from academic readings and conversations

---

*Create paths as you would in cyberspace. The analogy is stretched as this is (also) a linear text outside of cyberspace. Collage, a play of intricate connections within and between footnotes and text, and the use of different fonts and print sizes cannot reproduce hypertext. However, I can find no better way to interrogate and present my findings.
with Japanese speakers created a dilemma: traditional scholarship undermined, contradicted and was incapable of representing these trajectories.

*The medium is (from) the message.*

The Japanese focus, in addition to addressing a unique and remarkably unexplored terrain, engages questions that have gripped me for years. My encounter with Japanese culture forces me to question the limits of what I can know. Conscious of and determined to avoid a glib Orientalist Otherizing (or a colonial re-making of “them” into “us”), I seek ways to interrogate cross-cultural conundrums that are too easily dismissed as “radical alterity”. The confusion and passion I bring to this work both limit and propel its trajectory. I sought and seek collaboration in the hope that this might help presumption give way to insight.

*I am tired of shuffling the familiar to re-confirm what I already “know”.*
# Table of Contents

footnotes offered to facilitate *tachi-yomi* / browse

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledgements</td>
<td>i</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abstract</td>
<td>ii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>iii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 1 Method and Madness: Gaining Through Loss</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Koan Theory</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Beast of Initial Intentions: Excerpts From Thesis Proposal</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feedback</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diary: More (Than) I</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>footnote 19: Flows: Amniotic, Semiotic, Economic</em></td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An E-Mail Exchange</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assumptions</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complications For Educational Theory and Practice</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frisking Poetry: Creating and Resisting Structure</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 2 My Poochy and Tempura: History of a Language That is Not</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>footnote 61: Resistance of the ‘Moratorium’ People: Cute, Kitschy, and Pissed Off</em></td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 3 Loanwor(l)ds: Ab/solving Identity with Linguistic Imperialism’</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>footnote 80: Kazumi’s Negation: Self-Contradictory Identity</em></td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crossing K/ëgo: Motion Between Context</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>footnote 85: What This Thesis ‘Does’ I</em></td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter 1 Method and Madness: Gaining Through Loss

Sexually assaulted and beaten by their managers, Vietnamese Nike workers have coined the verb to Nike, “meaning to hit someone” (Bell, 1998, 11).

Crossing nation-state boundaries and enforcing uncontested constructs of power/knowledge, symbolic representations of otherness can masquerade more insidious forms of material domination (Wilson, 1993, 337).

Incantation, bumper snicker or m/other tongue, language is never innocent. Neither is this observation. The study of linguistic imperialism and its deconstruction can be a slippery and self-serving exercise, enough about you what about me reinforcing privileged positions to categorize, regulate and define; privileged positions creating an agentic We (powerful philosopher-kings of language) towering above always already passive Others (like Frow, I capitalize Other to “indicate the making of a mythical One out of many” [Frow, 1995, 3]). Thus constructed, the huddled masses are ready to be protected by a flourish of citations. This is not to deny the asymmetrical relations of power we create and are created by, or to glibly dismiss critical language pedagogy as the ‘White Man’s Burden’. I write not to reject political action across difference but to trace the limits and possibilities of collaboration.

---

1 "Just as in capitalist economic interchange where agency appears displaced from people onto commodities and money, so in abstract theorizing agency is displaced onto discourse. As thought is separated from events, language appears to be an independent realm. The universe on paper is not only perceived as independent from lived existence, but it (the discourse, the ideology) is assigned power otherwise attributed to people” (Anyon, 1994, 128). All that is solid melts into airy footnote. Swords to words, imperialism’s specious shift from Pentagon and Pentium to language makes scholars armed & dangerous class warriors, tenured guerrillas s(l)aying words to save a world recreated as discursive playground/war game. Consider the paradox of ‘imperialist nostalgia’: “a person kills somebody, and then mourns the victim....imperialist nostalgia uses a pose of ‘innocent yearning’ both to capture people’s imaginations and to conceal its complicity with often brutal domination”(Rosaldo cited in Kaplan, 1996, 34). Kaplan warns that imperialist nostalgia “erases collective and personal responsibility, replacing accountability with powerful discursive practices: the vanquished or vanished ones are eulogized (thereby represented) by the victor”(Kaplan, 1996, 34 ).
I'm reminded of Caliban and Prospero. Prospero, the western man of the book teaches Caliban, the colonial other, how to speak his language. And Caliban says, 'you give me words, that I might curse you with them'. Which is what happens to imperial languages. The imperial others learn it all too well. Make it something else. Make it proliferate, differentiate....Hiding in the master tongue. Waiting. Biting the master tongue (Wark, Netlislsh, unpaginated).

Working through my investment in the discourse surrounding linguistic imperialism (see appendix 1) and the binary axis it can suggest, I do not wish to elaborate a 'correct' position so much as to confuse y/ours. Exploring (through) solipsism, flashing lacunae and juggling assumption, I fumble—medium and message—against 'wholes' for points of rupture where rhetoric about the study of English (and [linguistic] imperialism) gives way to a radical listening across cultural divides and a dialogue with others.

---

2 My critique of linguistic imperialism('s critique) does not oppose but extends such scholarship. I ask what Jameson asks of postmodernity: does it transcend or reproduce what it opposes (Pincus, 1993, 224)? There is no one school of 'linguistic imperialism'. I use the term not to freeze knowledge but as a deliberate provocation. I engage not critiques of linguistic imperialism per se but my reflexes quick to condemn the spread of English. I write against (to gain?) this grain to explore assumptions fueling my condemnation of 'linguistic imperialism'. I take this term to be what Illich and Sanders call an "amoeba-word" (i.e. communication, crisis): "we must be forever conscious of the fact that we do not know what those terms mean. We use the words like words from Scripture...we gratefully transfer the power to define their meaning to an expéerocratic hierarchy to which we do not belong" (Illich and Sanders, 1988, 106). "Service professions invented their diagnosis of needs to create demands for the therapies they then came to monopolize" (Ilich, 1982, 79). Experts' "'one true story' is nothing more than a partial perspective claiming generality on the basis of social privilege and power" (Smith, D. 1987, 121). This work documents the disintegration of my monolithic understanding of linguistic imperialism. For linguists, language can become an "objectified, authoritative "thing" whose supreme authorities are the Book and the Expert. Words and concepts are expropriated from their social context and anchored in disciplinary secondary discourses which claim a monopoly over truth" (Fettes, unpaginated). I valorize 'secondary discourse'/the 'local', a vain gesture in an abstract paper reinscribing simplistic binaries: "when critique is cast as strictly 'local, ad hoc, and ameliorative,' no large-scale, systematic problems can be addressed" (Fraser and Nicholson in Kaplan, 1996, 17). In dialogue we negotiate strategic totalizations, post modernisms and monoliths, intervene both in and between global and local. Singing solo text, affirmations and denials of local/global ring hollow: fil(f)ailing disgust and desire I crave/flee 'expertocratic' status. The relations of power I am referring to are not reducible to binary oppositions or oppressor/oppressed relations. I want to suggest that it is possible to retain the idea of multiple, fluid structures of domination which intersect to locate women [and men] differently at particular historical conjunctures, while at the same time insisting on the dynamic oppositional agency of individuals and collectives and their engagement in 'daily life'" (Mohanty in Kaplan, 1996, 183). Critiques of linguistic imperialism must be contextual and at times uncaring: "Care is an insidious key word for a characteristically Western thing. John McKnight calls it the 'mask of love'... in the theological sense of 'Christian charity' as an unprecedented ideal, its institutionalized corruption of 'care' is historically unique. A commodity-intensive society is, above all, care-intensive. As such a society 'develops', most of the individuals who make it up justify their existence by producing care. The fellow-citizen is needed mainly as an object of the care over which care providers have established a radical monopoly. The need for care in such a society becomes the foundation of disabling professions" (Ilich, 1982, 151). I struggle not to be a disabling professional.
Radical? “The logic of capitalism is dispersive and disjunctive in the first place and does not lend itself toward wholes of whatever kind” (Jameson, 1991, 100). Status quo?

There is no Archimedean polyglot (unglot?) peak to examine language from. An absurd notion--a veritable koan: what is the sound of one word napping—the point (or better, a provisional handle) is not to unravel, taxonomize or escape language but to be aware of it as code(d) and coding, a mutable mutating social construction. Language is a virus (William Burroughs): instead of essentializing it as innocent or imperialist, how do we take it up, how is it actually used? Have scholars been eager to overlook the creative ways in which people engage and transform language?

My intellectual fascination with Japan as ‘text’ dove-tails with four years in a Japanese milieu to inform and bias these attempts at displacing fixed notions of subjectivity. Can textual stabs tickling identity promise more than conceptual pleasure or intellectual t/error? If we can see the reflections of ourselves/Others in radically new configurations, can we not discover more effective and respectful ways of dis/connecting? Or is this a read herring, the de/construction of linguistic imperialism aligning a deceptive sense of coherence, connection and agency by constructing the Other “through a structure of inverse sameness” (Frow, 1995, 78)? What assumptions are made about Others as well as our own subjectivity and power when we see ‘them’ as ‘colonized’?3 How do theories of linguistic imperialism allow for the location and interests of the critic to be erased, and with what consequences?

3 “Imperialism, like many abstract nouns, under-emphasizes activity, temporality and situatedness and other contextual factors” (Muhlhausler, 1996, 20). Bhabha observes that the Other “forever the exegetical horizon of difference, never the active agent of articulation” (Bhabha cited in Yoshimoto Mitsuhiro, 1993, 345). I would predicate discussions of linguistic imperialism with Chambers’ observation that “if you lack your own space, you have to get along in the network of already established forces and representations. And it is in such historical details, in the often unobserved and overlooked everyday politics of her- and histories, that we can cut the older ideological knot between capital and culture” (Chambers, 1993, 192). When do such unravellings occur, when is the un/tying of such knots merely the bread and paté of academics?
Koan Theory

[Language] evolves by subterranean stems and flows, along river valleys or train tracks; it spreads like a patch of oil (Deleuze, 1993, 30).

I hesitate to dissemble “useful theory [having] as a primary goal not the refinement of concepts, but successful political activity” (Anyon, 1994, 129). Calling yet never escaping the bluff of the abstract(ing) lone scholar, I seek to unhinge the back doors/trap doors of useless theory instead of smugly reinforcing what I already know. ‘Useful theory’ can be an oxymoron. Sustaining gaps between theory and practice (academic Taylorism reifying the [im]positions of philosopher kings?), decontextualized agendas of ‘useful theory’ risk scouting well-trodden ground (pastoral allegory, vanishing primitive, origin quest) to re-circulate familiar common sense assumptions buttressing tired notions of identity.

Playing catch with ourselves, tossing recycled presumptions and prescriptions bouncing the already known, we guarantee an unreflective reproduction of the status quo: “our textual products—lecture, book, essay, review, conference paper—overwhelmingly confirm a writing that does not exceed what is expected of it” (Cohen, 1993, 25). Frustrated by what is not said (“Why isn’t the critical fascination with power treated as a ruse of power?” [ibid, 4]) in most academic writing, in an attempt to nudge a predictable product towards a (multi-directional) process, a Deleuzean rhizome, I toss out curve balls of trickster theory...koan theory...for the reader to swing at, catch, ignore, re- and defigure.

Contra binaries, the rhizome “enacts the subjectivities of deterritorialization: burrowing through substance, fragmenting into simultaneous sprouts, moving with a certain stealth, powerful in its dispersion. Rejecting the classic, Western humanist metaphors of family trees and genealogies, the rhizome destabilizes the conventions of origins and endings” (Kaplan, 1996, 87).

The ‘novelty’ of trickster theory old news to the colonized: “encounters and negotiations of differential meanings and values within the governmental discourses and cultural practices that make up ‘colonial’ textuality have enacted, avant la lettre, many of the problematics of signification and judgement that have become current in contemporary theory: aporia, ambivalence, indeterminacy, the question of discursive closure, the threat to agency, the status of intentionality [and] the challenge to ‘totalizing’ concepts” (Bhabha, Freedom’s Basis, 48). Occluding differential material histories, messing with/in theory, I distort, manage, emphasize and ignore injustice, white privilege and the booty it mined during Japan’s bubble...
Far more important than finding a new paradigm (T.O. [Transitional Object]) is coming to face with the immense yearning that underlies the need for paradigm itself. This means exploring what we fear most, viz., the empty space or silence that exists between concepts and paradigms, never in them (Berman, 1990, 307).

Fuelled and burdened by assumptions and epiphanies gleaned from my engagement with Japanese culture and the disciplines of cultural studies, anthropology and critical pedagogy, this work is a self-reflexive essay stretching current boundaries and understandings of cross-disciplinary academic writing. I am aware that, to borrow from Chambers, it is far easier to confer sense rather than to discover it. Cognisant of a tendency for scholarship to create self-contained worlds supported only by linguistic pyrotechnics, I open my research for collaboration and scrutiny (not only) by native speakers of Japanese. While this gives me the privilege to interpret and represent their views (as Spivak notes, no concept escapes a Nietzschean will to power [Spivak, 88-89]) it nevertheless challenges the conceit of the solitary and omniscient

---

6 A conscious/obscene construction. I de/form koan theory as a playful ruse, koans understood as only an outsider can’t, replete with paradox, wonder, and delight. Barthes “believes that the haiku breaches meaning: it is intelligible, yet means nothing; it suspends language, as does the koan, to produce insight” (Camargo and Sherry, 1987, 181). I tread between mystification and definition, failing both. Somewhere thick French accents: all texts always already ‘koans’. Dislodging East West: why ‘Zen’, why not fractals, Goedel’s undecidability, Heisenberg’s uncertainty principal, chaos theory? I cringe—so California—at ahistorical New Age fetishizations of packaged indeterminacy. Yet I slip koan slides, ‘Japan’ not ‘California’ authorizing the mystical (see footnote 113), so groovy they know something we don’t. “Ethnography’s ‘end of description’ and seemingly schizoid flight from functionalist totalizations and the illusions of de-politicized empiricism reflect a wide-spread tremor of the postmodern condition in which master narratives of Western enlightenment and emancipation break down, free themselves from claims to history and mastery, turn fictive, and thereby undermine their own claims to truth-status. Yet this avant-gardist death (or hyper-production) of narrative may be symptomatic less of generic (or paradigm) exhaustion and more of a larger social crisis of mimetic contagion: the imposition of commodity logic and sublime irreality on a blandly global scale that makes critique or resistance doomed to capitulation, or at best to recapitulation of Late Capital’s processes, whether as theory...or as contestational art” (Wilson, 1993, 321-322). Or koan theory?

7...with many spins. I crawl a tension to my appropriation of Zen. Do we condemn speaking for the Other because they are inscrutable/need protection? What lack drives such projections? And/or eradications: often “speech about the ‘Other’ is a mask, an oppressive talk hiding gaps, absences, that space where our words would be if we were speaking, if we were there....Often this speech about the ‘Other’ annihilates, erases” (hooks cited in Anyon, 1994, 126-127). Stopping the usurpation of other voices is a first and crucial step. But kept as unexamined agenda and truism, it is useless. What is step 2? Does the condemnation of koan theory imply that identity is fixed, bordered by foreign script, impervious? Or do we condemn this not to safeguard what is deemed (made) ‘fragile’ and ‘exotic’, but to listen? How do we listen, at what points do we assume that identity is authenticity (the “native point of view” a “privileged level of analysis” [Geertz cited in Gavin, 1995, 38])? Swirl of social compass (seeking Truth Norths of Michigan Militia or Critical Theory) determining which margins we point to/from and who we are pulled uncritically toward above and under...
As a white, male scholar, as well as the colonial construction of the East as a homogeneous ‘object’ to exploit/worship.

This work continues and comments on a (sincere [but never total?]) effort to unlearn privilege.

---

8 I take to heart Giroux’s caveat about scholarship devolving into colonial tourism if it is “reduced to an intellectual practice that merely privileges the authoritative persona of the ‘seer’” (Giroux, 1993, 243). While committed to cross-cultural communication, I am wary of “border crossing[s] in which the Other becomes a resource for academic appropriation and valorization” (ibid). However, it is disingenuous to condemn academe while enjoying its privileges. Guilt figuratively and literally sucks: “[post-colonial intellectuals] speak with power but identify with powerlessness... [drawing power from] others’ deprivation while refusing to acknowledge its own presence as endowed” (Chow cited in Kaplan, 1996, 109). 

9 Those with the privilege to unlearn, earn. “In the professional realm of the academy, social domination is part of the scholarly obsession with those Enlightenment inducements to capitalist differentiation: progress, innovation, and originality. In a competitive atmosphere that requires constant achievement, the modernist demand of the new becomes the highest of intellectual values. In art history, anthropology, sociology, and now, to a certain extent, cultural studies, this translates into a relentless search for the exotic” (Trend, 1995, 39). Root rocks the questioning of privilege: “Why would relatively privileged white people, both in the countercultural delirium of the 1960’s and in the more corporate milieu of today’s New Age, identify with people who are presented as victims time and time again?...[Doxtator] calls this the ‘I’m a victim too’ complex. Indeed, Nietzsche conceives something like this complex as the very core of Christian culture, underlining the link between pity and contempt. Thinking of someone else as a victim is a way of displacing one’s own pain; in reactive Christian thinking, the individual imagines himself less of a victim than someone else because the latter is more of a victim than he is. White hippies do tend to recognize some of the oppressive aspects of industrial, consumerist society but express this understanding by focusing on and identifying with people who seem to be even more oppressed, thus reproducing...defeated victims” (Root, 1996, 100). Can textual angst undo much? “Consoling ourselves with the illusion of activity in the drama of self-situation, [do] we also situate ourselves into new complacencies” (Berlant and Warner, 1994, 112)?

-the impossibility of unlearning white privilege must unlearn ‘unlearning white privilege’
-power is part of every social interaction
-oh I have positioned myself
-What communitarians/real power relations are addressed and ignored by grad school thesis ritual
-self-abnegation in conference, sacrifice in italics
-costs nothing, as sincere as disingenuous, consolidating snoblesse oblige
-dragging me up
-too too easy to flag and flog not only the decontextualized reification of ‘white privilege’
-but also the abstract of my abstracting
-far from food banks
-social justice a stanza ex/cited
-fighting shame’s bounty

these op/positions delineating privilege in and from paper to rep (not only cultural) capital later?
In place of stopwatch and Stroop test,¹⁰ this study warps tangents of ethnography, critical research and collaborative investigation to open the question of English within Japanese. This is not done to reify native Japanese speakers as a “pristine ‘source’ of cultural authenticity” (McLaren, 1995, 274) but to examine and problematize processes of language, subjectivity and (especially) their analysis. However, I dread engaging Japanese speakers to create ‘data’ to interpret. My questioning of language/identity pre-dates and will post-date my academic dalliance. The insight, confusion, and pleasure flowing from dialogues on/from three continents cannot be fixed in these pages. I have attempted to open up this personal and conceptual work to Japanese speakers in an attempt to foster dialogue and collaboration. I have no maps for this, and struggle to re-draw the familiar grids of medieval solo scholarship.

My language skills are not up to academic conversations in Japanese. This skews the discussions that I can have. My research is doubly vexed by (what is misunderstood by outsiders as) a Japanese tendency to respond to strangers with uncritical formulaic responses. Loveday summarizes: “as has been widely documented and analysed, the Japanese do not generally express themselves directly and openly in public, non-intimate settings, where their behaviour tends to be characterized (from a Western perspective) as introverted, circumspect, shy, and uncommitted, as a result of classifying situations and people in terms of insider and outsider frameworks (see Lebra, 1976: ch. 7; Barnlund, 1975)” (Loveday, 1996, 171).

Interviews: a sincere and failed attempt to avoid my ahistorical blush...

¹⁰ Browsed journals reveal an a/political bias. The minutae of detail and positivism run rampant; instead of political economy, scholars ponder postvocalic r-lessness. I concur with Fettes that “linguistics has been every bit as dismal a failure as economics. By removing knowledge about language from its social context and thereby reducing it to whatever can be conveniently described in textual form, modern linguistics has built an ideological edifice which rationalizes inequality and oppression, in ways precisely parallel to those described by Michel Foucault (The Archaeology of Knowledge) and Dorothy Smith (The Conceptual Practices of Power). The ‘disciplinary’ effects of linguistics have been incorporated into the heart of modern educational theory. Because of this underlying discourse, schools have consistently and predictably failed to provide equal access to prestige forms of the standard language or effective instruction in second languages. Equally predictably, their most effective linguistic intervention has been to reduce the viability of minority languages worldwide” (Fettes, no pagination).
I am not an “insider” and will not ask someone to “mediate” between researcher/researchee as Lebra suggests. I spoke mostly to people I know, and am fortunate to have made the acquaintance of some remarkable Japanese scholars. While a narrow (almost exclusively female, educated and culturally hybrid) selection of the Japanese population, their excitement and insight do far more than confirm or contradict the ideas that shuffle my text. They put abstract questions on a human scale, reminding me how important they are (and how limited academia can be in addressing them).

The objects of analysis are also analyzing subjects, who critically interrogate ethnographers, their writings, their ethics, their politics (Rosaldo, 1989, 21).

I speak with friends and attempt interviews. I feel shame and absurdity in pinning these encounters down with consent form and microphone. However, e-mail correspondence surprises me with its generosity and frankness. My correspondents and I—home? diary? alone but?—are far more comfortable with e-mail than taped interviews.

Laden with books from Kimukuniya, I walk into an artist’s studio in San Francisco’s Japantown. Sheepishly, I bring up loanwords. The artist offers a Japanese proverb about a frog at the bottom of a well defining its world by these walls.

---

11 What if I spoke with burakumin (‘untouchables’), Tokyo Koreans, Brazilian second generation Japanese, seniors, Okinawans, indigenous Ainu? “How are you going to collect data? Interviewing? If so, are you going to interview Japanese in Japan? I can be an informant but I don’t think Japanese living abroad are good informants. If I were you, I’d collect data from Japanese in Japan. Perception of loanwords changes after living abroad for a certain period of time” (private correspondence, Japanese linguist, PhD candidate).

12 “Confucian ideology characterises friendship as a relationship of equality, indeed, the only dyad in the Confucian order of things characterised in this way” (Hendry, 1992, 170). Making friends through this work, I vacillate between the excitement of collaboration and uneasiness about ‘using’ the wisdom of friends to fill the pages I am obligated to. Yes, collaboration! grinds who am I to ‘give’ ‘them’ ‘voice’? This chorus, however sincere, can be the saddest refrain in the academy: most vile would be to garner benefits from these conversations while stagnating in guilty solo choruses. How to sing in harmony, how to collaborate? I find hope in Dorothy Smith’s practice of feminist scholarship where “the multiple perspectives of subjects, the multiple possible versions of the world arising in subjects’ experience, create a problem for [not only] sociology only when our project is to establish a sociological version superseding theirs” (Smith, D. 1987, 141). This hope shrinks when I consider how strong academic resistance is toward such multiple perspectives.
The Beast of Initial Intentions: Excerpt From Thesis Proposal

After having these directions vetted by the appropriate ethical review procedures, I will:

a) engage Japanese speakers in discussions about linguistic imperialism and English loanwords within Japanese. This opens spaces to explore the questions/answers they find relevant to their lived experiences. Attempting to challenge the traditional hierarchy of knower and known, I bring to this research not questions but an openness to dialogue.

b) discuss these issues over the Internet (as well as through the regular postal system). I will attempt to facilitate a multi-party dialogue by approaching Japanese Studies departments of universities where I have contacts and other appropriate academic sites and forums including INTERCUL (a site for cross-cultural studies), EASIANTH (a list for anthropologists studying Asia) and H-Japan (a bilingual refereed list for academics interested in Japan).

I will solicit feedback and input from respondents at every possible stage of this process.

---

13 Solo in library, or with permission, speaking with friends. A(s)elf-contained process. Regulating relating, experts coax disciplines, data and careers from non-scholars...

14 Asking permission to quote correspondence was often a stereotypically ‘Japanese’ experience (beginning with my unease). Wishing to establish clear-cut consent, I would ask permission to quote a person and suggest they choose a pseudonym. All names—except people wanting to be cited—are pseudonyms in this work. In one case, I received a playful pseudonym, but my query for permission was ignored. While I suspected that this was a ‘yes’ and not just an explanation of a name she likes, I had to ask:

> A while ago I asked if I could quote you under a pseudonym....you sent me a
> pseudonym...does this mean it's o.k. to quote you under it?
> I am a little confused, you did not say 'yes' but you did send this [pseudonym]

Indeed, you pointed out the Japanese way of replying ambiguously. When I sent that kind of content, it means that you can use pseudonym. If you were a Japanese person, you would understand it perfectly cannot change my habit of using that kind of ambiguity. Thanks for pointing it out. I will be careful when I reply to non-Japanese. It’s really interesting.

(e-mail, Yukari Nao)
Invited to meet with Japanese environmentalists and activists, I was excited and wary: ‘language imperialism’ over lunch, I would probably make them speak English with each other. In and between our languages, it was a fantastic meeting with almost four hours of enthusiastic discussion. Although there was an excitement for the questions swirling this work—we spoke extensively of linguistic imperialism/identity—I cringed at the thought of asking them to sign a consent sheet and become ‘subjects’ for this study. I have no desire to extinguish debate, disagreement and humour along an axis of expert and interviewee.

Again (and again): who am I to ‘give’ them ‘voice’? What arrogance! My study flounders in that I cannot ‘gain’ from or codify our exploration and friendship.

I find it difficult to see this as a ‘loss’.

The day after this meeting, I run into Tara Goldstein and blurt out my unease. She suggests that I take field notes about this meeting and do so after subsequent social encounters and recorded interviews as it will be fascinating to see what changing a context with a microphone may (not) do. I agree, and am grateful that my angst has become an opportunity.

The unease returns. While I have interviewed many (often ‘famous’) people as a freelance writer, I have conducted but one academic interview and cannot escape the feeling that I had used a friend, making her life fodder for an essay. Reading this, I realize that I have not seen her since the interview a year ago. Did it change something? While I was encouraged and heartened by Tara’s liminal pronouncement that we both have to struggle with questions of position and privilege, I do not share her experience of (or commitment to?) ethnography. At this time, the University is not my preferred site for education/community. I have not applied for a PhD. and seek other forums for communication and connection. Given this, my study skirts crisis and un-doing before it starts: how can I interview people, let alone take notes on a social gathering without telling those involved?
I face an immobilizing shame: if I ask people to be interviewed, will they conclude that their worth to me is as ‘informants’, that my interest is in their Otherness? I suspect this seems... irrational. For whatever reasons, to whatever outcomes, this is where I am/write from. These are the ethical issues confusing and angering me. I am ever more uncomfortable with “the enjoyable role of ethnographer/consumer and the positions of heightened authority which accompany the power to totalize and appropriate” (Curtis and Pajaczkowska, 1994, 201).

Bureaucratic codification of loanwords\(^{15}\): while the Ministry of Construction “sponsors a council whose task it is to map out what is intra-departmentally referred to as the charming construction of identity postmodern theory?” (Honna, 1995, 53) a Ministry of Education “Committee on Foreign Loan-Word Writing Styles” (Loveday, 1996, 160) assembled to pronounce and define official patterns in loanwords (i.e. whether telephone is pronounced and spelled as terefon or terehon) so that their pronunciation is nearer to the original English (ibid, 161). The interim progress-report of December 1988 “declared that loose rules were necessary for katakana spellings of foreign words, and that orthographic variations for one word should be accepted, although the committee would select one ‘representative’ pattern” (ibid).

“There was little support for the symbolic recognition of the sound /l/, but strong support for the official approval of the /v/ sound” (ibid).

I am invited to a party with the same group of people and am told with humour and a embarrassment that it will be a “Japanese” party. I am relieved they will not speak English for my sake. It is an enjoyable night. While much of the conversation is lost to me, it touches language, identity and cross-cultural communication. Loanwords are easily recognized (‘sub-culture’). To my chagrin and (defiant, self-defeating) joy, I realize it is absurd to type a list of loanwords and ask people if these terms create liminal spaces for them (etc.). While I strongly believe these questions are important, I realize as the loanwords fly by that they cannot be defined or captured in the abstract. Their meanings and dynamics cannot exist outside of specific contexts. I cannot pin ‘meaning’ to loanwords in the abstract. This is something academe cannot and must not pretend to capture.

\(^{15}\) Before the Meiji restoration (‘modernization’, 1868) loanwords were called bango (barbarian words) (Loveday, 1996, 48).
Fumbling beyond the consumption—‘production’ of knowledge, I resist a closed thesis addressing only professors. I have limited interest in a static document/trophy. Can this be something else? I have contributed to/learned from hundreds of discussions in the course of this work: while it can only be partial and limited—why this redundant predication, does it betray a wish to spin neat grand narratives?—the larger project (intractable thesis-as-verb) has another dynamic. The dialogical nature of my encounters cannot be captured here. Limit and liberation, these meetings were pivotal in making this work even more (!) ‘conceptual’.

In Orientalism, the ‘Orient’, occulted and fragile, is brought lovingly to light, salvaged in the work of the outside scholar...[and] confers on the Other a discrete identity, which also provides the knowing observer with a standpoint from which to see without being seen, to read without interruption’ (Clifford cited in Saper, 1997).

I cannot ask Japanese to outline and de-code individual loanwords and thus define what it means for ‘them’.

I ask, understated and only once, if people would like to participate in my research. I do not push it.

Neither do they.

Diary: More (Than) I

One way in which [not only] the sociological discourse has maintained its hegemony over experience has been by insisting that we must begin with a conceptual apparatus or a theory drawn from the discipline, if only because to embark on inquiry without such a conceptual framework exposes us to the wild incoherence of ‘history’ or of the actualities of people’s lives....the implication that the actualities of the everyday world are unformed and unorganized and that the sociologist cannot enter them without a conceptual framework to select, assemble and order them is one that we can now understand in this special relation of a sociology constituted as part of a ruling apparatus vis-à-vis which the local and particular, the actualities of the world that is lived, are necessarily untamed, disordered, and incoherent (Smith, D., 1987, 89-90).
Scholarship offers privilege and constraint. Notwithstanding a determination to tease the bounds of academic discourse, and despite attempts to problematize my writing, it is rooted in positivism and patriarchy, juggling what and what-not to churn the self-identical. To challenge this I offer collage instead of univocal meaning and linear argument. Because I concur with Okely that “reflexivity forces us to think through the consequences of our relations with others, whether it be conditions of reciprocity, asymmetry or potential exploitation” (Okely, 1992, 24) I weave this text with quotations, advertisements, loanwords, dream and a diary.

As positioned subjects “we are obliged to confront the moral and political responsibility of our actions” (ibid). My textual disruptions are an attempt to escape depersonalized authority, challenge homo rationalis and allow for a wider and more honest questioning of emotions and uncertainties. They are meant to create tensions and illuminations, and I trust their intersections will subvert and support my explorations in ways that I cannot foresee.16

If not for institutional fixations, this would be published in cyberspace as hypertext. Multiple points of entry allow readers to navigate texts in ways relevant to their interests/desires. I wish to circumvent projections of my questions as your questions for “the elitism of intellectuals comes, not merely from our assumption that we already know the answers, but even more from our assumption that we already know the questions” (Grossberg, 1994, 20).

Poetry17

16 Autobiography “expresses all the ambiguities of our postmodern culture. In the current climate of our ironic self-awareness, autobiography has indeed lost much of its innocence. It has become the vehicle of our epistemistic evasions, our social and psychic vexations. The innate contradictions of autobiography emerge to confirm the cunning of our knowledge” (Hassan, 1990, 20, italics mine).

17 Logic is stingy, art generous (Desmond, 1995, 106). “Art—this semitization of the symbolic...represents the flow of jouissance into language....cracking the socio-symbolic order, splitting it open, changing vocabulary, syntax, the word itself and releasing from beneath them the drives borne by vocalic or kinetic differences, jouissance works its way into the social” (Kristeva cited in Grosz, 1989, 55-56). Art—re-forging master’s tools?—“serves to ‘legitimise’ non-phallic jouissance by giving symbolic expression to the semiotic. The avant-garde goes further than other artistic practices; not only does it introduce jouissance to the social; it makes jouissance exceed the socially tolerable boundaries of representation, problematising the very concept of identity” (Grosz, 1989, 56). Loanwedges self & alter limitpromise of my quest. Auto“Individuals always started, and always start, from themselves. Their relations are the relations of their real life. How does it happen that their relations assume an independent existence over against them? And that the forces of their own life overpower them?”[Marx and Engels, 30]biography, thesis sedimented to c/leave dichotomous & absolute folding forward to be read simultaneous and knot: hypertext.
We have not truly got rid of God if we still believe in grammar-Nietzsche

My narrative orders, seeks in coherence, speaks of, to, and with movement. I believe 'Theory', like poetry, decenters reader and writer to 'make the familiar strange'. (Japan=)

Immense confusion tickling the immediacy of being. I risk collapsing into novelty, pretence and obfuscation, into and out of 'Japan'. I risk poetry, to challenge both my own and the academy's conventions. I am tired of—and realize I can never fully escape—the self-same.

Language is not a transparent medium, nor am I a self-sufficient individual: as I cannot pretend to understand the complexities involved in this writ(h)ing, it would be disingenuous to claim that I reject all attempts to 'master the reader'. However, I believe hypertext does subvert this to some degree. Furthermore, an intense constellation of contradictions,

---

18 With no 'local'/'practice' at hand, I boast elliptical rejections of 'grand narratives'; unable to save the world, I rant I don't want to play...yet this is written and read. Perhaps twice. My anti/scholarship is condemned and inspired by Smith's feminism: "rather than explaining behaviour, we begin from where people are in the world, explaining the social relations of the society of which we are part, explaining an organization that is not fully present in any one individual's everyday existence. Since the procedures, methods, and aims of present sociology give primacy to the concepts, relevances, and topics of the discourse, we cannot begin from within that frame. This would sustain the hegemony of the discourse over the actualities of the everyday experience of the world. It is precisely that relation that constitutes the break or fault disclosed by the woman's movement" (Smith, D. 1987, 89). My disruptions are'n't disingenuous and are in most ways masculinist: "Power, fleeing its basis in sexuality generally and male subjectivity specifically, becomes now a viral power, a power which speaks only in the previously transgressive feminist language of absence, rupture, plurality, and the trace" (Kroker, A. & M., 1991, ix). Do I when all is writ and un/done seek "to hide the privileging of the phallocentric gaze by theorizing the disappearance of power into seduction" (ibid)? I fear I reinforce and re-pair traditional academic frames. I am fascinated by/wary of Kristeva's notion that "only those with a secure position in the symbolic may have access to its transgression" (Grosz, 1989, 69). This, of course, is no transgression. She "accords a transgressive status to avant-garde texts produced by men, even though there are many women who may also fit into this category....in not occupying a phallic position in the symbolic, women can only imitate men, act in ways that are modelled on men's behaviour" (ibid). Women rivet masculinist discourse to succeed, men ostensibly disrupt it. To succeed. Dylan: "there's no success like failure, and failure's no success at all".

