UCIAS Edited Volume 3
The Politics of Knowledge: Area Studies and the Disciplines

Year 2003 *Article* 5

Japanese Studies: The Intangible Act of Translation

Alan Tansman
University of California, Berkeley
tansmana@uclink.berkeley.edu

JAPANESE STUDIES: THE INTANGIBLE ACT OF TRANSLATION

Alan Tansman

If Area Studies can be understood as an enterprise seeking to know, analyze, and interpret foreign cultures through a multi-disciplinary lens, translation may be the act par excellence of area studies. As the translator of Japanese literature Edwin McClellan wrote in 1969, translation is an implicit act of criticism:

> ...to translate a novel in such a way that the mood, the style, and even the intellectual content of the original are transferred into a totally different language is, because of the very intimacy of the process, the purest form of literary interpretation there is. The better the translator, the more alternatives he is aware of when he is trying to translate some particular passage. Presumably it is in this act of choosing from many alternatives that his critical faculty is involved. Of course, his choice is to a great extent determined by intangibles; and it is perhaps because his critical intelligence is applied to the evaluation of intangibles that the need for it in a translator is not readily recognized by those scholars who are engaged in the examination of more tangible problems.[1]

Beneath the Area Studies umbrella, scholars of the most "tangible" and those of the most "intangible" subjects have had little to say to one another. Scholars working specifically in Japanese studies are no exception. An analyst of postwar voting patterns and an interpreter of postwar poetry will find little common ground outside their shared experiences as learners of the Japanese language. Such benign indifference among scholars is, in itself, not a particularly troubling characteristic of Japanese Studies.

Rather, a push-and-pull between what McClellan calls "tangibles" and "intangibles" has been both a fracturing and an energizing force. It has pitted scholars who claim a disinterested attitude toward their material against scholars who reject such a stance as naive and disingenuous. This dynamic has also been played out in tensions between loyalty to a traditional academic discipline and loyalty to a geographically and linguistically defined "area" of study. It has led to polemics over the relative importance of theoretical models drawn from outside the "area" and archival work drawn from within it. Such tensions, while seeming to constitute a threat to the continued viability of Japanese Studies, are arguably the greatest source of its vitality and potential.

It is in the field of literary study that these tensions may be most threatening and most productive. I will make the polemical claim in this essay that the vitality and potential of Japanese Studies, and by implication of Area Studies, might be seen most pointedly in the case of the literary scholar, who presents an exemplary picture of the difficulties, challenges, and excitements of Japan Area Studies work. Though both the literary scholar and the social scientist engage in acts of translation[2], at the very heart of the literary scholar's work--and of Japanese Studies--is the careful reading of the Japanese

language itself. By “reading,” I mean more than making one’s way through the language; I mean a disciplinary skill that involves a close consideration of the texture, contexts, and ramifications of language.) The "intangible" work of the translator of that language will come to represent the quintessence of the work of the Japan Studies scholar.

Japanese Studies is the offspring of two contradictory impulses. On the one hand, it has been explicitly motivated by the desire for engagement with the world; on the other, it has yearned for scholarly seclusion. Masao Miyoshi, a scholar of Victorian literature turned scholar of modern Japanese literature, has narrated the story of American Japanology with sensitivity toward its political valences:

> The lineage of the Japanologists in America began with the religious and industrial missionaries who went to the Far East to civilize and democratize the barbarians. Then the imperial evangelists of civilization took over the role of teachers and advisors on their return home around the turn of the century. Their godsons, who had been dormant for a while, were mobilized into a cadre of interpreters and administrators during the Second World War and the postwar years. A noticeable advance in Japanology was made by this generation of Occupation-trained specialists, and their impact on scholarship remains both powerful and definitive. Because of the historical circumstances of mission and conquest, this genealogy has no shortage of those uncritical (or even unaware) of their own ethnocentric and hegemonic impulses.[3]

Miyoshi highlights the transformative impulse (what he might more sharply call the missionary impulse) of Japanese studies. Indeed, if Japanese Studies begins with Jesuits learning about Japan in order to transform Japanese, it has more recently been practiced by Americans attempting to transform America through what they have learned about Japan.

Japanese studies came relatively late to the United States, with pre-World War II scholars like Asakawa Kan'ichi at Yale, Hugh Borton and Ryûichi Tsunoda at Columbia, and Edwin Reischauer at Harvard. By the 1930's, substantial Japanese language collections had been established in the Library of Congress, Columbia, Harvard, and Berkeley; by 1935 twenty-five schools offered classes in Japanese studies, though only eight offered courses in language study. But it was the second generation of scholars that most reasonably might be called the founding generation of American Japanese Studies. These scholars, including Marius Jansen, Donald Keene, Edward Seidensticker, and Howard Hibbett, were trained in the language to deal with the "enemy," and many were, as Miyoshi points out, missionary children.

Thus, Japanese studies in the United States is largely a postwar phenomenon. Before the war, the field was dominated by part-time practitioners and amateurs offering only the bare beginnings of training. By 1950 it was being taught at Columbia, Berkeley, Michigan, Washington, Yale, and Harvard. In 1970, there were 597 academic specialists working on Japan; this had tripled by 1984, and almost tripled again by 1989.[4]

Although born of missionary impulses and fueled by confrontation with an enemy in war, the reaction of the immediate successors of the postwar founding generation was, according to one argument, a turning away from those impulses. Patricia Steinhoff, author of the massive 1993 Japan Foundation study of Japanese studies, argues that the next generation of Japanese studies scholars, while still somewhat linked to the context of war and the American occupation of Japan, were barely affected by politics and power relations. Indeed, she argues that their work grew and thrived precisely because of its purported irrelevancy: "I think the majority of my generation who entered Japanese Studies in the 1960s and early 1970s were, like me, attracted by the intriguing puzzles of Japan's difference and the sheer intellectual challenge of cracking the *kanji* code, rather than by the promise of financial support...." Such scholars, argues Steinhoff, were attracted to Japanese studies because of "...the prospect of a quiet academic life pursuing our endless fascination with Japan." Theirs was a wholly private endeavor: "In effect, the second generation of postwar Japan specialists entered the field for private and personal intellectual reasons, fully aware of the obscurity of the field."[5]