19 Lacan's symbolic order, insistent chains strangling meaning, self "heterogeneous, multiple, indeterminate, quite like a signifier jostling among the infinite signifiers of the Symbolic Order. Hence the phenomenon of aphanisis, the subject's 'fading,' its alienation or 'fundamental division'. Aphanisis rumours the end of reflexive certainty, the quietus of the Cartesian cogito" (Hassan, 1990, 38). Away from cogito...does it trap/force us to achieve identity by "saying what one is not...by reaching out to otherness and then holding it dialectically at bay" (Rapport, 1997, 194)? "To define what we are, we depend on what is alien. To call Japan a paradox is really to say that it threatens the existing boundaries and therefore our definition of ourselves" (Littlewood, 1996, 8). Or, contra binaries, is there, as Eagleton delineates Kristeva's Lacanian project, "a pattern or play of forces which we can detect inside language, and which represents a sort of residue of the pre-Oedipal phase" (Eagleton, 1983, 188)? Kristeva's semiotic "involves both the inscription of polymorphous
impulses across the child’s body; and the return of these infantile inscriptions....in the form of rhythms, intonations, melody accompanying all representation” (Grosz, 1989, 44). Eagleton traces the psychoanalytic paradigm: “this heterogeneous flow must be as it were chopped up, articulated into stable terms, so that in entering the symbolic order this ‘semiotic’ process is repressed” (Eagleton, 1983, 188 ). Yet repression is never total “for the semiotic can still be discerned as a kind of pulsional pressure within language itself, in tone, rhythm, the bodily and material qualities of language... also in contradiction, meaninglessness, disruption, silence and absence” (ibid). Terms absent from parsings of linguistic imperialism. Terms describing my experience of Japan. Wonder and alterity, the disillusion of self, the pre-Oedipal, flows and repressions altogether different in Japan? Barthes’ semiosis, Kristeva’s semiotic warp my journey, for “what might constitute Japanese culture as the basis of self-knowledge is also unknowable, changeful, never fixed, always an open text containing a ‘surplus of meaning,’ and hence never beyond doubt, and that, therefore, even the rights of the ‘father tongue’ will always vacillate” (Najita citing Barthes, 1989, 5) or capitulate; leaping text and theory, ‘Japan’ quiets my probing (frustrated in ‘real’ Japan, overdone in theory?). I experience/intuit differently in Japan. I am suspicious of psychoanalysis, but is it reductionist to consider Japan’s fragmentation or silencing of ‘father tongue’ as a play of the oceanic/semiotic/pre-Oedipal, as offering space to lose self (-insistence), a pace to make the symbolic more fluid? Is ‘Japan’ a convenient thetic (“the threshold between the semiotic and the symbolic” [Grosz 1989, 45]), and what of psychoanalysis and the desire to spin Japan-as-Woman as Other? Compare Butler’s observation that the female sex is ‘‘the subject’ that is not one” (Butler cited in Lippit, unpaginated) with Japan as “a deliberate self-conscious creation of certain individual artists” (Wilde cited in ibid). Inventing woman/Japan, a masculinist fascination.“The deconstruction or multiplication of the subject that Butler locates in the female sex resembles the curious investment in that many Japanologists maintain in a Japan ‘that is not one.’”(Lippit, ibid). Vampiric (?)“the process of exoticification is another kind of cultural cannibalism: that which is deemed different is consumed, its aesthetic forms taken up and used to construct a dream of the outside and sometimes of escape from the Western nightmare. Exotic images feed particular cultural, social, and political needs of the appropriating culture. This is why colonial adventures continue to be romanticized and why the consumption of the spectacle of difference is able to make the alienated Westerner feel alive”(Root, 1996, 30). This may apply to the alienated Easterner. I am fascinated by the synchronicity of Lacanian rifts with the intensely maternal tropes of Japanese self-understanding (Juzo Itami, director of Tampopo: “There is a complete lack of a father figure in Japan....[it] is a cultural invention nurtured...by the west” [Itami cited in McGregor, 1996, 246]): the fetish of mothers’ devotion to children (thus they do not?) experience ego separation as early as Western kids, they do not experience separation quite as firmly through...early and adult life” [Goldstein and Tamura, 1975, 149] etc.), businessmen diaper indulged in baby game brothels, the maza-con (mother complex) scandal in the mid-80’s involving kiyoiku mamas (education mothers) who “confessed to having sex with their sons, to rid them of distractions from their studies” (McGregor, 1996, 247). Popeye, a men’s magazine, details “46 maza-con techniques that men could use to attract, and turn on, the nurturing instinct in young Japanese women”(ibid, 248). Asada tells a secret only gaijin miss: “despite frequent argument about Confucian patriarchy, the Japanese family is an essentially maternal arena of ‘amae,’ indulgence, and both the father and the children are softly wrapped in it (in other words, the mother is forced to provide that kind of care)”(Asada, 1989, 276). Amae also from the hardness of loudspeakers: please pay attention, the bus is turning a corner. Please remember your umbrella. Be careful leaving the bus. Lift your ski tips. Don’t leave anything behind(triggered in some taxis by the [automatic, ghost-like] opening of the door (McGregor, 1996, 113-114). I watch the Nagano Olympics, intruded by opening ceremonies dedicating the Games to “children and...” humanity a separate (fallen?) entity. “When Children Rule the World” is sung, Japan no longer a threat—except as comic Godzilla gobbling snowboarder in beer ad—but quaint, folklore replacing economic frenzy, children, not money, ruling the world. But I am wary of Freudian analysis: are repression? ‘Oedipus’ Western tropes? Can the semiotic echo the amniotic? While connected with femininity, the semiotic is not “a language exclusive to women, for it arises from a pre-Oedipal period which recognizes no distinctions in gender” (ibid). Kristeva’s ‘semiotic’ (like de/constructions of ‘Japan’) confuses “all tight divisions between masculine and feminine—it is a ‘bisexuality’ form of writing—and offers to deconstruct all the scrupulous binary oppositions: proper/improper, norm/deviation, sane/mad, mine/yours, authority/obedience” (ibid, 189). These textual pleasures—the “old [infantile] joy of passive, effortless wish-fulfilment” (Dinnerstein, 1976, 60)—
consoling us "though only in part, for the inexorable loss of our pure infant sense of omnipotent oneness with the world" (ibid, 145). I cannot bracket phallocencterism. Yet as the semiotic is within our conventional sign-systems "transgressing their limits" (Eagleton, 1983, 190), my de-generation of knowledge teases language to both approach and flee 'Japan'7 the semiotic. I am intrigued by the notion of bisexual writing, yet does such a "facile and intricate textual dance... refuse to assume a shape for which [I]... must take responsibility" (Newton, 1993, 7)? Dance, text de-sexed, _deterritorialized_. Semiotic, _amniotic_, _Japan: constructions of and fleeing capitalism_? Deleuze and Guattari historicize Oedipus disclosing how 'political economy' and 'libidinal economy' overlap to manage our desires, duplicating "the structure of our capitalist economy as well as accounting for our psyches" (Treat, 1995, 293). When psychoanalysis sings to me, I fear this echoes in a western register. Freud begs to be historicized, his work reflecting "Europe's deep involvement in the business of colonial empire and slavery, enterprises repugnant enough to warrant their obliteration from the consciousness of people who had a stake in thinking themselves, ambiguously, as being more civilized 'than that.' In the topography of this New World of the mind, primal and potentially dangerous dark forces were subordinated to more developed powers of light, inside and outside worlds constructed as mirror images of each other" (Pollack, 1992, 192-193). _If_ psychoanalysis speaks from/to capitalism, pre-Oedipal parings may not fit Japanese experience. Asada's brilliant _Infantile Capitalism and Japan's Post modernism: A Fairy Tale_ historicizes/parodies both capitalism and Oedipalization. _Elderly capitalism_ (categories from a conversation between Asada and Guattari) in countries that developed mercantilism earlier (France, Italy) create a "vertically centralized system, supported by the Subject, with a capital S. Only in relationship with this Subject can each individual find the position of his own self, and identify himself as the subject. The position of this capitalized Subject is occupied by God, the King, the father, or in economics, gold" (Asada, 1989, 274). Despite to spit such transcendental signifiers "capitalism starts to operate by striking off the head in the center and by decoding the system... by a process of dynamic differentiation in which differences [manuscripts, Big Mac] are constantly created and consumed" (ibid). The United States is an "adult" capitalism where "leading roles are no longer played by the possessors of transcendental values embodied by gold, but by the entrepreneurs who will invest values into the endless process of growth" (ibid). Internalizing competition, the subject begins to "compete with himself [sic]" (ibid), i.e. Oedipalization "has come to make itself its own colony" (ibid, 275). Asada continues the fetish of Japan-as-child: "Japan did not at all mature. Far from it. It seems to be growing progressively more infantile"(ibid). Noting how smoothly Japanese capitalism works (writing during a boom) Asada concludes that the formation of adult subjectivity is not necessary for capitalism or modernization (ibid). Asada is fascinating not only for the inaccuracy of his trajectory, but I quote him at length to show how widespread the link between 'Japan' and 'childhood' is. "There are neither tradition-oriented old people adhering to transcendental values nor inner-oriented adults who have internalized their values; instead, the nearly purely relative (or relativistic) competition exhibited by other-oriented children provides the powerful driving force" for Asada's "infantile capitalism" (ibid). He describes engineers "manoeuvred into displaying a childlike passion whereby they are easily obsessed with machines" (ibid). Through "advertising, people become carried away by word play, parody, and all the other childlike games of differentiation" (ibid, italics mine). Tracing capitals' migration from Europe through the Americas to the Pacific, Asada wonders whether "capitalism's history as a process of infantilization... might as well be called a parody of Hegelian world history" (ibid, 276). He answers no, but with a "burst of laughter. And, we might add, after laughing, that it is a playful utopia and at the same time a terrible 'dystopia'" (ibid). _Pre and/or Oedipal, free floating yet hoarding filthy lucre, my experience of capitalist Japan certainly was on the Funhouse slide_, as is my present writing. _Raising red flags and man manning barricades could only be disingenuous, a distracting mirror, show-and-tell_. I tug these tendrils wrestling History and Psyche to my story, here, by keyboard, extrapolating toward Simon's extrapolation from Levinas, I "imagine breaking totality through an excess of specificity, causing us to face an other which refracts categories" (Simon, 1995, 92). 'Jouissance 'tag-teams angst: at best the funhouse gets boring; at all times, it is built on blood. Footnotes --why is it more comfortable to speak in the margins?--in an institutional right of passage are a fool's shadow of struggle. Even in context and conversation, where coalitions of I and we address concrete situations ("the ethical relation occurs in the face-to-face relation, as witnessed in the demand for an ethics itself, a demand which it is as impossible to satisfy as it is to refuse" (Bernasconi, 1987, 135)) I am frustrated in the quest for an effective and ethical struggle for justice that does not
epiphanies and confusion (content and style) *best represents my experience not only of Japan but also of this academic journey.*

Once the Archimedean, transhistorical agent of knowledge is deconstructed into constantly shifting, wavering, recombining, historical groups, then a world that can be understood and navigated with the assistance of Archimedes’ map of perfect perspective also disappears. As Flax put the issue, “Perhaps ‘reality’ can have ‘a’ structure only from the falsely universalizing perspective of the master. That is, only to the extent that one person or group can dominate the whole, can ‘reality’ appear to be governed by one set of rules or be constituted by one privileged set of social relationships?” (Harding cited in Smith, D., 1987, 121).

*Kaleidoscope against panopticon:* I harbour a deep ambivalence toward claims to truth and transparency found in traditional academic discourse. Polyvocal collage risks replacing these masculinist tropes with a wily spectacle of (equally masculine) novelty and genius. Revealing is not erasing, but I find fumbling fault a more honest hypocrisy than the more traditional posturings of neuter and invisible scholar-observers. I would rather fail seeking something new than to succeed reproducing the old. To expand on Giroux: my ‘language of possibility’ must also be one of impossibility.

*I will leave lucidity to Kipling.*

______________________________

become another funhouse mirror. Cinderella’s castle at Tokyo Disneyland “The image in the mirror was rocking.” Mirror mirror on the wall, who’s the fairest of the in all?” in Japanese, of course, but in a foreign (gaijin) accent. Evil is represented as foreign, this is not unlike our custom of giving evil characters in spy movies foreign (usually German or Russian) accents and personas” (Braunen, 1992, 229-230). In footnotes—*to what beginnings, for what ends?—we only see(d) ourselves. How to break out of this? To collapse his vision of infantile capitalism, Asada has “purposefully continued to engage in a grotesque parody” (Asada, 1989, 278). He continues: “what remains to be done is to dismantle this perversion thoroughly, and from there to produce a realistic analysis. That work, however, is something I would like to undertake together with you, who know Japan better than I do, in future discussions. Can you hear me laughing?” (ibid).
> English In Japanese: Loanwords

> >

> puraibashii ajiru

> autosekkusu

> burudee feminisuto

> sekkusu sukinshippu seku

> hara

> uumanribu bosu

> furanku haafu

> rabu

> mensu toire

> komyuniti komyunikeshon konpurekkusu

> aidentiti

> mai (mai ka mai homu mai homu shugi)

> >

> > *ETC*

---

20 ‘Raw’ data. While larger questions of power, identity and language were evident and eagerly discussed in dialogues for this work, most engagements with loanwords per se were ‘apolitical’, slightly confused and markedly disinterested. The connections between loanwords/power were clearly not obvious ones. Bad faith? Unreflective, uncritical perspectives? Certainly some (to what?) degree of misunderstanding due to language. How am I to explain this? Am I to explain it? Are loanwords but a metonym, a pretext for an intriguing academic yarn? I do not consider participants ‘unreflective’; this is arrogant and assumes that the questions of a white western male are always already ‘important’. The movement of this work is a teasing out of these questions (and their questioning).

I reproduce this unedited; it is typical of my exchanges. Given the disinterest, I felt sheepish and refused to be aggressive and pry.

Loanwords from above list: Community, feminist, woman’s lib, love, community, identity: why are these (also) loanwords? When are they used? This question was almost universally found uninteresting and unanswerable. I read my list of loanwords and wonder why I chose them. What list would Japanese speakers choose? I cannot explain or explore these meta-questions in Japanese. Many of the participants are shy/disinterested/have difficulty with these questions in English. The very act of questioning slants this project westward. It cannot do otherwise. Thus—jettisoning tape recorder and list of loanwords—I have had to radically change my questions/approaches/focus.
>What do you think of these words? When do you prefer a
Japanese alternative?

When it sounds weird. If you use so many English words, it
sounds like you are showing off or trying to be cool.

>When do you use a loanword alternative?

When it is widely accepted. That means everyone can
understand—from children to the elderly.

>Which do you feel uncomfortable hearing?

SEX I will never use it, I will use some other words to imply
what it is.21

>Do you use English loanwords in ways that English speakers
cannot understand?

YES, because if you are talking in Japanese, you do not think
in English what the borrowed word really means in English.

>Do these loanwords feel "English" or "Japanese"... or
something else?

They are Japanese and has Japanese sounds to it. It would be
totally different if you pronounce them in English.22

(e-mail exchange with 23 year old Japanese university student)

21 This is an anomaly and contradicts the strong euphemistic function of loanwords clearly evident from
conversations and readings. Does this make her right, the others wrong? Am I to ‘judge’ between A and B?
22 This is diametrically opposed to the aforementioned notion that the “perception of loanwords changes after
living abroad for a certain period of time” (private correspondence, Japanese linguist, PhD candidate [see
footnote 6]). Both people have studied abroad. I, foreign expert—'old Japan hand'—am supposed to deem one
of them right, the other wrong?
Assumptions

Whatever construct of otherness has been historically and provisionally articulated from within a position of power/knowledge can and should be thoroughly deconstructed, interrogated, beleaguered, and laid bare as an optical illusion and regime of Western truth (Wilson, 1993, 333).

Words like Other and difference are taking the place of commonly known words deemed uncool or too simplistic, words like oppression, exploitation and domination (hooks, 1990, 51-52).

I am aware of the following assumptions circling this work:

Rationality and linear thought are a social construct.

Language is not given but re/constructed through social interaction. Subjectivity is multiple, contradictory and constantly changing: “Selves are embedded in specific situations and [not only!] discursively produced. Selfhood is a construct inseparable from rhetoricity and performativity and is imbricated with questions of power and cultural axiomatics” (Dissanayake, 1996, 198).\(^\text{23}\)

It is more ethical to err straining for moments of individual/collective activity, autonomy and agency than to succeed in reproducing the status quo.

\(^\text{23}\) “Discourses must also be seen as moments of power as well, since power is invariably implicated in any effort to represent knowledge. Such a view also rejects the received distinction between a ‘symbolic’ order and the ‘real’ as ontologically given in favour of a view of these claims as effects of historical and social forces. Discourses disclose in social practice how ‘reality’ and the ‘symbolic’ are constituted and related to each other; at the same time, they themselves are products of ‘real structures’” (Harootunian, 1988, 5).
Language is “only one possible means of communication, not the means of communication as is often the case among English speakers” (Kunihiro cited in Loveday 1986, 113).

Agendas of these truth claims as well as my counter-claims (disingenuous and real refusals to claim) must also be interrogated. Lacing scholarship with dream, desire and relentless self-reflection clarifies/interrogates complex relationships that are not immediately apparent.

A disrupted text reminds reader and writer of spaces outside of the work....and within: “the space of creativity is a space whose occupancy invites other occupancies” (Trinh T. Minh-Ha cited in Lippit, unpaginated).

Academic writing lags far behind polyvocal, self-reflective, and rhizomic visual arts, music, physics, popular entertainment, and advertisement.

Amateur ethnographer, tourist, ex-pat, son of refugees: I cannot un-wish the exemptions of (not only) white male privilege. We cannot speak for or understand other cultures, but we cannot escape them. Berger argues that movement around the globe is “the quintessential experience of our time” (Berger cited in Rapport, 1997, 69); “emigration, banishment, exile, labour migrancy, tourism, urbanisation and counter-urbanisation....being rootless, displaced between worlds, living between a lost past and a fluid present, are perhaps the most fitting metaphors for the journeying, modern consciousness” (Rapport, 1997, 69).

I cannot but engage the ‘global village’ and wish to do so as ethically as possible.

---

24 Thanks to Amish Morrell for enthusiastic discussions regarding ways of seeing. I am inspired by his (cubist?) collages of photographs that celebrate the periphery and call into question linear perspectives.
25 Sex tours by Japanese men and women, Singaporeans littering abroad, Taiwanese taken to the front of the line at Ho’s tomb: it is arrogant to address privilege as always already and only ‘white’.
26 Global Village, Coke commercial. A C.B.C. Radio This Morning interview slams a powerful indictment of
"Listening draws upon those depths where ‘truth’ does not lend itself to presentation by means of institutionalized languages" (Fiumara, 1990, 51).

Exile is often seen as redemptive, an “experience that must be endured so as to restore identity, or even life itself, to fuller, more meaningful status” (Said cited in Naficy, 1993, 193). Some can selectively globalize: unlike the millions of Filipino, Thai, Bangladeshi, Palestinian, Turkish foreign workers migrating to shacks, racism and the promise of wage slavery, the have move toward sushi adventure and pad thai river raft delight. A Guatemalan scarf, perhaps a Tibetan incantation27, the ‘indignity’ of racination from children pointing and calling them a ‘foreigner’ or ‘red-haired devil’: souvenirs. I reject airline commercial glosses of globalization, and while I too exoticize the ‘Other’ and remain blind to my own privilege, I cannot but critique the (fetish and experience of) ‘globalization’.

And Japan? So far, it has welcomed much needed laborers from Southeast Asia. But this may be a mistake. If the Japanese immigration officials lose control of who can enter and who cannot, the nation may wind up with hundreds of thousands of non-Japanese-speaking aliens roaming about, looking for work (excerpt from Ministry of Education approved senior high school textbook, private correspondence, Regan Olinyk).

instant everywhere C.N.N. now. The Tanya Harding figure-skating debacle produced as many column inches as did the genocide in Rwanda. Michael Enright’s interviewee demolished the notion of the Global Village at a stroke: before the Rwanda genocide, there were two and a half minutes—I may have forgotten the exact amount, perhaps all of three minutes—of television news in toto re: Rwanda. All but thirty seconds were about mountain gorillas. If the world were in our living room, would we not have seen genocide coming?

27 Or a free-floating and imaginary Tibetan scent: a saleswoman raves to prospective customers about a new perfume. One of the descriptions was that it smelled “pure, you know, like a Tibetan temple”. She was taken aback when informed that Tibetan temples smell like rancid butter (private conversation, Erica Martin).
(ir)Rationale For Study: Complications for Educational Theory and Practice

It is because I agree with a Marxist analysis of capital that I am committed to exploring human agency at a time when it easily collapses into scepticism and consumption. This research aspires to nudge educators to look at their assumptions. If I can advocate for an avoidance of rigid theory in favour of a contextualized and compassionate pedagogy that listens more than it speaks, this thesis might be more than a careerist right (or detour) of passage.28

If I--critical and subversive--counter-text and plunder English linguistic imperialism with English, cannot the ‘Other’ be contestatory/oppositional with English? We’re revolutionary they’re dupes? Step ahead step back: who am I in abstract or sweating over chai/beer/trail/dengue to judge ‘their’ struggle or lack thereof? I am unable and unwilling to (yet I) do this.

I cannot over-emphasize the wonder and confusion that four years of working for Japanese organizations abroad has fostered. While this risks collapsing into a self-absorbed “working out” of personal concerns, the directions I untangle—as well as the solipsistic pitfalls that threaten to entangle me—are examples/warnings of the possibilities and limits of cross-cultural communication and the negotiation of nomadic identities.

28 My (false?) humility humbled by Morris’ scathing dismissal of the “time-honoured leftist practice of self-lacerating anti-intellectualism which, by fearlessly revealing that a paper in popular aesthetics cannot dismantle the military-industrial complex, only functions to deflate the significance of other people’s labour” (Morris, 1993, 41).
Skirting (map)oria, dis/ordering borders, revelling in/fearing chasms between and within cultures (Japanese negotiating new/old Englishes, a postmodern scholar-voyeur negotiating new/old identities), my work speaks to and from hybridity. I challenge myself, my readers, and the disciplines we juggle to interrogate fixed positions and assumptions. While not denying an intellectual pleasure in this, I do so not only to join a game of footnote tag, but to facilitate more humble and ethical encounters within and across cultures, languages and scholarship.

Frisking Poetry: Creating and Resisting Structure

Sidebars, I need sidebars!

Hypertext invites the (rhizomic/Japanese) reading of tachiyomi, “the act of reading--opportunistically, fragmentarily--while on the move: this desultory flipping through the pages of comic books [journal, thesis] and magazines, picked up in passing, with no real intention to buy; that reading of a newspaper picked up from an adjacent seat while travelling on the subway” (Burgin, 1996, 110).

29 I discover this metaphor ab/used by postmodern “phenomenon” (see footnote 94) Asada Akira. He claims to practice tachiyomi instead of traditional ‘reading’; he claims to have no books in his home (Ivy, 1989, 30). Ivy offers a brilliant analysis of how this creates the fetish of “genius” mirrored against the “laboring student masses” who adore him: “there is thus a magical circuit which collapses production and consumption in an effortless generation of language” (ibid). “It is not so much that the book [Asada’s popular Structure and Power] is a remarkably easy exposition of poststructuralism, but rather an artefact of magically produced ‘difficulty’. If all commodities are fetishes, then Structure and Power is a particularly fantastic one, and what it fetishistically replaces is intellectual labor” (Ivy, 1989, 30-31). And the fetishes of scholars, why are the raving and reproductions of our (anti-)canonical texts not as transparently absurd as Asada’s provocation? While squirming at how easy it is to criticize Asada (and thus myself), I also admire his cocky playfulness. He compares “the new technique of reading to eating hors d’oeuvres or snacks” (ibid, 30). This is honest (self-indulgent...reactionary?): he has no pretension of saving the subaltern with wily words. A pomo flaneur, Asada wanders in bookstores aimlessly: “it’s a matter of suddenly recognizing which book is sending out a signal to you” (Asada cited in ibid, 31). “If you perceive that and you get the book, then it’s the same as already having read it. You don’t have to read the whole thing from cover to cover— I think it’s all right just to put it by your pillow” (ibid). A full-time grad student for a few more precious months, what is the nature of my intellectual ‘labor’? Sweating or
In Japan, there is a saying, "Learning ten things only by listening one thing" (ichi wo kite, jyu wo shiru). It means that if you can learn ten things though you listen one thing, that is wonderful. We are trained to guess others' feelings or needs without asking them. It is sometimes very comfortable, but at the same time, very complicated.

Rien n'est parfait! Nothing is perfect!

(e-mail from Yukari Nao)

Fakku, furanku, eskepu, puraibashi: I have solicited (with little success) and crafted a list of loanwords to explore with Japanese speakers. The quest is already framed: are-these-terms-'English'-'Japanese'-or-'in between'? Dialogue makes it apparent that far from unsettling traditional scholarship, this approach reproduces it. On more than intellectual grounds, I strongly feel that such research is best left to Japanese speakers. I cannot and must not interpret and speak for them. Better to interpret and speak of my own experiences...which include (real and imaginary) Japans. In doing so, I speak with Japanese people, inevitably also speaking ‘for’ them.

brunching? Where is my ‘shop floor’, or do I walk (clumsy, mimicking Asada’s swagger) with a look of purpose stalking the doors of management?

Fack (*more indirect and less strident than non-loans referring to sexual intercourse...fakku-eiga [movies] must sound more modern and respectable than other loans or semi-loans* [Miura, 1985, 38]). frank (stronger than Japanese non-loans?), escape (skipping school), privacy.

Failure?

Know: “in focusing on real relations between real groups, denials, refusals and failures of understanding are more important in the historical formation of relationships and identities than are scientific neutrality and descriptive precision in accounting for one group to another. The introduction of ‘expertise’ into this setting is virtually guaranteed to be politically motivated and misleading” (MacCannell, 1992, 121). I agree with MacCannell’s injunction that we need not more “truth seeking” in ethnographic accounts, but better analysis of the kind of error that is generic to inter-group relationships” (ibid). Failure and error thus are not.
Jettisoning lists of loanwords, I cannot decide what to ask, each direction revealing itself as a Westerner’s desire. *The puzzlement of people I approach…their confusion and reluctance to be codified...matches my unwillingness to do so.* This work thus becomes a questioning and seeking of questions. *The motion of my thesis: I envision etching a starting line in the dust with my heel. For miles. Chatting along the way. Over continents.*

My thesis questions identity and the limits of this quest. “The whole project of cross-cultural theorizing may begin to seem, in certain Western articulations, specular—textually tired, if not defunct” (Wilson, 1993, 331). There is and must be far more than knowledge.

Metaphor: Greek root, ‘transport’. “Metaphor itself refers to the double of the *meta.* Metaphor is a carrier in the between; it ferries (*pherein:* to carry) us across a gap; or it is the carrier of transcendence; it is in the midst as *meta,* and yet an image of the *meta* as beyond, as transcendent. It is both determinate and indeterminate at once. It is neither one nor the other, but both in a manner that transcends univocal unity, sheer equivocity, and indeed a dialectic that reduces difference to mediated identity” (Desmond, 1995, 45). Meta means *both* “being in the midst” and “beyond, what is transcendent” (ibid, 44).

Local/global, mist and midst, *fort/da* oscillation, between t/error and aspiration...surfing errant rhythms of contradiction, I fold and fumble not to mire and stagnate, but to ride the resultant tension and be swept forward.

*All of this is to be read as allegory.*

---

32 *Who and why do I want to race?*

33 *Forward? Too Linear. To conquer, penetrate? I will not edit this, but complement it with Asada’s desire for his textual movement to initiate a “gradual sideways slippage toward knowledge” (Asada cited in Ivy, 1989, 27). A longer starting line.*
For most Japanese, and indeed for modern Japanese society and culture in general, the
Japanese language is not simply a language. It is not merely a social convention, something
that the society and the culture can use and then forget about. Above all, the Japanese
language in modern Japan is never regarded simply as a set of social conventions, arbitrarily
agreed upon. For modern Japan, the Japanese language is a way of life, and the enormous
amount of speculation, writing and talking about it that goes on at every level of Japanese life
constitutes an entirely distinctive and marvellously self-contained way of looking at life...It has
assumed the dimensions of a national myth of vast proportions.

(Miller cited in Camargo and Sherry, 1987, 177)
Chapter 2 *My Poochy and Tempura: Histories of a Language that is Not*

If we want to be faithful sons and daughters of our Father Marshal [Kim Il Sung], we must love our language ([School committee chairman to a North Korean student in Japan after the student had accumulated “four penalty cards” for using Japanese] Ryang, 1996, 282).

English linguistic imperialism, as elaborated by Phillipson and Skutnabb-Kangas, is “maintained by the establishment and continuous reconstitution of structural and cultural inequalities between English and other languages” (Phillipson, 1990, 41). While eager to problematize the political economy of a world bloated by English, I am wary of reifying English as always already oppressive. Contra the assertion that “English intrudes on all the languages that it comes into contact with...[speakers] who borrow words from another have no intention of returning anything. The transaction is purely uni-directional” (Phillipson, 1990, 6) I approach English not as a non-negotiable hegemon, but as an organic and mutable phenomenon which can be consciously channeled.34

To explore this in a specific context, I turn to the Japanese language where labyrinths of identity and imperialism are further complicated when we consider that English is already ‘inside’ the Japanese language. Given that “the average Japanese speaker uses three thousand to five thousand loanwords, which constitutes as much as 10 percent of daily vocabulary items (*Kokuritsu Kokugo Kenkyuujo 1970-1974*)” (Stanslaw, 1992, 61)35 and that “the majority—94.1 percent—of these borrowed words comes from English (Morita 1978)” (ibid), the Japanese language might appear decimated by English.36

---

34 While this is not representative of critiques of linguistic imperialism, it reflects personal reactions I struggle with. I could have quoted Pennycook arguing for “an avoidance of totalizing theories of social and cultural reproduction in favour of a critical paradigm that acknowledges human agency and looks not only at how people’s lives are regulated by language, culture, and discourse but also at how people both resist those forms and produce their own forms” (Pennycook, 1995, 48). *The postcard version of my thesis.*

35 Although this is the figure I most often see, it varies; i.e. “today in arguably the world’s most complex verbal and non-verbal communication system, fully 13% of everyday speech consists of foreign loanwords, mostly from English” (McCarty, unpaginated).

36 60–70% of new words in annually revised dictionaries of neologisms are from English (Honna, 1995, 45).
I began this study intending to examine the use of English loanwords by Japanese speakers. Recall the abstract prefacing this work: to what degree do these words remain ‘English,’ do they become ‘Japanese,’ or do they become hybrids, spaces in between?37 What are the ramifications of this for Japanese identity and my mis/understanding of this? In short: (how) do Japanese speakers change, appropriate and understand English loanwords within Japanese? What is their meta-understanding of this? What does this say about Japanese/non-Japanese subjectivity (and how they intersect and differ)?

> Are there things you can say in English, with loanwords/katakana, that you cannot in Japanese?

Sure, there are so many of them. These are some common examples:

privacy = puraibasii
identity = aidentityi
(e-mail correspondence, 23 year old Japanese university student)

In line with Pennycook’s perspective on linguistic imperialism, Loveday notes that “local coinages [sukinshippu, shibiru minimamu]38 indicate not a westernized but a hybridized culture. The Japanese have not experienced profound Western-based acculturation but live in a state of coexistence with increasingly dominant, selected Western forms while generally adhering to indigenous social and ethical behaviour” (Loveday, 1996, 90). In more chagrined and chauvinistic terms: “the English word looted by the Japanese can expect to be systematically stripped of its national identity after a series of cruel and little known initiation rites” (The Guardian, 20 March 1976 cited in ibid, 1996, 138).

---

37 Perestroika pizza Intifada: do these ring foreign, futon, hibachi, Pac Man, tycoon, and honcho Japanese linguistic imperialism; alcohol algebra Arabic; biology, statistic postivist trumps of German over ‘our’ ways? I mean this not to dismiss linguistic imperialism but to 1) attempt an approximation of how loanwords may appear to Japanese speakers 2) and point out the absurd/obscene pleasure of an outsider condemning what he is complicit with. Bali, an island as convenient, exotic and Other as Japan is, created a ‘Frog Dance’ for tourists in the 70’s. A decade later, a dance troupe is asked to perform it at a local wedding (Bruner, 1996, 166-167): while I ponder morals, people engage in a cultural production that resists codification.

38 Sukinshippu: “skin relationship...affective education of children through skin contact with parents...” (Miura, 1985, 157) a response to women breastfeeding/touching children less (ibid); also used by lovers desiring more contact (Cherry, 1987, 89). Shibiru minimamu “a minimum standard of living to be guaranteed by city governments” (Miura, 1985, 150). Literally civil minimum, the term was created by the Tokyo Metropolitan Office in 1968: Miura considers it a “trick” to sound modern and thus credible (ibid, 150-151).
Burrowing Language: (Not Only) Katakana

When it comes to remodelling English parts inside the Japanese language...donor norms are totally irrelevant (Loveday, 1996, 155).

Nihongo wa jozu ne! Your Japanese is good! Heard daily in Kanazawa after the simplest of utterances. Although it is a ‘truisn, I cannot escape the conclusion that when foreigners first arrive in Japan and cannot speak the language are bewildered by the culture, they are enthusiastically embraced (‘the Japanese are so polite!’) as inter-cultural distance reinforces a feeling of uniqueness. As I became more adept at Japanese, I lost novelty status and became a threat to ‘uniqueness’. Although this has only happened to me once, many foreigners report speaking Japanese to Japanese people and not being understood, being totally and utterly ignored. 39

Three times in its history, Japan has been locked in a ‘massive, life-and-death cultural confrontation’ with speakers of a foreign language. Korean and Chinese antagonists presented themselves at the dawn of Japanese culture. At the turn of the sixteenth century, Portuguese, Dutch and British English speakers threatened the nation’s cultural autonomy. Finally, after the Second World War, American English speakers occupied, and seemed bent upon transforming the Japanese homeland. The principal reaction to these linguistic confrontations—especially the post-war engagement— was the emergence of the Japanese language as the ‘fetish focus’ for a new national sustaining myth, which Miller has labelled the ‘modern myth of Nihongo [Japanese]’ (Camargo and Sherry citing Miller in Camargo and Sherry, 1987, 176-177).

39 “The Japanese language is presented as inscrutable to all save natives. This inscrutability is evident in the gratuitous flattery a novice speaker receives from natives, the suspicion with which a fluent foreigner (whose very fluency, itself a sign of knowing too much, brands the speaker a henna gaijin [strange foreigner] is met by natives, and the ridicule a hyphenated Japanese (a Nisei or Sansei, for instance) receives at the hands of natives for his or her fluency...[epitomized by] ‘Gaikokujin Kayo Taisho,’ a televised Japanese ‘Singing Competition for Foreigners’ an oriental Gong Show of sorts in which foreigners are rewarded for their efforts by peals of hysterical laughter’ (Camargo and Sherry, 1987, 185). Japanese “language attitudes have been characterized as deeply ethnocentric, and beliefs in the uniqueness, superiority, spiritual power, unlearnability, and untranslatability of Japanese are apparently strongly held by certain members of society” (Loveday, 1996, 4). “Miller claims that the Japanese experience a negative reaction to the spectacle of non-Japanese employing the language with any degree of fluency: ‘A foreigner speaking Japanese amounts to the public performance of an unnatural act’” (Loveday citing Miller in Loveday, 1986, 20). I find this observation offensive and...accurate? Loveday wisely tempers this with Saint-Jacques’ study that concluded 94% of respondents “were overwhelmingly in favour of being addressed in Japanese by foreigners....97% of the interviewed Japanese-speaking foreign residents of Tokyo state that the Japanese answered them in Japanese, enjoyed communicating with them in Japanese and did not find that their knowledge of the language created suspicion or mistrust but only added and fostered interaction” (ibid, 20-21). I ‘want’ to hold this truth against Miller’s and my own...still, I wonder, how would residents of a small rural town respond? Does this survey reflect real encounters with foreigners?
Modern Japanese (the tenth most-spoken language in the world with 123 million speakers [Loveday, 1996, 3]) is always already hybrid. Linguistic imperialism lurches long and controversial in Japanese history and consciousness. “When Western philologists first began to study the Japanese language, they had difficulties in relating it to any other. This was taken by many Japanese to prove that they were a ‘unique’ people, of mysterious origins, who once spoke in the poetic, connotatively rich language of Yamato [ancient ‘pure’ Japan] and who, more importantly, even today can take soothing spiritual recourse to Yamato kotoba alone [‘pure’ Japanese words], dispensing with foreign loan words” (March, 1996, 150-151).40

There is linguistic evidence that “Japanese is not an isolated language, such as Basque, but a member of the Altaic family, which is represented by such other languages as Korean at one geographical extreme and Turkish [and Hungarian] at the other” (Crump, 1992, 23). The influence of Korean,41 Altaic, Malayo-Polynesian, Tibeto-Burmese and Dravidian (Loveday, 1986, 3) as well as of Portuguese, Spanish, French, German, Dutch and English loanwords is hotly debated. Chinese is not; Chinese loanwords comprise almost half the Japanese language, and Chinese orthography is the foundation of Japanese writing systems.

---

40 Yamato kotoba are loosely equivalent to Old English before borrowings from French, Latin and other languages (March, 1996, 150). “There is a consensus on which words in Japanese are Yamato and which are borrowed or later constructions” (ibid). Traditionally, only Yamato are used in haiku. Watanabe cites four contexts where Japanese prefer Yamato kotoba: 1) when they feel introverted/withdrawn 2) for nostalgia 3) when the soul is touched/times of serenity (borrowed words are used intellectually, when one is distanced from things) 4) poetry (borrowed words are for scholarship) (ibid). Purity/essence scream to and from Yamato kotoba. Watanabe waxes poetic, heterosexist and Oedipal: “Yamato kotoba are spoken from feelings, they are as gentle and soft as mother’s skin, as a nipple, or as a mother’s womb [shikyū=womb, literally child’s palace (Cherry, 1987, 87); as Cherry notes, this signifies that it does not belong to the woman]...In contrast, borrowed words are hard and stiff (like playing games with men or), having an intellectual discussion... everyone knows that you don’t slip under the bed covers to nestle against your father’s muscular body, but against the softness of your mother” (Watanabe cited in March, 1996, 151-152).

41 Some Japanese are uncomfortable accepting that Japanese architecture/temples may be based on Korean models. There is speculation that the Imperial Household Agency refused excavation of the largest imperial tomb because it may reveal that this Emperor was Korean (March, 1996, 26-27). I confuse Japanese and Korean languages: the sound vocabulary and phatic tags on sentences sound similar to me. I was surprised to be told by a Japanese friend that she feels the same way (although she realizes her mistake in a second, I recall watching a television show for minutes before I realized it was in Korean!).
The Japanese, “with no means of writing of their own, adopted Chinese characters wholesale—and the contemporary variety of Chinese with them” at the end of the 4th century A.D. (Loveday, 1986, 24). Tens of thousands of ideograms make up the kanji syllabary. As in Chinese, each character represents a concept or word but does not indicate pronunciation in the way letters of alphabets do. Unlike Chinese, there can be multiple pronunciations of a given character. The adoption of Chinese words and characters (as [not only] this work argues, the use of English) involves changes that make them uniquely Japanese (Passin sees the absorption of English into Japanese “as significant as the massive borrowing from Chinese in the Heian period” [Passin cited in Loveday, 1996, 26]).

Multistroke kanji “retain an ‘elite’ aura” (Kataoka, 1997, 107) and the number of Chinese loans (47.5%) exceeds the number of native (Yamato kotoba) Japanese words (36.7%) (Loveday, 1996, 25). Pollack writes that “the adoption of Chinese script in Japan’s ‘first’ text [is] a problem [solution?] that will become paradigmatic for all that follows” (Pollack cited in Sakai, 1989, 102). Sakai’s unpacking of this parallels the terrain of my study:

---

42 On-yomi are readings taken from the Chinese, kun-yumi are considered native Japanese. A single character can have multiple pronunciations. Depending on meaning and which compound it is a part of, 

43 Japanese Anglicizing resembles “the early stages of integration of Chinese that took place a millennium ago: Anglo-Japanese contact includes direct chunks of English; bilingual and code-mixed styles; and massive processes of borrowing, locally adaptive coining, and hybridization” (Loveday, 1996, 113). “The morpho-syntactic paradigm for integrating foreign loan-words mirrors and derives from those established for Chinese loans a millenium ago” (ibid, 139). Even without “Japanese syntactic suffixation and syllabic orthography” (ibid, 149) classical Chinese words— “almost entirely indeclinable and monomorphemic” (ibid, 140)— enjoyed “extraordinary freedom...to enter into what one might call atypical syntactic functions; nouns can function like verbs; verbs and adjectives, likewise, may be used like nouns or adverbs... most words [could] function as other parts of speech depending on their place in the sentence” (Norman cited in ibid, 140).

44 Initially Chinese “was employed for official records and religious texts until historical events and linguistic developments led to the official use of a heavily Sinicized Japanese in the Heian period. Particularly the consolidation of the syllabaries, which became widely known by the 10th century, allowed for a more accurate representation of Japanese since the Chinese characters had been constructed for an analytic language unlike Japanese. From the Heian period onwards, extensive borrowing from Chinese occurred and mixed, Sino-Japanese writing styles also emerged, both effects of the long period of (written) diglossic bilingualism” (Loveday, 1986, 24-25).
Does not the pretence of not admitting that the script is never adequate to thought lead to the formation of an ethnocentric closure? Does not the recognition of the meaning's fracture purport that, because not only writing but also speech is exterior and inadequate to thought, the script is always foreign and that it, therefore, pierces the imagined closure of ethnic, cultural, and language unity? Does not Derrida say that, when one speaks or writes, one is always external to one's putative identities (Sakai, 1989, 102)?

"Japanese lack a language in which to write or even talk about this threat that is not contaminated by foreign script or scripture" (Tobin, Introduction, 33). Threat? Chinese Imperialism? Do I allow for an evolution in the case of the Japanese re-working of the Chinese language that I am reluctant to grant when it comes to our own mighty and impenetrable tongue?45

Stanslaw summarizes Umegaki’s six phases of Japan’s linguistic contact:

1) Buddhism, 9th to 13th centuries, Chinese and Sanskrit
2) Christianity, 14th to 16th centuries, Portuguese
3) Isolation, 17th to 18th centuries, some Dutch
4) Meiji restoration/enlightenment [sic?], 19th century, English, German, French
5) Taisho democracy/rise of Japan, early 20th century, English
6) [Post] Modern Japan, late 20th century, English

- (Stanslaw, 1982, 179)

Japanese always already contaminated, foreign. Eighteenth century Edo thinker Motoori Norinaga tried to "literally 'purify' Japanese of what he regarded as 'pernicious' Chinese influences by accepting kanji, which he realized it was impossible to reject, but wilfully pronouncing them in an invented 'pure Japanese' that most likely never existed" (Morris, John H-Japan posting, August 28, 1997, unpaginated).

As Pollack notes, the dove-tailing of Chinese figures and Japanese sounds presented problems that frame the language today. Long conjugational verb endings were problematic: how to represent sounds with no meaning on their own with characters that focus on meaning, not sound (Stewart, 1993, 10)? To complement the kanji from China, Japanese developed

45 Kanji = words of Chinese origin, gairaigo = words of foreign origin. Chinese is not foreign?
two phonetic syllabaries, each with 45 characters. Every word can be written entirely or (as in the aforementioned case of a kanji verb with a hiragana ending) partially in hiragana.\footnote{The "clumsy fit" (Cherry, 1987, 31) of Chinese ideograms with Japanese found men and women struggling to break them down into "a more usable phonetic form" (ibid). Originally a simplified form of kanji, hiragana was considered easier to master, even for those who had limited proficiency in kanji, a group that included women. Hiragana writing eventually flowered into the brilliant women's literature of the Heian Period (794-1192 A.D.), and still retains a 'female' feel" (Kataoka, 1997, 107). Women were forbidden to write kanji "which prevented them access and contribution to higher, intellectual levels of the written channel" (Loveday, 1986, 12); the world's first novel, the eleventh century The Tale of the Genji was written in hiragana by Murasaki Shikibu (Cherry, 1987, 31).} The more angular katakana syllabary is now mainly used for foreign loanwords (it can also be used for slang, adverbs and onomatopoeia [ibid]). It was originally "used to mark grammatical relationships and to enable readers of Chinese literature, especially Buddhists, to 'transcend' original Chinese texts" (ibid). Later it was used for military purposes (Kinsella, 1995, n5, 253).

In all European languages, the meaning of a word is clearly defined only through its function in the phrase, and by the context. In the Japanese language, however, the word preserves its independent meaning with little regard to context and functional position. Japanese grammar is comparatively loose and without much logical structure and adhesive power. The single character dominates in its visual form and its original meaning, enriched by Confucian, Taoist, Buddhist and even Occidental philosophical tradition, while the grammatical texture seems comparatively insignificant (Schinzinger, Introduction in Nishida, 1958, 3-4).

\textit{Katakana} was often substituted for \textit{hiragana} before World War II (Stewart, 1993, 10). The Japanese language changes (especially under the influence of experimental advertising copy) so that more and more words appear in \textit{katakana} (also used to highlight the words in the way that italics do). \textit{Katakana} is also used for telegrams, computer print-outs of bank statements and salary slips (Loveday, 1996, 9).\footnote{See Appendix 2 for a more technical parsing of \textit{katakana}/loanwords.} When receiving money in Japan, it is inevitably on a tray or in an envelope. Do \textit{katakana} and loanwords blunt and allow spaces for crass (and thus ideally un-Japanese) realities?\footnote{Is capitalism thus spoken 'outside' of Japanese? As frugality is not in keeping with mass consumption, \textit{loon} [loan] replaces the harsher \textit{shakkin} as the term for borrowing money (Honna, 1995, 53).}
The English alphabet makes up the fourth Japanese syllabary. Called *romaji*, “as it is merely transliteration, it tends to be seen as childlike and non-authentic” (ibid).

*Asahi Shimbun* article: “Anything in *katakana* looks sweet and fresh. We bow to it and value it too much” (Stanslaw, 1992, 68).  

---

*Izu Itto he bun setto?* (Is It Heaven Yet)  
*Riisaru Uepon* (Lethal Weapon)  
*Shiizu Gatta Habu Itto* (She's Gotta Have It)  

- ([Movie titles in Katakana]Honna, 1995, 60)  

Conquest ('s not-quite but) beckoned modernity and pulsed Otherness to the Japanese in numerous (resisted, absorbed, feared and coveted) languages. I struggle to examine this without essentializing or mystifying language. English imputes “worldliness, modernity, and/or sophistication” (Loveday, 1996, 203) *only* if the West has social attraction and worth. There is no recorded contact with a British trading company set up in Hirado between 1613 and 1623: “the fact that no loans emerged is itself indicative of the social and political insignificance of the minuscule and geographically very limited British presence, which could not match the profound socio-linguistic and cultural impact of Portugal and Spain at their zenith” (Loveday, 1996, 59-60).

---

49 Value how? Not necessarily referential. “Not only did many of our informants have difficulty in enunciating and decoding the literal messages on the [English loanword product] labels, but some of them also expressed disbelief that the packages themselves had a Japanese origin and destination. Even among the informants who were able to interpret the literal and symbolic significance of the printed message, no primacy of impact was attributed to verbal 'meaning' over iconic value of the script itself. *For many Japanese, English is an element of graphic design as much as it is a linguistic code*” (Camargo and Sherry, 1987, 184 italics mine).

50 In 1959, 4.5% of English titles were in Katakana, 57.1% in 1991, 51.2% in 1993 (Honna, 1995, 60).
Botan (button, from botao) and pan (bread, from pao) (Stewart, 1993) are the legacy of Portuguese contact (1542-1639 [Loveday, 1996, 50-51]). A Japanese loanword in English turns out to be Spanish: tempura (batter fries).

Money talks: The 19th century pidgin of Yokohama, Kobe and Nagasaki, while 85% Japanese, included “words from various English varieties (Chinese and Indian) as well as Malay and French terms” (Loveday, 1986, 28).

The apparent ease of linguistic absorption (‘Japanization’, ‘nativization’ [Kachru and Quirk, 1981], ‘acculturation’) occludes (especially official) panic over foreign contact. For two hundred years, nobody could leave or enter Japan on pain of death except for a small Dutch trading post off of Nagasaki (Littlewood, 1996, 5). From 1640-1854 “Dutch was Japan’s sole medium for gaining access to western knowledge” (Loveday, 1986, 26). The Dutch were not allowed to study Japanese (ibid, 52) and for the Japanese Dutch was kept a “secret, hereditary art carved out by a few officially authorized interpreter families” (ibid, 26). As late as 1756 the printer’s blocks for a harmless Japanese book about Holland were destroyed because they included the Dutch alphabet in illustrations (ibid, 53).

Mesu (surgical knife) and penki (house paint) (Stewart, 1993) remain from Dutch, but erekishiteito (electricity) was a true loanword as it has been replaced by the Sino-Japanese denki (Loveday, 1996, 55). Many Dutch words have been supplanted by English, and others have become—I cannot resist editorializing—deliciously ‘Japanese’: Donktaku (from Dutch Zondag, Sunday) means “sly dog” in Tottori dialect while in Hiroshima it means “stupid” (Loveday, 1996, 55). I am delighted to not understand how loans change in such a manner.

History derides the assumption that English, once in, will never leave (suteeshon--railway station--became the non-loan eki [Miura, 1985, 169]).
In 1848 one intrepid American sailor, Ranald MacDonald, actually entered the country; he was captured and forced to instruct the Nagasaki [Dutch] interpreters almost every day in English during his seven-month imprisonment, becoming the first native teacher of the language in Japan (Loveday, 1996, 61).

In 1854, Commodore Perry’s black ships forced trade, ending Japan’s insularity and augmenting the ambivalence toward China with panic over the West. Remembering that “on a popular and academic level, Westerners had for centuries been betrayed and conceived of as ‘subhuman’” (Loveday, 1996, 61), the capitulation to Perry’s gunboat demands precipitated a “growing cultural self-doubt and self-denigration” (ibid, 62) and pride. While some viewed the shogunate as “weak and cowardly [for] yielding to the West” (ibid), the desire for modernity drove Japan’s first minister of education Mori Arinori (1885-1889) to propose that English replace Japanese as the national language (Loveday, 1996, 67).51

Dutch remained the language of bureaucracy until 1870 when it was replaced by English (ibid, 1986, 26). Linguistic entropy...lobbyed for by Dutch speaking diplomats?

I am therefore convinced that our policy should be to stake everything on the present opportunity, to conclude friendly alliances, to send ships to foreign countries everywhere and conduct trade, to copy the foreigners where they are at their best and so repair our own shortcomings, to foster our national strength and complete our armaments, and so gradually subject the foreigners to our influence until in the end all the countries of the world know the blessings of perfect tranquillity and our hegemony is acknowledged throughout the globe (a memorandum on foreign policy circa 1857, cited in Matsumoto, 1988, 88).

You have to deal with barbarians as barbarians (Senator Mangum on the Perry Mission, ibid).

51 The project had a global (absurdly imperialist?) twist: he proposed that “English be recast to eliminate expressions that made the language difficult even for native English speakers” (Camargo and Sherry, 1987, 178). Lippit summarizes Kakuzo’s 1905 The Awakening of Japan: between East and West Japan “comes to stand as a site of global preservation—a trans-continental museum of the other” (Lippit, unpaginated).
Worried about “the limited resources of the native Japanese lexicon, the difficulty absorbing Western culture through Japanese, the inconvenience of writing characters, and the control of commercial power by English-speaking nations” (Loveday, 1996, 67), Arinori coined the phrase Kokugo hashi eigo saiyoron (Abolish Japanese, Adopt English) to argue that “under the circumstances, our meager language, which can never be of any use outside of our islands, is doomed to yield to the domination of the English tongue, especially when the power of steam and electricity shall have pervaded the land. Our intelligent race...cannot depend upon a weak and uncertain medium of communication” (Arinori cited in Stanslaw, 1992, 60).

He was assassinated by an ultranationalist in 1889.

In the mid-nineteenth century, Hisoka submits “Reasons for Abolishing Kanji” to the Tokugawa Shogunate. Seeking universal education, he declares that kanji “which could be read in so many different ways and gave rise to numerous errors” create obstacles to “creating the educated population which was essential to the nation” (Maejima, cited in de Bary, 1989, 250-52).

Maejima, noting that the characters for ‘pine’ and ‘plain’ “can be given four alternative phonetic readings (matsutaira, matsuira, matsuhei, shohei), among which it is impossible to determine which is correct, decried kanji as ‘eccentric, unwieldy, an

---

52 Meiji reforms did not “purge Japanese writing of Chinese ideographs (they remain in use today, albeit in steadily decreasing proportion to phonetic script); but for Karatani the literal presence or absence of ideographs is not an issue in the face of dramatic indications that, during the decade of the 1890s, the status of writing in Japan was profoundly altered. The Chinese ideography, which may have numerous pronunciations and meanings, and which produces a graphic meaning quite autonomous from the flow of phonetic symbols, gradually declined in significance as a site of heterogeneity in the text. As efforts were made to bring the Japanese writing system into greater conformity with that of ‘advanced’ Western languages where a cipher could be equated with only one sound, the written language became more and more derivative in relation to the voice, as an instrument of vocalization....The text was now seen as producing meaning in a far more purely linear fashion” (de Bary, 251). Does a Japanese cipher always already produce a graphic meaning? Karatani spins a Derridean link between “modern Japan’s phonocentric conception of writing to an attendant metaphysics of presence (interiority)” (ibid). How can I, outside, even wish to crawl interior? How can I even begin to understand let alone parse this language for/from linguistic imperialism?
evil without parallel in this world” (Maejima cited in Karatani 1993, 53). At approximately the same time, Van Gogh “writes in several letters that he wishes to see reality ‘as the Japanese do’... Europeans found in ‘Japanism’ a way out of their own century: they discovered a world without point of view (a subject), one indifferent to all meaning” (Karatani citing Van Gogh in Karatani, 1989, 262).  

'English' on stationary for students cramming for competitive exams:

I have my own favourite things to do I want every day to be full of excitement, totally happy and rewarding.
Country Life is simple and uncomplicated.
We are always cheerful shrewd and naughty pleasure. So happy.
(Wark, The Tokyo Nice Life, 10).

The first state-planned English course was set up in 1857 at the “Translation Office for Barbarian Literature” in Tokyo (Loveday, 1996, 63), later changed to the “Institute for Open Development” after Western diplomats complained (Miyoshi, 1993, 276).

53 Suzuki worries that “loan words will lead to a stratification of the Japanese language, a fragmentation of society into groups with reduced mutual intelligibility, and a possible lag in the popularization of higher education. Pointing to seven different meanings of kon (conditioner, condenser, control, computer, complex, converter, and concrete), he warns that borrowings lower the efficiency of the Japanese language as a medium for transmitting information and handicap its quest for a global role” (Blair, 1977, 2).
54 West seeks fracture East looks West for structure? Too easy/linear: “In 1980s Japan (a Japan ‘liberated’ from its obsession with modernism), parody, pastiche, and collage have become dominant trends. But in the Japanese context, this amounts to a rehabilitation of the nineteenth century. It is a revival of that mood within which late Edo society saw itself as a ‘paradise of fools.’ There is an almost pathological play with language, with the reign of the superficial on the one hand, and the regeneration of ultranationalistic ideology on the other” (Karatani, 1989, 271). Who plows who plays, can they equally consume and flirt with the foreign?
55 Over a century later, diplomats’ complaints would change the name of brothels from “Turkish Baths” (turkoburo) to “Soapland” (soopurando). An estimated 20,000 torukojo (Turkish bath girl) became sopu redi (soap lady) according to the Tokyo Special Bathhouse Association which picked the new euphemism (Cherry, 1987, 119-120). “Japanese scholars count more than thirty synonyms for prostitute [historically, Shinto shamanesses], but not a single word to describe men who buy their services” (ibid, 120).
The *Kana* Society was organized in 1884 to promote the Japanese syllabry; in 1886 the *Romaji* Society was established to promote writing in romanized script (Karatani, 1993, 46). But modernity was and was not embraced: *A and B*, insecurity and pride, feudalism and (post-)modernity were co-present in Japan. Four years before the *Kana* Society, “the use of foreign words in university lectures not connected with European literature was forbidden. After the 1890’s Japanese was established as the main medium of instruction in every educational institution, and many foreign staff were replaced by Japanese” (Loveday, 1996, 67-8). Although English was still taught, it lost its “cultivating mission” and became “a mere instrument for translation purposes” (Loveday, 1996, 68).

Pro-Western professors lamented the abilities of “students ignorant of the ‘Anglo-Saxon spirit’ and ‘gentlemanly values” (Loveday, 1996, 68). Interestingly, another obstacle to English was “the socialist movement in Britain, since the literature it generated was considered threatening to Japan’s contemporary capitalistic course of massive industrialization, which was already confronted with labour unrest and union activity” (Loveday, 1996, 68).

*puchiburu* (Fr. petit bourgeois)

“Meiji scholars [like their past and present Chinese counterparts] struggled with new concepts expressed in English and came up with translations. ‘Society’, ‘individual’, ‘modem’, ‘rights’, ‘liberty’, ‘he’, ‘she’ and almost all the borrowings were translated. Consequently there are two ways of writing them: *katakana* (for phonetic representation) and *kanji* (for semantic rendering)” (Honna, 1995, 55). *I ask if these have different meanings/nuances and am told that they are the same for my respondent (Mikiko Yukari) but may be different for older people who grew up with post-war American banners proclaiming “democracy”*. 
Triumphantly ‘modern’ after defeating Russia, Japan embraced American culture from 1912-30. The fashionable use of *modan-go* (modern words) (perhaps by a *moga* [modern girl] of the period) created terms like *eroguronansensu* (erotic grotesque nonsense, referring to lewd cafes/theatres/bars of the ‘20’s [Miura, 1985, 36-37]), *furappa* (flapper) and *marukusu boi* (*Marx boy*, trendy university socialist [!]) (Loveday, 1996, 73). White collar worker (*sarariiman*) is from this period (Miura, 1979, 138) (Loveday, 1996, 73).

Militarist expansion isolated Japan from the West; by the M-scale war with China (1937) it was caught in a “virulently anti-Western ideology” proclaiming “bourgeois liberalism and capitalist democracy to be ineffective” (Loveday, 1996, 74). The desire/claim to “overcome the modern” haunts contemporary Japanese debates about post/modernity. After 1940 romanized Japanese words and English were “removed from Japanese posters, labels and signs: for example, ‘Post’ was removed from letter-boxes and ‘WC’ from public toilets” (Loveday, 1996, 74). *Anaunsa* (announcer) was “replaced by the esoteric *hoosoo-in* (literally ‘broadcast person) and *rekoodo* (record) was supplanted by *onban* (literally ‘euphonic board’)” (Stanslaw, 1982, 189). *Piano, clarinet, record, marathon, golf*, and *ski* were re-named into real Japanese (Loveday, 1996, 74).

This ‘postmodern rub’ weaves through my conversations with Yukiko Minami. The intense insistence on a ‘unique’ identity belies the fact that the centre of ‘Japanese culture’ is empty. There is no ‘Japan’. Ironically, Ms. Minami notes this is the uniqueness of Japan.

---

56 Generations later, student activists in the 60’s shout *nansensu*—nonsense—“as an interjection expressing disagreement or disapproval whenever a speaker representing the administration said something they did not like” (Miura, 1979, 106). Is a ‘Japanese’ term too disrespectful? Dasan, in his 1970 bestseller/award-winner *Nihonjin to Yudayajin* (*The Japanese and the Jews*) notes that “the learned discourse of a conservative college professor and the radical arguments shouted by loudspeakers by leftist students [nyuu reifu] employ the same level of courteous language considered appropriate for someone addressing a group of people” (Stanslaw, 1982, 195). *Nansensu* to Ben Dasan, who in spite of his name is a right wing Japanese Christian appropriating a Jewish identity to further his *Nihonjinron* project of describing the uniqueness of Japanese identity (Mikiko Yukari). ‘Outed’ by a leftist journalist, Dasan’s mis/identity is an open secret in Japan.

57 The ‘real’ Japanese of “pseudo-Chinese neologism” (Morris, John *H-Japan* posting, August 27, 1997, unpaginated)? Nishida’s “real”: *that which, contradicting itself, is yet identical with itself* (Schinzinger citing Nishida, Introduction, Nishida, 1958, 55)

58 18th Century nativist Motoori theorized *mono no aware*, an “emphatic understanding of things...embedded in native daily life, language, and culture...‘seeing’ and ‘knowing’ what could not be grasped by other theories
Without a centre or direction to grasp, there is just a “repetition without origin, an event without cause, a memory without person, a language without moorings” (Chambers, citing Barthes in Chambers, 1993, 195).

The authors [of Multicultural Japan: Palaeolithic to Postmodern] expose the official self-image of Japan as riddled with historical ironies, some in nearly every paper in the collection, others left to the reader to adduce. The ultimate irony to this reader is that everything hyped as most Japanese owes most to foreign influence if not substantial migration (McCarty, unpaginated).

After WWII, language is “remarkably different....there are more katakana borrowings than kanji translations. The trend is to borrow English words immediately without rendering them in kanji Japanese” (Honno, 1995, 55). “After the war, people associated kanji phrases with militaristic slogans” (ibid) and were eager to be rid of them (kanji glowed ‘most-kanji’ to me from armoured fascist buses: I am interested to find my reaction somewhat paralleled by Japanese experience). Where foreigners may focus on the American Occupation as the active agent of linguistic imperialism, Honno’s parsing of fascist slogans (“phrases made up of a series of kanji arranged in pseudo-Chinese syntax sounded vitriolic and hard to the Japanese ear” [Honno, 1995, 55]) complicates (but does not deny) English linguistic imperialism.

The Americans, echoing Arinori, assumed that kanji were difficult to learn and “so outdated that its use would prevent the democratic development of Japanese society” (Honno, 1995, 55). An American mission recommended that Chinese ideograms be abolished and romanji used instead (ibid). 500,000 American troops occupying Japan (conversational language texts became best sellers [Loveday, 1996, 75]) dispersed and influenced language in ways no educational mission could predict or control.

of cognition” (Harootunian 1993 220). If kanji, stock scandals and Korean architecture do not allow ‘pure’ Japanese forms, mono no aware conjures an essential Japanese spirit behind content, allowing Japanese to connect with “true and enduring cultural forms that affirmed them in an unchanging and unchangeable Japaneseess” (Harootunian, 1993, 221). I find this ethnocentric mysticism frightening (exclusionary, sometimes fascist) and resistant to the deterritorialization of consumer capitalism.
Onri, onri-wan (only/only one) is used in some loan compounds to mean “no more than” and “exclusively” (Miura, 1979, 112). After World War II “onri required a special meaning, i.e. ‘a Japanese woman, usually a former prostitute, who lives and sleeps with no one but a specific foreigner, most likely a G.I.’” (ibid). In addition to ‘Bamboo English’ there appeared a post-war pidgin “termed pangurisshu (from pansuke ‘street-walker’ plus ingurisshu, ‘English’) used for verbal communication ‘between Japanese speaking foreigners and the extensive world of their local lady friends’” (Miller cited in Stanslaw, 1982, 180).

In 1946, Shiga Naoya “a highly revered literary figure, advocated replacing Japanese with French” (Blair, The Role of, 1); Ozaki Yukio advocated English (ibid). Shades of Mori Arinori: “many other Japanese have expressed the feeling that their national language is grammatically deficient and lacking in lexical resources” (ibid).

Lexical resource: excess? If there were an unlimited number of kanji, people could be shut off from information; standardising script makes it difficult to “manipulate information media employing the vast resources of kanji combinations. At the start of a new democratic Japan, the kanji regulation seemed a sound policy, and people welcomed it” (Honna, 1995, 56). With caution. From a possible 50,000 characters, a post-war list of 1,850 characters adopted by law as most essential for everyday communication neglected to include characters used in a number of personal names (this list a compromise in the face of American pressure to replace kanji with romanji after the war) (Emori, 1990, 9). Parents using excluded characters were not allowed to register births if children’s names were not on the approved list; most of these parents refused to substitute approved characters. To solve this impasse, the Ministry of Education supplemented the official list of characters with 92 additional ones in 1951 (ibid).

59 Local lady friends? Up to 100,000 Japanese wives were deserted when soldiers returned to America (Littlewood, 1996, 117).
60 The impulse for the simplification/standardization of Japanese desired by the Americans is contradicted by official approval of more characters: “the number of characters for basic school education was raised from 881 to 996 in 1968, the number of approved readings for daily characters was increased in 1973 and the list of approved daily characters extended to 1,945 in 1981” (Loveday, 1986, 23). How are these chosen?
Japanese orthography is a palimpsest of many cultures. Fe/male, infantile, aggressive, elegant: calligraphy, the written word (fusing with or contradicting content) un/layers meaning and personality; it also reflects beauty and a “degree of spiritual accomplishment” (Kataoka, 1997, 129).61

---

61 Individualism exists inside webs of intense social obligations. Kataoka explores how the informal writing of young Japanese women (ages 15-33) is full of “unconventional signs” (Kataoka, 1997, 131). Intentional transformations of script include “attempts to convey visual sensation via pictures and signs”, the unconventional use [and reinscription] of ["childlike"] romaji and a novel substitution/mixture of one syllabary with/for another (ibid, 110). “Violations of orthographic codes” (ibid) create extremely individualistic expressions of personal identity and sub-group membership. They suggest an intense private creativity and jouissance that is extremely difficult for outsiders to see, let alone understand. Kinsella traces the history of “cute handwriting” (or ‘round’, ‘kitten’, 'comic', 'fake-child' writing): by 1985, there were up to “five million young people using the new script” (Kinsella, 1995, 222). Some schools banned it. Word-processing software adapted the style (ibid). Kinsella notes that the “horizontal left to right format of the cute handwriting and the liberal use of exclamation marks as well as English words such as ‘love’ and ‘friend’, suggest that these young people were rebelling against traditional Japanese culture and identifying with European culture which they obviously imagined to be more fun...it was almost as though young people had invented a new language in which they were suddenly able to speak freely on their own terms ‘making’ written Japanese language—considered to be the lynch pin of Japanese culture—their own” (ibid, 224). I leap to admonish: ‘Fun’ speaks from and for shopping mall kicks. Bust of Karl, flag of Emperor, what shall these misguided youngsters do for community? Experience and academic pretension make it difficult to applaud ‘fun’ as progressive. Fortunately, kids wrapped in Prussian uniforms don’t need my ‘permission’ or ‘understanding’. Kinsella sees ‘selfish,’ cute and infantalized behaviour (while “strongly correlated with indulgence and individualistic consumption” (ibid, 249)) as a refusal of traditional roles. Barbie did not sell well until she was redesigned as “a cute pretender who appears less buxom, less glamorous, shorter and younger” (Cherry, 1987, 39). Citing a backlash against the ‘selfishness’ of women vying for good jobs instead of getting married, Kinsella notes the black American response to the conservative backlash stereotyping blacks as vain, violent and criminal. Many adopted “the stereotype of the ‘nigger’...raising it into a positive stereotype” (Kinsella, 1995, 249). Similarly, “in Japan, a barrage of sexist stereotyping and insults...under the guise of media or academic social analysis about the new position of women in Japanese society” (ibid, 250) is resisted by women “defensively strengthening a ‘girls only’ culture and identity” (ibid). “Women debased as infantile and irresponsible” (ibid) flaunted and mocked this construction “as a means of taunting and ridiculing male condemnation” (ibid). Kinsella notes the image of ‘cute’ women manipulating multiple boyfriend labels ashi-kun (Mr. Legs, provides taxi or car [perhaps a Bongo Wagon or Cherry Vanette]) or mashi-kun (Mr. Food, good for a late night meal) (ibid). I am fascinated by how Japanese see themselves as infantalized by their culture and how this can be taken up as resistance. “Subservient company employees [denied] any of the characteristics of the powerful, antagonistic, macho individualism of the male in western societies” (ibid, 244), men seek solace in cute, wearing cute fashions and emulating cute behaviour, using gambling machines called My Poochy and Fairies (ibid, 228). Keigo speaks of the “moratorium people” (moratoriumu) who flee organizational links for the non-affiliation of youth culture (Okonogi in ibid, 250). Since the late Sixties, students have ditched the classics in favour of children’s books and comics (Kinsella, 1995, 251). Born into do your own thing individualism, it is hard to grasp my status quo might challenge it elsewhere (ibid). Kataoka explores: “Cute is anti-social; it idolises the pre-social. By immersion in the pre-social world, otherwise known as childhood, cute fashion blithely ignores or outrightly contradicts values central to the organisation of Japanese society and the maintenance of the work ethic” (Kinsella, 1995, 251). She finds the negativity regarding adulthood “startling” (ibid, 242), society meaning adulthood and vice versa, a time of “restriction and overwhelming obligation” (ibid) with sanctuary sought outside the ‘social’ in an imaginary childhood. Foreigners cannot understand how the creation/adoption of languages outside of the Japanese social world challenges powerful taboos and social obligations.
I memorize the katakana syllabry. When I read it, I say a foreign ('English') word. This is delightful and frustrating. I concentrate on each cipher and slowly read: DO RAI KU RI NI N GU....quicker and quicker, repeating it, dropping the last 'u', remembering that 'r' can be 'l'...I concentrate: dorai kureeningu dry kreening....dry cleaning!

H-JAPAN
August 27, 1997

I would suggest that if you want to come to some kind of meaningful understanding of how the Japanese language is changing under the influence of (mainly) English, and critique the bipolar _all-or-nothing_ approach of criticisms of English language colonialism, then I think that looking at loan words is a very superficial way of trying to achieve this....

...an important part of the structural changes occurring in Japanese is also due to European thought/linguistic patterns being reflected in the way Japanese people today use language. I think that this tendency is probably more pronounced the more educated the person is. When my (Japanese) colleagues argue over how to edit a piece of prose being drawn up by some committee, the _logic_ and _grammar_ being applied is not that of Japanese (or at least Japanese, the way I learnt it!), it is the _grammar_ that they all learnt in their English classes in high school...

...I have written this posting in English (well, sort of..), but if I wrote it in the _Japanese_ of the particular period (Edo Period) I work in, it would look more like a form of mutated Chinese than vernacular Japanese. Go back a few more centuries, and it WOULD be mutated Chinese, and read like something that would neither be Chinese nor (vernacular) Japanese. If the thought hadn't crossed your mind, if the _English_ loanwords in modern Japanese were replaced by _real_ Japanese (as they were meant to be done so during the War), they would simply be translated into a pseudo-Chinese neologism. Would this be any more genuinely _Japanese_?...

(Morris, John, _H-Japan_ posting, August 27, 1997)
Chapter 3  Loanwor()ds: Ab-solving Identity With ‘Linguistic Imperialism’

There is no language in itself, nor are there any linguistic universals, only a throng of dialects, patois, slangs, and specialized languages. There is no ideal speaker-listener, any more than there is a homogeneous linguistic community (Deleuze, 1993, 28).

Signs and language can be set free from immediate referents. This is what Barthe’s particular ‘Japan’ permitted him to contemplate...[Barthe’s text opens up] the opposite of a resigned nihilism: it proposes an excess of sense. We become aware that signs can be cast loose from their meanings in one system of thought, language, culture and history and acquire other, sometimes unrecognizable, perhaps incomprehensible, ones elsewhere. Such a semiotic movement, of setting sign to sign, and appearance to appearance, on the surfaces of language and culture, does not avoid the question of significance, but rather supplements, extends and complicates it (Chambers, 1993, 195).

The first Japanese McDonald’s opened in 1971 with the slogan “If you keep eating hamburgers, you will become blond! (Moritsugu 1986)” (Creighton, 1992, 46).

62 “There is a thin line between studying Japanese material culture and ridiculing it. I am not saying that there is nothing funny about an electronic toilet seat. I am saying that the humour and ridiculousness we find in the consumer behaviour and material culture of contemporary Japan suggest a continued orientalizing condescension even as, or especially as, we find ourselves being eclipsed economically by the Japanese” (Tobin, Introduction, 36). Does ‘linguistic imperialism’ like laughter re-inscribe center-periphery, reassuring us that we can still dominate/excavate colonies not only for “profits but also to have access to territory where dreams of absolute power mining tin or theory could be put into practice” (Root, 1996, 32)? My experience of Asia (like this project) ruptures and re-inscribes Euro-centrism. Clearly “some of the most radical criticism coming out of the West today is the result of an interested desire to conserve the subject of the West, or the West as Subject” (Spivak cited in Chambers Border Dialogues, 25). Seeking to fog this, I struggle with Fanon’s remarks about the colonist as an exhibitionist preoccupied with authority and blind to people around him (Root, 1996, 45). “When desire is constructed within a self-referential framework, it is not really concerned with its object of interest, and therefore the imbalance in the power relation between the observer and the observed is easily overlooked or ignored. The object is not supposed to talk back and shatter the illusion” (ibid). Why/how do self-referential frameworks slip into critiques of linguistic imperialism? Who dictates how and in what tongues people speak? Who speaks and who is spoken for? I cannot shake Spivak’s observation that the “means of production of explanations is of course a very important part of the ideology of cultural explanations that cannot be distinguished, in fact, from the explanations themselves” (Spivak, 1987, 105). Baym echoes this in her condemnation of theory: accepting the unexpected she argues that “theory is, by nature, legalistic; in fractions-the wrong theory, theoretical errors, or insouciant disregard for theoretical implications-are crimes; theory is a form of policing...this repetition of authoritarian structure betrays an infatuation with male forms and deconstructs [not only]the feminist project” (Baym, 1986, 45). In fatuations and forms, fumbling justice for reward and power, my investments ingainst linguistic imperialism weigh messy across heart and page...
I leap to parse this with Bhabha’s “colonial mimicry”, Fanon’s “masks” and Sartrean “bad faith”. Theory need never consider Japanese experience or challenge the conceit of a ‘Western’ epistemology where one must be either A or B, blond or Japanese. My experience of Japan is one of intense paradox; confusion and wonder force me to consider the ‘impossible’, that things can be both A and B neither A or B. I cannot but ask: if one is consciously coded as Japanese, are there spaces to also code oneself as ‘blond’?

63 ‘Western’? Nietzsche condemns the A = A logic of Being by “advocating a ‘logic’ of difference or becoming” (Grosz, 1989, ix). Freud’s unconscious “radically heteromorphic to consciousness” (ibid) means we never know ourselves; de Saussure demonstrates that “language itself undermines and problematises the very identities it establishes. A sign is self-identical (A = A), but it is also always something else, something more, another sign” (ibid). One best sped abroad where incomprehensible framing ourselves always already fixed, static, present. 64 “The Japanese person not only acts in response to but also perceives his/herself as contingent upon a given social nexus. The result is the consciously socialized self” (Lebra, 1994, 107). Referring to themselves in English as ‘We Japanese’ (“which seems to prefigure and preface all discourse between Japanese and the outside world” [Harootunian, 1989, 89]), but one sign of an intense conscious obsession with a unique Japanese identity. “Being a Japanese’ is synonymous with carrying the essence of Japanese collectivity” (Miyanaga cited in Maher and Yashiro, 1993, 10). Japanese know “perhaps too well, who they are and especially who they are not. For the Japanese, group identity is an assured given. They tend to believe that there is a greater degree of physical homogeneity among themselves than actually exists. They tend to believe that they look uniquely alike, and always look different from other Asians” (Wagatsuma cited in Loveday, 1996, f12, 205). Maher and Yashiro demystify—perhaps with a too eager grip—this Japanese harmony as a “political expedience derived from industrial capitalism’s need for an ideology of moral order and community which subsequently underpinned the much repeated claim that Japanese ‘naturally’ avoid conflict and possess a culture of harmony” (Maher and Yashiro, 1993, 9). Harootunian notes Japan “quickly ‘renarrativized’ the nation’s history” so that it “had successfully evolved peacefully from a feudal order, whose values had survived intact to mediate this development....traditional values were pressed into the service of mediating vast and even traumatic changes that otherwise would have torn society apart” (Harootunian, 1993, 202). “Japanese society was made to appear conflict-free and consensual, and, in time, came to be reread as a superior and even more efficient expression of liberal democracy” (ibid, 203). And detour of. Shintaro Ishikawa co-authored The Japan That Can Say No with Sony founder Akira Morita and The Asia That Can Say No: A Policy to Combat Europe and Asia with Malaysian Prime Minister Mahatir (who blames economic collapse on a Jewish conspiracy). These books repeat simplistic formulae: Asians are “culturally relative and tolerant, whereas the Christian-based Westerners insisted on moral absolutes” (McGregor, 1996, 44), Asians are peaceful and co-operative, Westerners are militaristic—Ishikawa calls the Nanjing Massacre a “fabrication” (ibid, 46)—Asians value family, Westerners are selfish (ibid, 44-45). Desperate for cognitive/cultural footholds, I have not escaped these dichotomies even as I strive to challenge them. Plurality and resistance thrive with and without my scholarship. McGregor recounts an encounter between a Japanese bureaucrat and his Malaysian counterpart. Meeting for talks on trade, the Malaysian lectures about “the perversion of family values in the West by homosexual marriages. The Malaysian thought that his Japanese visitor, being a fellow-Asian, would warmly agree, and was taken aback when his guest from Tokyo bluntly asked him: ‘What’s homosexuality got to do with trade liberalisation?’” (McGregor, 1996, 46). The Japan That Can Say No sells 1.3 million copies, yet the absurdity of sweeping (pan-)Nationalist statements are unravelled by a messy and beautiful world that refuses to be reduced to any (racy or postmodern) formulae. Reading ‘Asian’ arguments for the need for a “transcendent benevolent state” (Maher and Yashiro, 1993, 9) based on ‘traditions’ of harmony, I am reminded of the neo-Confucianism of Lee Kuan Yew. It is not only in Japan that there is a “relentlessly...
this puzzle towards issues of language and identity. In light of Mitsuhiro’s insight that “Japanese society is based on a postmodern order of mimesis in which incongruous cultural artefacts are a facet of everyday life” (Brannen, 1992, 218),

is a blond Japanese--Japan-blondness—shocking only to Westerners? Consider Nishitani’s Zen decentering of a “person-centered view of person” (Nishitani cited in Parkes, 1996, 306) with ‘person’ as phenomenon: “when I say that a person is a phenomenon I do not wish to imply that there is some other ‘thing’ behind personal being, like an actor behind a mask. Person is an appearance with nothing at all behind it to make an appearance. That is to say, ‘nothing at all’ is

obsessive ‘return’ to ‘origins’: an orchestrated attempt by the state to compensate for the dissolution of the social by resurrecting ‘lost’ traditions against modernism itself, and by imposing a master code declaring ‘homogeneity’ in a ‘heterogeneous present’” (Harootunian, 1989, 66). I am startled to realize that where ‘harmony’ appears a blatant ruse for capitalism in Lee’s Singapore, I remain invested in (even while ostensibly resisting) the myth of the harmonious and unique we-Japanese. Lee’s myth-making is transparent; it is harder to see that “it is in the eighteenth century that the [imaginary] unities of the Japanese culture, language, and ethnicity as they are conceived of today were brought into existence” (Sakai, 1989, n7, 121).

 Logical consistency is “pernicious and distortive when set alongside real societies” where self-deception is not defined as “the mind’s simultaneous holding both of A and non-A as truths” (Lafluer, 1996, 271). Such ‘contradictions’ baffle foreigners used to perceiving through dichotomy. “Many scholars in Japan subscribe to the theory of Professor Chie Nakane of Tokyo University that the Japanese have no principles. Stranger still, not a single Japanese that I have heard of was surprised by Professor Nakane’s contradictory statement at the Foreign Correspondent’s Club of Japan that the Japanese have many principles. Obviously the two statements contradict each other, but according to Japanese hara-logic [extra-discursive, of the ‘gut’, intuitive] they are both correct and incorrect, neither is simply correct or incorrect [Derridean heaven! Huh?]” (Matsumoto, 1988, 89). Can non-Japanese approach blond/not-blond from the perspective(s) of Kitaro’s “differential logic” embracing “the self-identity of absolute contradictions” (Nishida cited in Odin, 1995, 6)? Nishida’s “absolutely contradictory self-identity” is also translated as “Oneness of opposites” (Schinzinger, Introduction, in Nishida, 1958, 5) “more freely and familiarly rendered as a ‘coincidence of opposites’” (Bragt, Translator’s Introduction, Nishitani, 1982). While these terms baffle and frustrate my Occidental mind, it is fascinating to examine how these ‘Eastern’ challenges come from eminent Japanese philosophers very much concerned with the work of Nietzsche, Heidegger, and Hegel. Curve ball: “the Western self is deep because it involves self-conscious reflection of reflection of reflection, down to the infinity of God conceived as equally deep.... If the Western self were ever to work it out that the law of God in the immost mind automatically directed the will, the self would be bored” (Neville, 1996, 204).

I find Hall’s metaphor of people stitched “into place in a local, moral community, yet unstitched in an elite global culture of consumption” (Rosenberger, 1995, 146) reductive when considering Japan. It points in only one direction: post-structuralist questions which de-stabilize binaries of inside/outside better approximate the paradoxes and multiplicities of Japanese identity. Knot only ‘Japanese’: “‘Japan’ offers the possibility of undoing our own ‘reality’ and displaces the usual position, or topology, of the subject, together with her or his voice and authority. What has been taken for granted, considered ‘natural’, hence universal, is revealed to be local and historical” (Chambers, 1993, 194). Loanwords are but my excuse to undo Western paradigms via the (more easily seen as constructed) ‘East’ to reveal the ‘universal’ as particular and mutable.

Why-do-they-draw-their-eyes-so-round, the inevitable response when I show Japanese comics (manga) to westerners. Japa-blond: the koan ma(s)king Sailor Moon? “In animations as old as in those of 1970s, there appeared many blonde Japanese women” (private correspondence, Japanese linguist, PhD student).
what is behind a person, complete nothingness, not one single thing” (Nishitani cited in Parkes, 1996, 306-7).68

“As Nishitani often insists, [the] Cartesian division of reality into immaterial, invisible, subjective consciousness and material, visible objectivity is the epitome of Western thought, the creator of its culture and civilization. Out of this climate has arisen the Western dichotomous type of logical assertion that A is not, cannot be B.... By contrast the Eastern and Buddhist model for conceiving the universe can be termed a biological-organic one. The East speaks of the interdependency of part upon part and of part and whole...in the amorphous unity of nondistinction, of the Taoist Great Primordial Nothingness...out of which beings flow in their diverse forms and to whose oceanlike womb they return upon dissolution” (King, Forward, in Nishitani, 1982, xi).