It would be hard to argue that the work of this generation of scholars was not affected by politics. What Steinhoff seems to be getting at is that at the very least they felt themselves to be apolitical. For Steinhoff, the nature of postwar Japanese studies stems from its minuscule size and general irrelevance not only to politics but to American academic life, along with the decision of the first postwar generation to integrate Japan specialists into academic disciplines rather than place them solely in language and culture programs. (Steinhoff's analysis implies that this decisive factor may have prevented the isolation of Japanese Studies.) In part, the decision reflected budgetary concerns, but had the salutary effect of creating Japan specialists trained in broad theoretical and methodological principles, and compelled to apply those principles to Japan: "In general, those disciplines whose internal intellectual organization and dominant theoretical orientations included some geographic or cultural division were more hospitable to the incursion of area specialists..."[6]

Despite their distribution across departments, scholars working on Japan developed a second tier of affiliation with other Japan specialists (which may have both attenuated and enriched the effect of their disciplinary allegiances), creating what might be termed an area-studies affiliation. Had these early specialists been clustered in Japanese language and culture departments, their intellectual orientations would probably have been different; had they been more densely collected in distinct, insular disciplines, their concerns would have been more exclusively cohesive with those of each discipline.[7] But as things turned out, with a foot in each camp, they developed their work along interdisciplinary lines and so, one might add, created the beginnings of what might be thought of as a cultural-studies approach, without cultural studies' political imperatives.[8] This development depended on Japan specialists not being completely isolated from one another, or from their non-Japanologist disciplinary peers. No better testimony could be offered against the establishment of false dichotomies between disciplinary and area studies work, or what has been more tendentiously discussed as the split between "theory" and "archive". In fact, the very image of a scholar—a scholar of Japanese literature, for sure, but also of other fields as well--working *either* with theory *or* the archive is a

figment of a tendentious imagination. I hardly know a scholar who does not read both and try to incorporate each into her work. This is, I would add, a happy development.

The experience of one of the fathers of Japanese Studies is instructive for understanding the early configuration of intellectual affiliations and its nascent tensions. Robert Smith, perhaps the dean of Japan anthropologists, was the youngest member of the postwar founding generation of Japanese Studies. As a graduate student in the late 1940's and early 1950's at Cornell University, he cut his teeth on the community-study approach to anthropology and the culture-and-personality studies commissioned by the Defense Department. As Cornell had no Japanese Studies Program at the time, he worked in applied anthropology, in the Cornell University Studies in Culture and Applied Science. The work of Ruth Benedict, commissioned by the Defense Department, had created the methodological foundations for anthropological work on Japan. Benedict worked through what was called "the study of culture at a distance," an idea instituted in the early 1940s when the Office of Wartime Information established centers for national culture studies. She ran the Institute for Intercultural Studies at Columbia University with a staff including Margaret Mead and Catherine Bateson (it was dissolved in 1947). Such centers studied "enemy" countries inaccessible to field work. To Smith, Benedict's The Chrysanthemum and the Sword was "the last great prewar work on Japan by an American, and although it was addressed to a general audience rather than to specialist scholars, there is a sense in which all of us have been writing footnotes to it ever since it appeared in 1946....for whatever one's orientation toward it, her book undeniably set the terms of the discourse on Japan for more than a generation."[9] Though I will later argue for the centrality of language skills in Japanese studies, it should be noted here that this book, important to Japanese and American scholars alike, did not rely on expertise in Japanese.

Smith's generation of the progenitors of Japanese Studies was later taken to task for claiming to do "disinterested" scholarship and for disavowing the influence of their own emergence as scholars in a politicized context, the very context that produced such "engaged" scholarship as Benedict's. Roger Bowen has argued that the work of the postwar generation of scholars trained in military language schools was not "neutral." Larger social concerns were not irrelevant to them: "Arguably, this new breed of Japanologists studied aspects of Japanese society, history, and politics that did not conflict either with their politically conservative beliefs, nurtured by the emerging Cold War, or with the Occupation's attempt at politically engineering a democratic Japan remolded in America's image of itself."[10] These scholars suspended criticism of Japan and saw it as "a homogeneous, nonsectarian, and economically unified Japan...at peace with itself". Such a view allowed this generation of scholars to be proud of their accomplishments: "Japan's former occupiers-turned-Japanologists could look with pride and satisfaction on the salutary effects of American-sponsored land reform, educational reform, and the like...." Such scholars were perhaps blinded to a more complex Japanese past: "In this context, thoughts about a Japan with a possible revolutionary past, not to mention an oppressive and even violent present, were seemingly beyond serious consideration by conservative Japanologists during much of the postwar era."[11]

The self-proclaimed objective scholarship discussed by Bowen had, he argues, its own politics, helping to mold an image of Japan that had direct or indirect repurcussions

on American policy. The Japan specialist's development of a picture of Japan as a younger brother to be nurtured in the American image was encouraged by, and helped shape, a series of six conferences between 1965 and 1969 on the "modernization" of Japan, funded by the Ford Foundation and conceived and developed by the Committee on Modern Japan. Each conference culminated in a book; the resulting series now stands as a landmark in postwar social science and international studies and was to determine the direction of Japanese studies for years to come.[12] Indeed, in 1998 Helen Hardacre argued that "no over-arching, unifying perspective" had yet replaced the modernization framework as a means of conceptualizing the study of Japan.[13]

Later projects funded by the Social Science Research Council through the Ford Foundation, however, examined Japan's more troubled past and thus went far to break the mold the earlier volumes had helped to cast. The SSRC funded conferences on urbanization, business history, health and medicine, infant psychology, and family and life-course, resulting in such volumes as Japan in Crisis, Conflict in Modern Japanese History, Postmodernism and Japan, and Uncommon Democracies, all essential for bringing into Japanese studies questions of imperialism, colonialism, and post-colonialism.