68 “In self-other relationships, we have characterised the interactional self as relative, multiple, and variable in accordance to where and how self stands vis-à-vis the other; a less relative, more stable, fixed self is captured in the encapsulated inner self—the world of pure subjectivity. Now, in the boundless self, relativity is overcome by the mutual embrace of self and other, subject and object. Far from being actively assertive, self is supposed to be absolutely passive and receptive, and passivity entails the state of being empty. The ultimate self then is equated, paradoxically, with the empty self, non-self, non-thinking, mindless, or nothingness (muga, mushin, mu, etc.). Self-awareness itself is to be transcended” (Lebra, 1992, 115). Can an empty self become blond? What is a ‘full’ self? Yusuke Torii racinates my challenge. Blonde is not on a continua with dreadlocks: “I think English in today's Japan still signifies social upper mobility—better jobs with better income, more international airs...I agree with you in that conventional ‘imperialism’ is not an effective framework because obviously the Japanese have utilized English and other American, Western, artifacts for their own purposes, but I'm not sure if ‘postmodern’ can be the alternative, especially in a positive or optimistic sense of the word. Racial boundaries of the Japanese today do not seem (to me) permeable except from white westerners (and black Americans for a younger generation)” (e-mail, Yusuke Torii). Torii sees postmodernism reinforcing the status quo, as does Wilson: the deconstructive paradigm of ‘Japan’ read as Asada’s “Infantile Capitalism” makes “national sublation into one hypercommunicative and brand-name glutter ‘empire of signs’ encapsulating the imaginal presence, if not the collective worship, of a half-Zen, half-imperial nothingness that serves so well the dynamics of the commodity form” (Wilson, 1993, 318).
The U.S. chains have done a wonderful job of adapting their standard platters to the Japanese palate. Thanks to a large helping of Yankee ingenuity, the nation of sushi and sukiyaki has also become the land of the squid pizza, the curry doughnut, the bean-paste danish, the rice burger, the kim-chee burger, the tempura hot dog, the green tea milk shake, the sashimi submarine and the ever-popular BST (bacon seaweed and tomato) sandwich (T.R. Reid of the *Washington Post*, citation incomplete).

From a 'Western' voice: “we are inseparable from our fictions, our features. We are condemned to discover afterward that the mask is our true visage” (Paz cited in Gidley, 1992, 10). *Easy to see abroad*. “Japanese reality is what is apparent. Reality is something that is agreed upon....In Japan, the mask is the face” (Ritchie cited in Taylor, *The Tasteful, The Trivial, and the Tacky*, unpaginated). *So hard to see 'within':* the Latin *persona* means ‘mask’, ‘character’, ‘person’ (Neville, 1996, 290). *Does fetishizing an Imaginary 'Japan'—'Imaginary' by no means indicative of 'false' or necessarily 'misunderstood'—thrill me with dispersal and emptiness while allowing me to feel bounded, complete, rational?* Laclau and Mouffe's injunction that we can only know the 'real' through (contested and constitutive) discourse (Pringle and Watson, 1992, 65) dangles me un/convinced yet the text I must (and) choose to write is always already and only discursive. Or is it? *Writing random to right random,* do I (vacillate because I) fear vacillation, dissemination, contingency, absurdity, “the possibility that things might not always be semiotically organized” (Spivak, 1992, 185)?

Anthony Appiah: “modernity has turned every element of the real into a sign, and the sign reads ‘for sale’” (Appiah, cited in Adams, 535).
Den Fujita, to reinforce the foreignness of his hamburgers, “ensures that his staff uses limited English, such as ‘one Big Mac, two apple pies,’ to create a foreign mood” (March, 1996, 108). 69 "Macdonaru (McDonald’s) = “to badger with questions” (Loveday, 86, 18).

Centuries before burgers:
In the case of a noh called Tadanori, the main actor impersonates both the defeated warrior-poet Tadanori and the person who kills him in the murder scene itself. This denial of a one-to-one correspondence between the actor and the character is even more conspicuously demonstrated by the chorus that often speaks for one character and then for another, as if distinctions among characters were trivial [Foucault’s death of the subject, Nishida’s topos of nothingness, Barthes’ absence of man?]. Unlike the Greeks chorus, which sings in its own voice, the noh chorus presents several points of view, often even sharing a line with the main actor. Thus the noh seems indifferent to dramatic representation of human acts. It is set on presenting a being or doing, a ‘concrete abstraction,’ through a complex interrelationship of actors, their masks and costumes (or the absence thereof), music, chorus, stage design, and theater space (Misyoshi, i989, 162).

In Japan, “‘Dallas’ failed to win popularity. Japanese viewers complained that the ‘Dallas’ characters were too clear-cut as whether very bad or very good” (Iwao, 1997, 331). Murderer and victim, A-and-B, brutality and beauty, xenophobia and hospitality, cliché not cliché (the idea of cliché is absent in the Japanese world [Goldstein and Tamura, 1975, 95]): contradictions de/center Western views of Japan. “Letters to the Editor of English language newspapers scream anger and despair at ‘how the Japanese can be so X at the same time as being so Y’. As if ‘the Japanese --whatever that might designate--have an obligation to be predictable and consistent” (Maher and Yashihiro, 1993, 11).

69 September 3, 1997 H-Japan:
All of Mr. Fujita’s statements must be read, understood and used with extreme care. This is especially true if he had direct influence on the burger/blonde statement which of course no Japanese took literally (it seems stupid to me at any rate) for those interested in it (as an interesting aspect of pop culture?). Considering the circumstances surrounding MacDonald’s start-up in Japan I would not be surprised if he was directly involved in such a statement. This caution is needed because of what he wrote 20 years or so ago in an infamous book about Jews, that became a best seller. Full of many inflammatory and erroneous statements, Mr. Fujita even wrote such nonsense as to say that Jewish men loll in the bath watching their ‘thing’ float in the water. The usual Shylock type of commentary too was present, if I recall accurately. The book caused great consternation in the Jewish community in Japan at the time.

(Cohen, Aaron, posting H-Japan, September 3, 1997 unpaginated)
A-and-B: Shin Kanemaru—“the most powerful man in Japan at the peak of the bubble economy” (McGregor, 1996, 77)—confessed to accepting a 6.6 million dollar political donation without declaring it. In one sentence he regretted breaking the law and “in his next breath, he thanked the businessman...for his ‘good will’” (ibid). McGregor notes that although at odds the two statements work, the first as a ritual purification rite, while the second acknowledges if not discharges a “debt of obligation to the donor” (ibid). Contextual obligation overrules abstraction and codified laws...

A chasm—a differend—teases attempts to ‘understand’ radically alter notions of subjectivity. Irreducible in English, ‘I’ becomes relational in Japanese: “it is impossible to leave the relationship between the speaker and listener unspecified” (Karatani, Origins, 47). With six terms of self-reference for boys by the age of six and five for girls (Smith, Robert, 1983, 79), there is in Japanese “no fixed center from which, in effect, the individual asserts a noncontingent existence” (ibid, 81). There is a “linguistic absence of the fixed ‘I’ (or ‘you’) as well as...[a] lexical variety of ‘I’ substitutes” (Lebra, 1994, 107) in Japanese; I-words, although numerous, are “more frequently avoided then employed” (Loveday, 1986, 6).

Lebra’s analysis is provocative: if “self-other exchangeability presupposes the double, multiple, or split self....the Japanese self may be said to be ‘dividual,’ instead of ‘individual’” (Lebra, 1994, 118).

---

70 “The differend is the unstable state and instant of language wherein something which must be able to be put into phrases cannot yet be...a feeling....a lot of searching must be done to find new rules for forming and linking phrases that are able to express the differend disclosed by the feeling....In the differend, something ‘asks’ to be put into phrases, and suffers from the wrong of not being able to be put into phrases right away....what remains to be phrased exceeds what they can presently phrase, and...they must be allowed to institute idioms [beyond useful theory] which do not yet exist” (Lyotard, 1988, 13).

71 Lebra sees the Japanese self made of a “boundless self (innermost), inner self, interactional self, emphatic self and presentational self (outermost) (1992: 117)” (Lebra cited in Ryang, 1996, 282). I write this not because Lebra (Japanese) can ‘fix’/define Japanese subjectivity—she is one of the more astute writers in the field—but to reinforce the baffled and baffling peeling done by both Japanese and foreigners around this puzzle.

72 Does my creation of fluid identities frame mine as fixed? “The attempt to describe the culture of other groups (which is the necessary condition for defining and describing my own culture) continues in most circumstances to rely upon a projection of moral and temporal distance, an ascription of otherness, that betrays the uncertainty of the place from which I speak” (Frow, 1995, 3). Broken? Reading Okely’s exploration of autobiography, I am fascinated and confused to consider how men and women have a differing sense of self in “dominant western cultures...[where] feminine identity is marked by more flexible, permeable ego boundaries than those for a ‘masculine’ cultural identity (pace Bordo 1990). There are differing narratives of the self; the ‘feminine’ one being open to representing experience as interpersonal while the ‘masculine’ one priv-
We...we're not Asians. We Japanese—we’re WHITE! (Yakuza gangster in the film World Apartment Horror cited in McGregor, 1996, 38).73

Postmodern avant la lettre, Japanese culture spins “metanarrative[s] of indeterminacy...metanarrative[s] about the certainty of uncertainty” (Anyon, 1994, 122) so that “even the question ‘Who is self; who is other?’ is not unambiguously settled... [there are] terms that can be used for self-reference as well as second-person and third-person reference. That is, some common terms, such as boku or temae, may mean ‘I’ or ‘you’” (Smith, Robert, 1983, 81). In light of this, does assuming/projecting a singular locus of self constitute ‘useful theory’?

Is the rubric of linguistic imperialism in and of ‘our’ image or ‘theirs’?

ileges individualism and distance” (Okely, 1992, 12). Self-constitution: am I re-tracing boundaries of a (very) male self, or do I seek erasure, exorcism: in/of neither imaginary or real Old world nor New, I have a privileged appetite for difference, self-pluralization, and novelty. If my political commitment to diversity is as I suspect (de-)rooted in a life experience where it is painful and convenient to never be put there, do I engage fluid identities to refuse frames? Or to fame frames and twist Derrida—talked text’d thack degrees boasting forth—I efface myself only to return, arriving only through my own effacement? Quest(ion)s of self easily elide the social: it is my hope that the opportunity to engage such questions will better help me to understand the boundaries of self and social formation. These meta-philosophical vectors must ultimately fuel a more sensitive and just social praxis. One theorized by Roger Simon who finds at hand (“a place where one is constantly confronted with the incommensurability of that which cannot be reduced to a version of oneself” [Simon, 1995, 90]) what I chase around the world: “the point of stressing that social identities are multiple and not unitary is that in theorizing how the social organization of ethnic difference works as a form of structuration, one has to consider how multiple identities are produced, both in regard to the specific text of the subject positions people live and the relation of these positions to each other. This way of thinking, breaking with subject/object dualism, radically re-orient[s] how we can address questions of subjectivity and domination, while still requiring us to ask ‘who is being structured, who is structuring’” (Simon, 1987, 35).

73 “It’s different. Magic, Eddie, Prince are not niggers, I mean, are not Black. I mean they’re Black but not really Black. They’re more than Black. It’s different” (Pino [Do The Right Thing] cited in Burgin, 1996, 135).
After addressing the incredulous Asian guest workers, the ‘White’ Japanese gangster is “left on the landing, aghast, humbled, and deeply perplexed by the palpable idiocy of what he has just uttered” (critic cited in McGregor, 1996, 39).

Baudrillard, despite invoking Orientalist tropes of purity and impenetrability, is worth quoting at length here, more for what he reveals about his (Western) attempt at grasping the riddle/koan of Japanese identity than for what he says about Japan:

The strength of the Japanese lies in the kind of hospitality they accord to technology and to all forms of modernity (just as, in the past, they opened their doors to religion and writing). Their hospitality involves no psychological internalization or commitment on their part, however, and things are kept strictly at the level of codes. It is more a form of challenge than an offer of reconciliation or recognition: their own impenetrability remains total. That is, literally, a sort of seduction whereby something- a sign, a technique or an object- is diverted from its own essence and made to function in another code; or-to put it another way-made to pass from the realm of laws (capital, value, economy, meaning) into the realm of rules (play, rituals, ceremonies, cycles, repetition).

Japanese dynamism corresponds to neither the value system nor the goals of the Western project. Its practical applications manifest a distanciation and operational purity unencumbered by the ideologies and beliefs that have shaped the history of capital and technology in the West. The Japanese are the great play-actors of technology, unknowingly upholding in the sphere of technology the paradox of the actor in the theatre: the most effective actor must have detachment, he must have rules to go by, and his own inspiration must come from outside-from the role, or from the technical object, as the case may be....signs are played with: the subject should efface himself completely, meaning should be at its most elliptical-in short, pretence should be the order of the day (Baudrillard, 1993, 143).74

74 It is intriguing to shift the following comment regarding weightlessness from the ‘West’ to Japan: “In the end, this is what the universal cultural problematic of deconstruction is all about. Without a center, without a transcendental context, how do you value difference? Thanks to the hegemony of the West, indifference has become a universal fact. In the future, power will belong to those peoples with no origins and no authenticity. It will belong to those who, like America from the beginning, can achieve ‘deterritorialization’ and weightlessness and figure out how to exploit the situation to the full extent” (Baudrillard cited in Naficy, 1993, 192-193). America, bloated on conquest, City On The Hill; Japan sans ideology, without the weight of New World Orders, is far more deterritorializing/deterritorialized than America.


Pretence trails westward wakes of falsehood and declination\textsuperscript{75}: being true-to-one’s-[fixed]
self, Plato’s immaculate forms deep-center identity, cleaving binaries of truth and falsehood,
lightness and dark.\textsuperscript{76} In place of pretence, substitute the Japanese concepts of omote
(“formal dimension of self” [Tobin, \textit{Japanese Preschools}, 24]) and ura (a “more spontaneous
dimension” [ibid]) which are considered “complementary rather than opposing” (ibid).
Complementarity shifts/connects within and without: self and other are irreducibly
interpersonal in Japan: “ningen, the Japanese term for ‘person’, means ‘human between-ness’”
(Gavin, 1995, 36), i\textsubscript{and-you?}dentity not simply what/where one is, but also where \textit{two or more
are/nt}. Spaces replace centers, ‘being’ a question of absence (not an answer of presence)—
identity rhizomic “between things, interbeing, \textit{intermezzo}” (Deleuze and Guattari cited in
Kaplan, 1996, 87)—self “embedded in the medial process of milieu (\textit{funudosei})—not abstracted
from such a process, as in the Western scientific discourse ”(Berque, 1992, 102). Blond and
Japanese(?)\textsuperscript{77}: between, ambivalent, Chrysanthemum-and-Sword. Easy to see/the foreign.\textsuperscript{78}

\textsuperscript{75} Earth Day 1990. Suntory’s \textit{Earth Beer}. On earth-coloured labels “Suntory is thinking about the earth”.
Neither bottles or cans are recyclable; the labels look frayed, but are not recycled paper (Skove, 1995, 172).
\textsuperscript{76} “The Western conception of the person as a bounded, unique, more or less integrated motivational and
cognitive universe, a dynamic center of awareness, emotion, judgement, and action organized into a distinctive
whole and set contrastively both against other such wholes....is a rather peculiar idea within the context of the
world’s cultures” (Geertz cited in Gavin, 1995, 37).
\textsuperscript{77} “Japan has swung, almost schizophrenically, between ‘insisting on not being Asian at all, and declaring
itself the epitome of Asianness’” (McCormack cited in McGregor, 1996, 40). Tokyo University founder
Fukuzawa’s \textit{datsu-a, nyu-o} (“Out of Asia and Into the West” [Fukuzawa cited in ibid, 42]) rallied an insecure
rural nation toward modernity (Prussian school uniforms a residue of this [McGregor, 1996, 42]). The
embrace of the West was always in parallel and tension with a call to maintain “Japan’s Eastern Spirit, under
the banner of \textit{wakan yosei}: Japanese Spirit, Western Learning” (ibid).
\textsuperscript{78} Walker suggests that “writers who created the first modern literature in the Meiji period discovered them-

selves as individuals through their reading of Western literature” (Walker cited in Maraldo, 1994, 57).
Tooson’s essay “The Self That I Discovered in Rousseau’s \textit{Confessions}” prompts Maraldo to wonder if Tooson
“had no model available to him, within Japanese culture, of what it is to be a self?” (ibid, 57). What self/\textit{koan}
did Tooson shine in Rousseau? “It is difficult to imagine that someone could be unaware of being a self-
containted individual, existing ‘in the past and in the present, in the form of experiences, memories and
reflections’. I want to show that this apparent lack of awareness is best interpreted as a confrontation with
certain Western paradigms of self which were undeveloped, or at least underdeveloped, in Japan.” (ibid,
57-58). Again, west looks east for dissolution of self, east looks west for constitution of self? Under culture,
commonality, \textit{primal and undifferentiated} (semiotic? white?) prime time me/us?
“Self is born and reborn through positioning in various sets of cultural ideas [languages] and practice. In short, self is not transcendental with an ultimate meaning itself. Self’s meaning derives from its position in relation to other meanings—meanings of other selves, other relationships, other groups, and so on—and from its movement among these positions” (Rosenberger, *Tree*, 67) easy to see in Others while we remain...deep?

Many Americans are simply not familiar with fish as food. They usually like fish once they taste it, but they don’t want to eat it if they know it is fish. That is why a famous brand of canned tuna fish in America is called ‘Chicken of the Sea’. They solved the American fish problem by pretending their tuna fish was something else (excerpt from Ministry of Education approved senior high school textbook, private correspondence, Regan Olinyk).

Allegory. Godzilla/Kabuki, Japanese/English:

Godzilla vs./is *Kabuki*: obvious guy in rubber costumes, obscure.....? Hollings argues that while the Americans suppressed *kabuki* with its stylized “giant puppets, costumes and exaggerated gestures” it came back in the Japanese monster movie (Hollings, 1997, 245-246). *Kabuki* for foreigners is exotic, authentic, high culture, mysterious. Godzilla is bad dubbing, Saturday afternoon pop-gun popcorn kitsch. Godzilla appears in numerous ads during the Nagano Olympics yet “*Godzilla* is exotic for me...it is like 1950’s Japan. I have never seen a *Godzilla* movie” (Mikiko Yukari). “For the generation born after 1955, Japan itself, they insist, has become exotic” (Ivy, 1995, 54 ). It is easy to condemn the cheapening of Japan’s esoteric culture. *We want it quaint, Other*. Yet what might Godzilla mean to the Japanese who remember him? *Is our Godzilla Japan’s?*

*Gojira*’s pleas for nuclear disarmament--director Ishiro Honda visited Hiroshima in 1946—were deleted from the English version by its American distributors (ibid, 248).

Barthes (considering Tokyo): “the rational is merely one sign system among others” (Barthes cited in Chambers, 1993, 194).
Blond and Japanese, not fixed poles, but sign systems constituted of (and constituting) multiple spaces. Visualizing Japanese society as a web of Confucian reciprocity allows me to (mis)interpret a contextual society where things become maddeningly both A and B. Upon meeting, sarariimen exchange business cards indicating their status mid-bow to establish who bends lower. In the absence of transcendental ethics/identity, they create a context, a—shifting and shiftable—hierarchy to shape appropriate situational and provisional rules for behaviour and identity. One can hear a conversation “between two workers in the same corporation and by their language alone know which has seniority, if even by a year or two” (Kasulis, Researching, 104): “the ordinary workings of the Japanese language make it impossible to converse without clearly indicating to which group the interlocutors or the person they are talking about belong” (Loveday, 1986, 17).

79 ‘Spaces’ are never innocent. Japan objected to Australia’s 1901 Immigration Restriction Act “not so much because it discriminated against Asians, but because it put Japanese people on a par with Asians. Japan wanted the ‘respect due to a great power and a highly valued ally of Great Britain’ and expected Australia to discriminate between it and the ‘backward and dependent Asian peoples’” (Ball cited in McGregor, 1996, 197). Japan sought status similar to that granted to them in South Africa under apartheid “as honorary whites (not, it should be noted, honourable whites). Under pressure from Great Britain, Australia felt it had to give face to the Japanese complaint. The government slightly modified the dictation test requirement used to keep non-white people out in a way which eased the affront to the Japanese. Honour appeared to have been satisfied, even though the whites-only policy did not change in any particular fashion” (McGregor, 1996, 197).

80 Maddening to a Fogarasi, quotidian to an Iwao: “Japanese thought tends to emphasize the inability to attain or recognize absolutes. It is accepted that things are both right and wrong, good and bad, agreed with and disagreed with. It is possible to be black and white simultaneously” (Iwao, 1997, 331). I sent this out for comment. I am fascinated by the following exchange and believe it confirms the relevance of my speculations:

> So if these contradictions are interesting or familiar, zap me!

Sounds very familiar. It's part of me. I have no thoughts about it, though. It's part of me. I have no interests to 'think' about it. I can tell you how I 'feel' or would 'do' if you ask me a specific question, if you throw me into a imaginary situation... But no thoughts (e-mail, Kazumi). (See footnote 130).

81 This is by not only an Eastern phenomena: the different identities that we take on are obscured by our insistence on bound and fixed subject positions.
A salaryman's every encounter blossoms a new space, a new negotiation of identity: the "individualistic Western notion of self" does not reflect the uniqueness of Japanese human identity that exists in between-ness" (Kimura cited in Gavin, 1995, 36 italics mine). 

We put thirty spokes together and call it a wheel
But it is on the space where there is nothing that the utility of the wheel depends.
We turn clay to make a vessel;
But it is on the space where there is nothing that the utility of the vessel depends.
Therefore just as we take advantage of what is, we shall recognize the utility of what is not

- (Lao Tze, Tao Teh Ching [The Way and Its Power])

Over a third of pubs, coffee-shops and non-Oriental restaurants have a Western name (Loveday, 1996, 106).

82 It is too easy to invoke an "individualistic Western notion of self". Sartre borrows the notion of "mutually construed personhood" from Hegel (Solomon, 1994, 14) who suggests "that personhood essentially depends on what he calls 'recognition' by another" (ibid), thereby opposing Descartes "introspective self-identification" with a "publicly embodied" self (ibid). "Self and self-consciousness [for Hegel] are first of all a matter of status, and status can be obtained, again, only through [business card?] mutual recognition" (Solomon, 1994, 15). I would argue that Japanese and American selves both shift with/ from/around status even if I cannot but hold that this is more static in America and more shifting or in-between in Japan. Therefore, I agree with Markus and Kitayama's observation that in both Western and non-Western societies modes of self-construal are "independent" and "interdependent" creating a "so-called Western view of the individual as an independent, self-contained, autonomous entity who a) compromises a unique configuration of internal attributes...and b) behaves primarily as a consequence of these internal attributes" (Markus and Kitayama cited in Solomon, 1994, 22). "In the absence of superordinate and individual faculties proffered as defining of self, self is always a local, embodied and site-specific correlation of details: a repertory of experiences, desires, and beliefs, which, in combination, constitutes one's person. It is a locus, shaped by an enacted pattern of social roles and relationships." (Ames, 1996, 229) Easy to see away, difficult to see at home. This work is a convoluted attempt to dislodge the Cartesian certainty of self.
800 college students were “asked to supply meanings for nine common slogans such as ‘For beautiful human life’ (for Shiseido cosmetics), ‘My life, my gas’ (for Tokyo Gas Company), and ‘Do you know me?’ (for American Express). Less than half of their responses were judged correct” (Stanslaw, 1992, 69).

Japanese public transport. My freakiest koan. Every ride screamed the unknowable. Without situational ethics, what rules? Stifling anger, projecting self. Passengers push shove. Whoops. My ideals of politeness nowhere to be seen when Japanese became anonymous. Grmmrm. Though I was always delighted by obafurim elbow action (a derogatory compound for aggressive older women, approx. middle-aged-monster-lady; I see it as a compliment). Packed bus, passenger butt stuck in door. BXXZZZ BXXZZZZ sounds as it cannot close. Bus stops, still and waiting, door slamming this passenger’s poor ass. He offers no business card; all eyes ahead, static, one flustered Canadian moving forward golden ruling trying to make room. Finally, the bus driver speaks over the speakers. Everyone takes one giant step forward.

Angry. And still angry very much angrier for thinking this way. 83

Can scholars learn from salariimen? How and when do we negotiate identity, when do we impose it? How might the study of linguistic imperialism negotiate new spaces and identities (which honour context and recognize agency) by creating a praxis of listening, collaborating... respecting? Can we acknowledge, let alone get beyond or beside, inscribed norms and values? Can I ever get off that bus, and is this necessary?

83 Universal ethics instead of holding situational morality? The Kantian ‘Categorical Imperative’, my precious Do Unto Others. Mind Body stutter rage Che justice if anyone buds into line: just an immigrant’s eldest son not getting what he wants (private conversation Erica Martin)? Spanning racist valorizations (Confucian ethics leaves outsiders out at least Western ethics [and practice?] extend to Pope and pauper [chorus: Do unto Others not Uncle]), rage and guilt warrants this privileging of ‘my’ (racist?) ethics over others every damn day on public transport (“there are either no principles or, alternatively many principles on the basis of which people and behaviour are judged” [Iwao, 1997, 331]) leaving no doubt that ethics are socially constructed and so very difficult to re/de/construct. I clearly have not unpacked my assumptions, biases and investments in making the West “represent the moment of the universal under which particulars are subsumed” (Sakai, Naoki, 1989, 95). There is no doubt the West does unto-others: sweatshops Swoosh starvation wages butcher community strangle bio-sphere. Wrapped in sneaker justice and deodorant compassion, I have the privilege and perversity to fume about politeness. When particularly indignant and full of the Gore-tex gospel, I spend a fortune to write a thesis...
Crossing *Keigo*

One form of *I* is *watakusi domo* “which best translates: Yours Faithfully” (Illich and Sanders, 1988, 124).

Negotiating multiple possibilities for self-reference, I flash a vulgar unreflective question: could there be a time—a liminal space—where a Japanese woman might seek to express a provisional identity outside of a feudal-patriarchal order, to suspend dominant norms and be simply (and more anonymously) *I*? Moag notes that Fijians and Tongans “find English the only safe medium in which to address those of higher status. English not only hides their inability in the specialized vernacular registers, but also allows them to meet traditional

---

84 This assumes the English ‘I’ is more democratic/stable; this ignores registers, roles, hierarchies. What if anything stops my imaginary woman from assuming/appropriating such a simpler *I*? Masculine *boku* (*I*, literally *manservant*) is increasingly used by women (Cherry, 1987, 38). “Speaking Japanese would seem to provoke an identity crisis for there are many different words for ‘I’. To pick one is to identify oneself by gender, age, and level of respect felt toward the listener....The choice of an ‘I’ is one of the hallmarks differentiating feminine language from the neutral and masculine ways of speaking Japanese....The *boku* girls are just one example of how this rigid system is breaking down” (ibid). I am baffled by Goldstein and Tamura’s discussion of nomadic identity and the use of polite language: “‘I’ reference in *keigo* is constantly shifting. Starting at the point of the self, the ‘I’ becomes enlarged by including members of various groups to which the ‘I’ belongs. But from another point of view, the ‘I’ becomes absorbed into these groups, which, thenceupon, contain it. Then the ‘I’ at once becomes expanded and contracted while at the same time the reference of who belongs to the category of the other changes” (Goldstein and Tamura, 1975, 136). *Crossing: Language and Ethnicity Among Adolescents* examines the use of Panjabi, Creole and stylised Indian English by teenagers of Anglo, Panjabi and Afro-Caribbean descent. In all cases “language crossing was intimately connected to moments (and/or themes) where normal social order was loosened, and it either responded to these, or indeed produced or enhanced them” (Rampton, 1995, 219). While *keigo* levels and loanwords are ‘in’ Japanese, do they create outside inside, unshackling.....no, *this is a Cartesian centre to deconstruct...* enhancing, and responding to/with already loosened social, linguistic rules? I hope for the levelling of asymmetries. Perhaps hierarchies are erased out of and into new ones: I cannot map these directions, but wish to indicate that agency exists. Takemura uses the concept of *shakei* from Japanese landscape design (“borrowing the landscape or quoting the scenery” [Takemura, unpaginated]) as a metonym for the “concept of quotation or re-editing... [which is] a key to all Japanese culture” (ibid). *Language as landscape, ‘English’ trimmed to Japanese forms; topiary?* Yes, but I resist urges to—abstract/solo—fetishize or deny this as ‘liberation’.

Hierarchy to liminality: my paradigm and desire. Can I understand liminality in hierarchy? The ‘hierarchy’ I too easily see, un/liminal, rigid and loose, fissured with contradictions spun from and with different levels of politeness, perhaps loanwords.... and? *Crossing, without ever leaving home... without ever ‘having’ fixed und fertig home?* More *koans*: how can this re-frame our understanding of m/other tongue, what I clearly see in ‘Japan’—Bakhtin: “a variety of alien voices enter into the struggle for influence within an individual’s consciousness (just as they struggle with one another in surrounding social reality)” (Bakhtin cited in Rampton, 1995, 221)—do I see it opening in/to English? *Crossing, without ever*...
superiors on a more or less equal footing” (Moag cited in Kachru, 1995, 293). Bewildered by complicated expressions/negotiations of status, I find myself *willing* this to be so in Japan, a ‘Japan’ I build with Euro-American concepts. *Selectively* build. Epigram confession: I have conveniently cited only part of Illich and Sanders’ translation of *watakusi domo*, jettisoning “the I can be brazen, as it is in English” (Illich and Sanders, 1988, 124) to focus instead on Japan’s “hazy” I (ibid).

What choices and omissions do I trace to encounter/create a “feudal” Japan? What do I project and desire when examining how women “entering companies as receptionists or telephone operators are obliged to spend some time training in order to perfect their honorific language [keigo] to their employers’ satisfaction” (Moeran, 1998, 8)? If male employers “do their utmost to maintain their authority over a younger generation, by ‘wrapping’ them with complicated forms of language” (ibid), I immediately wonder if loanwords are a way to unwrap this.85

Interesting idea. I ask three Japanese speakers this question. Miscomprehension and “no”.

---

85 Does this reify language/respect the discursive/performative slides of identity? *I cannot decide in the abstract, but keep such questions in mind for specific situations*. The wonder and indeterminacy of this project is frustrating as *thesis*: the questions crave synthesis and situation. When applied to specific circumstances, confusion may spawn wisdom if hesitation and the ‘unknowable’ tug powerful reminders of the complexities and contradictions of power shuffling in and across cultures. *Indeterminacy = “the best chance of popular resistance to technocratic rationality”* (Frow, 1995, 33) but also = shopping mall...
Subject: RE:k/eigo as resistance?
To: "G.F."<isaragof@netcom.ca>

i do not know whether loanwords offer a way out of keigo. loanwords are another modified way of expressing certain ideas. particular choices of words shows one's attitude towards certain things but it is still on a vocab level. even if you talk about sekuhara [sexual harassment], for example, people will manipulate the level of politeness by employing certain styles. you can still use keigo to discuss sekuhara and so on. abundant use of loanwords may give an impression of casualness...to certain extent, yes, loanwords may offer...but from my view, not too much. for example, when i talk with a professor, i use lots of loanwords with keigo...but it relates more on topics...it depends on person you are talking with whether the person is young, etc...

(e-mail, Japanese linguist. PhD candidate, revealing the limits of abstraction)

_Eigo_ is Japanese for ‘English’. What twists are forced if we read _keigo_ as _eigo_ in the following?

_Keigo_, polite and respectful language, is “often associated with the expression of hierarchical differences, but much of its use, especially among women, is considered with quite different, though not unrelated matters. Prominent amongst these is the way _keigo_ is used more to express phrases and sentiments considered appropriate to a particular situation or occasion than to communicate much in the way of fact or feelings. It is said to be the opposite of _hakuda hanashi_, or naked speech, which may be regarded as the most frank language. Indeed, _keigo_ is often described as a form of language which is used to hide one’s real feelings” (Hendry, 1990, 25). Japanese “esthetics of silence” make “a virtue of reticence and a vulgarity of verbalization or open expression of one’s inner thoughts” (Kunihiro in March, 1996, 42) to all but one’s inner circle: do English loanwords circumvent this?

---

86 Junichiro Koizumi, 1989 Minister of Health and Welfare, worried that people could not understand loanwords used by bureaucrats, “ordered the establishment of a Terminology Rationalization Committee[!] to deal with the problem” (Loveday, 1996, 160). Not surprisingly, the ministry “failed to come up with solutions and the investigation committee was reported to be in a long recess” (Honna, 1995, 46). Honna notes that “the Ministry’s investigation committee took no time to recognise the difficulties involved in finding well-formed and appropriate Japanese expressions to substitute the foreign words currently in use. For example, how is _informed consent_ to be rendered in Japanese....How about _terminal care_? A direct translation displayed by four Chinese characters looks to the Japanese eyes too blunt and threatening to be considered appropriate” (Honna, 1995, 46). “_Tibi_ (tuberculosis) is preferable to the native Japanese term _kekkakubyō_” (Stanslaw, 1982, 194). Doctors often do not tell patients that they have cancer; English terms “blunt” harsh realities through “linguistic prudery, hypocrisy, evasion, deceit” (Honna, 1995, 53). In short, euphemisms. As Latin reassures and mystifies English patience—_peristalsis_!—English medical jargon in Japan reifies the profession to impresses those not in the circle. I was surprised to hear German terms from Japanese doctors, and have subsequently learned that this was the language of medicine until this generation.
Japanese: “it is of a loosely related, agglomerative nature, admirably suited to the expression of ambiguous, infinitely suggestive nuances of feeling-tone, and frustratingly indeterminate to a Westerner” (King, Foreword in Nishitani, 1982, x). Japanese often indicate that they find English a far more “direct” language. 87 Depending on context and personality, this brings relief and/or an intimidation. 88

English, Chaucer to California, woven, forgotten, melting. Direct? As opposed to…

inscrutable? Japan’s isolation, silent Buddhist reflection, “two and a half centuries of extreme societal control under the Tokugawa shogunate during which time interaction was regulated right down to the exact manner of smiling to superiors” (Loveday, 1986, 112)? As supposed to language. To clothes. Top hat flapper jazz fascism Occupation and occupations V.C.R. ends of history: what language can express let alone silence and sideline this?

Chotto muzukashii, that’s a little bit difficult (shortened to chotto—little--) it took time to realize it meant no. Let’s go to the zoo tomorrow—little—I’ll pack two lunches… no way.

Matsumoto examines 20 (!) ways the Japanese (don’t) say no (Matsumoto, 1988, 108-115).

87 Keigo’s politeness is “described as a ‘precious beauty’, the ‘essence’ or ‘cream’ of the Japanese language” (Hendry, 1993, 53). Hendry considers honorific language a linguistic wrapping (ibid, 52) and observes that “some of Jane Austen’s characters were mistresses of the art” (Hendry, 1993, 57). English in/directed into Japanese: a Japanese linguist “finds it a kind of psychological torture to listen to foreigners speaking Japanese, even ‘perfect Japanese’ because he can’t understand their ‘real intent’” (Hendry, 1993, 68) (like my ‘torture’ at high squeaky polite voices, torture at not finding or understanding the correct level of keigo).

88 Or moot out-person ramblings. Discussing this with a Japanese speaker (a philosophy graduate, versed in ‘theory’ and eager to decenter cultural givens) I am met with confusion and a blunt “no, I don’t think so”. Despite the best of intentions and rigorous self-critique, I universalize my values. Western overindividualized expression might suggest “wild abandon, social carelessness or shallow flamboyance” (Loveday, 1986, 113) to Japanese speakers as easily as it smacks of emancipation. My projection rests an axis rusting language solid, received, reified. Pro and/or con, I ignore and am always already exterior to the Japanese use and understanding of English. “Precise and ordered talk is considered odd and even ‘anti-social’; instead vagueness, hesitation, indirectness and ‘incompleteness’ [my thesis, striving and failing to be ‘Japanese’ wherein “what is abolished is not meaning but any trace of finality” (Barthes, cited in Chambers, 1993, 195)]? are felt to be appropriate rhetoric patterns for organizing verbal content” (Loveday, 1986, 115): how can I (and who am I to assume the throne and) declare if ‘English’ therefore is an attractive ‘escape’ or vulgarity? Unfortunately, training, culture and this academic ritual urge conclusion, proclamation and decision. The more I read-write these un/certainties, the more I want to listen, contextualize and accept contradiction and confusion.
Reification: a far more pointed tongue, English (grammatically and culturally) “gets to the point” where a far more stratified Japanese orbits, suggests and seeks consensus.  

89 (Gendered) phatics so so! dominate Japanese conversation. Is that so? Isn’t it nods (it’s so isn’t it?) and (you don’t say) the ubiquitous hai (yes/it’s so!) punctuate speech (and motion: Hayashi notes that body [leaning, head and hand movements] and utterance synchronize between Japanese speakers! [Hayashi, 1996, 193]; Japanese speakers “frequently monitor their own breathing to stay in sync with their interlocutors” [Hall cited in ibid, 194]). “Japanese tend to respond immediately after minimal utterances of the speaker, timing their responses to coincide either with the last syllable of an intonation group or with the pause preceding the next group” (Loveday, 1986, 113). Foreigners can find this bewildering: “the listener’s constant participation creates a more intensely cooperative interaction than is typical of conversation in American English...some English speakers addressing Japanese listeners may find themselves reduced to paralyzed silence by the barrage of verbal response and nodding which greet their words and seems to indicate that they have already been understood when they have scarcely begun to speak” (Clancy cited in Loveday, 1986, 113 -114). These routine formulae are fundamental to create context and frame social relationships (Loveday, 1986, 114): a nod or a tag word at the end of a sentence invites agreement and flashes status. Wierzbicka translates the ubiquitous tag “ne” as “I think you would say the same” (Wierzbicka, 1994, 75). Eh? She quotes Mizutani and Mizutani regarding the concept of aizuchi: “the word ai means ‘doing something together’...; tsuchi means ‘a hammer’...Two people talking and frequently exchanging response words is thus likened to the way two swordsmiths hammer on a blade. In Japanese conversation, the listener constantly helps the speaker with aizuchi—the roles of the speaker and the listener are not completely separated” (Mizutani and Mizutani cited in Wierzbicka, 1994, 75). Do scholars in Kyoto weave footnotes about Canadians hammering together with our monosyllabic tag? Aligning points of view: I have often spoken with foreigners about how Japanese speakers move/nod even while on the telephone. Whether stranger or friend, callers to the Singapore Japanese Kindergarten were basted with phatics/agreement. Annoying to many American ears (to Japanese, female English speakers “often sound harsh, raucous, rude or overly masculine” [Cammack and van Buren cited in Loveday, 1986, 131), the raising of women’s voices by an octave when they speak on the phone is considered polite in Japan. What to me—“English female pitch is considerably less differentiated from English male pitch”(Loveday, 1986, 90)—seems an artificial/annoying falsetto is used by information clerks and elevator girls. Like the tea-pouring and photo-copying O.L.’s—office ladies—they constitute a reserve pool of single women for harried businessmen to meet and marry, keeping courtship in the corporate family, allowing men to work, not date (Cherry, 1987, 105). First called B.G. for “business girl”, the acronym was changed when it was discovered that many English speakers used ‘B-girl’ for “bar girl” or prostitute; readers of a woman’s magazine suggested new names and O.L. was chosen in 1963 (ibid, 103). Comics such as Cactus OL “celebrate the prickliness and stubborn refusal” of some OL’s in the face of their bosses (McGregor, 1996, 223). In the comic Feeling Metaphysical, OL’s put salty water into their bosses coffee and laxatives into their chocolate (ibid, 224). It is condescending/Orientalist to portray Japanese women as ‘victims’: conversations with Japanese acquaintances, friends and lovers shine a strength, humour and status hidden to first and second glances. Yet, while cognisant of the immense power of (especially older) women in Japan, and wary of universalizing occidental tropes of gender and justice, I cannot but shudder when I hear Japanese women use a squeaky falsetto voice. To me, it signifies helplessness, making girls out of women. This is polite, reassuring? Discussing this with a Japanese woman, I was asked “don’t you get tense, nervous on the phone?” She considers phone calls “intimidating” and invokes the binary of uchi-soto, inside-outside. The higher voice becomes a way to “put on make-up” or “wear a mask,” a “way to cover up your identity,” staying outside with outside (soto) people. A resident of North America for four years, she notes that “my voice goes lower on the phone in English. People notice ‘hey, your voice has gone up!’ when I speak Japanese on the phone”. I told her about asking students if former Socialist party leader Takako Doi used a higher voice on the phone; she responded that “they probably don’t understand your question...it’s so internalized... maybe if someone point out ‘Doi-sensei, your voice goes up’ she can maybe change”. If gender is performative as Lebra posits (Lebra cited in Loveday, 1986, 94)—and I believe it is—and a decorative and dainty Japanese (hyper-) femininity is
The Japanese of the royal family is so formal and archaic that some Japanese in Oxford “resorted to English” when Emperor Hirohito’s grandson studied there (Hendry, 1990, 26). Emperor Showa’s funeral (Hirohito in North America)—the impending day of his death was called ‘X-de’ [X-day] by the media (Loveday, 1996, 197)—“taxed even the most accomplished journalists to find suitable language to refer to him” (Hendry, 1993, 67).