Never fully replaced, the canon of Japanology created by the modernization project has been harshly criticized, by, among others, H.D. Harootunian. Like Bowen, Harootunian has cautioned against naively accepting the assumption that the first generation of postwar scholars consisted of "disinterested" scholars, and has reminded us of their presumptions and illusions of value neutrality. The dismissal of conflict models of Japanese history for the "modernization" theories, which depicted a Japan successfully transforming itself according to United States standards and theories of development, can, according to Harootunian, be held responsible for the diminishing of the reputation of Canadian marxist scholar E.H. Norman. Harootunian sees the first generation of postwar scholars as implicated in "..the relationship between American missionary experience, now inscribed in Japanese studies in the United States, and the promotion of a self-righteous prescriptive disguised as a "description" of Japan's "modernization" that resembles a Calvinist mind-set that earlier presumed to "bring enlightenment to a backward country."[14] Harootunian implies here, not that these scholars were untheoretical, but that they hid their theoretical concerns in a language of empirical description. In 1970, Japanese anthropologist Sofue Takao concurred with such critiques of modernization theorists when he argued that American social scientists had a tendency to see deviations from the American standard as a deviation from the norm.[15]

The passion evident in Robert Smith's response to attacks like Harootunian's is a measure of the depth of fissures in the field, fissures that continue to haunt it. To Smith, Harootunian's charges are a "...remarkably uninsightful, dismissive characterization of both the individuals and their work...." They are "charges that cannot go unanswered because they combine bad history with patricidal impulses." To the charge that roots in military training schools and missionary impulses must be taken into account when understanding his generation, Smith responds: "To anyone who has the faintest notion of how people were recruited into the military language programs during the war--and who these "former American military officers" are in real life--the characterization of them and

their values is as hilariously wrong as it is irritatingly smug...the denunciation of former teachers as "thugs" and "sons of missionaries" has no proper place in academic discourse, but I suspect both commentators are simply outriders for a larger force of revisionists about to appear on the scene."[16]

Too often, the fissure here has been cast as that between "theory" and "description," between those who work empirically with the archive and those who reach beyond it analytically. The Japanese historian Stephen Vlastos articulates this schism in stark terms. He argues that there has been an isolation of Japanese Studies from other areas of scholarly pursuit, and that this isolation has been the direct result of a distance from politics and a resistance to theory: "Compared with colleagues in more crowded and politically contentious fields, Japan specialists have enjoyed considerable latitude professionally and intellectually....The irrelevance of Japan Studies to American academia, I believe, is partly self-imposed: the consequence of indifference if not hostility toward theory."[17]

Vlastos may be exaggerating this dichotomy. The tension might be better understood as that between proclaimed and implicit theory, between theory that announces itself and theory that remains unstated. The "irrelevance" associated with stances characterized by implicit theory has been linked by Masao Miyoshi to the problem of ethnic representation, particularly to the absence of Japanese-American scholars in the field: "Such an absence is cognate with the scarcity of oppositional readings of Japanese literature that might have provided a dialectic context for criticism. Area specialists in the Japan field are likely to be inbred and ghettoized, conversing only on rare occasions with scholars in other areas and disciplines."[18]

I would not suggest that the dichotomy described by Vlastos, which mirrors the tensions between disciplinary and area studies affiliations, is wholly absent. In particular, it indicates a sharp point of tension in the study of Japanese literature. The critique against traditional archival scholarship has been strongly presented in political terms by Richard Okada, a scholar of classical Japanese literature:

As we know, the American academic study of Japanese literature, especially pre-modern literature, constituted no self-aware or definable "discipline," but--behind a mask of rigorous linguistic training, which was in most cases no more than an alibi for translation--it did rely on the de-politicized, positivistic inside-outside textual dichotomies of the New Criticism and the old historicism--otherwise known as translation and introduction and/or commentary. Being housed safely within "area studies," literature professors were sheltered from their colleagues in English or other literature departments and left pretty much to their own devices.[19]

There may be less to this critique than Okada's charged tone allows. As Andrew Gordon has trenchantly shown, the fundamental position of area-based research on Japan has always linked theory and archive, or discipline and area. That natural meshing of theory and archive, first conceived by historian John W. Hall in 1966, was echoed in SSRC language in 1996. While the former was a call to "reunite area studies" with "methodological and theoretical advances in the social sciences," the latter urged scholars

to "integrate discipline-based scholarship" with the "often unique perspectives provided by local--or area-based--knowledge."[20]

Japanese Studies has been criticized for merely providing case studies against which to test theories, rather than producing theoretical breakthroughs. As a consequence, workers in this field have been seen as the "fetchers" of data, to use Andrew Gordon's term. Gordon convincingly argues that instead of rebutting this criticism one should question the premise that "something called 'scientific knowledge,'" or theory, or social sciences, or the disciplines, stands outside and above area knowledge."[21] The difficulty of answering the criticism of insufficient theory "lies in the treachery of the question, the way it dichotomizes scientific knowledge and area study to the disadvantage of area. One response must be to argue vigorously against the terms of the question, asserting that the processes of theorizing and studying areas are integrated ones..."[22] Gordon would argue that "knowledge in the social sciences and humanities is in some fundamental ways not about universal political or social behavior. It is about the particular."[23] In the best work, the pursuits of fetching and analyzing are indivisible. Moreover, he argues, even the most empirical of Japanese studies should be taken seriously because they have produced pictures worth having, even by those outside the field. As examples, Gordon cites Thomas C. Smith's work on the agrarian origins of modern Japan, Tak Fujitani's Foucauldian study on the symbolic production of monarchy, and Anne Allison's studies of Japanese comics and sexuality. The question of whether Japanese studies has produced a model from the ground up is an unreasonable one to Gordon. Studies of Japan have, however, produced alternate theoretical models, and here Gordon cites Chalmers Johnson's work on the late developmental state, and Doi Takeo's study of Japanese relationship patterns, The Structure of Dependence.