Members of the Japanese National Debate team tell James Stanslaw that “such argumentation was almost impossible to conduct in Japanese, especially for women. To their knowledge, all debating societies in Japan conduct their contests in English” (Stanslaw, 1982, 195). Stanslaw observes that due to constraints within Japanese, loanwords may be a way to “circumvent these inhibitions” (ibid).

Prince Mikasa uses the loan “conveyor belt” in the annual court ceremony of haiku poetry; Emperor Showa [‘Hirohito’] uses damu (dam) in a 1976 poem (Loveday, 1996 162). “The conveyor belt that brings in the feed revolves and thousands of young birds cluster about it to eat” (Prince Mikasa cited in ibid): “usually not even Chinese-derived vocabulary is permitted in this type of text” (ibid). “The breaking of enshrined language-rules in this year-end ritual celebration of Japanese nationhood, by those very persons who, as symbolic embodiments and guardians of Japanese values, are expected to uphold them most of all, is an extremely significant indication of the intimate acceptance of English transfers” (ibid).

“Consciously or deliberately displayed in external adornment as well as behaviour and speech” (ibid), does the spectrum of roles reveal itself as artifice, leaving foreign observers baffled and essentializing what is acknowledged as artifice by Japanese? The question and allegory slides to language(s). I am fascinated to read that in the Japanese Red Army women “spoke with great frankness and directness,” avoided honorifics, and used “men’s language” (Pharr cited in Loveday, 1986, 15); a Japanese grandmother can float gender and switch to “brusque, rather masculine speech in the home, reflecting her social position” (Jorden cited in ibid, 14). “There is an increasing usage of boku by younger women, for example, a first-person pronoun that has been used until recently only by men. Are we seeing a shift in the somatic level of selfhood expressed in the gender-specific terms of the ordinary language?” (Kasulis, Researching, 104). What selves flourish or wilt across/within languages? How can (these) words approach the extra-discursive?
Meaning sneaks and screams from “greater silence, terseness and caution in [Japanese]
speech, the lack of logical organization of discourse, the heavy emphasis on vertical
politeness and depersonalizing routine formulae” (Loveday, 1986, 31). Naked speech, real intent, the
point: these are often skirted in Japanese. I ask again: might a Japanese woman seek a pro-
visional identity—“a becoming at a different speed” (Wark, Nettish, unpaginated)—to trans-
scend uchi-soto and feudalism? Can Mai homu (my home: “a home-and family-centered way
of life” [Loveday, 1996, 143]) twirl provisional and liminal spaces of refuge and resistance, or
is this mere sloganeering, commodity fetishism? This is not to replace linguistic
imperialism with the far more obscene notion of linguistic liberation, pep talks worthy of
Captain Kirk ("Whoso would be a man must be a nonconformist"[Emerson, 1950, 148]) spreading all
that is noble (read: western individualism) to the universe.

90 Consumption is/n’t an establishment value; ‘English’ establishes and destabilizes: ‘my’ (the Japanese equivalent
sounds “too possessive, too egotistical, stressing as it does, private over the collective” [Buruma cited in Camargo and Sherry, 1987, 178]).
Mai-homu-shugi (shugi=ism, my-home-ism) is “an antiestablishment value system which places one’s home above
one’s work” (Miura, 1979, 97). Hitachi’s Humanication “strategy of office automation... markets a personal
word processor named ‘Mine,’” along with such software packages as ‘MyCalc’(Camargo and Sherry, 1987,
176). Wark sees Japanese English as a language of ‘conjuring’: “English is purified of its mundane uses and
emerges in the copywriter’s hands as the language of a utopian realm, where one can indeed say ‘I have my
favourite things’...This language promises shared experience precisely because it is thoroughly privatised. It
addresses the individual consumer but promises friendship [Sanyo Sogo Bank re-names itself Tomato Bank]. The
friendship on offer, however, is the friendly commodity, the nice objects out of which a ‘nice life’ is accumu-
lated, rather than actually lived” (Wark, The Tokyo Nice Life, 10). “The ability to use the English language
has come to signify a transmutation of the non-native speaker and of the adopting speech community that
Kachru (1984) has likened to alchemy” (Camargo and Sherry, 1987, 176). Conjuring (a term allowing for
phatic, metalingual and poetic functions of language [Jakobson cited in Camargo and Sherry, 1987, 170] in
addition to the referential seized by linguist-bureaucrats) and alchemy: I am intrigued by these metaphysical
labels, and catch myself ready to pounce with a pat leftist ‘historicize!’ This is impossible to do when
considering an abstract ‘English’ potentially both a “vehicle of disharmonic conflictual (i.e. culturally
disruptive) values as well as the basis of elite group membership” (ibid). A strange alchemy in deed...
91 “English is emphatically the language of commerce, of civilization, of social and religious freedom, of
progressive intelligence” (Marsh, quoted in Crowley, 1989, 72). It “is worthy of our holiest and never ceasing
devotion. It will bear to future ages the sentiments of a free, generous and singularly energetic race of men”
(Harrison cited in ibid, 76). Despite Kirk’s/the British Council’s firepower, people talk back. The impossibility
of examining cultural deformations outside of context b/end this paper. Context and history are crucial.
I cannot parse language as resistant-reactionary in the abstract. Ditto the often overlapping phenomenon of
kitsch in Japan. Recall ‘cute’ (footnote 61). Ritchie examines shogunates laws “forbidding the non-noble
classes from ostentatious display, unwittingly promoting the restrained esthetic for which Japan is so
famous....’ One of the attractions of kitsch is that it kicks rules in the face....Kitsch is liberating“

66
"Herbert Passin (1977) argues that the use of the pronoun mai (my) in Japanese expression such as mai homu [my home], mai ka (my car), and mai puraibashii (my privacy) is indicative of a new social order in Japan that gives ‘priority to one’s family and to one’s private realm’” (Tobin citing Passin in Tobin, *Introduction*, 23). If we assume ka and puraibashii to be western prerogatives and English a “Trojan Horse” (Cooke cited in Pennycook, 1994, 13) of foreign consumerist values and “particular class interests” (Pennycook, 1994, 13), if we fear that “although the Japanese have mastered the world economically in terms of Western-style goods and technology, there may be an ironic reverse as Western styles begin to master Japanese conceptions of self and relationship” (Rosenberger *Introduction*, 11), are we (wilfully?) ignoring ways in which so-called ‘Western styles’ may in a feudal context appear progressive? And is this not for the Japanese to decide, adapt or reject?

(Ritchie cited in Taylor, unpaginated). *Hello Kitty* (speaking only) / English, resistance?

92 Japanese built railways, not roadways. “For a very long time, the Japanese people resisted buying private cars” (de Kerckove, 1995, 160) for “a car implies individualism, independence, making sudden decisions... In a country of such close social texture, individual initiative is fundamentally suspect” (Morain cited in ibid, 160-161). Not quite. Japan now is, figuratively and literally, a nation of railways and roadways. Moraini’s reductionism—individualism as “against the grain of the Japanese mentality” (ibid, 160)—must be fundamentally suspect. But in a nation where a popular teen magazine can be called *Average*, the pressure to conform is intense: how does the Japanese language change for the roadway, how does it carve out spaces to signify individualism? *Cars = individualism*: I am struck by two contradictory(?) images. The flashing lights and kitsch-laden machismo of Toyota “hot rods” bare witness to an (auto-erotic?) creation of individual male identity. These in a sea of (1989 Kanazawa) predominately white cars (a rainbow by 1992) dotted with armoured busses spouting propaganda, deafening *boozokaku* motorcycles, and black sedans of gangsters. Individualism yet. The ‘individualism’ of cars something more in Japan...and the something more of language? Structure, roadrailways, imperialism: arrogant abstractions, our ways?
One example I've noticed a lot recently is the use of "mii" and "yuu" (not "me" and "you") as casual ways of referring to self and hearer among young people. E.g. "Un, mochiron paatii ni iku, mii wa ne." By inventing these words (i.e. borrowing the forms and giving them meaning) the users have created another level of formality/familiarity in their Japanese personal reference system. They might have used these words because of the feeling they perceive English to have, and in that sense they are borrowing an "English" idea (casualness), but these new words have a meaning the words "me" and "you" don't have in English (i.e. indicating a high degree of familiarity). So a characteristic of the Japanese language has been strengthened. One cannot say that English has been adopted; this kind of borrowing does not threaten the position of Japanese -- if anything, it makes it stronger.

(Alan Thompson, personal correspondence)

Tossed at my Kirk homunculi: Happi chamingu furanku (happy, charming, frank) have native equivalents "which are more readily employed in contexts of sincere and private communication than their English-based synonyms" (Loveday, 1996, 90).

The traditional term nanshoku (male charms) refers to homosexual love between men but the term joshoku (female charms) refers to heterosexual love (Cherry, 1987, 116). "Lesbians in Japan are at a loss for words. They find unacceptably insulting or voyeuristic nuances in almost every Japanese term for homosexual women. They make few efforts to reclaim these slurs, the way American lesbians have embraced the word 'dyke,' or to invent new words in their native tongue" (ibid, 115). Celebrating Lesbos, they become rezubian.

Do I recreate the imperial project to insist that "the place of otherness" be "fixed...a subversion of western metaphysics" (Bhabha, The Other Question, 73) in order to reify consumerism and individualism as western, top-down, always already and only oppressive, giving no thought to how this is actually taken up in different cultures? "So-called loanwords may create a non-/less (yet still quint[non]essentially) Japanese s/p ace but it does not follow [re: mai] that 'their' private realm is identical to 'ours'"(Fogarasi, All That is Soridu, 9). I am not arguing that Englishness has been annihilated from Japanese English, rather I seek to dislodge any reification of English and show that non-Japanese cannot use their 'English' weltanschůuang to understand, translate or pass judgement upon Japanese English.

Lacking a verb for coming out in Japanese, there is instead kamu auto suru, to do coming out (ibid, 116).
After a city council member who had lived in the States explains the term, Itabashi adopts **NIFTY** as the city’s self-identifier (Honna, 1995, 60)

I am intrigued by the challenge of *mai* as ‘progressive’; this goes against the grain of my pedagogy and politics. I forget that bourgeois individuality was/is at different historical conjectures a progressive response to feudalism. This is not to sanction packaging the contradictions of Japanese subjectivity as ‘feudal’ but to submit that mine is not the only perspective on ‘consumerism’ and ‘individualism’ (if this term invokes cowboys and disgust, we are merely see[dl]ing ourselves).

---

93 How do unreflective theorizations of linguistic imperialism create such reductions? Do I smudge the cognitive dissonance of cross-cultural contact (*boku* and *temae* both / and *you* (Smith, R., 1983, 81)) with templates of theory, offering not only the comfort of ‘understanding’ but a moral high ground?

94 Cultural motivations for shopping, the ‘symbolic order of shopping’ must not “obscure underlying material determinants and objectives, namely profit and expansion” (Zerzan, 1994, 131). To effectively engage Takai’s valorization of consumption as resistance (ibid, 129) it is useless to track what consumerism means to ‘me’. The ‘underlying material determinants’ of Japanese consumerism must be understood and approached from Japanese, not Western, perspectives. Conversations with Japanese friends suggesting that a Gucci bag in Glendale (to stick out, be above) is different than one in a land where a teen magazine is called *Average* (to conform, consumerism as duty) coincide with academic observation: Japanese materialism is “influenced by a marked psychological preference for group-based self-identification” (Maynard, 1995, 150). What’s true for a bag—same signifier, different signifieds—is true for English. We/they hear the same sounds, but do we/ they *understand* and intend the same things? We can only attempt to find out by asking, listening. However, the commodity spectacle can seduce even its most ardent critique. Especially in Japan. Ivy delineates “communication as a form of knowledge-as-play, brought about by the ‘commericalization of society’ (*CM-ka shakai*)” (Ivy, 1989, 34) creating what Parco Corporation calls “The Meta-Mass Age” (ibid, 33). This “maintains that Japanese culture today no longer exhibits the vertical cleavages of the past—the distinctions between high culture and mass culture, dominant culture and subculture... instead, culture today is a mosaic of cultural styles. Culture is dispersed, fragmented, and decentered. Intellectual distinctions are levelled” so that “one of the most famous media stars in Japan today” is Ito Shigesato, a *kopii raitaa*, copywriter (ibid, 35). *Japan has even embraced Postmodernist-as-Superstar: the A A genshoo or “Asada Akira Phenomenon” made a media star of postmodernism and the postmodern academic Asada Akira. His *Structure and Power* sold eighty thousand copies in a matter of weeks in 1983 and Asada became “a sensation in the weekly magazines and newspapers, and the media announced the advent of ‘new academia.’ Office workers, university students, artists, musicians—everyone bought the book” (ibid, 26) which celebrates knowledge as play. Asada “urges his readers to play with knowledge. Knowledge is that which appears in the interstices of a dualistic choice, a line of escape to the outside, a chance encounter. It is nomadic thought” (ibid, 28-29) *trickster theory not idiosyncratic but already a Japanese pop culture fad fifteen years ago? I am disgusted to be so delighted! Ivy traces a phantas-magorical postmodern feeding frenzy: GS: *Tanoshii chishiki* (GS: Gay Science) is a journal advocating “Nietzschean joyful knowledge” (ibid, 36) spinning “yet another loop in the already self-referential cultural condition of the meta-masses” (ibid). And this escapes journals and conferences: “Japanese commercials often employ extraordinarily recondite and esoteric materials, words, and themes. For example, a composition by Erik Satie might form the background music for a watch commercial, the words ‘Russian formalism’ might

_Negotiating the labyrinth_: without surgery or forgery, _sans_ R.E.M. or hallucinogen, the promise of an entirely new _I_ created through language and fantasy? I immediately pounce, with disdain, on advertisement, on Baudrillard, on privileged and melancholy seekers buying crystals, dream catchers and ersatz lifestyles. Yet I cannot but consider that shifting Japanese signs and subjectivities are circled and splashed with (though by no means fixed or understood by) postmodern coloratura that are (otherwise and not only) flawed by their refusal of materiality.  

---

appear in a watch commercial, or the expression ‘postmodern’ in a car ad” (ibid). Commercials sometimes do not refer to a product; “for devotees, the commercials themselves often become highly valued aesthetic artifacts, and their creators respected and famous artists” (ibid), their work seen as self-reflexive or even subversive (ibid). While it is thrilling to read and cite that “the principle of sheer equivalence liquefies all solid realities” (ibid, 37), I am sceptical. _While some write dissertations others work lathes_. I cannot but remain wary of consumption as resistance. As for the levelling of hierarchies, I am reminded of the fetishization of Japanese Management in the West. The C.E.O. may wear the same uniform as a janitor, but when they meet, one bows far lower than the other. Still, my jingle fangled capitalism cannot be ‘theirs’, and consumerism (for the wealthy) may well resist (not only feudal) power in ways that I do not understand. Between subversion and rationalization, Deleuze and Guattari recognize “both the domination of capital as well as its unprecedented liberation of desire” (ibid, 43). “The point is to work with, to play with this liberated desire, to push capitalism even further in the direction of decoding and deterritorialization” (ibid). _But from the library, it is hard to see who gets to deterritorialize who_. MacCannell’s take on ‘deterritorialization’ is grim. He writes of White Culture’s universalization of exchange values: “Once all of the groups on the face of the Earth are drawn into a single network of ‘civilized’ associations based on monetary or some other system of equivalencies, the transcribability of all languages and the translatability of any language into any other language.....White Cultural totalization will be complete...[and] ‘ethnicity’ is the only form which indigenous groups can assume in order to be part of the totality” (MacCannell, 1992, 131). _Fetish, margin, commodity, postcard ethnicity structural adjustment the extra-discursive jackboot of equivalency via capital’s flow..._ 

95 “The semiotic overtones of both the Japanese and the Western postmodern convey to its advocates a clausrophobic sense that there is nowhere else to go except in circles, via performative language games or the re-playing of the record of one’s life or the endless circulation of increasingly unnecessary consumer goods and images. And all of these aspects of ‘crisis’ appear to be deja vu in the Japanese postmodern, where they have been a way of life for so long. But for nations and peoples in daily struggle with Western and Japanese imperialism, it must come, if they hear about it, as a surprise to learn that the game or story ‘is over.’ For the third world, the idea that Japan or the first world has no system, no structure, no content, no signifieds does not induce apathy so much as vigilance; the view of the postmodern as a postnarrative, hence postpolitical stage is itself a dangerous narrative ploy designed to defuse the potential of political struggle” (Wolfe, 1989, 231).
Rules in a public junior high school in Kobe:

“Boys and girls may be friends but may not enter into relationships. Exchange of gifts, borrowing and lending, or any other reciprocal relationship is absolutely forbidden.”

“Conversation between the sexes for more than three consecutive minutes, or walking together for more than three meters, is forbidden. Naturally, an exception will be made for assemblies.”

“Punishment for scandalous occurrences between boys and girls will be as follows: Third-year boys: Write a self-reflection essay of no less than two thousand characters and do seiza [kneeling] sitting for three hours. Third-year girls: Write a self-reflection essay of no less than two thousand characters and do seiza sitting for six hours....First-year boys: Exempt. First-year girls: Do seiza sitting for one and a half hours” (Morimoto, 1996, 207).

Embarrassed and excited, I fumble high priced discursive tools to examine selfhood and subjectivity. I am heartened by illuminative discussions with Japanese speakers that support what appears to be a free play of signs, detached from their “material moorings...as access to concrete materiality is endlessly deferred” (Trend, 1995, 43) a la Baudrillard. Neon abroad, silent in ourselves, subjectivity also spins in the ‘West’. Ames notes the “irreducibly social aspect of self” in Sartre’s ‘Being-for-others’ where “self, dependent upon status, requires recognition” (Ames, 1994, 3), i.e. blooms in a web of/with others. Does Nietzsche’s challenge to the “unitary self” with “a ‘field of selves’ notion of self” (ibid, 4) nudge the Orientalism that haunts observations outsiders make about Japan, or does it risk essentializing ‘selfhood’ as always already and universally multiple and in flux?

Christian preacher Uno Masami “warned in two books that ‘the Jews’ were about to provoke an ‘economic apocalypse,’ which would enable them to buy up Japan, after which they would destroy the Japanese race by letting blacks and Hispanics take Japanese jobs and rape Japanese women. Uno’s books sold more than 1 million copies in six months” (Buruma, 1995, 34). 97

96 Postmodern theory ignoring (or not silly enough for) ‘economics’? On December 31 1990, the “Tokyo sharemarket was worth more than 40 per cent of the value of all world stockmarkets, and one and a half times the value of the Japanese economy” (McGregor, 1996, 19).

97 Fear and desire refract the panic over Japanese/Jewish identities: “the Japanese were a chosen race who might have adapted Western ways, but retained their unique national spirit. They were as civilized as the Europeans, yet they were rejected on racial grounds. Hence the idea that the Japanese were like the Jews”
"I love Japan" on politically dominant Liberal Democratic Party election posters (Loveday, 1996, 105)

I invoke chronology. Although this cannot legitimate my (surprised/reluctant) postmodern bravura, theoretical readings followed visceral ones. By years. Yet I am caught with my hands in the theory jar, stuttering Sherlock Holme's admonition to follow the impossible when the possible has been exhausted. Speculation that shines absurd and irresponsible in classroom and conference becomes germane to questions of Japanese selfhood and subjectivity. Without bracketing critique or discomfort, I am trying to confront (create?) ambulatory and frisky signifiers not to escape history and social formation but--however implausibly--to reveal them. This thesis cannot escape authoring, dominating and legitimating. I can only attempt to be aware of (and sabotage) this, and am painfully aware of how this oscillation tempts solipsism and the worst of academic arrogance and ethnocentricism.

Go-kuro-sama: honourable-trouble-honourable, thanks given when a task is part of a role (Goldstein and Tamura, 1975, 76).

Shifting signs circle my straw woman: what kind of an I do I foist upon her, what would(n’t) she confer onto herself? Ludic I, resistant I? Does cross-cultural drag merely mock "the bland eternity of the same" (Baudrillard, 1993, 114)? Am I projecting Western tropes? When I (earnestly) attended a meditation workshop in 1992, the Ottawa Zen Centre featured incense, tatami mats and intense Caucasian monks in robes who 're-create' their vision of Zen practice to the absurd point of taking on Japanese names (Fogarasi, Bond To Be Free, 70). Are (Buruma, 1995, 36). In some cases, are: some Japanese scholars argue that the early Japanese tribes were in fact Jewish (ibid). I am boggled to read that anti-Semitic Japanese scholars trace history back to the Sumerians to argue that the Jews are 'impostors' and Jewish culture "developed diabolically as a counterfeit expression of Japanese Sun Goddess culture" (Masuda, cited in ibid, 36): obscene and fantasmagorical constructions of hatred that I am ashamed to have heard (Sumeria, hidden histories etc. with equally insane substitutions for the Sun Goddess) from a distant Hungarian relative. 98 If the uncanny swirls a "return of something estranged under the guise of the familiar" (Ivy, 1995, 107), is
their new selves no selves, do they seek salvation in a Japanese identity, “dying of self and returning to the One” (March, 1996, 89)? Do my misunderstandings of cultural cannibalism ‘here’ apply to circumstances ‘there’? How to escape Orientalism, the “arrogance of the radical European humanist conscience, which will consolidate itself by imagining the other, or, as Sartre puts it, ‘redo in himself [sic] the other’s project,’” (Spivak cited in Yoshimoto Mitsuhiro, 1993, 342)?

Anne no hi: Anne’s Day. Based on Anne Frank’s recording of her “sweet secret”, Japan’s first sanitary paper product company called itself Anne Co.; “Anne’s Day” has entered the language from their advertising campaign (Cherry, 1987, 18) to join are (that) and the English derived mensu (ibid, 19) (preferable to the Japanese “potently filthy characters”[ibid] that label public rest room sanitary napkin receptacles belying a history of menstruation being labelled as “pollution”[ibid]). I have read about the popularity of Anne Frank House with Japanese tourists and the generalization of her story to be about innocence and suffering (to include that of the Japanese during the war) yet I am still shocked to read Anne Co.’s P.R. chief’s deterritorialization: “the image we presented had to be beautiful, pure, not of suffering but of delight, not gloomy but bright”(ibid, 18). In Japan, a Holocaust victim signifies delight?

---

this...canny? “Hegel postulated an abstract dyad of the self and other, constructed in the consciousness of individuals. Within this idealized rendering the subject envisions an external object that it comes to recognize as different from itself. This differences produces a dissatisfaction that prompts the subject to absorb the attributes of the external other. Hegel termed this process ‘sublation’, and theorized that sublation is the motor force of human learning, as the subject is changed through the appropriation of new ideas and objects” (Trend, 1995, 42). Ottawa monks scarf Japan, Linguistic Imperialism = they-can-only-sublate - us = arrogant?

99 I pass this off as Zen. It is a slogan from a pre-war ultranationalistic handbook (Fundamentals of National Polity) explaining the relationship between the Emperor and subject (cited in March, 1996, 89).

100 Said: “European culture gained in strength and identity by setting itself off against the Orient as a sort of surrogate and even underground self” (Said cited in Hassan, 1990, 70). “The image of authenticity and the potential for liberation attributed to cultural difference are based on the assumption that European culture is dead; because cultural transformation is no longer possible, Westerners must look elsewhere for meaning” (Root, 1996, 31). I scatter Japans, tickling interiority, groping self and strength through thesis ritual. How, why, and to what ends can we speak of this without delineating Occidentalism, the creation-transgression of borders to re/create us? We, integrate, they disintegrate? Our oui (true north strong and free) fixed and immovable, self-flagellating over appropriations, never considering ‘they’ can take, shift and flagellate as well?
Surrogacy: The Other’s Project(ion)?

Re-doing self with other: Like Kasulis, I am intrigued by Lebra’s analysis of the “Japanese phenomenon of *migawari* (surrogation). Lebra shows how the surrogate is used in a variety of social contexts, ranging from religious healing practices, to interaction between overlapping social groups, to the management of aristocratic and imperial households. Although, as Lebra points out, the use of surrogates is a cross-cultural phenomenon, it may be especially prominent in Japan. In Japan, it seems, a way of being oneself is to let someone act in your place. Lebra speculates that the prominence of the *migawari* phenomenon in Japan derives from a nonintegral sense of self. The Japanese self is actually divisible into multiple selves that function differently according to context” (Kasulis, *Introduction*, 84).

Surrogacy: *Japanese students doing ‘arubeito’ [arbeit, gr.] part-time work, dress as Shinto priests and bless cars* (private conversation, Franz-Joszef and Harumi Ecker).

Surrogacy: Host bars for women, or bars with women dressed as men who serve drinks and chat with exclusively female customers (McGregor, 1996, 246).

Surrogacy: A travel agent gives a customer a receipt but no ticket, assuring her not to worry because “I will become you, my honourable customer [*okyaku-sama ni nari kawatte*], to get your boarding card ready at the airport” (Lebra, 1994, 109).

Surrogacy: A woman’s dedication to a religious sect has nothing to do with her beliefs but is “surrogate devotion for the sake of her mother” (ibid, 109-110).

Surrogacy: Inside *Image Clubs*, men can sexually harass women in a room made to look like an office, replete with fax and xerox machines (McGregor, 1996, 240). “One of the most

---

101 “‘Jingle Bell Rock’ can be used as background music for the traditional Dance of the Dead Festival, without producing dissonance in the ritual” (Camargo and Sherry, 1987, 185).
popular image club boudoirs is decorated to replicate the inside of a train carriage. Inside, a female passenger waits to be groped, and to grope back” (ibid).\textsuperscript{102}

Surrogacy: The phenomenon of Japanese renting actors to play grandchildren instead of visiting their grandparents (“even Baudrillard might find Japan’s devotion to simulacra a little frightening” [Masao, 1989, 148]).\textsuperscript{103}

Surrogacy: “When my trainee is in the ring, I [a trainer] am the one who is fighting the game. I become the boxer” (Lebra, 1994, 110).

Surrogacy: Tokyo Disneyland. German Happiness Kingdom in Hokkaido replete with medieval castle and Trabant (Jesus and Other Japanese Attractions, 29). Canadian World promises “the sense of romance, exoticism, and nostalgia implicit in 19th-century Canada” (ibid). There is a Venice of Japan and a Holland Village offering a flood of 600 tons of water. It welcomed 3.86 million visitors in its first year. Tobu World boasts a miniature Parthenon, Taj Mahal and ninety-eight other famous buildings (two million visitors in its first six months) while Niigata Russian Village features a Russian Orthodox Cathedral (ibid).

\textsuperscript{102} In Osaka in 1994, 75% of high school girls said they were molested on trains by chikan (‘foolish men’ or ‘idiot being’) but only 2% told police (McGregor, 1996, 240) “Rail companies were initially reluctant to support a campaign by citizens’ groups to put posters up in trains and stations warning molesters to desist. ‘Since we have male passengers, too much emphasis on molestation would hurt their feelings’, an official of the Osaka Transportation Bureau told the media” (McGregor, 1996, 240). Female guides called konpanion (companions) at a 1985 science exhibition “were trained to respond to chikan in the crowds...[by exclaiming] ‘I’m so sorry!’ as if she had accidentally bumped into his hand” (Cherry, 1987, 108). Yamamoto’s A Groper’s Diary is “selling well at Tokyo bookstores” (Yamaguchi, Women run gauntlet of gropers on crowded Japanese trains, unpaginated). Yamamoto “recounted how his wife once came back home and told him she had been molested on the train. ‘I felt offended’ he said” (ibid).

\textsuperscript{103} Three hours with a ‘daughter’ ‘son-in-law’ and ‘grandchild’ costs 1,130$ plus transportation costs (Reuters clipping Lonely Japanese turn to Rental ‘Families’ unpaginated). One can rent staff “for timid business executives to bawl out and ‘sweet-hearts’ for young people unlucky in love” (ibid).
Surrogacy: Christ’s Tomb in Aomori prefecture: “some Japanese believe that Jesus’s brother was crucified, not Jesus himself. Jesus escaped, came to Japan, married a local girl and had three daughters” (ibid).

Blonde *and* Japanese? 

104 I float provocations without contextualizing ‘blondness’ (not that there is any single context; Japanese may also do this). I am grateful to Wakako Kusumoto for this historical weaving of blondeness to capital:

Subject: Re: H-Japan(E): Hamburgers

>As reported, Fujita remarked “If we eat hamburgers for a thousand years, we will become blonde [kinpatsu]. If we become blonde, we can conquer the world.”
>Unfortunately there’s no reference here on where this particular remark is cited from.
>Does anybody know if it was actually in an ad, or where Fujita’s remark was originally reported?

I have an article on Fujita Den which appeared in _The Japan Times Weekly International Edition_ (March 23-29, 1992). In the article, Fujita is quoted as saying, “Whenever I saw Japanese overseas I was disappointed. Most of them looked pale and small. Being able to speak foreign languages is not enough to make you a real tough, competitive businessman. We must have sound and healthy bodies. Twenty years ago, it was widely believed that it would be too difficult to change the 2,000-year-old Japanese habit of eating fish and rice. But I thought it was necessary for us to build up our bodies by eating beef.” Thus, “he is in business not just to make money but to change Japanese lifestyles by introducing different cultures to the country, for example, American fast food.”

I have a bit of difficulty comprehending the idea that eating American fast food would build “sound and healthy bodies,” but anyway, the article mentions two books authored by Fujita: “The Essence of Successful Entrepreneurship” and “Yudaya no Shouhou” (The Jewish Business Style). Judging from this particular article, Mr. Fujita seems to hold rather stereotypical images of U.S., Jewish, and Japanese cultures and peoples.

(Kusumoto, Wakako H-Japan posting, August 30, 1997, unpaginated)

Here is the ultimate reference concerning blonde Japanese eating hamburgers: “Our innovation on the Japanese eating habits has succeeded, and hamburgers have completely taken root in our diet. I am going to make young Japanese blonde and help develop global-minded talents who can compete side by side with people from other nations through improved diet, I [Fujita Den] said twenty years ago. “McDonald’s Company (Japan), Ltd. 1991 20 Year History of McDonald’s Japan; Tokyo: McDonald’s Company (Japan), Ltd. p. 35

(Schmidpott, Katja H-Japan posting, September 4, 1997, unpaginated).

Becoming blonde is not an innocent choice between corduroy or denim. I am extremely grateful for Yusuke Torii’s grounding of my flights of fancy. Pointing out that the “postmodern” collapse of identity dates to the Meiji era he observes that “Confronting the white West in mid-nineteenth century, racial inferiority became the fundamental part of Japanese identity, and Japanese consumption has been always stimulated by evoking the West and white people in advertisements. As early as in Meiji era, some intellectuals advocated that
Not Surrogacy: The Ottawa Zen centre? What desires and mystifications fuel my eagerness to grant the ‘Other’ surrogacy and easy/breezy swirling funky and contingent identities where I deny this to the ‘Same’?

English: Surrogacy? What surrogacy does Japan sous rature fuel for/from me?

From Big Sur to Acid House, Japan is as far ‘East’ as the west glows. For Wilde “the whole of Japan is pure invention. There is no such country, there are no such people....[they are] simply a mode of style, an exquisite fancy of art” (Wilde cited in Pollack, 1992, 12). And theory. Knot Butler: The country that is not. Pollack observes that Barthes’ Japan “is to be treated not in some rigid, commonsense fashion as a ‘real’ place but rather as a very special sort of condition that necessitates the deconstruction of his own Western thought” (ibid, 18). 105 Japan becomes for him (for me) a “certain disturbance of the person...a subversion of earlier readings, a shock of meaning lacerated, extenuated to the point of its irreplaceable void, without the object’s ever ceasing to be significant, desirable”” (Barthes cited in Pollack, 1992, 26) (or considered subject and listened to).

miscegenation with whites and speaking English is the only way to protect Japan from Western powers. As the McDonald's comment shows, the basic pattern of racial discourse in consuming the world did not change over the years. I have developed a scepticism against the assumption shared by many western scholars that the Japanese has been cherishing the myth of racial purity in a straightforward manner; I think it has often been permeable as far as white westerners are concerned. Having lived as a Japanese in Japan for a quarter of a century, I have seldom encountered negative comments on ‘halves’ with whites, except as vicious envy, and I doubt the assumption that Japanese racial purity...[is] emphasized when whites are concerned... Japanese popular culture can be better understood basically in terms of a trite and therefore almost unconscious racial envy toward white westerners and the resultant hierarchical thinking to degrade other races” (e-mail, Yusuke Torii). I concur with Yusuke and am one of the ‘Western scholars’ far more comfortable dealing with Nihonjinrohn than with Japanese insecurity towards whites.

105 I am grateful to Lisa Taylor for pointing out how French intellectuals looked East for their ‘Other’ (Barthes/Japan, Kristeva/China, [less so] Derrida/Japan). Loanwords are a metonym for a larger interest in loanworlds; her injunction that it is vital to explore between the poles of Orientalism and its liberal antipode define the sweep of this work and remind me of its importance.


*Japan as Other*: “conceived as mere supplement, safely contained within the epistemological limit of the West” (Yoshimoto, 1993, 344), the ‘infinity’ of the Other a “traumatism of astonishment” (Levinas cited in Simon, 1995, *n*. 15, 104) filling and thrilling a westerner’s emptiness. As Pollack observes, (not only) Barthes substitutes “the absence and emptiness of a desirable non-place for the presence and fullness of an undesirable place” (ibid). Ditto Ottawa “metropolitans in search of metaphysical displacement” (Kaplan, 1996, 32), ditto my observation/creation of Japanese conjuring English a/way from history?

*Do Japanese seek/create presence and fullness engaging English within Japanese?*

As it is understood by Derrida, the ‘center’ is not a fixed locus to one or the other side of which we can locate our discourse; it is rather a function that refuses to prioritize any particular claim to moral centrality: ‘a sort of non-locus,’ as he conceives it, ‘in which an infinite number of sign-substitutions come into play’. And it is clearly from this same point of view that Barthes is claiming to construct his own non-locus of ‘Japan’. But the paradox involved is almost too sublime: how does one go about constructing a non-place without substituting it for the very place one had hoped not to build in the first instance? (Pollack, 1992, 24).

**Surrogacy: Infatuation**

Heidegger constitutes ‘Japan’ “in a conversation ignorant of its own immediate historical situation and in close proximity to the already modern premodernity of the pre-Socratics: ‘Japan,’ like Parmenides or Anaximander, figures forth the truth of presence; it is the place where the still distant possibility of a radical *kehre* (turn) in the tradition is directly lived and where language speaks in a way it does not yet (or no longer) speak to or for the Western ‘us’” (Melville, 1989, 282).

It would pay us to put the whole Empire in a glass case and mark it *Hors Concours*, Exhibit A (Kipling cited in Maher, 1993, 36).
French music, snobbish smile, text in French on the right side of the screen (only speech act in ad by a French native speaking woman)

*Je suis une femme independente [I am an independent woman]*
*Je suis une femme qui aime la vie [I am a woman who loves life]*
*Je suis une femme qui sait ce qu'elle veut [I am a woman who knows what she likes]*
*Je suis Japonaise [I am a Japanese woman]*

- (Haarmann, 1984, 107-108)

Blind to and/or lacking a ‘center’ academics easily become giddy when they enter what to them is the semiotic free-for-all of Japan.

*mea culpa*

*Q.E.D.*

Kaja Silverman attempts to interlace cultural understanding with an active “gift of love...a result of a ceaseless textual intervention” (Silverman, 1996, 81) at the level of the Lacanian cultural screen106 to “learn how to idealize oppositionally and provisionally” (ibid, 37). I agree that pleasure, not alienation, opens up spaces to love and identify with (representations of) others. Her work is a courageous attempt to not only salvage but celebrate idealization in the service of an identification “that results in neither the triumph of self-sameness, nor craven submission to an exteriorized but essentialized ideal” (ibid, 79).


---

106 A “culturally generated image or repertoire of images through which subjects are not only constituted, but differentiated in relation to class, race, sexuality, age, and nationality” (Silverman, 1996, 135).
Despite the dazzle of the “diamonds of ideality” (ibid, 78), love can blind. Silverman’s embrace of Japan through Sandor Krasna’s *Sans Soleil* is an absurd re-making of Japan, a trump of her self-sameness. Praising *Sans Soleil* as not penetrating other cultures but open to “penetration’ by them” (ibid, 186), Silverman believes that “Japan’ ceases to be an alien other, which must be colonized, exoticized, or phobically repelled” (ibid 192). I understand the yearning for the “estrangement from one’s self, and from one’s national coordinates” that Silverman credits Krasna with (ibid), yet am incredulous that Krasna “escapes” national identity by stopping at a stop-light “Japanese style, so as to leave space for the spirits of the broken cars” (Krasna, cited in Silverman, 1996, 192).

This is Western fetishization—*Madame Butterfly and Master Po*—not Japan: “Even if I expected no letter I stopped at the general delivery window, for one must honor the spirits of torn up letters, and at the airmail counter to salute the spirits of unmailed letters” (ibid).

Krasna falls into the Orientalist trap of making the Orient a “salutary ‘derangement’ of... European habits of mind and spirit” (Said, 1979, 150). I am guilty of this (as are Barthes, Silverman, Krasna and the Ottawa monks) and also implicated by Lalvani’s astute observation that the bourgeois go to the Orient “motivated by a disenchantment with a rational social order and a desire for self-discovery” (Lalvani, 1996, 80).

Ishida Ryooko had never been late before. Hosoi Toshikiko made up his mind to “close the gate in an abrupt manner” and not allow tardy students to slip in. He lowered it, crushing her head against the entrance post. She died in hospital of a fractured skull. Principal Nomura “explained the ‘accident’ to students by telling them that it could have been avoided if students were tardy less often” (Morimoto, 1996, 232).

107 *Orientalism* is read in Japan “as part of the Middle East discourse and is viewed as having little to do with Japan or cultural understanding” while—the Other will choose the Other—Eliot is “revered” (Miyoshi, 1993, 284).
Attempts to avoid colonizing Japanese subjectivity by projecting myself (a 'good thing') are frustrating; they risk collapsing into a semiotic free-for-all. High and dry with western binaries, I cannot approximate the alterity of Japanese experience without threatening to invoke a "liberal humanistic freedom to choose one's own meaning" (McLaren, 1991, 163). How to know or describe the ineffable, understand the alter, theorize the un-knowable? Is my reluctance to engage linguistic imperialism in Japan co-extensive with a refusal to impose or interrogate structures of power? Does it reproduce the imperialist (and Nihonjinron) trope of Japanese inscrutability?

After Japan attempted to ban Korean names, language and culture from 1910 to 1945, Seoul banned all Japanese magazines, films and books until 1994. Jettisoning plans to stage a traditional Kabuki or Noh play, a Tokyo troupe instead performed a Japanese-language production of Jesus Christ Superstar in a theatre circled by armed guards. One Korean paper considered it a "beachhead for the arrival of [Japanese] popular culture" and the cultural ban was "quietly reimposed" (McGregor, 1996, 69). Michael Jackson (investing 100 million dollars into [the name is delicious!] 'Neverland Asia' at South Korea's Muju ski resort) attends the inauguration ceremony of President Kim Dae-jung (Globe & Mail, Feb. 28, 1998, C13).

---

108 Why scorn Ottawa appropriations yet see as resistant Osaka's play with identity? I don't know but am mindful that I cultivate a centered/deep self (A or B) where Japanese shift, 'contradict' and 'play?' (A and B).
109 More to the point, why bother? To scrape smug certainties of subjectivity tenuous and contrived, always already alter/ below the bombast of presuming to 'know our selves'. "Does any subject or position have the stability to definitively state what-it-is?" (Grosz, 1995, 67). An 'apolitical' de(con)struction of identity can spark conditions fundamental to political change: an awareness that we are socially (pace Marx, not of what we might choose to be) constructed and thus responsible for what we do. I wish to rupture static essentialist notions of identity. I seek ways to politicize identity and loosen hegemonic blinkers.
110 Mea Culpa. Instead of generalizing abstractions of power I would rather look at specific situations... case by case as the Japanese say, an interrogation far more useful in dialogue, classroom, over coffee. Alone with computer, I can best attempt to recreate my personal koan of Japan, the struggle to understand (and ultimately to let go of) radical alterity shedding light on the lacunae, limits and arrogance of western scholarship...
111 Scholarship "promoting cultural uniqueness and monolingual integrity" (Maher and Yashihiro, 1993, 9); "the theory of Japanese uniqueness and superiority" (Morimoto, 1996, 234). A discourse essentializing and mystifying Japanese identity.
Shifting Shopping Selves

H-JAPAN
September 5, 1997

I wonder why anyone would bother to take a statement like Fujita's about "making Japanese people blonde by feeding them hamburgers" so literally? Of course, lots of Japanese _are_ "blonde"—as well as red, green, and rainbow-colored in the hair department—but that's entirely beside the point. I would have taken the statement figuratively to mean something like "making Japanese people think and behave like foreigners." I've been told by Japanese observing me eat shiokara or natto that I am "becoming Japanese," patently a ludicrous idea on the face of it. It's that psychosocial apparatus that Jack Seward referred to as the "baka-valve": when there are only two available opposing categories such as uchi and soto, something registers only as either one or the other. He is eating hamburger means he is blonde; he is eating natto means he is Japanese. No problem, unless you are looking for western 'logic,' which in this case is equivalent to rikutsu, 'splitting hairs.'

(Pollack, David H-Japan posting, September 5, 1997, unpaginated)\(^{112}\)

Self is "not a univocal concept" (Gavin, 1995, 37). Ohnuki-Tierney argues—contra the assumptions of linguistic imperialism—that a "homogenous sense of 'self' or 'other' is not immediately available either from without or even within a specific culture" (ibid, 39). Recall Ames: "self is always a local, embodied and site-specific correlation of details" (Ames, 1996, 229). To shift the litany of oppressor/oppressed that over-determines my academic encounters with Japanese English, I strive to examine not merely what is 'bad' about this cross-pollination

---

\(^{112}\) I definitely don't agree with David. It is definitely true that the metonymic meaning is there and is important, but the idea of "making-over" oneself (a term borrowed, with apologies, from Sabine Fruehstuck, also on this list) is common in Japanese society in the form of surgical alteration. Also, given the generally prevalent wave of physical-mental allocations in Japanese expression (blood type X = personality Y) I don't find the hamburger=blond at all surprising, PARTICULARLY since it has occurred several times before in different guises. Admittedly the physical and the symbolic are very hard to disentangle.

(Ashkenazi, Michael H-Japan posting, September 9, 1977, unpaginated)
but also how foreign tongues might shape new patterns of being or move toward more ethical relationships (without collapsing into Silverman’s romanticism).

Japanese “Young Women’s” magazines: non-no, Say, Sign, Peach (Skove and Moeran, 1995, 61)

Sanskrit, Celtic, Aramaic...ancient Taoist texts, haiku...the dying languages of aboriginal people...Balinese, with no word for or conception of ‘art’ removed from everyday life. What wonder and mystery are promised by (the fetishization of) these languages to jaded westerners? English, the sound of business and colony, used by Mandela and Martin Luther King against accounting and atrocity. Consciousness, ethics, subjectivity are in and of language, there is no outside...I do not suggest that English is a neutral tool to be taken up by dashing guerrillas and wily spirit-masters stuttering from Away. I also refuse the notion that the predominate white middle class male experiences of Euro-American academics are universal (all the more reason to seek opportunities to challenge the solipsism of academic production with dialogue and collaboration. Unable to do so, I desire other areas of connection).

If I am doing this in a decade, I will be (more and less than) a wealthy hypocrite

“The very word for self in Japanese, jibun, implies that self is not essentiality apart from the social realm. Jibun literally means ‘self part’--a part of a larger whole that consists of groups and relationships” (Rosenberger, Introduction, 4). An Imaginary western self impossibly ‘away’ from the social realm might appeal to Japanese as much as the loss of self does to Ottawa monks weaned on Kung Fu. It is too simple to make a binary of mystical Eastern selves (more California than Japan\footnote{Curve ball rebounds: Buddhism re-enters the Japan of young Japanese bohemians via the circuitous route of California’s appropriation of Zen and suddenly—appropriating the appropriation?—Zen becomes cool, exotic in Japan (conversation with Yukiko Minami)! What becomes of self/other and in/authenticity if a young Tokyo rocker, having rejected his father’s value system, reads Kerouac rambling about Zen and is inspired to run away to join a monastery in Big Sur? If he chose Ottawa at least he wouldn’t have to change his name. Or would he—imperialism or liberation?—choose to become ‘Jack’? (see footnote 6).} and hot rod Western selves (tango, rockabilly and flamenco recreated in Osaka...passion riddling the porosity of cultural boundaries). As
Rosenberger notes, “whether or not the Japanese are becoming individualistic in an American sense is the wrong question, one itself rooted in Western dichotomies” (ibid, 13).

“When naming new projects, the National Police Agency uses English words, put into [kata]kana, because it is easier to get funding from the Ministry of Finance that way” (Blair, Jefferey, The Role of, 4).\(^{114}\)

In Japan and the West, “self is born and reborn through positioning in various sets of cultural ideas and practice. In short, self is not transcendental with an ultimate meaning itself. Self’s meaning derives from its position in relation to other meanings-meanings of other selves, other relationships, other groups, and so on-and from its movement among these positions” (Rosenberger, Tree, 67). Surfboard or shakuhachi, self and satori beckon (in) signifiers never empty of position, power, under/privilege. Convinced that “cultural transformation is no longer possible, Westerners must go elsewhere for meaning” (Root, 1996, 31), alienated academics, caught in isolating medieval habits, track community. Rainforest, Kibbutz, romanticized solidarity behind barricades, the collapse of subject/object boundaries in romantic love (Peele, 1988, 164-165), original bliss prior to the descent into language...in the face of hyper-individuality, we seek pre-lapsarian wholeness and innocence(?).

\(^{114}\) Debates (often pursued by bewildered/bitter foreign English teachers) circle the notion that there is a conscious effort by the Japanese Ministry of Education to hinder fluency in English (by insisting on arcane exam-driven methodologies) even as it requires all high school graduates to have studied English for 6 years. “Japanese students performing in the 1989-91 sessions of the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) managed only one hundred and forty-ninth place in a league-table of 62 countries, behind China, South Korea, and Vietnam, even thought it enjoys a higher level of material support for the teaching of English” (Loveday, 1996, 99). 99% of all secondary schools teach English, the primary objective being “the instrumental access English provides to the country’s top universities....English competence [measured by translation and tricky grammar points, not oral/aural abilities] is frequently the decisive factor in institutional entrance-tests; it functions as a means of student selection and, ultimately, of social classification in the Japanese meritocracy” (Loveday, 1996, 96); “teacher-centered learning, collective conformity, unquestioning rote learning, and emphasis on absolute correctness clearly do not provide an environment conducive to successful [English] learning” (ibid, 98). “The prosperity of English education or English loanwords in Japan rather seem to have strengthened, as well as weakened, the boundary of Japaneseness, by producing the dominant discourse of the difficulty of acquiring English for the Japanese” (e-mail, Yusuke Torii).
Silver Age, much 'softer' than Japanese term for old people.

If a Confucian “self is not essentiality apart from the social realm” (Rosenberger, Introduction, 4) might liberation be sought in distinctiveness and autonomy? “For the Japanese, individuality lies at the opposite pole from social involvement. The autonomy of the individual is protected and assured not in society but away from it, where one may legitimately indulge in self-reflection” (Smith, Robert, 1983, 102 italics mine). English, sound and flurry of the “American archetype...more attuned to cultivating a self that knows it is unique” (Plath cited in ibid, 89), re-made a liminal/legitimate(d) space for introspection? Theories of linguistic imperialism must be open to cultures using English ways incomprehensible to us. Scholars must approach subjectivity as flexible and contradictory, self “an intersubjective, performative act...not a ‘self’ given to consciousness, but a ‘coming-to-consciousness’ of the self through the realm of symbolic otherness—language, the social system, the unconscious” (Bhabha, Unpacking My Library, 206).

The Emperor of Japan wore a Mickey Mouse watch (Brockway, 1989, 25 italics mine).

Two lawyers from Shimane prefecture—upset at coinages such as Shimanesuku Shimane (Shimane-esque Shimane)—filed a petition for the Prefectural Assembly to stop using “Japanese English” in official documents and project titles: “the lawyers stated their purpose as ‘promoting the preservation and distribution of correct, beautiful, and elegant Japanese English’” (Loveday, 1996, 160).
H-JAPAN
September 6, 1997

>I wonder why anyone would bother to take a statement like Fujita’s about
>"making Japanese people blonde by feeding them hamburgers" so literally?

Literally. Why? Because it is productive and exciting to transgress the
borders of nation, self, ‘Other’. Or are we to capitulate in the face of
fixed and homogeneous assertions of unique essences, east west north or
south?

To explore the varied trajectories—including our own scholarly
desires—involved in avoiding/imitating/studying another culture.

To tickle our blind spots and find new ways of seeing.

(Fogarasi, George, H-Japan posting, September 6, 1997)

Exotic Japan’s Nice Middles

Japanese “Ladies’ Comics” magazines: Silky, Office You, Be Love, Young Rose, Lady’s
Comic You (Skove and Moeran, 1995, 61).

Japan National Railway’s 1984 Exotic Japan campaign—by and for Japanese—including this
advertisement: “Japan Now—so thrilling it makes your heart pound: Ah, Exotic Japan! (Ivy,
1995, 50) the last phrase written in katakana “as if ‘Japan’ had been introjected as the

115 “The process of colonization by which the territory and cultural space of an indigenous society must be
disrupted, dissolved and then recoded according to the needs of the apparatus of the occupying power”
(Young, R., 1994, 22). Koan: Japan (de-)colonizes itself? Wark notes that Japan’s advertising is far more
utopian than in the West: “the ‘nice life’ of consumption bears almost the full burden of promising redemp-
tion, purity, peace, contentment. The language of beautiful things and its pure, thin, gossamer fabric of
English evoke a land fit for dreams. So the value expelled from everyday life and language reappears in
another realm, in a foreign tongue” (Wark, The Tokyo Nice Life, 11). Rosenberger concludes that the Japanese
“are losing their culture, but, defining it as merely style, are not admitting it. Rather than seeking self in
foreign, as something that entered from the outside” (ibid). Be(com)ing Japanese by being (also) foreign? Blond? Frow observes that “Heimat functions simultaneously as the place of safety to which we return and as that lost origin which is sought in the alien world“ (Frow, 1995, 135 italics mine).\(^{116}\) Theorizations of linguistic imperialism cannot fix such hybrid and complex movements on a compass grid.

From his obsession with purity and nationalism to the spectacle of his clumsy hari kiri,\(^ {117}\) Yukio Mishima can appear to foreigners as an exemplar of Japanese culture—Ah, Exotic Japan!—resisting westernization, yet Kenzaburo Oe and other Japanese have criticized him for “shaping his life to live up to the image of Japan created by Europeans” (Oe cited in Tobin, Introduction, 31).\(^ {118}\) What appears Japanese may be colonization; what appears English may

---

relationship, they search for identity through being what is different than themselves—the ‘other’, the exotic—whether that be foreign or a reinterpretation of their own ‘tradition’” (Rosenberger, Tree, 12).\(^ {116}\) Signs at Narita proclaiming lines for ‘Aliens’. A card-carrying alien, I lost my gaijininity when I turned in my Alien Registration Card upon leaving Japan. Very us/them, binary. Another koan? Exotic Japan and Japa-blondness, Japan porous “absorbing, aping, devouring” (Baudrillard, 1993, 144) ever-shifting identity...yet also us/them? We-Japanese can become ‘you’, yet we remain unique, impenetrable, you are always alien, can never become we? When I lived in Japan (89/90), they were debating whether to fingerprint third generation Korean Japanese...

\(^ {117}\) Circuitous linguistic imperialism: the Japanese refer to ritual suicide as seppuku, never hari kiri—literally, gut slitting—which has a ‘childish’ and gruff sound to it (Mikiko Yukari).

\(^ {118}\) A sincere provocation: despite a knowledge of the patterns common in cross-cultural exchange and cognizant of the desire to ‘create’ a thrilling Other bounding (off?) myself, I propose that, if we are not thoroughly confused by Japan, than we have completely missed the point(lessness). Like the shock of a staff on tired shoulder—though not a sleepy monk—(postmodern) Japan startles me. Mishima was not (only) Western: he envisioned the emperor as “a radical cultural principle of creativity and the realisation of potential in each individual” (Asada, 1989, 16), “a ‘free creative subjectivity,’ who acted as a signifier (or perhaps a transcendental subject) that authorised cultural signification but was not bound to a signification, and was always capable of transmitting form itself on its endless itinerary through time. To defend ‘culture’ [I think of empty Japan, and elite scholars’ desire to defend culture] meant ridding society of egoism and encouraging self-sacrifice in order to conserve the ‘continuity of destiny’. Accordingly, the ‘mother’s womb’ of this vast cultural idea, whose surplus always escaped being assimilated to the logic of history, representing a general economy of excess and expenditure, was an imaginary community, itself a form that remained immune from history” (Harootunian, 1993, 218): “anarchy” within “aesthetic terrorism” (Mishima cited in Asada, 1989, 16). Asada delineates Nishida Kitaro’s principle of mu or nothingness, and empty space “embracing seemingly contradictory elements” (Asada, 1989, 277). Where the presence of European kings and nations “contain conflict between individuals and the whole, and have no other choice but to repeat collision through striving to expand the self in space, the imperial household as the place of nothingness contains Japan like an empty cylinder which pierces time; and inside of this, on the basis of zettai mujuneki jiko doitsu (absolute contradictory self-identity) which exists between atomism and holism, individuals will each find a place and participate in ‘holonic,’ as
be Japanese: beyond panic and ethical proclamation, *dialogue is crucial* if westerners and Japanese are to avoid reproducing imperialism.

Minister of Transport Ishihara blocked plans for the use of the “letter E as an abbreviated prefix for express trains” (Loveday, 1996, 160) as “thoughtless” and portending a “nightmare” (Ishihara cited in ibid). Yet I rode *limited express* trains; seats for the elderly were *silver seats*. First Class passenger cargo cars are *green cars* (Honna, 1995, 46). The term *naisu midi*—reminding me of Wark’s *Tokyo Nice Life* and an often manic imperative towards a chipper ‘niceness’ (that can even transform Anne Frank)—was coined by mid-80’s Japanese National Railway ads; meaning “nice middies”, they created increased women passengers with the introduction of “nice middy” passes for “group travel by women thirty and over” (Cherry, 1987, 128).

*Ima Nihon wa, dokidoki suru hodo shigeteki da: aa, Ekizochikku Japan!* (Japan now so thrilling it makes your heart pound: Ah, Exotic Japan!) (Ivy, 1995, 50 [the core phrase of the campaign]).

Unreflective identity—Mishima, my gut reaction to these advertisements?—“the purest of clichés” (Coles cited in Gilles, 1994, 3). Do these ads reinscribe, destabilize, create or mock the cliché of Japan? Ivy observes that “there is a double movement here: because *Exotic Japan* is written in *katakana*, it is marked as foreign, as non-native....On the level of script, then, *Ekizochikku Japan* establishes Japan as elsewhere, as other: the non-Japanese seen through Japanese eyes” (ibid). Japanese=non-Japanese=Japanese? *This is not theory run opposed to holistic, harmony.”* (ibid). *Harmony*. Mother’s womb, pre-Oedipal flows rounding through and to: I am fascinated yet not surprised to learn that “the relation of the emperor to his subject was very frequently presented in terms of ‘one who looks after the baby’ and the ‘baby who is looked after’ in the pre-war Japanese State” (Sakai, 1993, f.19, 254). Mishima, ultra-nationalists, the clatter of my typing chatter of *monkey mind* panic over “a self-possessed Japan untaunted by its cultural other” as well as “an imaginary site called Japan within the insular passageways of European philosophical discourse” (Pincus, 1993, 236). Perhaps the most intriguing take on Mishima is Karatani’s: “There is probably no spectacle more ridiculous than the Right and conservatives attempting to appropriate Mishima’s death. His action was entirely ironic: What he attempted to realize was the destruction of the very thought that aims at realizing something. It is not that the Japanese culture he aimed to defend had nothing in it, but, rather, it was this very nothingness in the culture that he aimed to defend” (Karatani, *The Discourse*, 313-314).

19 Riding a Freudian motion between loss and longing, Ivy understands Japan to be haunted by “recurrent yet elusive forms of absence” (Ivy, 1995, 242). She deconstructs practices creating ‘authentic’ premodernity “before the catastrophic imprint of Westernization” (ibid, 241); these *like my critique of linguistic imperialism* remain “inescapably a modern endeavour, essentially enfolded within the historical condition that [they] would seek to escape” (ibid).

120 Japanese culture is “characterized by division, dissymmetry, discontinuity and difference, qualities seen not as problematic...but as the resolution of human problems by fostering an alternative of decentric orderli-
amuck but an ad campaign. One that, years after the McDonald’s ad, also invokes blonness (as Japanese ?):

A Victorian doll with pale hair and eyes stands on a beach, looking out at the viewer. At her feet is a shattered mirror, which throws back fragments of her reflection. To the left is written in Japanese ‘Nihon wa gaikoku desu’: ‘Japan is a foreign country’ (ibid, 53). 121

ness” (Heine, 1995, 30). Cliché or parody, Eikozichiku Japan challenges my notion of identity. “According to Derrida, the work of Pound and Fenollosa based on the Chinese and Japanese writing system functioning to effect a critical decentering of the Western metaphysics of presence” (O’Din, 1995, 13). I submit that Eikozichiku Japan does the same. Advertisement as enlightenment ...the poetry of a sad world.

121 Victorian doll...very Japanese. The Imperial Family wear clothes modelled on “Victorian royalty’s at many official ceremonies” (McGregor, 1996, 238). Prince Mikasa, the brother of Showa Emperor Hirohito, wore a “pompous English morning suit, and carried a top hat and gloves in one hand” (McGregor, 1996, 162) to a reunion of kamikaze pilots(!) in 1994 (McGregor, 1996, 163). Gwynne Dyer’s Millenium dedicates an episode to Japan. In The Scrutable Samurai, he pits his hypothesis of a global culture against “the hardest case...the culture that seems to have modernized without becoming like everyone else” (Dyer, 1996, 31). Dyer equates the Meiji Restoration with Richard the Lionheart industrializing England (ibid, 35) and anglicizes Japan up to and including punk rock. Yoyogi park’s rebels (inevitably the most convenient sound byte of Japanese ‘rebellion’) evoke the “tribes of London” who have changed a Britain that was until recently “repressed, inward looking, class ridden” (ibid, 39). Dyer sees Japan on the cusp of such a change (anglicization? Watership Up? What Newfoundlack informs this fantasy? I recall the terror I felt after knocking a fierce punk’s drink over. He apologized, and I [arrogantly] dubbed Japan’s punkers ‘sumimassen [I beg- your-pardon] punks. Ching notes that their “clothing is ripped in the same way, accessories are bought for the same place, all dance steps are performed in a very controlled and unvarying manner. In Japan, punk has literally become a ‘style’, losing all political implications” (Ching, 1995, 278). Dyer’s blinkers do not allow him to imagine Japan as anything but periphery (Ching notes that Taiwan gets Japan’s ‘secondhand’ punk (ibid); Taiwan is fascinated by Japan, not America (ibid)). Dyer’s reductionism continues: the English in Shakespeare’s plays were “spontaneous, emotional people. They’re practically Italians [!]” (ibid) but empire turned them into the “disciplined, repressed, conformist English of Victorian times” (ibid). Once the English lost their economic power, they were “freed to be themselves again. They’re a lot less serious than they used to be and a lot less obedient. And I think the same thing’s about to happen here [Japan]” (ibid). Hello Kitty, ur-icon of Japanese childhood, was born in a suburb of London and speaks only English (Fogarasi All That Is). Hello Kitty, Winnicott’s Transitional Object, negotiating gaps “the teddy bear (or any such object the child might choose [career, flag, saint, starlette]) was the intermediary between me and not-me; it served to keep inner and outer reality separated and yet related” (Berman, 1990, 50). “English” a fetish, a buffer? British cats, Victorian dolls and English ‘local’ in Kyoto...making Japanese ’outside’? The kanji in Somehow, Crystal (a controversial novel cataloguing brand names) look “particularly dense and therefore foreign in its own right” (Field, 1989, 173); among the katakana names of “American singers, tennis players, European furnishings” (ibid) Chinese-derived Japanese print is “re-exoticized” (Field borrowing from Harootunian in ibid, 173). “Thus is Japan rebaptized, at the price exacted whenever the principles of commodity culture are embraced” (Field, 1989, 173). I remind myself that these ‘principles’ and their ‘embrace’ are as universal as ‘baptism’, i.e. NOT. Distant scholars cannot bless or curse the koan of Eastern Emperors in Western suits...
If, as Ivy states, "for the generation born after 1955, Japan itself...has become exotic" (ibid, 54), who are we (seeking Heimat in/from Other) to delineate or defend authenticities? At what point do notions of linguistic imperialism turn culture museal, in need of curators?

"The interactional self is what occupies Japanese most of the time, and yet they are aware of its basically precarious, vulnerable, relative, unfixed nature. The relativity of the interactional self is best illustrated by the Japanese terms for self and other. The Japanese speaker either uses no term for self or other ('zero form'[Fischer 1964]), or selects certain terms from among many possible ones that are appropriate to the given relationship....an adult male stranger is likely to call himself 'uncle' [in addressing a child]...Likewise, a schoolteacher, speaking to students, calls him/herself 'teacher'. This speech behaviour, called by Suzuki (1986) 'emphatic identification', reflects the lack of the exact equivalent of 'I' which would serve as the fixed point of self: As long as one stays in the interactional world, multiple and varied self-identification seems necessary. A multiple and variable self like this ultimately boils down to 'non-self' as symbolized by the zero form" (Lebra, 1992, 111-112).

122 "Stores that once hired consultants to familiarize the Japanese with Western apparel now hire teachers to demonstrate how to put on kimono" (Creighton, 1992, 54). Rosenberger believes that the Japanese "are losing their culture, but, defining it as merely style, are not admitting it. Rather than seeking self in relationship, they search for identity through being what is different than themselves—the 'other', the exotic—whether that be foreign or a reinterpretation of their own 'tradition'" (Rosenberger, Introduction, 12). A foreign Japan, however, does not automatically become a colonized Japan in the image of the West (MosBurger's riceburger features burdock root, bacon, and seaweed served on grilled rice in the shape of a bun [Tobin, Introduction, 27]; I doubt it will make anyone blond). Japan was/n't always foreign.

123 My Principal always referred to herself—at home/work/visiting Canada—as encho-sensei (Principal). With colleagues and students' parents, I referred to myself as Georgie sensei, and began to use it instead of 'I'; among friends, I would use 'I' (watashi). This let me play a role that was appreciated and rewarded...yes, Georgie sensei likes sushi, yes Georgie sensei can use chopsticks instead of I am tired of and bewildered by threatening your 'uniqueness'. I saw this as 'protecting' my 'real'(?!) self, insisting that colleagues I considered friends call me 'George' in a non-work environment. Georgie sensei, I thought, was not me. Lebra confuses my confused rationalizations: was I doing something not contra but parallel to the Japanese? Lebra writes: "A more stable self, something like 'I', more immune from social relativity, is sought inwardly. The socially, outwardly oriented interactional self is thus compensated for by the inner self" (Lebra, 1992, 112). English used as an Imaginary language of inwardness? If the Japanese are aware of the "precarious, vulnerable, relative, unfixed" interactional nature of self (ibid, 111)—a lesson scholars of linguistic imperialism
Moving Kejime

To approach language and culture as constructed and constructing, to see them as flexible, resilient and unstable, we must like the Japanese move beyond binaries. We must decenter obsessions with fixed points (foreign/local, authentic/alien, blond/Japanese) and how they are occupied, attending instead to movement between points, a “passage from one sign system to another....[for] intertextuality or trans/position demands that the passage from one signifying system to another necessitates a new articulation of the thetic [a break or rupture in the signifying process that necessitates the identification of the subject and its object as preconditions of propositionality]—of enunciative and denotative possibility” (Rogoff citing Kristeva in Rogoff, 1994, 36).

Pocari Sweat and Calpis (pronounced cow-piss), popular soft drinks. Creap, a coffee creamer.

Again, the(tic) rhizome, a postmodern loop of elite theory in the west, Kindergarten in Japan. Literally: “the most crucial lesson to be learned in the Japanese preschool is not omote, not the ability to behave properly in formal situations, but instead kejime—the knowledge needed to fluidly shift back and forth between omote and ura” (Tobin, Japanese Preschools, 24). Our panic—passage from one sign system to another—kid’s stuff in Japan. Bhabha’s hybridity...kejime...process flowing in Japan, impossible to pin down there.

124 Yet not an “endless dissemination of signifiers” (Derrida cited in Anyon, 1994, 119). Recognizing change does not=escaping power/responsibility; it means that ‘our’ understanding and experience cannot be exported as a rescuing/decoding template. But the free-for-all is often irresistible: a “closed discursive space” or a “black hole” (Melville, 1989, 283), “radically unreadable” Japan promises “a kind of heaven of theory where there are no choices to be made among Jameson, Lyotard, Baudrillard, Debord...” (ibid, 280).
125 “It may be better to conceive of culture tout court as a flow” (Rapport, 1997, 70). Yes, but with caution,
Is ‘kejime’ involved in the use of English? Instead of being passive colonized victims, Japanese take on cast off re-workings of English language and identity, through specific “continua of transformation, not abstract ideas about identity and similarity” (Benjamin cited in Bhabha, Unpacking My Library, 203). Ningen—‘person’ (‘human between-ness’ [Gavin, 1995, 36])—flows a multidimensional conception of self (“not essentiality apart from the social realm” [Rosenberger, Introduction, 41]) that navigates between fluid identities. Bhabha’s cultural translation speaks to Japanese (and ultimately western) conditions of subjectivity: “the process of cultural translation ... opens up a ‘space-in-between’, [ma] an interstitial temporality, that stands in contention with both the return to an originary ‘essentialist’ self-consciousness as well as a release into an endlessly fragmented subject in ‘process’” (Bhabha, Unpacking My Library, 204).

for an ersatz ‘Zen’ new age fetishization of flow only occludes issues of power and justice. Re-workings never innocent of power and control, never outside history, but certainly outside of the attempts of isolated scholars to understand them through western paradigms (“firmly rooted in that Black Forest farmhouse called modern European social theory” [Morris, 1993, 43]). Benjamin “insists on the need to recognise the ‘human’ (or the historical) as always in need of translation, or mediation, in order to accede to its historicity: the human as the cultural ‘sign’ of a social or discursive event, not simply the assumed abstract idea or symbol of the universal similitude of all Humanity” (Bhabha, Unpacking My Library, 203). The rubric of linguistic imperialism must not project itself to speak for humanity; it must engage how “the West understands itself as the guardian of universal values on behalf of a world formed in its own image” (Featherstone, 1995, 89). The ‘West’ needs to be unpacked to reveal the ebb and flow of these ‘images’. Arnold’s reification of literature was an attempt to resurrect a moral centre by replacing God with literature, to “‘Hellenize’ or cultivate the philistine middle classes” (Eagleton, 1983, 24) (Meiji leaders turned to literature to create agreement/security in the face of secularization and modernity [Miyoshi, 1993 278-279])). What centres and assumptions do certain vectors of linguistic imperialism follow...ignore...Hellenize? Do they mirror an Arnoldian anti-industrialism where “apostles of equality” (Arnold quoted in Mathieson, 37) bless the masses with True Culture? Scholarship and practice must strive toward Benjamin’s historicity and not settle for a grandiose vision where language is mystified so that poetry [or a billboard] “tends to form the soul and character, it tends to beget a love of beauty, of truth” (Arnold quoted in Mathieson, 1975, 44). Like many scholars of linguistic imperialism—myself included—Arnold fears “a wave of more than American vulgarity, moral, intellectual and social, preparing to wash over us” (Arnold quoted in ibid, 38). Despite commitments to social change, is our education so dominated by Arnold’s elitism that we risk reproducing it, chasing false agency through footnotes instead of in genuine social relations? My Arnoldian desire to salvage other cultures from English/me (but a gain me), lost grace, theory hedging bets, squeaking at least moral certainty?
Postmodernism I: Buddhist Praxis?

The Bible says that in the beginning was the word….the words of the Buddha in the sutras cannot be read or understood by most Japanese….the form is the thing (Goldstein and Tamura, 1975, 145-146).

Form is not regarded as barrier to expression of the self but is rather the technique by which two selves are connected in standard intercourse—meaning must then be inserted below or beyond the words (Goldstein and Tamura cited in Loveday, 1986, 114).

Theory is imperialist if it strives to replace ‘human between-ness’ with western subjectivity, if it contrives impossible ways to substantialize and absolutize ‘space’. I am wary of the potential violence of theory, cognizant that postmodernism offers “the tools to deconstruct a European imagination while leaving the underlying structures of imperialism intact” (Teur, 1992, 56) allowing “nothing less than total embrace and absorption of the Other by de-divinizing the world, eradicating identity, erasing history and tradition, and reducing all that gives sense to life for non-Western cultures into meaninglessness” (Sardar, 1992, 515). 127

Yet I repeat: postmodernism is immediate, visceral—practical—to me in Japan.


127 Mitsuhiro resists the colonizing “single totality” of postmodernism, calling it “nothing more than a catchword for Western critics’ last-ditch effort to reclaim the lost hegemony of the West at least in the intellectual field” (Yoshimoto cited in Tobin, Introduction, 8). I ab/use it to question, not answer: “paradigm-shift is still part of the salvation mentality, a patriarchal mind-set that tells the hero to persevere, find a new form of consciousness that will give him redemption” (Berman, 1990, 312).

128 Sassy: “trendy and cute”, Lemon “young, fresh, not as sweet” (Yukari Nao). “Of sixty-eight currently available Japanese weekly and monthly magazines starting with the sound A, as many as 70 per cent have an English-based title” (Loveday, 1996, 112).
Slick (anti-)theory has a way of slipping away; “through paradox, inversion, self-subversion, facile and intricate textual dance, [postmodernists] often present themselves (maddeningly, to one who wants to enter into critical dialogue with them) as having it any way they want” (Bordo cited in Anyon, 1994, 118). Despite these risks and an undeniable contribution “to the causes, rather than to the demise, of the problematics of mystification and obfuscation” (Fu and Heine, 1995, xvii), postmodern trajectories are inevitable and extremely useful when considering Japanese subjectivity.129

“The postmodern sense of meaninglessness that is considered new and radical in the West is old stuff to the Japanese” (Tobin discussing Kojin in Tobin, Introduction, 7).

Potential ad for conference or journal(?)... Japan: We Make Postmodernism Practical. Ah, Exotic Japan!

A postmodern thought is but a consumable decor in a self-sufficient discursive space and functions ultimately only to further the development of consumer society. In Japanese society, where there is no ‘resistance’ to this movement, concepts like absence of the subject or de-centering do not have the intensity they might have in France. But precisely for this reason, Japanese consumer and information society accelerates its process of rotation without the slightest obstacle (Karatani cited in Wolfe, 1989, 229).130

---

129 Harootunian and Pollack “suggest that Japan anticipated the West’s belated discovery of an unbreachable gap between the sign and the signified” (Tobin, Introduction, 6-7). Karatani argues that “since Japan has no fixed structures, deconstruction as such is not possible. By this view, deconstruction has already taken place in Japan, insofar as Japan has already arrived at a radically decentered or multicentered reality in which God, the ego, and all other fixed metaphysical centers have been displaced through a differential logic” (Odin, 1995, 4).

Yukiko Minami tells me that Japanese society needs to construct structure before it can deconstruct it. Miyoshi observes that “logocentricity appears to be one crime Japan is scarcely guilty of: so much so that Karatani Kojin and Asada Akira could boast to Derrida that there is no need for deconstruction as there has never been a construct in Japan” (Miyoshi, 1989, 148). With no a priori logocentric framework, Karatani can both deny deconstruction in Japan and claim that it is “much easier for us [Japanese] to effect a deconstruction in Japan than in America” (Karatani cited in Ivy, 1989, 40).

Lebra: “I am resistant to this brand of Western intellectual fashion [deconstruction], probably because I am like other Japanese who, too sensitized to the situational, multiple contingency of perception and action to be fully converted into structuralism, have been practicing poststructuralism prestructurally and therefore have nothing to deconstruct” (Lebra, 1994, 120). What lack makes it so that I have everything to deconstruct? (see footnote 141).

130 Wolfe observes that “In what might appear to be quasi-neonativist fashion, Karatani turns this ‘lack of resistance’ into its opposite, a distinctively Japanese, and hence anti-Western notion of modernity, an ‘empty structure of power’” (Wolfe, 1989, 229). Like Barthes, Karatani posits Japan’s ultimate signifier as “degree zero” as opposed to “the supreme signifier God of Western thought” (Ibid, 228). No centre. ZERO allowing Japanese to be blond, smashing down school gates on westerners trying to grasp, de-centre, accelerate their/
I wonder what essentializations of self/Other\textsuperscript{131} flow from agreeing with\textsuperscript{132} the argument that "the nonsubstantialist and uncentered worldview of Mahayana Buddhism in general and radically acentric Zen Buddhism in particular can best be interpreted through Derrida’s postmodern vision of a dislocated reality fixed of all centers" (Odin, 1995, 4). “God, the self and all things ‘are’ and ‘are not’” (Odin, 1995, 5): this koan is impossible to ‘understand’ within a so-called western paradigm, it pushes toward an in between-ness, a constitutive gap, a space/ma where other ways of being and speaking (English) may be heard.\textsuperscript{133}

Uncanny, foreignness is within us: we are our own foreigners, we are divided (Kristeva cited in Carmichael, 314).

---

\textsuperscript{131} "So-called imperialist misrepresentation or appropriation of the Other is an oxymoron. The Other cannot be misrepresented, since it is always already a misrepresentation. Imperialism starts to show its effect not when it domesticates the Other but the moment it posits the difference of the Other against the identity of the self. This fundamental imperialism of the self/Other dichotomy can never be corrected by the hermeneutics of the Other or cross-cultural exchange; on the contrary, the latter reinforces the imperialist logic under the guise of liberal humanism, or what Spivak calls ‘neocolonial anticolonialism’" (Mitsuhiro, 1993, 353).

\textsuperscript{132} Do I contrast the western self as autonomous so that empty Other implies intact Self? Zweig traces the West’s admiration/panic regarding Narcissus, “deploring his inhuman solitude, admiring him as a figure of fulfilment and transcendence” (Zweig cited in Hassan, 1990, 35). Autonomy (and its ambivalence) shakes European history: “in the speculative fantasies of the Gnostics, in the programmatic self-indulgence of the Medieval Brethren of the Free Spirit, in the almost objectless love poems of Provence, in Adam Smith’s theory of self-interest, in the radical social criticism of the nineteenth century, we find the same cult of self-love, along with the same foreboding that self-love will undermine the teetering fabric of sociability” (ibid).

\textsuperscript{133} ‘So what sometimes seems to happen when non-native speakers/writers use English is that one can sometimes see the shadow of another way of thinking, as it meets the ways of thinking that English shapes. One sees a shape, and beyond it, the shadow of another shape. Even better, one sees a third shape, not belonging to either language, emerging at the point of contact of the two” (Wark, Nettlish, unpaginated). At best, Boulez’ explosant fixe, a “trapped bang” (Boulez cited in ibid). Yes and. What are these ‘shapes’? I am quick to trace vectors of power and capital missed by Wark’s secund abstraction but this would be but my own abstraction trumping his. The lived experience of power can only be approached in context and in dialogue and I have to ask myself, what is my desire in (not) going there?
Citizen George: Exulting excess, I wish to make explicit that while my excited appropriation of Buddhism attempts nothing short of slaying rationality, it also mystifies, fetishizes and exoticizes the 'East' rec-room satori seeking transhistorical selfless selves notching, noting, no thing, floating caught joy-riding Nirvana grip fraught sublime vast too-clever interiors solipsistic deep wise cleansed of Colgate punch-card screamin’ OM and skateboard sticker...

Postmodernism II: Capital’s Praxis (My Blindspot?)

It is in the very nature of capitalism to encourage desires even as it works to restrict them (Treat, 1995, 294).

“Superficiality, the dominance of the signifier over the signified, simulation, commodity reification, and the waning of effect” (Tobin, Japanese, 250): not ‘Japan’ but Jameson’s definition of the key features of late capitalism. “Consumption involves the active manipulation of signs...what is consumed are not objects but the system of objects, the sign system that makes up the code....this leads to the autonomization of the signifier, which can be manipulated (for example through advertising) to float free from a stable relationship to objects and establish its own associative chains of meaning [become blond]” (Featherstone 1995, 19). The dehistoricized eternal now of consumerism displaces, decodes, and annihilates; it juggles yesterday’s rebellion into tomorrow’s product today. But, without eliding the power relations that overdetermine what is broadcast and heard, can a progressive politics not also benefit from this meltdown to manipulate free-floating signs, can one not juggle back?134

134 Slope slipperier, I deconstruct my deconstruction. If we displace reified notions of ‘English’ oppressing the Japanese, this decenters all notions of language and power. We don’t exchange cards mid-bow but, despite our obsession with fixed binaries, our identity is no more static than that of the Japanese. “The Same can be recognized on condition that it be an Other” (Ranciere, 1994, 33); the fractured mirror of Japanese subjectivity is no beatnik daydream if changing and contradictory identities inspire us toward the possibility of change. Or is this too easy, too linear, giving access to the throne? I am intrigued by Hassan: “self and other meet, mingle, embrace, conflict, stand for a moment aversively apart; they influence and contaminate one another. In reality, too, differences are a function less of logic than of desire and power” (Hassan, 1990, 64). Do I fracture mirrors, desiring power?
“The era of flexible accumulation with its rapid circulations, destabilized nationalisms, and ever-increasing inequalities poses particular challenges to those who would attempt to come to terms with it. The transnationalization of culture as well as industry brings with it profound possibilities for forging new alliances and identities. The same conditions also induce neo-conservative consolidations of power” (Kaplan, 1996, 141). Celebrations of identity blur with sweaters, civil rights and dying soldiers sell commodities; resistance is/’t a Nike commercial. Simple solutions, modernist slogans, the White Man’s Burden... the impossibility of ouching history in an academic text. Despite spiting, my writhing seeks (destabilizing) omnipotency....theory, like capital, creates Others outside of space, time and power.