Like Gordon, Martin Colcutt sees the tension between Japanological and disciplinary pulls as pragmatically productive, and raises the vital question of the nature of student training:

> That tension is going to continue. But for those of us working in the field and for our graduate students, a good grounding and disciplinary relationship is vital. It is out of the disciplinary context that many of the theoretical and methodological questions will come which we can use to inform our own research and put to Japanese colleagues for them to consider.[24]

This happy conclusion, however, is not shared by all, as Okada's critique cited above indicates. Though he certainly underestimates the complexity of literary translation and the intellectual sophistication of its practitioners, in whose hands it could be an act of criticism based on (perhaps unstated) theoretical assumptions, Okada rightly points to the cloister in which an earlier generation of scholars of Japanese literature worked, and in which many scholars today feel frustrated. Most Japanologists surveyed in 1993 by the Japan Foundation considered Japanese studies weaker as an intellectual endeavor than the disciplines. This sense was strongest among social scientists, two thirds of whom thought so.[25] Perhaps one indication of the social sciences' relatively low opinion of Japanese Studies as an area of endeavor distinct from a disciplinary affiliation can be inferred from the responses of Japanologists to the question of the disposition of replacements of

Japanologist faculty lines. The great majority of Japanologists in language and literature departments--73%--said they would replace a Japan specialist with the same; this dropped to 53% for history and 33% for the social sciences. Conversely, the numbers go up in a similar proportion for those who said they would not replace a Japan specialist with the same.[26] While this does not necessarily imply a higher regard for Japanese studies by humanists working with Japan, it indicates at the very least that they find specialists in Japan more indispensable to their fields.

Of course, the relative regard given Japan specialists can also be connected to the nature of materials in each discipline. Japanologists perceive the importance of language skills differently depending on their objects of study. A scholar of literature has no choice but to work with original language materials; a scholar of politics might rely less so on them. In the humanities, 78% use Japanese as the primary language of research; in the social sciences, 58%.[27] Yet it may also be possible to conclude that the attitude toward one's object of study, and the very formation of that object of study, are shaped by the levels of competence in Japanese. A political scientist may be able to "get away" with fewer language skills than a literary scholar, and, having "gotten away," can construct a field where those skills are less called for. He or she will thus naturally turn more toward his disciplinary colleagues, with whom he shares a language of theory. In practical terms, political scientists may have been quick to develop a common language across geographic areas than have literary scholars across language groups. In part, this may be attributed to the relative amount of time needed to master theory as opposed to the archive. A scholar of Japanese literature, who can simply not "get away" with not working in the language, has less time to spend on theory, and may tend to become more closely connected to other scholars of Japanese literature and to other scholars of Japan than to disciplinary colleagues in, say, Euro-American literature. This tendency toward linguistic isolation is excacerbated by a particular configuration of institutional affiliation. Virtually all Japanologists, except literary scholars, are formally housed with discipline-based departments, or at least are affiliated with them. Scholars of Japanese literature are rarely affiliated with, let alone placed within, comparative literature or literature programs. This is a situation not unlike that of Greek and Latin, but the level of anxiety about ghettoization seems a relatively recent thing.

Social scientists, conversely, seem naturally drawn toward disciplinary affiliations, where less developed language skills can be compensated by use of English-language materials.[28] By the same token, lack of sufficient language skills may induce scholars to move from area into discipline. Carried to an extreme, this can result in the dismissal of the importance of language skills and the belittlement of scholarship that speaks in less theoretically weighted language--what amounts to a social scientific dismissal of area expertise. The ironic but happy result of this, however, may be the opening of area studies further into the disciplines.[29]

****

Situated at the farthest reach from non-language based scholarship on Japan is the study of literature. Hermetically sealed within Area Studies, linguistically and

institutionally separated from the disciplines, the study of Japanese literature provides an example of Area Studies work par excellence.

Perhaps it is not too prosaic to suggest that the tension between theory and archive in Japanese Studies can be linked to the practical exigencies of mastering the archive. Here, study of literature may present the most extreme case, for it is arguably the subject requiring the most reading of original-language materials. For the scholar of Japanese literature, even the best intentions and the most conscientious research habits are undermined by the sheer volume of Japanese-language material needed to be mastered in the thorough investigation of a Japanese literary topic, particularly if it is to be treated in an area-studies fashion, from a cross-disciplinary and multi-geographical standpoint. To write on Natsume Sôseki (1869-1914), the emblematic Japanese novelist of the crisis of modernity, and, perhaps, the most studied modern Japanese writer, one would, in good conscience, read all, or certainly most of his own writing, totaling over thirty closely-packed volumes. In addition, one would need to familiarize oneself with the bulk of secondary literature about him, in English and Japanese, numbering in the hundreds of books and articles, as well as the theoretical and contextual material, in both English and Japanese, needed to make an argument of interest to peers in the American academy.

Some of these tasks seem reasonable. Reading everything that has been written on Sôseki in English, for example, would be simple; even reading enough theoretical and contextual material to formulate an approach to the material and articulate it with some degree of naturalness would be no great chore, although it would require reading as well in the Chinese literary and philosophical classics (in which Sôseki was raised) and gaining some understanding of Confucianism and Buddhism, the history of English literature, and the work of the Pre-Raphaelites (important influences on Sôseki). But reading in Japanese literature itself during Sôseki's time and before, as it developed from pre-modern prose to modern, would occupy many years, and reading everything by Sôseki in the time allotted a dissertation would be impossible (certainly a student of Dickens would be expected to read most of what he wrote); the thirty-odd volumes of his works would occupy one for years. Finally, the mere thought of reading everything about Sôseki written in Japanese would certainly lead one to a more lucrative and practical profession. Writing about Sôseki would require discussing passages of his writing, and each time one did so would be no mere matter of copying from book to computer and analyzing. One must translate first, a seemingly brief detour that can occupy one for hours or days.