[Postmodernism] is like the Toyota of thought: produced and assembled in several different places and then sold everywhere...postmodernism is a sign of the loss of the colonial model of a universal culture spread out to educate the world at large. It is rather theory for a post-colonial world of products made and sold in different places without a centre. It is like the lingua franca of the world; it can be made and consumed everywhere and nowhere (Rajchman cited in Marcus, 1995, 11).

This whole global, yet American, postmodern culture is the internal and superstructural expression of a whole new wave of American military and economic domination throughout the world: in this sense, as throughout class history, the underside of culture is blood, torture, death and terror (Jameson, 1991, 5).


---

135 A) “The reduction of everything, including production and labour, to the abstract value of money enables it to decode flows and ‘detrerritorialize’ the socius. Having achieved a universal form of exchange, it then reterritorializes” (Young, 1994, 22).

B) “Capitalism therefore liberates the flow of desire, but under social conditions that define its limit and the possibility of its own dissolution, so that it is constantly opposing with all its exasperated strength the movement that drives it toward this limit” (Deleuze and Guattari cited in Treat, 1995, 294).
Everywhere nowhere: Japan, diplomatically and militarily invisible in Pakistan, is “the most ubiquitous economic presence” (Lippit, unpaginated). Colonialism is thus “the creation of a space rather than its occupation. And having resisted invasion from both East and West (an issue that has remained essential toward the constitution of its historical identity), Japan assumes the posture of a phantasmatic empire, literally an invented topography” (ibid). The blood, however, remains real. And away.

I am excited, not defeated, to observe that the more I discuss, read and explore these issues, the more indeterminate my work becomes. The further I go, the more I find myself here. At a keyboard, in front of a computer screen. Tired, asocial. Illich’s expert. Ecstatic over e-mail one moment...alienated the next.

What’s it gonna’ be? Live knots, deadlocks? Loanwords bound by or cleaved from history, A or B? Tracing tensions within capitalism, theory, identity and language, I cannot pronounce this or that sin or salvation. Unable and unwilling to draw the straight lines and pat conclusions called for by this modernist/medieval academic ritual, I (sloppy and sincere) seek interstices to misunderstand misunderstandings.

[Yoshimoto] insists that the language of avant-garde copy expresses the situation of the sign in advanced capitalist society, negating the goal of selling. He overtly praises Baudrillard’s notion of the simulacrum as particularly appropriate for analyzing contemporary Japanese capitalism. Copies appear, then, in a double sense: the words of the copywriter and copies of copies—copies without originals, without reference. In advertising, the referent is the product—when that referent is subverted or elided, one is left with the simulation of an advertisement, a serial succession of images where the ad no longer advertises anything (Ivy, 1989, 37).

An allegory for English in Japanese?

Mickey Mouse a mascot for money market accounts “because of the similar alliteration of Mickey Mouse and money market” (Brannen, 1992, 225).
Reality?

>>Que tal, anyway, George? Glen passed along the kitty litter, difficult
>>for me to digest, here in The Land of Ten Thousand Thousand Bankruptcies.
>>Kitty's not smilin' if she ever was, these days. 62% of business owning
>>respondents say the times are worse than bochi-bochi. I don't know what
>>it means for your thesis, but the world may be less interested than formerly
>>in the commercial art of DaiNippon. Fear and loathing of an unknown Japan
>>as a catalyst for study has been replaced by indifference and/or I-told-you-so's.
>>Latest loanword from the radio I've caught - 'ri a ri ti.'

-(e-mail, American friend resident 20 years in Japan)

136 So-so. phatic non-committal response to query how's business in Osaka (= howzitgoin' ? so-so...).
Chapter 4  Tentative Beginnings: MA, A Third Space?

Dream.
I am climbing onto the thatched roof of a large and flimsy hut. Below, a scurry of domestic activity. With me, women manipulating runic tablets on boards. I cannot understand the figures, but know there is a link between what is happening below me and the arrangements on the boards. I don’t know if they are descriptive or prescriptive and fear being exposed. I am afraid of heights.

_I awake, eat, and work on my thesis._

To (somewhat) reconcile A and B, to negotiate the confusion of my quest, I offer an exploration (appropriation?) of the Japanese concept of _ma_. Another allegory: a challenge to reveal/shake assumptions re: language, identity and scholarship.

Odin, discussing Pilgrim’s work, explores “the extent to which the art, literature and other sign systems in the decentered text of Japanese culture are totally fractured or displaced terms of the aesthetic principle of _ma_, a rich, multi-nuanced term indicating ‘space, spacing, interval, gap, blank, room, pause, rest, time, timing, or opening’._ The religio-aestetic principle of _ma_ refers to the opening of a space-time interval whereby each object has a relatedness or betweenness with its surrounding context” (Odin, 1995, 12).137 More simply “the word _ma_ basically means an ‘interval’ between two (or more) spatial or temporal things and events...a room is called _ma_, for example, as it refers to the space between the walls; a rest in music is also _ma_ as the pause between notes and sounds...By extension _ma_ can also mean ‘among’” (Pilgrim, 1995, 56).138

---

137 ‘Entering’ a mandala: “The practitioner goes from the manifestation to the source, from the form to the essence, and finally reaches the realization that form and essence are two-but-not-two” (Grapard cited in Hendry, 1993, 150). _Mandela_, where curve balls fly, Stephen Hawking’s sandbox, a rhizomic “principle of asignifying rupture: against the oversignifying breaks separating structures or cutting across a single structure” (Deleuze, 1993, 32).

138 I look to Japan for dissolution, _ma_, fluidity. Sakai uses the Heideggrean _Dasein_ to urge that people be “understood as ‘being-between’ or ‘being-thrown-between,’ an essentially unstable middle entity, or _Chun-kansha_, suspended between infinity and void” (Sakai, 1993, 238). I sit by computer citing east against citation, enjoying the “Euro-American [post]-modernist version of exilic displacement, stress[ing] the freedom of disconnection and the pleasures of interstitial [ma] subjectivity” (Kaplan, 1996, 89). I seek Nishitani’s zen Heidegger: “the field of reality...is...as a field of emptiness, a field of infinite indeterminateness or inexhaust-
Ma: “that moment unbridled by contradictions-contrasts between part and whole" (Matsumoto, 1988, 50).

Ma is in the compound for ningen, ‘human being’. “Ma (read gen here [recall kanji can have multiple pronunciations]) implies that persons (nin, hito) stand within, among, or in relationship to others....ma clearly begins to take on a relational meaning—a dynamic sense of standing in, with, among, or between” (Pilgrim, 1995, 56). Ma is also part of the compounds for ‘time’, ‘space’ and ‘society’: “human relations...become a matter of negotiating the ma (ma no torikata) between/among human beings” (ibid 67). I try to imagine English as ma between (not only) Japanese and English...kejime...choices, agency flowing provisional also-Japanese identities in ma-spaces ‘English’ (un-)frames. Can we imagine scholarship about identity, language and linguistic imperialism as ma, replacing solitary proclamation with discussion, a recognition of and respect for spaces, motion and change?

139 Bhabha’s ‘ma’/Third Space: “The linguistic difference that informs any cultural performance is dramatized in the common semiotic account of the disjuncture between the subject of a proposition (enonce) and the subject of enunciation, which is not represented in the statement but which is the acknowledgement of its discursive embeddedness and address, its cultural positionality, its reference to a present time and a specific space. The pact of interpretation is never simply an act of communication between the I and the You designated in the statement. The production of meaning requires that these two places be mobilized in the passage through a Third Space, which represents both the general conditions of language and the specific implication of the utterance in a performative and institutional strategy of which it cannot ‘in itself’ be conscious” (Bhabha, Cultural Diversity, 207-208).

140 Fetishization, i.e. “English speakers believe in God, since they say “Thank God!”” (Ryang, 1996, 298)?

141 Marx-san: we make ourselves, but not always from the conditions we desire. Theorists of linguistic imperialism document ‘conditions’ of oppression; I write not to contradict this but to tickle solo western scholarship. Balancing on the slipperiest of slopes, spinning words at words snaking neither guilt or atonement, I duck my doubts: do I fetishize, appropriate or create a discourse around ma as a ruse to escape power and responsibility, creating discursive wonderlands, Magical My-story Tours I am you and you are me, the Walrus is All...stringing an endless starting line—“like the metaphor of the rhizome, nomadism signifies the inverse of dwelling or being and celebrates the intermezzo zone” (Kaplan, 1996, 89)—writing solo...

142 masturbation? Not if demystification leads to (much more than typing the words) empowerment/action. Spaces re-figured/mediated collaboratively. Spaces to listen across, spaces left empty/(also-empty), spaces both A and B, spaces to “co-emerge with an-other”(Lichtenberg-Ettinger, 1994, 58), spaces not merely waiting to be filled with our own wor(l)ds. See Appendix 3 for an analysis of space/architecture/language.
Space has no identity or fixed function outside of the practice of the subject (Takemura).

Bakhtin’s “primary values: incompleteness, becoming, ambiguity, indefinability, non-canonicalism—indeed all that jolts us out of our normal expectations” (Gardiner, cited in Rampton, 1995, 314). Loanwords? This text?

*Ma* is an “‘open-ended aesthetic’ which underscores ‘the unfixed, dislocated sense of space or place’ without being anchored in any kind of ‘fixed center’. In the uncentered sign systems of Japanese discourse, the ‘negative, imaginative, open moments of space-time are as important as what is objectively there’. [Pilgrim] states that *Ma* resides in the between-ness which is continually breaking open the literal, descriptive world and inviting direct experience of the inarticulate, deconstructed, ‘empty’ reality of immediate experience’. The characteristic voids of the *ma* aesthetic thereby ‘function to dislocate the world of meaning and action, emptying yet opening it to another level of experience and reality’” (Pilgrim cited in Odin, 1995, 12). 143

*Ma** @**** *Japanese English* !?

Both nothingness and emptiness are deceptive ideas and those who are philosophically trained are liable to conceive them as sheer negativism, but in reality nothingness (as well as emptiness) is dynamic and determines itself as this world of manyness. They are concrete and creative and directly experiential. A living world of manyness is a world of constant becoming, perpetual flowing, and thus of absolute contradictions, where the equation, A=not-A, takes place in actuality and not dialectically (Suzuki, *How to Read Nishida*, Nishida 1960, iv–v).

Matsumoto recalls translating for an AFL-CIO labour leader in Japan. “The man, proud of having been a good orator in the United States, asked me why there was no feedback from the Japanese audience. At a loss to explain in detail the meaning of *ma* in English, I answered, in an overly-simplified manner: ‘Because you were articulate.’ My comment was obviously inadequate. For what I meant was this: ‘Your speech was so neatly organized that the Japanese audience, deprived of *ma*, didn’t know how to identify you non-verbally, much less to relate to you verbally’” (Matsumoto, 1988, 51).

---

143 Things ‘too graphic’ in Japanese can be approached through English; it “gives you a *ma* between you and the object” (conversation with Yukiko Minami).
Ma, blonde Japanese, in-between (potential, contextual, a way from pronunciation’s infeasible finality), liminal, identity rocking itself by seizing (imaginary) identities: “In a Japan-induced fantasy he calls ‘Without Words,’ Barthes portrays the disengagement of the self from itself, the dissolution of the unified self in the field of the other:

The murmuring mass of an unknown language constitutes a delicious protection, envelopes the foreigner...in an auditory film that halts at the alienations of the mother tongue...I nonetheless grasp the respiration...as I move, a faint vertigo, sweeping me into its artificial emptiness, which is consummated only for me: I live in the interstice, delivered from any fulfilled meaning...in Japan the body exists, acts, shows itself, gives itself, without hysteria, without narcissism, but according to a pure—though subtly discontinuous—erotic project (Lippit citing Barthes in Lippit, unpaginated).

Lippit notes that in this pre-Oedipal hallucination “which halts at the alienations of the mother tongue” (Barthes cited in Lippit, unpaginated) Barthes “reveals a being at the precipice of identification” (Lippit, unpaginated). Is this but a ruse to re/create oneself, dis-illusion a textual thrill leaving extra-discursive entitlements of race and gender solid and unsullied? Yet this precipice...interstice...strikes me intellectually, viscerally and intuitively as very real. From this ma, the koans of loanwords and blonde Japanese make sense.

Mishima, interviewed in his simulacral 18th century French style villa: “Here, only what you cannot see is Japanese” (Mishima cited in Burgin, 1996, 116).

de Kerckhove contrasts ma to the “western notion of neutral space” (de Kerckhove, 1995, 165). He sees Japanese space as a “continuous flow, alive with interactions and ruled by a precise sense of timing and pacing (ibid). Ma “connotes the complex network of relationships between people and objects” occurring not in dead space but in an electric “space-time” (ibid).

144 His quote from Michel Random is worth repeating here:
In Japan, everything depends on ma: the martial arts as well as architecture, music or the plain art of living. Aesthetics, proportions, garden design, all belong to networks of meanings which are related to each other through ma. Even business people in Japan obey the laws of ma when they approach each other; the idea is to sense how our partner judges things. Ma will then dictate the hierarchy of choices, the priorities of investments, the right time and the proper pace in the organization of the enterprise, and shape the exact perception of people and situations. In a word, ma is perceived behind everything as an undefinable musical chord, a sense of the precise interval eliciting the fullest and finest resonance (Random quoted in de Kerckhove, 1995, 166).

We are mediated by the Other not only through language, gaze, performance and semiotic constellation. Money is no mere metaphor, labour hardly narrative. Terms like ‘exchange’ ‘ma’ and ‘co-creation’ occlude exploitation, contact hides contract struggling to contain trade, identity. “In the final analysis, Japan, with or without its postmodernity, is an imperialist power striving to control increasingly large realms of the world’s necessity” (Wolfe, 1989, 231).

“For the Japanese, ningensei (‘humanity’ or ‘human-beingness’) takes precedence over everything else. Ningensei, in other words, comprises the primary reality, whereas symbolic representations like law, words, and reason remain only secondary; the Japanese thus are cognizant and respectful of ‘law behind law,’ ‘words behind words,’ and ‘reason behind reason’” (Lebra, 1976, citing Dasan, 6). Recall Dasan’s Nihonjinrohn project. Yet this idealized Japan strikes me as....Japan. His imaginary one mine? It is tempting to move towards an analysis of linguistic imperialism that recognizes a ‘law behind law’ and operates on a more human scale. Is this to absolve myself, to deny imperialism? I would mock Ottawa monks grooving such lawless laws.

*us to modulate the intervals of space, something Japanese learn to do from birth simply by observing their traditions* (de Kerckhove, 1995, 164, italics mine). Kejime!
Ma, always already liminal?...like travel, a “flow state” of passage...a time of early childhood, when the temporal and spatial were still integrated, when their mutual constraints were not understood or experienced” (Curtis and Pajaczkowska, 1994, 204). My mania to escape history, the intense bounding of either complete stricture or utter freedom, ma sneaking the male solipsism of an imaginary “ultra-erotic elimination of parental and state authority” (Kaplan, 1996, 19), the narcissism of self-creation?

And more. “Although ma ultimately deconstructs all boundaries (as mind-created constructs and orders imposed on the chaos of experience) and operates experientially at the intestines of being, some elements of its meaning and expression can be located within such constructs and orders” (Pilgrim, 1995, 57). Solid and melting Ma'ngleish, blonde and Japanese, deconstructing all boundaries, a king among koans. In place of (my desire to negate?) English as cultural hegemon/saviour, do I disguise it as ma and koan? Do I weave enigmatic daydreams, divorcing language of/from power to deny power, a vain attempt to escape complicity behind the flash of “clownish, trickstering... [a] cultural relativity which obliterates, or at least rib-tickles, absolutes” (Boon, 1990, 68)?

Groovin’ interstitial, waltzing indeterminate, I excoriate self in ourobouric abandon...a liberal Caucasian scholar’s liminal absolution, the male becoming ‘human’ to occupy the Other. What politics are enabled and silenced by focusing on Japan’s “radically disruptive freplay of textual signifiers...which displaces all self-identity into multiple perspectives and accomplishes the irreducible plurality of meaning...each sign...emptied into a chain of differential traces and floating signifiers-without closure, without origin, and without a privileged center” (Odin, 1995, 19)? 145 Is this not a textbook definition of the meltdown off/by the commodity fetish?

145 Nihonjinron, “treatises about Japanese uniqueness” (Berque, 1992, 101), a “civil religion” (Befu cited in Maher and Yashihiro, 1993, 9) “exaggerate the Japanese propensity to debase the identity of the self, and by so doing tend to present the Japanese as a uniquely contextual people (kanjin) different from other humans
(ningen)” (Berque, 1992, 102). *Nihonjinron* “share two fundamental characters with myth (kōan theory?): the abolition of time (history), and the abolition of the subject (the enunciating individual)” (ibid, 101). How to approach (even postmodernist views of) Japanese identity without reinforcing *Nihonjinron*? Does this paper ironically play into essentialist notions of Japanese uniqueness, a frustrating cliché I couldn’t escape in Japan? (De)basing identity, freebasing identity: do *Nihonjinron* and the rubric of linguistic imperialism create ethnic absolutism, which Gilroy defines as resting on the assumptions of a fixed ethnicity being the “most important aspect of a person’s identity” (Rampton, 1995, 312)? Do I force ‘sense’ on self and Other(ize), do Westerners spin their own *Nihonjinron*, nationalist and liberal alike feeding (off of) conceptions of “Japan as a signified, whose uniqueness was fixed in an irreducible essence that was unchanging and unaffected by history, rather than as a signer capable of attaching itself to a plurality of possible meanings” (Miyoshi and Haroutunian, 1989, xvi)? “The West is never content with what it is recognized as by its others; it is always urged to approach others in order to ceaselessly transform its self-image; it would never be satisfied with being recognized but would wish to recognize others; it would rather be a supplier of recognition than a receiver thereof” (Sakai, 1989, 95). *Nihonjinron* can thus be considered a ‘Western’ discourse(!) for “its insistence on Japan’s peculiarity and difference from the West embodies a nagging urge to see the self from the viewpoint of the Other....[establishing] the centrality of f the West as the universal point of reference” (ibid, 105). Borrowing from Said, Moeran defines Japanism as “a way of coming to terms with Japan that is based on Japan’s place in Western European and American experience. Japanism is a mode of discourse, a body of knowledge, a political vision of reality that represents an integral part of Western material civilisation both culturally and ideologically, with supporting institutions, vocabulary, scholarship, imagery and doctrines” (Moeran, 1990, 1) to gain authority over Japan. Might Japanese use *Nihonjinron* to seek authority over self/west? Prime Minister Nakasone ends an infamous speech (“in America there are many blacks, Puerto Ricans and Mexicans, and on the average America’s level [of intelligence] is still extremely low” [Nakasone cited in Ivy, 1989, 22]) with “an appeal to search out the racial origins of the Japanese: only by knowing their self-identity can Japanese know their ‘difference’ from the rest of the world” (Ivy, 1989, 22). *Identity as difference as superiority: my lived experience of Eastern European history/memory mirror Nakasone’s racism*. This in no small part informs my quest to leap cultural borders. I question who has the power and desire to cross borders. I understand that history and strategic essentialism can empower. For me, difference screamed hierarchy and suspicion in school yard and family: I seek not the ‘same’ or ‘universal’ as panacea but rather seek an ethical embrace of plurality that understands identity to be contingent, constructed and contradictory. Narrated. My desire to destabilize (my) national identities is not meant as a universal program. Bhabha writes that “cultures are never unitary in themselves, nor simply dualistic in relation of Self to Other. This is not because of some humanistic nostrum that beyond cultures we all belong to the human culture of mankind; nor is it because of an ethical relativism that suggests that in our cultural capacity to speak of and judge Others we necessarily ‘place ourselves in their position’...the reason a cultural text or system of meaning cannot be sufficient unto itself is that the act of cultural enunciation—the place of utterance—is crossed by the difference of writing....It is this ‘difference’ in language that is crucial to the production of meaning [identity] and ensures, at the same time, that meaning is never simply mimetic and transparent” (Bhabha, *Cultural Diversity, 207*). For Barthes, the immediacy of *haiku* (*Japanese*) “provide[s] a space of pure fragments in which it is language itself that is celebrated in an ‘exemption from meaning’...there remains just a trace, a designation of words, where meaning is ‘only a flash, a slash of light’” (Barthes cited in Chambers, 1993, 195). Mystification? While fascinated by and unfortunately reduced at present to have academe as my (unlikely) site of political action, my passionate/clumsy exhortations for difference and against hierarchy authenticity and the exclusionary culture of the same have a deep history. An intense loathing for the hatreds surrounding my childhood drive me to contextualize identity and attack essentialism. Therefore the notion of Japanese-and-Blond is far more than a semiotic joy-ride, it is an attack on notions of racial purity/superiority. From this standpoint, a Baudrillardian continual deferral of subjectivity and questioning of the ‘original’ become political and practical if it challenges notions of authentic/pure identities. The incomprehensibility of (not places but ‘events’, metonyms to close and reduce) Rwanda, Nanjing, Sarajevo warn that the ‘local’ and ‘identity’ are not always resistant or progressive. Rarely looked down upon but taught to look down, I resist
Barthes’ “erotic project,” my (anti-)text leashed to/wagging the logic of commodity flash?

“The whole drive of our society is toward displaying as much difference as possible within it while eliminating where it is at all possible what is different from it: The supreme trick of bourgeois ideology is to produce its opposite out of its own hat” (Williamson cited in Kaplan, 1996, 16). Wark observes this trick in Japan: “English is the lexicon through which the commodity becomes associated with a perfect realm, elsewhere” (Wark, The Tokyo, 10-11).

Celebrating indeterminacy and interstice tempts exciting and utterly irresponsible denials of history/power/the social. Struggling against this I must not automatically (I strain to grasp this, approaching it best peripherally...sideways...) reproduce the same to deny a Japanese subjectivity embodying a radically alter weltanschauung of (apparently) alogical gaps and contradictions; what slides alchemy here may well be commonplace and accepted in Japan.

this by blurring hierarchical notions of identity to reveal it as always mediated, never self-sufficient, never directly transparent to itself. Instead of a seamless inheritance, I sing for traces, creole, mixture and contamination, for shifting constellations of meaning. For tomorrow today, against origins and a "nostalgic appeal for a lost unity"(Chambers, 1993, 196-197). Thus, my comfort with discomfort re: Japan, my most immediate/visceral route against unitary identity and (ironically) unique, homogeneous belonging."Discontinuity is the foundation of an authentic tradition"(Benjamin, cited in Chambers, 1993, 196). I seek as an ideal Young’s “unoppressive city” with its “openness to unassimilated otherness”(Young cited in Jarvey, 1993, 16). A footnote of Roger Simon’s returns me to my own, forcing me to face the compassion I exclude from my history. He cites Aquin’s notion of Hongritude, Vienna’s arrogant “will to repress the Hungarians living there, with their minority bad breath, and their music which nobody took the time to differentiate from that of the gypsies” (Aquin cited in Simon, 1995, n4, 42). Austrians, Russians, Germans, Turks, desperate tales of domination... Hungarian Boys Scout orienteering competitions, strange twisted war games, children navigating a New York forest, tape recordings of machine gun fire hidden among the trees...refugees foisting a simulacrum of what they fled upon their hot-dog scarfing spawn amazed to realize the massacre at Mohacs spoken of as if yesterday was hundreds of years ago...“Hongritude” informing (not excusing) “the blind compensation of the dominated: that there is a group beneath it which allows it to show its domination without a hint of bad conscience” (ibid, 43)... self-hatred beamed onto others, hatred I mock, flee, deny and denounce with the same normative grids of justice and oppression, leaving me leaving ‘them’ returning to ‘them’ to me linear, monochrome...caricatures, reduced and rejected...j’accuse! flying, compassion absent...hatred hated...another way to channel scars of history, another type of easy answer, my smug and furious focus on anti-Semitism I essentialize as ‘Hungarian’...if I am honest in my quest for identity as “never self-sufficient or directly transparent and present to itself” I must not echo Hongritude’s echo...can I find a ma in Magyar? Absurdity & identity: see appendix 5 for a discussion about Nihonjinron the guts of identity politics...
Slammed ma, no ma, help ma, balm ma, ni hao ma: "To what extent is it possible—or even desirable—to represent a non-Western culture from within the syntax, terms, and narratives, or the policies and protocols of Western culture?" (Wilson, 1993, 331). What is the sound of one hand clapping? Barthes “once commented that the attempt to imagine a symbolic system outside the limits of Western metaphysics is ‘like trying to destroy the wolf by lodging comfortably in his gullet’: the values we drive out, he explained, return in the language we speak” (Pincus, citing Barthes in Pincus, 1993, 223).

I offer my re-presentations of (real and Imaginary) ‘Japan’ not merely as history but, as Said’s aforementioned condemnation of Orientalism posits, for (and against) a “salutary ‘derangement’ of...European habits of mind and spirit” (Said, 1979, 150). If Japan didn’t exist, would we (pace Wilde) invent it?146

“There is no radical and plural democracy without renouncing the discourse of the universal and its implicit assumption of a privileged point of access to ‘the truth’” (Laclau and Mouffe, cited in Chambers, 1993, 197).

I invoke Japan, ma and linguistic imperialism to explore hybridity (and creative subversion). I turn toward Bhabha’s hybridity-as-verb, not given but always already unstable and destabilizing, a (ma) negotiation/translation of “cultural identities in a discontinuous intertextual temporality of cultural difference” (Bhabha, Cultural Diversity, 208). I resist the temptation to critique the spread of English as an always already dissolution/occupation of Other cultures, not to avoid but to find openings for tackling issues of power and privilege.147

---

146 Melville cites Sakai about a ‘Japan’ never out of quotation marks: “even in its particularities, Japan is already implicated in the ubiquitous West, so that neither historically nor geopolitically can Japan be seen as outside of the West...insofar as one tries to speak from the position of us, the putative unity of either the West or Japan, one would never be able to escape the dominion of the universalism-particularism pair, that is, one would never be effective in criticism no matter how radical a posture one might put on” (Sakai cited in Melville, 1989, 283).

147 And the power I exercise writing this? Discourse cannot strip. I fear this and every emperor (waving quill sword or keyboard) always has new clothes. Despite convoluted efforts to confuse my confusion, I have
For Barthes (arrogance or honesty?) “the Orient is a matter of indifference, merely providing a reserve of features whose manipulation—whose invented interplay—allows me to ‘entertain’ the idea of an unheard-of symbolic system, one altogether detached from our own” (Barthes cited in Heine, 1995, 32). *Flip this:* can English be re-made by Japanese or other non/English speakers using the “encounter with the ‘other’ not to presume to explain [or understand] that alterity, but rather to go beyond...language and sign culture, and thereby disturb and question the presumed stability of the symbolic order....[w]here differences although recognized remain as differences, irreducible to the same...exist[ing] as a supplement, an excess that causes ‘knowledge, or the subject, to vacillate’” (Chambers, *Cities*, 194)? Vacillate for intellectual thrills, or from this, a more ethical stance/understanding of the ‘Other’?


Vacillation...an intellectual joy-ride creaking sclerosis or a movement toward/with dialogue, a more ethical stance, greater understanding of/with Others? Featherstone delineates Appadurai’s vectors of transnational becoming: refugees, tour-groups, microchips, derivatives and news-clips flow people, capital and information towards “a new, disorganized or ‘post-Fordist’ stage of capitalism” (Featerstone, 1993, 173-174). These intensified flows “in some cases lead to the development of ‘third cultures’ which have a mediating function ....[and] operate with relative independence from nation states” (ibid); *Japanese loanwords, as intranational as international...loanwords, koan agit-theory...third spaces?* 148

inevitably created anamorphosis, a “perspective which requires the spectator to assume a specific position, encoded by the painter [writer] in order to perceive a pattern in what from a conventional point of view remains illegible...it undoubtedly also implies his desire to master the reader, to direct the reader’s gaze towards his own undeniable presence, and more specifically, to his creative powers” (Soderlind, 53 ). 148 Positioning position, Bhabha notes how the “pact of interpretation is never simply an act of communication between the I and the You designated in the statement. The production of meaning requires that these two places be mobilized in the passage through a Third Space, which represents both the general conditions of language and the specific implication of the utterance in a performative and institutional strategy of which it cannot ’in itself’ be conscious. What this unconscious relation introduces is an ambivalence in the act of
Ma: giddy slippage, Third Space, *jouissance a divertimento*...a/historical fancy, a sly opening of language to foreclose it? “Culture-as-sign articulates that in-between moment when the rule of language as semiotic system—linguistic difference, the arbitrariness of the sign—turns into a struggle for the historical and ethical right to signify. The rule of language as signifying system—the possibility of speaking at all—becomes the misrule of discourse: the right for only some to speak diachronically and differentially for ‘others’—women, migrants, Third World peoples, Jews, Palestinians, for instance—to speak only symptomatically or marginally” (Bhabha, 1992, 49). What is the context of this text? *Ma* a convoluted way to speak for?

Do I fear the spaces of and between theory and action, the status quo’s comfortable frustration a convenient way to lament and rationalize stupendous inaction?

Traditional rifts between ideas/language (action/material things) offer feeble excuses. Such dualism “obscures the way social experience is concurrently and inextricably linguistic and behavioural. To give priority to either thoughts or actions at the theoretical level is to reproduce the prejudices of Cartesian ontology as well as the social division between mental and manual labour, which is typical of, though not exclusive to, industrial capitalism” (Poster, 1989, 127).

Sifting these rifts towards *ma*, I sneak im/possible under(*beside?*)standings of self and other.

interpretation...The intervention of the Third Space, which makes the structure of meaning and reference an ambivalent process, destroys this mirror of representation in which cultural knowledge is continuously revealed as an integrated, open, expanding code. Such an intervention quite properly challenges our sense of the historical identity of culture as a homogenizing, unifying force, authenticated by the originary Past, kept alive in the national tradition of the People. In other words, the disruptive temporality of enunciation displaces the narrative of the Western nation which Benedict Anderson so perceptively describes as being written in homogeneous, serial time (Anderson 1983: ch. 2)” (Bhabha, 1995, 208).
Without speaking-for-Others or simply twiddling thoughts on and of public transport, how can Western scholars and teachers approach the rubric of linguistic imperialism without re-centering the West? While I am ambivalent about the limitations circled and circling this academic attempt at dialogue, I know much more (listening, learning) can be done in classrooms and izukaya restaurants.

Violence Jack Off, name of clothing store (http://www2.gol.com/users/scaires/Japlish/buildings.html).

I quest(ion) for action: between difference and the self-same, through power, Japan-blondness and wonder, I trace the boundaries of my identity, scholarship and understanding to challenge their ground. My heel is still in the ground. I ask again: can we imagine and create scholarship about identity, language and linguistic imperialism (not ‘condemned’ but st(r)ained into an even more productive and reflective critical praxis\(^\text{149}\)) as ma, replacing solitary proclamation with discussion, a recognition of and respect for spaces, motion and change?

This is only a beginning. I do not wish to remain sitting on the starting line.

Or to start running.

Across pages.

Alone\(^\text{150}\)

\(^{149}\) Self-reflexive, thinking against if not without paradigm, “developing a radical new code that is itself about coding, and is not merely a shift in coding...the awareness of coding as coding” (Berman, 1990, 313) not ignoring codes but being aware of how they are made and make: all this easier seen (yet still confusing!) looking at (making our selves?) the Other.

\(^{150}\) And idiotic. “Astonishment is idiotic” (Desmond, 1995, 12) from the Greek idios, intimate/private.
Dear Mr. Fogarasi,

Although I am not a linguist but a sociologist fluent in Japanese as well as other languages and would like to add a comment to your approach to loan words.

First, I think caution needs to be taken when assuming that loanwords are only adopted because there is no equivalent in the other language. I would rather argue that they are embedded in a specific social and political context...

...Thus loanwords are in my view changing shape and meaning in their new context. Have you heard of 'pocket bells'? An entirely English term, however with no meaning in English speaking countries (the answer is: pager). I therefore suggest to approach words from their context of usage, rather than from the originating language. Local contexts have much more power for diversion and distortion than most pop views on globalization might assume. KFC struggled 10 years to establish itself in Japan, now it is famous for its buns, not chicken. MacDonalds now carries curry and sushi. Apparently the Japanese found other ways of becoming blonde.

(Ezawa, Aya, *H-Japan* posting, August 28, 1997, unpaginated, bold mine)

Loving not knowing. Loving: not knowing- Helen Cixous

*Knot knowing.*
The proper response to the challenge of postmodernism is not to wish ourselves back to the halcyon days of the male subject’s quest for total control of his subjectivity, but rather to return to a renewed sense of our own obligation to the other. Before we raise the epistemological question ‘Who are you?’ we must first raise the ethical question ‘Where are you?’. We cannot forget our commitment to the other. For, as Kearney notes, ‘When a naked face cries ‘Where are you?’, we do not ask for identity papers. We reply, first and foremost, ‘Here I am‘ (McLaren and Lankshear, 1993, 412).

But I am trained for/by the bourgeois navel gaze, who are you, who am I....

What is required is a different kind of intelligence, the ability to be in a position of awareness, or psychic distance, with respect to one’s own somatic and energetic longing; the ability to not turn anything--computers, ideologies, relationships, spirituality, whatever--into worldviews, but to recognize that they are (like the human ego) just tools, nothing more. It’s a tall order, and not an imminent one. For we have lived with vertical ascent structures in the West for at least two millennia, and we are not going to “go horizontal” very easily. But it remains the case that the ultimate redemption of the West is the redemption from the need for redemption itself (Berman, 1990, 293).

My penchant to condemn linguistic imperialism links me as you, re/creates margins, orders comforting stories, lies to make them neat. Siding with the radically incommensurate, sliding with ma, spinning beyond centrifugal theory, spinning lies to make it simple, spinning lies to make it complex?

what do I say? Spinning lies to make it complex?

Either way, expertocratic status smug in a thesis. A dear souvenir of academic apostasy.

I pause and chuckle...resigned...to the absurdity of disparaging disciplines and expertise in a thesis...chuckling at the im/possibility of expertocratic status.

My quest is too large. Too boy. Too solo. From Arnold and Frye to Derrida and Kristeva, my education is (and seeks the) disembodied, abstract, novel and intriguing.

I admire the work of my thesis supervisors from/of classrooms and (for?)shop floors.
They take stands, make choices, engage. I don't seem to be able to do this in an academic setting. My savings are almost exhausted; soon this text, this obsession, will be

But other stands are rewarded. A third degree to be unemployed with. The bells and whistles are here, the postmodern theories I despise, adore, mock and emulate chime

these texts so wonderfully so ironically practical in and of Japan!

these texts take flight. I am tired (yet still evidently somewhat thrilled) by this.
what do I say?

the shelf this sits upon contains too much too little saying.

From the vantage point of my conceptual categories the disillusion of said categories is both a selfish thrill and pre-requisite for more ethical connections.
Spinning. Tickling the symbolic order, un-linking; be it with polemics about imperialism or the giddy architecture of koan theory, we risk becoming voyeurs, thrill-seekers, cultural tourist theorists getting off on difference and confusion, never stepping from this buffet to see the power structures allowing us to enjoy library and resort. Or to see the arrogance that comes from setting ourselves up as protectors of authenticity, defining ourselves and others by projecting Otherness onto what we cannot understand. Making it vulnerable and in need of salvation. By experts. Too much saying. Yet, without radically questioning the ground of our being, we can never envision or effect radical change.

The ways I know to question reproduce

move sideways

Too much saying. Too little listening.

Listening. Fiumara exploring Gadamer: no “genuine human relationship” can exist without “the radical and reciprocal openness of listening” (Fiumara, 1990, 29). I am reminded of Levinas’ ethics: “being called by and responding to the other’s otherness” (Grosz, 1989, xvii) (his work deconstructing the West from within by analyzing “a repressed Judaic tradition underlying Greek logocentric thought” [ibid, 141]). “For Levinas ethics does not spring from human nature or from what can be known; rather what exists and what can be known are effects of the subject’s radical dependence on and responsibility to the other” (ibid, 142). We exchange more than business cards. Fundamental to this is a listening, a radical listening.
Japan shook the boundaries of self of what I know. It replaced certainty with contrivance; fixed essence and identity became tentative, mutating, and mutable. It has been a privilege to ‘work through’ this koan, an incredible opportunity to read, e-mail, discuss, dispute and make non/sense of my cross-cultural confusion and obsession. I pause and smile. The tape has stopped playing. I hear no birds. There are still a few drops of tea. I re-write this again again. My intense engagement with these issues—a hot stone in the throat one can neither swallow nor spit out (Zen description of koan)—has been profound. I have a closure of sorts. It opens. Emptier and more patient, I approach a cross-roads, away from academia, away from travel, away from abstractions of who and why to where and what. The stone has cooled. Swallow or spit?

I swallow. And change the tape.

But this need not be a solipsistic story of personal growth (annihilation?). As Barthes and so many others look (‘make’) East beyond East to gain West, if ‘Japan’ can reveal identity to be shifting and open to change, dare we loosen (if not quite lose) the hisstories and hierarchies that make our discomfort so comfortable?\(^{151}\)

\(^{151}\) Postmodernism (as catalyst, not agenda) can reveal complex identities. I celebrate Kristeva’s call for “paradoxical community” (Kristeva cited in Carmichael, 1995, 313). Carmichael elaborates: “The foreigner, Kristeva argues, confronts us with a projection of our own strangeness, and in her terms, ‘this means to imagine and make oneself other for oneself’; feeling foreign with respect to questions of identity and affiliation is, for Kristeva, an emancipatory condition [for me, for Japanese, for/with loanwords]: ‘Whether a constraint or a chance, a psychological evolution or a political fate, this position as a difference being might appear to be the goal of human autonomy’” (Carmichael, 1993, 313). I refuse to abstract curricula for imaginary students, but these questions are extremely germane to teacher training as well as to a reflective and ethical pedagogy. I do not include a standard ‘for further research’ heading as this entire text reaches for this. I recall a passionate discussion with Lisa Taylor about the number of teachers who go abroad to teach (and the diversity they encounter in Canadian classrooms). Amidst Orientalizing/Otherizing and liberal universalism, identity, self and power must be problematized if teachers are to struggle toward ethical (‘paradoxical’) pedagogy and community.
Borrowing from Wilson, I am tired of “an appeal to dialogue and language games of poetic justice” (Wilson, 1993, 328). Despite the impossibility of one culture fully entering another—and to spite the violence of such attempts—I side with Wilson’s powerful evocation of for Bakhtinian dialogical outsidedness, sensitivity and “openness to cross-cultural differences, nuances, tones, ceremonies, literacies, rites, signs, and customs that constitute the ethnographic-poetic real” (ibid): i.e. *listening*.

**Radical listening.** Horizontal. Active. Contextual. Open(ning) to the impossible. *Listening need not be passive.* Or a liberal paralysis/retreat towards inaction (or fear of action) reproducing the status quo. I cannot stop my will-to-know, but I can pause, and in the stillness, observe and perhaps quiet the will-to-speak. Not to stagnate, but to reflect. To *listen.* A way from the self-same. Self-flagellating arrogant notions that “we have abolished ‘elsewhere’.... Nothing can come from anywhere except from us” (Baudrillard, 1993, 145) assure that this will be so.