Now, nobody who has written about Sôseki has done all this--nor should anyone be expected to. All scholarship requires carving out a manageable corpus from a morass of material. Japanese literary scholarship is no different. The difficulty here is not merely due to the massive amount of information available on virtually any scholarly topic; nor simply to the practical difficulties of working with Japanese materials. It is certainly not due to problems of access to the archive. Indeed, one (mixed) blessing of the field is the enormously easy access to a treasure of well-kept and carefully catalogued and stored materials, to which United States scholars have easy access. All Japanologists stand on the shoulders of an extraordinary tradition of scholarship written in Japanese in all

disciplines and virtually all topics. If anything, scholars in the United States have a burden of influence so great it threatens hopes for originality.

Yet, with all these treasures open to us, we face the hard truth (and the almost dirty-little-secret) that few students enter a Ph. D. program in Japanese literature having read even a single novel in Japanese. While a third-year college class in Spanish might require the reading of a novel or a few short stories per week, a comparable class in Japanese, taught by the best possible teacher in the best possible program to the best possible student, would allow perhaps that much per term. Entering graduate school, an American student of Japanese literature has read less in her field in the original language than a student of English has read in high school. Such a situation leads to another dirty-little-secret of Japanese literature graduate training, pointedly remarked upon by Edwin McClellan a number of years ago, but still relevant today, despite increased numbers of students college with high-school Japanese or bilingual backgrounds. It is still common for graduate students to rely on translations for access to literature that is not of immediate concern to them. One is consistently being surprised by how little some graduate students in Japanese have actually read in the original language. Presumably, when these become teachers, they must still depend nearly as much on translations for their own general knowledge of the field.[30]

Of course no individual is to blame for this situation. The United States Foreign Language Institute places Japanese in the group (including Arabic, Chinese, and Korean) of the most difficult languages for English speakers to learn, requiring 1,320 hours of instruction in an intensive program in order to bring students to the same level of proficiency reached after only 480 hours of instruction in a language in category 1, which includes French and Spanish. According to the doyen of Japanese-language studies, Eleanor Harz Jorden, Japanese language-learning difficulty even transcends the others in its category if both the spoken and written languages are included.[31]

Masao Miyoshi, among many others, cautions against the mystification of this difficulty, through which, he argues, "a sort of proprietorship is maintained by some Japanologists, who impress outsiders with the difficulty of the Japanese language and the exceptionality of Japanese culture."[32] But the experience of those who have both learned the language as non-natives and taught and translated it seems more instructive. In the words of Van Gessel, "My own experience of studying the language, combined with a seventeen-year career spent trying to teach it in the classroom, leaves me persuaded that Japanese has earned its reputation for difficulty."[33] To become able to read a fairly easy Japanese novel with naturalness, that is, not as a language chore, takes perhaps eight to ten years. After the standard six years of graduate training, the typical student of modern Japanese literature has read (in the most rigorously archive-based programs), say, 75 novels in Japanese, and a small amount of criticism--less than an educated American has read before entering college.[34]

Such a language-learning scenario might leave even the most serious scholar in despair, especially when confronted with the enormously erudite works preceding her on almost any writer. To counter this despair, scholars have developed strategies of containment: translation and commentary studies, an enterprise undertaken by the first

generation of literature scholars through the 1960s, but now a way of ensuring, at many institutions, termination in the tenure year; the single-author study, which at least limits the purview, though this has been increasingly denigrated for narrowness of scope; and finally, the increasingly prestigious and common theoretical approaches to a topic, which can compensate for thin archival reading with theoretical acumen; or the cultural-studies approach, which can reduce the amount of original-language material used. The potential problems inherent in the cultural studies approach are arguably the most daunting. A dissertation on the literature written under the American Occupation would require the reading and absorbing, in Japanese, of hundreds of novels, short stories, and essays, just to get the foundation built; and then analysis of law, politics, and material culture. A cultural studies dissertation on the literature of Japanese colonization would require mastery of both literature and politics, as well as the tools of more than one methodology.

It is certainly laudable that scholars have increasingly been attempting to leave what has been called the ghettoized world of Japanese literary studies, and that their interests have led them to intellectual affiliations not easily made within Japanese Studies (affiliations already present in an earlier generation, as Steinhoff describes). A scholar interested in the resonance between Japanese fascism and aesthetics, for example, might have more to learn from Italian, French, and German scholars and sources than from scholars of classical Japanese poetry, economics, or political science. Writing about Japanese modernism might lead one just as naturally to European sources as to Japanese or Asian--and much the same could be said for work on sexuality, colonialism and post-colonialism, and popular culture, to name a few topics of recent interest to Japan humanities scholars.

Work on Japan that reaches beyond the confines of Japan, and literary work that goes beyond literature, are potentially important and exciting; such work shows off the benefits of a flexible Area Studies orientation. Yet it should be kept in mind that it risks a thinning of the archive for a thickening of theory. Art historian John Rosenfield describes this danger well, reminding us that for scholars of Japan the pull between archive and theory is linked with that between Japan and the West:

> ... if we lose ourselves in theoretical concerns and ignore the positivist, empirical basis of Japanese studies, we run the risk of repeating one of the most flagrant crimes of Orientalism: applying Western standards and principles of analysis without a deep understanding of the Eastern subject. Moreover, if we lose ourselves in the dense thickets of theory, we run the danger of "substituting poetics for poetry," of ignoring the expressive properties of works of art--the vital expression, the felt excitement--that should serve as the prime focus of our efforts. When we lose sight of that, we surrender the most powerful resource of our profession.[35]

To put this differently, one has only so many hours in the day, and so many years to ensure job security. To do work such as I have described above requires great pruning. For better or worse, much of this pruning has been of the archive, if for no other reason than the lateness of mastery of the language, and the slowness of reading that continues to accompany most non-Japanese scholars of Japan throughout their careers. These

scholars' desires to be on a par with and able to speak to colleagues working in French, Spanish, German, and comparative literatures, and also with those in anthropology and history, make the drudgery of the archive an unappealing venture. The disciplinary or theoretical emphasis also poses the threat of discouraging students from the laborious philological work needed to study subjects such as, for example, Japanese classical literature and Buddhism.

The dilemma of the Japan scholar (especially of literature) wishing to do rigorously theoretical and concretely grounded work directly reflects the tension between area studies and discipline. The most sophisticated theoretical work, even that which does grapple seriously with a wealth of Japanese material, has often been sharply criticized for language errors upon which conceptual arguments are built; work that completely eschews theory has been criticized for being hermetic, not serious, and retrograde.

No easy solution can be offered to this problem. It might be suggested, however, that one cannot work with theory unless one has mastered the archive. Or, at the very least, that the balance of power between the two need be tilted toward the archival material; one must fetch before analyzing. The scholar of literature who does not base her work on the archive risks turning herself into a mere amateur historian, anthropologist, philosopher, or literary theorist. One cannot but ponder the advisability of guiding dissertations that leave young scholars swimming in a sea of theoretical formulations without the ballast of the archive--though no doubt buoyed up. Yet what point would there be in leaving that young scholar cemented in the concrete archival foundation with no means of going beyond it? One might suggest, at the very least, that while theory can be learned throughout one's career, the foundation of the archive is built early on, or, perhaps, not at all. Of course, an early dismissal of theory can leave a student unable to conceptualize her materials so as to communicate with scholars outside her field.

Scholarly rigor may be threatened by the contrary pulls of theory and archive, and the multiplicity of intellectual affiliations of young scholars reveals a question that strikes at the very heart of Japan Area Studies configurations. Is modern Japanese literature (or history, economics, political science) more productively understood alongside other modern literatures, or against other disciplines studying Japan and China? Why is Japan studied as part of the geographical unit of Asia? For convenience? University libraries have provided different answers (inadvertently, perhaps). At Yale, Japanese literature is shelved with its literary cohorts across the world; at Harvard and Columbia, with East Asian Studies.

East Asian programs function as administrative units, but colleagues in them are as likely to discuss office space and enrollments as they are ideas. Scholars of East Asian literatures are often linked through the mission of teaching the most difficult languages to Americans. But the association fostered by language teaching has not been all to the good. Seen by their colleagues as performing a service to the field, providing tools for later "intellectual" work, they are cordoned off from the disciplines. Often, literary scholars are in the anomalous situation of being hired to teach, in addition to their specialty, language, a professional expertise in which most have not been trained and which they are not inclined to use. Indeed, this is a misuse of their skills, but more

importantly, such hiring practices diminish the seriousness of language teaching as an art and profession, and have baleful effects on the work conditions--job security, teaching loads, and salaries--of teachers exclusively trained in language pedagogy.

Furthermore, as most language teachers are women, it seems plausible to suggest here a connection between the feminization of this work and its inadequate conditions. The closer a literary scholar's connection to the work of language, the lower her status can fall. In no other discipline is a scholar expected to be teaching in what is not her discipline. (The Asianist historian asked to teach world history will still be working in her discipline.) Moreover, language teaching is time-consuming and labor intensive. One might thus speculate that it reduces the literary scholar's research output and stature, and, ultimately, the progress of the field itself.

****

The burden of language mastery in the study of Japanese literature and the diminishing status of all language-related work may be responsible for the separation of Japanese literature from other areas of Japanese studies and for the larger difficulty of linking the humanities and the social sciences more closely. Nevertheless, Richard Lambert applauds the potential in the marriage of the humanities and the social sciences, whose tie "presents an unusual opportunity for intellectual cross-fertilization through dialogue with scholars in disciplines with which they normally have little contact." Yet, according to Lambert, the enduring relative prestige of hard numbers still stymies this potentially fruitful combination. Most social sciences in area studies are of the "soft" kind, their research related to humanities-oriented topics. "The pervasive humanities aspect of much of area studies," Lambert continues,

> is immensely enriching. However, for many social scientists not engaged in area studies, particularly those at the "hard" end of the spectrum, the close ties of area studies with the humanities reinforces their perception that area studies is not a scientific activity. From the perspective of the "hard" social scientist, the humanities are nondisciplinary. The fact that humanistic disciplines have their own distinctive conceptual and methodological framework does not alter their judgment since these disciplines do not follow the social science paradigm. To the extent that social science research in area studies leans toward the humanities, it is likewise considered nondisciplinary.[36]

Despite the centrality of the humanities, and of language study, to Japan Area Studies, then, social sciences continue to define the terms of debate.[37] Even arguments for Area Studies that endorse the centrality of language learning and cultural mastery and reject the "scientific" claims of rational choice theory have seemed to capitulate to the terms of the opposition. "Soft" humanists yield to the terms of "hard" social scientists. As Jacob Heilbrun writes:

> What is ironic is that those new internationalists who oppose the political

> scientists' economism often share their disregard for detailed, humanistic knowledge. In a sense, by latching onto globalism, area studies has unwittingly surrendered new territory to the rational choice theorists. For, despite the paeans to diversity and difference among the new area studies savants, they, too, assume that all cultures can be comprehended with a few globally valid formula...[38]

Against the prestige of hard numbers it is difficult to argue the value of intangibles. Yet the humanities must explain without embarrassment that much of its endeavor involves the intuitive reading of aesthetic materials--that it relies on a personal sensibility born of deep and hard reading of aesthetic material. This way of scholarship has tended to result in a diminishing of the humanities in the area studies enterprise. It might be argued, however, that confronting the problems facing the humanities, particularly the study of literature, is necessary for the continued viability of Japanese studies. The challenges facing scholars of Japanese literature can be seen as a concentrated and extreme version of those facing all Japanologists.