Attachment, aversion, logic...the (‘white’?) noise of culture, theory, desire, slogan, memory, dream, de(a)finition, fright, ad and imagination... speaking easy answers of A B, slipping answers pure and absurd, slipping vertical discovery, expertise recovery and possession....thesis.

Option One: abandon the Self, so that Other ceases to be a problem; Option Two: attempt to destroy the Other, allowing Self to reign supreme; and Option Three: work your way back to a Self/Other relationship that is not founded on opposition or confiscation (Berman, 1990, 51).
Beyond ownership, a radical listening (of which I have no model for or recognition of) hears both A and B, hears through and with cultural filters/noise. Allowing for spaces, silences, for cognitive dissonance. For ma. With kejime. Harmonies. Rests. Recognition, respect and reconciliation with otherness and alterity not centered on identification. This cannot and need not escape power relations, but is less invasive than unreflective lunge speaking, penetrating, understanding. Without models, I am left with metaphors, poetry, desire.

Lacan’s mirror phase: why fetishize a metonym for sight, do we not touch, hear, smell, and taste others? I desire a radical listening that sees, smells, tastes and touches. An anti-specular synesthaesic listening to augment the penetrating voyeuristic gaze. Power lifts some to look, but listening requires consent, voice, communication (Nixon raises an eyebrow and grins to reveal an imperfect metaphor for an imperfect world. Must I apologize for seeking perfection? At least and at most, be aware of perfection’s impossibility and utter necessity. Why apologize for hope?). I seek (and celebrate in this thesis) not a ‘Japanese’ weltanschuaang but a partial, fragmented and heterogeneous non/center of my own to listen from, “a fractious unity that can never be wholly unabsent, a decentering ‘center’ that implies its own displacement” (Boon, 1990, 80). And I seek the we to seek this with and in.

The challenge, reward and worth of this thesis is as process, not product. I have already quoted Pennycook as a “postcard version” of my vision. I quote him again: “My search is not for a definition but for a bottom-up way of understanding language, not for a description of language structure but a way of looking at the creation of meanings through English” (Pennycook, 1994, 28).
Critical theory must “surrender its sense of its own territorial right to codify and manage the margins, determining the conditions under which speech from the margins is possible” (Connor in Giarelli and McLaren, 1995, 8).

Borrowing from Pecheux, I desire not to identify or counter-identify with critiques of linguistic imperialism, I wish to disidentify and to go “beyond the structure of oppositions and sanctioned negations that [the discourse] supplies” (Giarelli and McLaren, 1995, 9). For this, awkward and enthusiastic, I move toward and with ma, urging and amazed by kejime’s contextualization, the non-chalant Japanese flow between and within sign systems.

A self does not amount to much, but no self is an island; each exists in a fabric of relations that is now more complex and mobile than ever before. Young or old, man or woman, rich or poor, a person is always located at ‘nodal points’ of specific communication circuits, however tiny these may be. Or better: one is always located at a post through which various kinds of messages pass. No one, not even the least privileged among us, is ever entirely powerless over the messages that traverse and position him [sic] at the post of sender, addressee, or referent (Lyotard cited in Kaplan, 1996, 16).

Possibilities of self, language and the social are far greater than we imagine.

Let us listen to stop speaking the same.
I am inspired by Chantal Mouffe’s injunction that true pluralist democracy is to be seen “as an ‘impossible good’, that is to say, as something that exists only as long as it cannot be perfectly achieved” (Mouffe, 1994, 112).
References


127


Appendix 1 Selective Review of Relevant Literature: Blushing Out My Mis/understandings

Read first to know ‘my’ initial understanding of critiques of linguistic imperialism.

I have no knowledge of either Sanskrit or Arabic. But I have done what I could to form a correct estimate of their value...I am quite ready to take the Oriental learning at the valuation of the Orientalists themselves. I have never found one among them who could deny that a single shelf of a good European library was worth the whole native literature of India and Arabia (Macauley quoted in Phillipson, 1990, 220)

As I write, the government of Canada is considering barring immigration to anyone without a knowledge of French or English. I am enraged. My parents would never have been let in under this policy (my father would have suffered the fate of his immediate colleagues and comrades, execution). My study suddenly becomes irrelevant/profound. I cannot believe this is happening. Linguicism leaps from library from parliament from streets. I am again standing up for ‘God Save The Queen’ in grade four and resenting it. It’s a little late to foist the Union Jack...

The ends: my thesis is an attempt to challenge orthodoxies by going into uncharted--and perhaps unchar(i)table?-- territory. The course of this research has unsettled itself and overflown many unexpected turns, the least of which forces me to conclude that (my) critiques of linguistic imperialism are incapable of addressing the complex issues of English loanwords within Japanese. A rigid focus on this (or any) academic field re-inscribes fixed Cartesian categories that I believe must be dismantled in order to approach (not only) Japanese culture and language.

The beginning: when I first read the work of Robert Phillipson, I was excited to discover theoretical directions that could frame and give expression to my political and intellectual concerns. While a traditional literature review would be redundant (already in the text) and risk tracing the very boundaries I struggle against, I parse Phillipson’s English Language and Imperialism in this appendix to introduce my normative initial understandings of and problems with linguistic imperialism (and its critique).
In Phillipson’s words, his book:

explores the contemporary phenomenon of English as a ‘world’ language and sets out to analyse how the language became so dominant and why. It looks at the spread of English historically in order to ascertain whether the language has been actively promoted as an instrument of the foreign policy of the major ‘English-speaking’ states, and if so, in what ways. It looks at the language policies that Third World countries inherited from colonial times, and considers to what extent ‘aid’ in the form of support for educational development, and English learning in particular, has served the interests of Western powers rather than the receiving countries, and contributed to perpetuating North-South inequalities and exploitation. It looks specifically at the ideology transmitted with, in and through the English language, and the role of language specialists in the cultural export of English. It attempts to gauge the contribution of applied linguistics and English Language Teaching ‘experts’ in helping to legitimate the contemporary capitalist world order (Phillipson, 1990, 4).

English linguistic imperialism is described as “the dominance of English [as] asserted and maintained by the establishment and continuous reconstitution of structural and cultural inequalities between English and other languages. Here structural refers broadly to material properties and cultural to immaterial or ideological properties. English linguistic imperialism is one example of linguicism, which is defined as ‘ideologies, structures and practices which are used to legitimate, effectuate and reproduce a unequal division of power and resources (both material and immaterial) between groups which are defined on the basis of language” (ibid, 41).

Given four years of teaching in Asia and a penchant for critical thought in and out of the academy, I was excited to read critiques of linguistic imperialism describing the privilege and power that dis/placed my experiences abroad. However, I have come to see the need to ‘unpack’ my initial and instinctual critiques of linguistic imperialism.
My re-figuration of and frustration with these tools for Japanese contexts is not to be read as a dismissal of critical such a socio-linguistic analysis of other countries. I seek allegory, parallel and interstice (not as but against abstracted ‘agenda’ or ‘strategy’). At best, I hope to offer de-centering shadows giving pause to re-consider (and make more complex) questions of language and identity.

As Calvet has indicated (1987, 235), the technical terms ‘borrowing’ and ‘loan words’ are misleading, as speakers of a language who borrow words from another have no intention of returning anything. The transaction is purely uni-directional, and reflects the desirability of the product to the consumer, the only constraint on use being intelligibility—though states may intervene to attempt to ban certain foreign forms and implement measures to devise indigenous neologisms (ibid, 6).

I grapple with my reflex to ascribe such passivity, Phillipson’s monolithic/top-down view of loanwords is antithetical to my understanding of them within Japanese. Given (not only) my experience of Japanese subjectivity as having no fixed centre, I have analyzed and argued for a Japanese penchant for resisting Westernization and making foreign things “Japanese”. Yet even and especially in the case of cultures/individuals who see themselves in more fixed/win-lose/linear terms, agency must not be dismissed by caring ‘experts’.

152 The violence of linguistic imperialism is no allegory. A short while ago, Native children were beaten for speaking their language in residential schools. Kurdish children still are in Turkey (Skutnabb-Kangas and Phillipson, 1993). Like children in Wales who dared speak their language at school, students in Kenya who speak Gikuyu wear signs saying “I am stupid” or “I am a donkey” (ibid). I am not immediately present to such violence, but am and have been (especially as a teacher of English abroad) complicit in systems of privilege that create and benefit from such abominations. It is (perhaps too?) easy to doubt the relevancy of this or most any study in the face of these horrors. Unable to stay striking hands, I address what I know and approach what I do not/cannot know to better understand issues of (not only linguistic) imperialism.
I cannot dismiss Phillipson’s powerful analysis of E.S.L. as “an international activity with political, economic, military and cultural ramifications” (ibid, 7). Particularly poignant is a listing of material resources placing teachers beside “a gun, books, capital” (ibid, 222). A detailed, powerful and problematic catalogue and analysis of imperialism, his book needs more of a Foucauldian perspective on how power is established in/through discourse. It is also weakened by a projection of monolingual assumptions that are, ironically, ‘imperialist’. Phrases like “the use of one language generally implies the exclusion of others” (ibid, 9) and “monolingualism has a long pedigree” (ibid, 10) are narrow (English? American?) truncated views of linguistic possibility, ecology and history.

My undergraduate work—to say nothing of the residual polemics from my Eastern European history—is rooted in a modernist/Frankfurt School socialism. Both are deeply rooted in elite masculinist heroics and meta-narratives. Gender, academic training and family history pre-dispose me to simplification and clean categories...a culturally specific, absurd, useless and imperialistic way of approaching (my experiences in and of) Japan.

Language is easily fetishized as a monolithic, irresistible and ruthless advance. What does it mean to speak of the “intoxication” that language brings with it (ibid, 27)? It is clear to me...
that I critique in Phillipson what I (do not easily) see myself doing. Despite the fact that I have come to have an ambivalent stance toward this book, I still find it powerful and provocative. The strongest part of Phillipson’s work is the exhaustively researched “British and American Promotion of English” detailing the political economy of the English language. It rips the mask off of language neutrality and the ‘civilising mission’ of America and Britain (Trade follows the book [ibid, 133], an American embassy maxim). It remains, however, stuck in a Euro-American modernist ethos.

While offering a brilliant Chompskean unravelling of bureaucratic policies, this cannot speak of/to the actual use of English. For example, while a 1941 British Council’s Annual Report stated that:

The Council’s aim is to create in a country overseas a basis of friendly knowledge and understanding of the role of this country, of their philosophy and way of life, which will lead to a sympathetic appreciation of British foreign policy, whatever for the moment that policy may be and from whatever political conviction it may spring. (British Council Annual Report 1940-41 quoted, cited in ibid, 113)

Lee Kuan-Yew, educated in Britain and a noted anglophile, leads Singapore’s successful struggle for independence. The English language was a unifying medium that reflected a most unsympathetic appreciation of British policy (“We know your language” [Singaporean poet] Thumboo cited in Pennycook, 1994, 258). While the use of English in Singapore is problematic and complex, it does not follow the simplistic logic of the British Council.156

156 Note how Lee Kuan Yew (a.k.a. Harry) posits static and incommensurable values/identities onto language: “I may speak the English language better than the Chinese language because I learnt English early in life. But I will never become an Englishman in a thousand generations and I have not got the Western value system inside; mine is an Eastern value system. Nevertheless I use Western concepts, Western words because I understand them. But I also have a different system in my mind” (Lee cited in Pennycook, 1994, 247). A former Singapore Minister of Education defines his view of the “Western value system”, seeing English as a vehicle for “hippyism, a libertine pre-occupation with self-gratification, the cult of living for today and for myself and to hell with others” (Tay Eng Soong, cited in Pennycook, 1994, 249).
Phillipson’s analysis of the professionalization of English Language Teaching summarizes many of its fallacies. I wonder if these also inform some of his assumptions regarding monolingualism and the co-existence of languages. If academics/conferences/journals of English language teaching claim “English is best taught monolingually” or “if other languages are used much, standards of English will drop” (Phillipson, 1990, 153-177), can we resist this in no better than merely inverting these ideas, blinded by staid notions of monolingualism and the almighty/reified power of a decontextualized and already all ready fixed language?

My work aligns toward Pennycook’s complexities. “We cannot reduce language spread to an imperialism parallel to economic or military imperialism. What I want to examine are the effects of the spread of English, how people take up English in their daily lives, what is done with ‘the world language which history has forced down our throats’” (Achebe cited in Pennycook, 1995, 51).157

English is not used for English purposes in Japan.

157 For a succinct critique (expansion) of Phillipson’s work, see Pennycook 1995, esp. p. 56.
I think of my Chinese Singaporean housemates who called poorer, less [English] educated compatriots “Chinamen”. I clearly see the homogenizing and disruptive effects of colonialism/advanced capitalism and its seductive tongue(s). What I do not see quite as readily is my complicity in reifying capitalism as irresistible and my arrogance—Ivory tower socialism, the White Man’s Burden all over again?—in passing judgement on people learning English, trying to survive and thrive.\footnote{158 “Vibrancy, sharing, caring, hopefulness, love and solidarity as been accomplished despite capitalism” (Philip cited in Simon, 1987, 42). Alas, not only in Japan, romantic love because of capitalism? Romansu (romance) and rabu (love) side-slip “traditional mores [which] tabooed the open declaration and display of affection between couples...through contact with Western culture, attitudes and behavior have changed. The acculturation of the notion of romantic love, with it s radical values of partner selection on the basis of individual choice...[has] been gaining ground throughout this century” (Loveday, 1996 89). But rabu never occurs on itself in Japanese but in compounds with predominately physical meanings: rabu hoteru, rabu hanto love hunt, rabu shin love scene (Loveday, 1996, 90).}
Appendix 2  The Use of Loanwords: Why, What, How

1) Loanwords approach a co-identification with the West, a desire to “partake of the predominantly material aspects of the external model, as embodied in its language” (Loveday, 1996, 204).

2) Loanwords can compensate for lexical gaps (scientific/technological jargon: cholera, ozone, cholesterol, electron, hacker, bug...also soul food, ethnicity, salad bowl, homeless, drug, gun control [Honna, 1995, 53]). “Japanese translations take time and seem too clumsy for wider use” [ibid, 47]). This works in reverse: the term otamu has gained currency in the cyberworld to describe the (clumsy concept of) the brilliant yet puerile and nerdy culture of (not only Japanese) computer geeks who socialize best in cyberspace.

3) Loanwords can obscure, foreign terms can be used to “decelerate or even hinder decoding” (Loveday 1996, 206). They can be used for politeness/euphemism: etchi suru, pronouncing the English letter ‘H’ to stand for the Japanese word hentai (‘perversion’ plus suru ‘to do’) (ibid). Rebellion: romanized graffiti, slang, “clipping or oblique referencing often serves to render such vocabulary opaque to outsiders: torabu suru, to make trouble” (ibid, 206-7). Group solidarity: loanwords can demarcate and solidify sub-group membership; “an antilanguage is the means of realization of a subjective reality; not merely expressing it, but actively creating and maintaining it” (Halliday cited in ibid, f13, 207).

4) Loanwords as elusion and derision: seibun-irebun teishu (seven-eleven ‘husband’), leaves home early comes home after kids asleep (ibid, 207); pun on 7/11 convenience stores.

5) Loanwords as humour, macaronics: bai-nara (= bye and sayonara), kaer-ingu (= ‘go home’ and ing) (ibid, 209).

6) Loanwords with semantic narrowing and shift: human becomes humane, “friendly to human beings’, as in human electronics. Human computer is a machine, not a person”. “A Tokyo restaurant named HUMAN feels no hesitation in writing its speciality STEAK under its name in its shop sign” (Honna, 1995, 47). Meanings change and are multiple: claim once meant ‘complaint’ but now also means ‘opinion’; abstract now means both “apart from concrete realities” and “summary” (ibid)

6) Loanwords for Japanese phrasings/neologisms of English: Golden Hour (TV Prime time), Golden Week (Holidays in May). No Face System “a love hotel where customers can enter a room without presenting themselves at registration”, a “masterpiece of English Japanese, a coinage which is almost impossible to make if based on traditional Japanese words” (ibid).

7) Loanwords as abbreviations: biru/building kemaone/connection gyara/guarantee nega/negative sando/sandwich infura/infrastructure amai/amateur dema/demagogue demo/demonstration shinpa/sympathiser.
8) Loanwords as acronyms: OL office lady DK dining kitchen OB old boy 3K kitanai/kitsui/kiken—dirty/hard/dangerous—jobs themselves re-named, construction site was koonjigenba, now station, worker outdoorman, eating place outdoor residence so that working conditions “typically considered dirty, dangerous and painstaking are ‘charmingly’ rephrased” (ibid, 54)

9) Loanwords as abbreviations of compounds ensutoo/enginge stop, engine trouble seku hara, sexual harassment, waapurpuro, word processor, pasukan, personal computer, masukomi mass communication, offureko.

10) Loanwords combined with Japanese words: ha-burashi toothbrush, kara-oke empty orchestra, gaijin buumu foreigner boom, noberutti shouhin novelty commodity, insaidaa torihiki insider trade, manga-chiccu ‘tic’ (chiccu) is added to manga ‘comic’ (= like a comic), adjectival modifier na added to English words: rich-na, dangerous-na, delicious-na, big-na to create adjectives “structurally and semantically treated as Japanese words” (Honna, 1995, 60).
Appendix 3  *mÀ Tempting Architecture*: Structuring Space as An Allegory for Language

Foreign dignitaries staying at Akasaka Palace, the state guesthouse, can be forgiven for thinking that they are in Versailles Palace (McGregor, 1996, 238).

Despite an absent emperor and traffic detouring the “forbidden forest in the heart of Tokyo” (Barthes cited in Hendry, 1993, 107), Hendry sees the palace irradiating power “of a certain sort, and the problem may lie in our Western propensity to want always to be unwrapping, deconstructing, seeing the objects at the centre of things” (ibid, 109). “What meaning does the notion of the simulacrum, the copy, have in a culture where the notion of the origin, it is said, has not existed: where there is no transcendental signified? Where, it is also asserted, literature and art trace the form and flow of the sensuous, detached, empty signifiers—rather than fix the meaning of external signifieds; where, in short, there is no logos?” (Ivy, 1989, 39).

Toyo Ito turns me toward de Certeau when he sees Tokyo “as a city whose life does not reside in its structures but in the energies that surge through them....” (Hollings, 1997, 251). Ditto language(s)?

Substitute ‘language’ for ‘city’:

In his book *The Practice of Everyday Life*, in the chapter titled “Walking in the City,” Michel de Certeau inaugurates a dual mapping of urban space. There is first what he calls the 'concept city,' 'founded by utopian and urbanistic discourse,' whose first operation must be ‘the production of its own space [un espace propre].' Certeau comments, 'Rational organization must thus repress all the physical, mental and political pollutions that compromise it.’ However:’ Beneath the discourses that ideologise the city, the ruses and combinations of powers that have no readable identity proliferate; without points where one can take hold of them, without rational transparency, they are impossible to administer ’ (Burgin citing de Certeau in Burgin, 1996, 94).

*Architecture as language*: “in Japanese architecture what is seen is frequently not there, and far more is present than is actually seen” (Coadrake cited in Hendry, 1993, 98). Obsessed with presence, I ignore the embrace of absence, misreading the dynamic of emptiness, dismissing it as tautology. In place of the undefinable creative potential (non-place) of Buddhist nothingness (Derridean difference), my Occidental comfort of certainty, proclamation, A or B expertise. My (taxonomized and taxonomizing) consciousness cannot ‘understand’ ma; I slip towards it with architecture as an allegory for language/identity.
Foreigners extending their stay in Tokyo must visit the Ministry of Justice. "In a district populated largely with the imposing structures of government ministries this particular one looks most splendid to a Western eye, for it is apparently built of brick, and its style is eminently European. It seems quite appropriate, then, for the purpose mentioned above, but this impression is deceptive, for the brick face is purely a facade, and the inner structure is of reinforced concrete like most of the other buildings around it...the Western face is quite keeping with the way the Japanese legal system is itself wrapped in Western packaging (Hendry, 1987: ch. 12). It appears, from the outside, to operate like a Western system of courts and code, but in practice its operating principles are very different. In this way, many times, Japan satisfied her Western critics that she was no barbarous nation, but without making too many concessions to Western ways of doing things" (Hendry, 1993, 107).

"Nin of ningen should be understood to imply the mediation of the Other in the human being. Yet, it is misleading to regard the human being merely as a composite of individuals mutually mediating one another because the second character, gen, of ningen shows that the mediation of the Other in the human being is essentially spatial in character. By virtue of its openness as space the human being is a being that is in the world of people and that is always mediated by the Other" (Sakai, 1993, 249). In these spaces, grabbed and grabbing, mediation. Denied A-or-B, my mind sails toward evanescence, Master Po mystifications betraying a discomfort with indeterminacy. I banish indeterminacy as mystical nonsense if I cannot cleave, parse and name (thus define and control) the vectors of power swirling (within) ma.

I re-quote Takemura Shin-Ishi's poetic vision of re-quoting: his "sliding door pictures...[are] portable and transient, temporary, but they are not ornaments or decorations of the interior. It is an interface rather than a surface" (Takemura Shin-Ishi). Ditto loanwords. Ditto this text.159

159 Bognar's look at the illusory depth in Japanese architecture loops my mis/understanding of subjectivity and language. Sliding doors (sliding signifiers) "crease" space to layer and give the "impression of depth and mystery" (Hendry, 1993, 100). Bognar notes that "an outer space always seems to envelope another one inside" (Bognar cited in Hendry, 1993, 100). "The suggestion of an innermost 'core' is purely theoretical, he argues however, 'in a sense an invisible, unattainable zone,' and goes on to add, 'the Japanese have always been able to give an illusion of depth to spatial [social?] composition" (Hendry, 1993, 100-102). Hendry offers a fascinating picture of the spatial wrapping and rituals of a Japanese home. On the porch, messages are left, bills are paid. I never locked my door, and salesmen often opened it without knocking. Visitors wait to be invited in. "To move further into a Japanese home, various small rites must be observed" (ibid, 99). Footwear is removed and ritual phrases are exchanged. I was always disappointed when my lover (who was [who I constructed] 'maverick') shyly said what seemed 'cold formalities'. "A fairly formal or official visit may nowadays take place in a Western room with tables and chairs, and this is as far as the outsider will penetrate" (ibid). "Insiders will come and go through a door, traditionally a sliding door, and glimpses of the interior may be snatched, but the guest will go no further" (ibid). Space and subjectivity, snatching glimpses, sliding doors/ language. In traditional rural homes, a
Hashi—bridge and chopsticks—"a symbolic bridge mediating ma with nutrients and food for the body. Hashi also means fringe, but it doesn’t necessarily have a negative implication. Center or fringe? We don’t have this distinction in Japanese culture" (Takemura, unpaginated).

Kyoto is building a replica of Paris’ Pont des Arts bridge. While President Chirac suggested this, Japan will pay for it. Marc Keane wrests an Occidental analysis: “the idea of building a replica of a foreign structure in the middle of a historic city immediately seems a mistake” (Keane, 1998, 11). I am not surprised that a foreigner is Chairman of the International Society to Save Kyoto (I know the desire for a static Japan of “timeless inns and shops” for I experienced an intense disappointment upon seeing Kyoto for the first time; far from the promised novelty, beauty and mysticism of the Orient I once referred to it as ‘Scarborough with temples’).

zashiki is the most formal room of the house (ibid); Hendry calls this the “ceremonial centre of the house” (ibid. 100) “but this room will still be on the outside, or visitors’ half of the house, which is usually clearly separated from the insiders’ more intimate half” (ibid). The other half or “inner sanctum” is called the “oku of the house, the ‘heart’ or ‘interior,’ although also having the connotations of ‘depth’. The same character is used in the compound for ‘wife’, namely okusan. The character itself portrays rice, the main source of subsistence, entirely enclosed in other logographs” (ibid). Kanai (wife) means inside-the-house and the figures for okusan (wife) literally translate as Mrs. Inside (McGregor, 1996, 234) Mrs Interior (Cherry, 1987, 66). One refers to other people’s husbands as goshujin, “honourable master” (ibid). Sumiko Iwao notes that “contrary to the image of subjugation outsiders seem to associate with Japanese women, the latter often believe it is they who draw the boundaries within which their husbands move, not the other way round” (Iwao cited in McGregor, 1996, 235). Can ‘wifey’ detour Mrs. Inside? The oku needs no ritual to enter, but needs intimacy between host and guest. “The inner part of the house is usually much more comfortable, often literally warmer, and it is only here that it would be possible to feel relaxed and at ease” (ibid). Peek of pajamad man unbelievable clutter beer cans and delight.

Holy Jesus, he’s Japanese?

“The moment the insider steps out from the inside she’s no longer a mere insider. She necessarily looks in from the outside while she’s looking out from the inside. Not quite the same, not quite the other, she stands in that undermined threshold place where she constantly drifts in and out. Undercutting the inside/outside opposition, her intervention is necessarily that of both not-quite an insider and not-quite and outsider. She is, in other words, this inappropriate other or same who moves about with always at least two gestures: that of affirming ‘I am like you’ while persisting in her difference and that of reminding ‘I am different’ while unsettling every definition of otherness arrived at” (Minh-ha, 1988, 76).
Space and time weave different meanings in Japan. “Any place can be made into a temporary shrine if you erect four bamboo poles and tie them together with rope...bamboo has a special connotation for the whole of Japanese culture because it contains a void....the void never has a negative implication in Japanese culture. The void is not mere emptiness. It is potent or potentially powerful in the sense that it is something to be filled....The Japanese concept of space is essentially a medium” (Takemura, unpaginated); verbing noun, Takemura defines ma as an “in between or intermediating space” (ibid). Lacking ma, fixating upon A or B, French or Japanese, I will not parse Kyoto’s borrowings as foreign or Japanese with my Western paradigms.160

Bognar on Japanese cities “if we try to lift the veils wrapping them in endlessly juxtaposed layers, surprisingly...[they] become ‘empty’” (Bognar cited in Hendry, 1993, 109). And unsettling.

*English on/is a veranda:* Architect Kurokawa Kisho, focusing on ma and the notion of a ‘world between’ “discusses the engawa (‘veranda’) of a typical Japanese home as exemplifying the betweenness by which outside and inside, nature and human, are merged-blurring boundaries, distinctions, and oppositions” (Pilgrim, 1995, 66).

*A contextual (ma) world best understood in motion (kejime), intractable, A and B.*

---

160 “The labyrinth and contaminated quality of metropolitan life not only leads to new cultural and musical connections, it also undermines the presumed purity of thought. If critical thought can entertain this encounter, and abandon a distance monologue for dialogue, it curves downwards into the everyday world and a different register. To travel in this zone, without maps and charts, is to experience the dislocation of the intellectual subject and his, the gender is deliberate, mastery of the world. The illusions of identity organized around the privileged voice and stable subjectivity of the ‘external’ observer are swept up and broken down in a movement that no longer permits the obvious institution of self-identity between thought and reality.

To inhabit this world, both intellectually and ethically, individually and socially, is, as Trinh T. Minh-ha puts it, to struggle to continue in its continuation. Here the individual does not dominate, but rather lets go and loses him- or herself in order to explore and find parts of that self. This opens up the possibility of ‘dislodging the inertia of the I’ [Minh-ha]. It leads to the release of diverse voices... an unfolding of the self, and negates the possibility of reducing diversity to the identical. Knowledge takes a holiday, a sabbatical, from the traditional ideas of truth and scholarship as unitary and transcendental entities. Against the virility of a self-assured, strong thought it proposes the weaker, but more extensive, mode of thinking that is contaminated, transgressive, multi-directional and transitive” (Chambers, 1993, 190).
Appendix 4 Invitation

Starting in August, 1997, I ‘surfed’ Internet university sites for Japanese Studies, Cultural Studies, Anthropology and Linguistic sites with links with student/professor addresses. I have sent this invitation out hundreds of times. It was also published on the refereed list H-Japan and INTERCUL (a site for cross-cultural studies). I was surprised and pleased to have it posted by someone on EASIANTH, a site for anthropologists studying Asia. It was exciting to see the names in the books I read suddenly appear on my computer screen.

A tiny percentage of recipients replied (I did not document this; I sent out the invitations in caffeine-fuelled midnight marathons...perhaps 5% of recipients wrote back). Responses followed a distinct pattern. An intense dialogue (seven or eight exchanges) would occur and than disappear. Papers, classes, life’s rhythms quickly made my query a low priority even for people who responded (including the many names generously given to me by Jim Cummins). One scholar set up a discussion group of eight people after my H-Japan posting appeared but I lost contact and suspect it never got off the ground. Nevertheless I am heartened that the ideas in this Master’s thesis have already created (and in large part been created by) a dialogue.
Language is never innocent. Neither is this observation.

By examining the cultural, political and economic impact of the global expansion of English, the study of linguistic imperialism challenges notions of language neutrality. Without denying the asymmetrical relations of power that we create/are created by, I wish to question the assumptions of much of this scholarship. Is it not arrogant to imply that the ‘Other’ is always already and only ‘oppressed’ by ‘our’ tongue? Does this fetishize and essentialize English? As a student of English, how do you feel being told you are being somehow duped? I do not wish to dismiss critical language pedagogy as the ‘White Man’s Burden’. Beyond the trite and convenient categories of colonizer/colonized, how is English actually taken up and used in the world?

I am specifically interested in Japanese loanwords: almost ten percent of the language is made up of (mostly English) foreign loanwords. While not wishing to essentialize an individualist ‘happy Hollywood’ paradigm, are there not areas in which English can express things impossible to say in Japanese? Does, for example, the English loanword for sexual harassment (seku hara) speak to a concept difficult to articulate in a Japanese context?

The first ad for McDonald’s in Japan said: Eat hamburger’s and you will become blonde. Imperialistic? Certainly. But this assumes that one can only be x or y. Can things not be x and y in Japan? Can Japanese be coded as both Japanese and (Japa-)blonde...Sailor Moon? Are western scholars foisting their perception of fixed and deep subjectivities onto the Japanese when they tell them that English is oppressive? I am very much interested in postmodern examinations of Japanese subjectivity, self/other, etc. etc. etc.

I would be grateful to hear from anyone with any interest in this area. I’m especially interested in discussing loanwords with (not only) native Japanese speakers. If any of this tweaks your interest, if you can suggest some loanwords to examine, or have any ideas...please contact me and pass this note around to linguistic departments, cultural studies Laundromats, anthropological drive-ins, etc. etc. etc.

A thousand thanks and arigato

George Fogarasi
OISE/University of Toronto
isaragof@netcom.ca
Appendix 5  Unique Intestines

Beyond frustration and banality, I cannot begin to express the frequency and absurdity of we Japanese or unique Japanese clichés encountered almost daily in Japan. Beside unique food unique language and the ubiquitous unique four seasons, I always enjoyed hearing about the unique intestines of the Japanese. The following are a selection from the exchanges on this topic from H-Japan. I include them to give an example of Nihonjinron. While this risks being reduced to ridicule, it is a poignant example of Japan’s fascination with questions of identity self and other.

H-JAPAN
December 16, 1997

(1) From: Kevin Doak

Mark Hudson mentioned there was a Japanese politician who offered the "we Japanese have longer intestines than you Americans" argument to hold off U.S. exports of beef to Japan. The unfortunate man was none other than former Minister of Finance and Prime Minister Hata Tsutomu who dragged the old argument out while visiting Washington D.C. as chairman of the LDP's agricultural policy research council in December 1987. The details, as well as Kumon Shumpei’s "Nationalism of long intestine" article in the Japan Times (Feb. 15, 1988), are cited in Karel van Wolferen's _The Enigma of Japanese Power_.

Kevin M. Doak

(2) From: Carol Tsang

About intestines, and for what this is worth...

My father-in-law, who is Chinese but has lived in the US for nearly 60 years, has recently been having problems that led his doctor to do some kind of barium x-rays of his intestines. The result? The (American) doctor says his intestines are "unusually long".

Perhaps the suggestion that some of these questions be posed on H-Asia was a good one—and perhaps my father-in-law is just unusual.

Carol Tsang
University of Illinois, Chicago
Subject: H-JAPAN (J/E): Intestines and Ideology (2 responses)
To: Multiple recipients of list H-JAPAN <H-JAPAN@H-NET.MSU.EDU>

H-JAPAN
1997/12/15

2) From: Michael Guest

...Some initial studies, I believe, attempted to irradiate the intestinal tissue for x-ray analyses from various angles to generate images, then trace the length of the relevant organs by blue-tacking cotton thread onto the computer screens. The drawback there was that the length of the average Japanese small intestine is something like 2 or 3 hundred meters, I seem to remember. The process might, of course, be further computerized, but only with difficulty; and the problem still remains of having subjects allow the irradiation of their intestines for this purpose...

Dr Michael Guest
Assoc. Prof., Shizuoka University

Subject: H-JAPAN (E): Intestines and Ideology
To: Multiple recipients of list H-JAPAN <H-JAPAN@H-NET.MSU.EDU>

H-JAPAN
December 25, 1997

From: "J. F. Morris"
Subject: Intestines and Ideology

To come back to the matter of the length of the Japanese intestines, my wife finally got to check out the anatomy books at the hospital where she works, and found (a) that the individual variation between individuals can be something in the order of 4 (i.e. between some 300 metres to some 1200 metres)....

One thing that has come out of asking a number of people about the "intestine" difference, is that there is a very large number of highly educated (Japanese) people who take it as gospel truth....

john morris
Appendix 6: Consent Form

George Fogarasi is writing a Master’s thesis for the department of Curriculum, Teaching and Learning at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education/University of Toronto. The focus of this study is the use of English loanwords in the Japanese language, specifically the political/cultural/linguistic/personal ramifications of how Japanese speakers use/change English words.

All data collected for this project will be kept in absolute confidence. Participants’ anonymity is assured, their identity will be known only by George Fogarasi. He alone has access to this data. Participants’ names will not be used in the thesis. There will be no way to identify any participants in this work. The utmost care is taken to respect the anonymity of all participants.

Participation in this research is entirely voluntary. At any time before the final thesis is published, participants can change or withdraw any or all of their input from this project.

Data collected for this study is kept in a securely locked file until a Master’s degree is received by George Fogarasi. At this time all research data will be shredded and destroyed.

If participants wish, they can receive a final copy of the thesis they have helped create.

I understand the above and agree to be interviewed by George Fogarasi. I wish to participate in this research.

Name:____________________________________

Signature:______________________________

Date:_______________________________
Glossary of Japanese Terms

**Hiragana** Forty-five character syllabary derived from Chinese ideograms (*kanji*). Any Japanese word can be spelled in *hiragana*. Represents sounds, not meaning. Also used in conjunction with *kanji* (e.g. *hiragana* verb endings tagged onto Chinese ideograms).

**Kanji** Chinese ideograms. One meaning, multiple possible soundings.

**Katakana** Forty-five character syllabary used mainly for foreign loanwords.

**Keigo** Honorific/polite language used to show respect. Used more by women. "It is said to be the opposite of *hakada hanashi*, or naked speech, which may be regarded as the most frank language. Indeed, *keigo* is often described as a form of language which is used to hide one's real feelings" (Hendry, 1990, 25). Indirect, complex, nuanced.

**Kejime** The ability to discern and move between different social/linguistic settings, conventions, circumstances. Tobin describes it as "the knowledge needed to fluidly shift back and forth between *omote* and *ura*" (Tobin, *Japanese Preschools*, 24).

**Koan** In some Zen practice, an illogical/impossible riddle one concentrates on in meditation, i.e. *what is the sound of one hand clapping?* Logic cannot provide an "answer": a *koan* is solved by moving beyond intellectual strictures. Insight is sudden and resolves (the appearance of) paradox/opposition.

**Koan (or Trickster) Theory** Confronted with overwhelming experiential, intellectual and academic evidence that things can be *both A and not-A* in Japan, I am forced to question the fundamental basis of my Western beliefs and knowledge with the "illogical" and "impossible". *Always already and only 'Western', I strive to move beyond binaries with what I have chosen to call koan theory*. This draws attention to the contingent, contextual, social composition of knowledge. Strange in Toronto, these perspectives are practical in Japan, and as I found again and again in discussions and research, something the Japanese are completely comfortable with and non-chalant about.

**Ma** A space, "the opening of a space-time interval whereby each object has a relatedness or betweenness with its surrounding context" (Odin, 1995, 12). *Ma* is in the compound for *ningen* 'human being' (also *time, space, society*) implying that "persons (nin, hito) stand within, among, or in relationship to others....*ma* clearly begins to take on a relational meaning—a dynamic sense of standing in, with, among, or between" (Pilgrim, 1995, 56). The challenge of understanding (with) *ma* is central to this work. It has opened exciting perspectives that intuitively and intellectually 'make sense' of contradictions I have struggled with for years. I use *ma* as allegory and metaphor to move from abstractions toward the contingent and contextual. *Ma* not only allows for a rich and un/puzzling approach to Japanese culture, it offers a powerful challenge to the logical strictures of Western scholarship.
Nihonjinron A (dubious, nationalistic) field of Japanese scholarship “promoting cultural uniqueness and monolingual integrity” (Maher and Yashihiro, 1993, 9); “the theory of Japanese uniqueness and superiority” (Morimoto, 1996, 234). A discourse essentializing and mystifying Japanese identity. Nihonjinron “exaggerate the Japanese propensity to debase the identity of the self, and by so doing tend to present the Japanese as a uniquely contextual people (kanjin) different from other humans (ningen)” (Berque, 1992, 102). While often frustrated by this both in Japan and in my research, I cannot but wonder when and how I reproduce it.

Omote Front, “surface”; “formal dimension of self” (Tobin, *Japanese Preschools*, 24), opposite of *ura*, back, a “more spontaneous dimension.” Omote no kao is how someone looks on the surface. “We normally say that 'the person has omote and *ura* meaning the person has inconsistency and cannot be trusted personally. Usually has a negative connotation” (e-mail, Japanese linguist, PhD candidate).

Riariti Reality, term used to describe post-boom economy.

Romaji Japanese term for English alphabet, the fourth syllabary of the Japanese writing system.

Soto Literally “outside”, coupled/contrasted with *uchi* “inside” (*uchi-baki*, shoes for inside, *soto-baki*, shoes for outside). Inside/outside a common metaphor used to differentiate between public/private, social conventions/‘real’ feelings etc. Demarcates in-group/out-group status, determines language used, etc. While (too) convenient a tool for Western observers to iron out contradictions with, the terms are very often used by Japanese.

Uchi Literally “inside”, coupled/contrasted with *soto* “outside” (*soto-baki*, shoes for outside, *uchi-baki*, shoes for inside). Outside/inside a common metaphor used to differentiate between public/private, social conventions/‘real’ feelings etc. Demarcates in-group/out-group status, determines language used, etc. While (too) convenient a tool for outsiders to iron out contradictions with, the terms are often used by Japanese.

Ura Back, the “spontaneous dimension” of self, complimented by *omote* (front or “formal dimension of self” [Tobin, *Japanese Preschools*, 24]). Ura no kao is how someone actually is. “We normally say that 'the person has *omote* and *ura* meaning the person has inconsistency and cannot be trusted personally. Usually has a negative connotation” (e-mail, Japanese linguist, PhD candidate).

Yamato Kotoba Native (‘pure’) Japanese words. 36.7% of Japanese words, Chinese loans constitute 47.5% (Loveday, 1996, 25).