In so far as issues of globalization are intrinsically no more important than issues of identity, and in so far as the humanities identifies language as a pointer of identity, the study of language and the humanities should be as central to the intellectual enterprise of Area Studies as are the social sciences. The persistent focus on a perceived contradiction between the humanities and social sciences (some times more real than others) impedes the realization of one of Area Studies' defining ideals: to be an interdisciplinary and cross-cultural field that allows a disciplinary freedom not easily found within traditional discipline-based departments, and a geographic freedom not found in traditional single-area based departments. Some feel that the contradiction has been resolved, but in a far-from-equitable way; the political scientist Chalmers Johnson has bemoaned that "what is new today is that the competition between theory and area studies has come to an end--with the virtual defeat of the latter," a view perhaps colored by a social science prism.[39] From another angle, Area Studies seems far from dead. Area Studies--as institutional affiliation or scholarly attitude--can smooth the way for a literary scholar of Japan interested in art, architecture, and history, in Japan, and perhaps in China and Korea. For enrichment in other areas, however, she will still need walk down the hall to speak to her colleagues in German and French.

For scholars of Japanese literature, the social science perspective has not been productive. They are institutionally segregated from social scientists and historians, the former often housed in language and literature programs, the latter in institutes or centers. In Japanese Studies, scholars and students of literature seem more inclined to pay attention to their Asian Studies social science colleagues than vice versa; and are themselves often viewed as belle-lettrists or service teachers of language skills, no doubt in part because they are generally housed with (or double as) language teachers. Seeing colleagues in Japanese literature as no more than language teachers whose work could not possibly be relevant to that of other scholars diminishes scholarly possibilites for cross-fertilization. This is especially striking--and dispiriting, one should add--considering that texts usually associated with the humanities, and particularly literature, have become the

center of the most fruitful converging of disciplines in the study of an "area," that is, of cultural studies.

If the humanities, and literature in particular, have long been the uneasy handmaidens of the social sciences within Area Studies, the advent of cultural studies has provided an interesting response to geopolitical complexity and variety outside Area Studies. Blurring disciplinary boundaries, cultural studies is commonsensically described by Michael Holquist as "a way of grouping the increasing number of works that bring together insights formerly apportioned among the social and human sciences."[40] Within the rubric of cultural studies, the books that had always been important to literary scholars become equally important to art historians, anthropologists, and historians. They are books with a literary core, and the language of these non-literary scholars is often peppered with the language of literary scholarship. Benedict Anderson's Imagined Communities, for example, argues that nations are held together by the power of narratives, that a community must create a narrative about itself that is not an actual past but a more compelling teleological tale, in Holquist's words.[41] The philology of Erich Auerbach and Walter Benjamin have provided literary models for questioning assumptions about time and space in communities. In both, "literary texts are the most intense and comprehensive expressions of the cosmologies of the cultures in which they are enshrined.[42] In the work of Hayden White and Donna Haraway, history and anthropology are seen as shaped by tropes and narratives. Literature-centered scholars can see this as asserting the literariness of nonliterary phenomena, and extending the relevance of literature as "master in a house of cultural discourse." Cultural critics can see this as decentering the centrality of literature.

Literary texts have thus become indispensable to the study of society, and the lynch-pins for interdisciplinary work that touches on "real" life: as in the work, for example, on trauma and the Holocaust by historians, psychiatrists, and literary scholars. Scholars of Japanese literature, then, need not rely on the social sciences to be engaged—if they so desire--in the "real world." Through the analysis of language, they can confront questions of power, as the scholar of American literature, Richard Poirier, has argued. Literature, writes Poirier,

> is not in itself an effective political form of action...At best, it can help us deal more critically and effectively than we otherwise might with rhetorics outside literature, as a regular game of neighborhood softball might have the unintended effect of preparing someone to cope a little better with the rigors of the workplace.[43]

Cultural studies, which examines questions of identity, gender, and politics and culture, represents both a way out and an enriching of the old Area Studies model. In cultural studies, disciplinary and theoretical boundaries are crossed through the use of psychoanalysis, anthropology, history, linguistics, sociology, and political science; scholars are linked through a broad range of intellectual figures across disciplines.

Much of the recent interdisciplinary Japan scholarship, including anthropologist Jennifer Robertson's work on theater and imperialism, literary scholar John Treat and

anthropologist Brian Moeran's edited volumes on popular culture, and historian John Dower's book on race propaganda in The Pacific War, War Without Mercy, has grown from this soil. Japan in the World, edited by Masao Miyoshi and H.D. Harootunian's in 1991, was a landmark in Japan scholarship that cuts across disciplinary and geographical boundaries. The volume set out, in literary scholar Edward Fowler's words, to "remove Japan from the cultural and geopolitical vacuum in which it paradoxically finds itself..."[44] Arguing that the familiar binarism of the Cold War cannot explain how states relate to one another, the book includes contributions by Perry Anderson on comparisons to Germany, Eqbal Ahmed on U.S.-Japan relations and racism, Arif Dirlik on Sino-Japanese relations, a conversation between Japanese novelist Oe Kenzaburo and British novelist Kazuo Ishiguro, Frederic Jameson on Natsume Sôseki and Rob Wilson on Korea and Japan, among others. Another example of such multi-dimensional work that involves both Japanese and Americans is the joint research project of Rikkyo University and the University of Chicago in 1988 called "The Intellectual History of Postwar Japan," which resulted in 1990 in the publication of the Daedelus special issue, Showa: The Japan of Hirohito, and its Japanese translation, Nichibei no Shôwa.[45]

These are positive developments and need not be feared, and which one hopes will not be forestalled merely through unfamiliarity, impatience, crankiness, or simple dismissal. But there are downsides as well. Art historian John Rosenfield speaks eloquently of the generational fissure the new scholarly languages create: "Graduate students today tend to dismiss the paragons of traditional scholarship" in favor of French theorists. For Rosenfield, postmodern critics' "baffling, obscurantist language" has proved frustrating. Rosenfield recognizes that these ideas have permeated academia today, and that a new generation of cultural studies scholars is emerging. With an intellectual generosity that should set an example, he "does not join those who dismiss it as trendy nonsense (or worse)" but sees it as "the product of serious thought by serious people," and potentially "a tonic that clarifies and renovates obsolete ways of thinking--when correctly applied."[46]

Energizing this generational split is the desire among some for scholarship that seems relevant to questions of power. The desire for "relevance," both outside the academy to the sphere of politics and within the academy to the world of theory, has fueled interesting work. Yet it is worth being aware that this may also be threatening the possibility of academic work that seems less concerned with the worlds of politics and power and with self-conscious theorizing. The fetishization of perceived relevance may be particularly damaging to the close study of an obscure writer, the careful examination of a literary imagination, the laborious working-through of a difficult textual problem--in short, areas of intellectual endeavor which the academy can—and should--protect from becoming antiquated and institutionally precluded tasks by the pressures of the marketplace or the rise and fall of popular trends. Like other scholars of literature, scholars of Japanese literature have drawn more and more on theories from non-literary thinkers, and have applied themselves to non-literary texts with increasing frequency. This has the potential to produce vital work but also to diminish the prestige, or relevance, of literature, and literary study. What one would like to see appear amidst the "thickets of theory" is what Jennifer Robertson calls a "reality check" of reading. If the

dearth of citations of Japanese-language materials is dismaying in anthropology, it is perhaps more so in literary scholarship. Robertson writes:

> If there is one gatekeeping concept that is unequivocally appropriate for Japan scholars to employ it ought to be "bibliophilia": the long cultural history of literacy and enormity and diversity of textual production in Japan are reasons compelling enough to demand (greater) attention to bibliography.[47]

Of all fields within Japanese Studies, none has become more fractured by the clash between claims for theoretical and archival work than Japanese literature. This is somewhat peculiar, considering that a good many scholars occupy a middle ground, finding compromises between mastering primary sources and thinking through them with the tools of hard-learned theory. The vehemence of the discussion stems, one would suggest, not from calls for theoretical work, which all scholars engage in either explicitly or implicitly. The passion stems from an association made between theory and political advocacy on the one hand, and between lack of theory and scholarly disinterest on the other. In the case of Japanese literary studies, one senses an inverse relationship between the felt irrelevance of literature to society and the need to treat literature as a tool of power. What better way to hide its origins as belle-lettres than in a call-to-arms?

Masao Miyoshi and Harry Harootunian's trechant argument against any naiive self-proclamation of "irrelevance" is pertinent here. They remind us that no scholarship has been completely innocent in its motives or effects. Their argument also, however, reveals the pitfalls of demanding of the humanities a this-worldly orientation.

> Japanologists have mobilized their expertise to differentiate Japan from the hegemonic West: this cannot be described in any other term but ethnocentrism....Other experts employ their knowledge to represent Japan as a model of rational efficiency, management, and order. This group has seen in such contemporary Japanese achievements an exemplar for a failing American economic social order.....An earlier appreciation of Japanese literature and arts has visibly declined in recent years and has been replaced by a preoccupation with political economy....Assuming the existence of genuine interest in Japanese history, literature, and culture among the college-age generation today, we see too few places where such curiosity can be satisfied, given the current agenda dominating Japanology.[48]

A welcome warning against the baleful effects of prescriptive scholarship, the statement implicitly worries about the fate of scholarship and teaching that does not take on the real world. This can only be good for the humanities--and for the freedom of intellectual work. Yet, as literary scholar Edward Fowler argues, the argument seems targeted solely against "engaged" scholarship when it is "within the paradigm of American global supremacy." What of the viability of "unengaged" scholarship? Fowler asks an important question of Harootunian:

> Is this what ultimately distinguishes (intellectual) historians and other

> humanists from social scientists, one wonders: the urge by those in the one field merely to reflect on the human condition versus the urge by those in the other to mold it according to their vision?[49]

The reliance upon social scientific parameters to frame this argument, purportedly made in support of the humanities, paradoxically reveals the utter absence of any consideration of "unengaged scholarship" as a legitimate practice.[50]

The pressures to be relevant have been most dire for that branch of literary scholarship that seems most untheoretical and least engaged with politics and power: the work of translation. To become a translator is a perilous choice for scholars seeking tenure and promotion. Though demeaned institutionally for intellectual irrelevance (for "fetching" rather than theorizing), and incorrectly assumed to be disconnected from the "real world," translation has, like other forms of interpretation, been a shaper of intellectual fields, while being shaped by larger social forces.[51]

The act of translation, to return to the opening of this essay, is the work of cross-cultural analysis and interpretation. It requires getting under the skin of another culture and communicating its thought and beauty in a new idiom. It calls on great stores of learning but requires an evaluation of intangibles, through intangible variables like instinct and sensibility and taste. When enacted between literary languages as separated by history and culture as are Japanese and English, translation seems well near impossible:

> When the languages are so very different, when the cultural contexts also are very different, and, finally, when literary standards are really much further apart than we sometimes like to admit, perhaps the translator must have the kind of freedom of expression which, though purporting to be translation, amounts in fact to explanation.[52]

Styles of translation change in keeping with changes in this-worldly conditions. Thirty years ago a bow might have been translated as a handshake, closeness to the Japanese sacrificed to accessibility to the English-language reader. Increased familiarity with things Japanese might now allow, in Edward Fowler's words, for "a more rigorous linguistic account of what is actually going on in the Japanese--even at the expense of "'readability'." It may now be time, he argues, to let the "foreignness seep into the text" and to "come to grips with what is different."[53] This does not mean belittling the achievements of past translations. Rather, we might recognize the brilliance of Arthur Waley's 1926 translation of the eleventh-century Tale of Genji "without entertaining thoughts of mimicking his habit of making it seem sometimes as if his Heian ladies wear farthingales and live at Hampton Court." We might "set our sights as readers a notch higher."[54]

That higher notch would be where Japanese Studies is grounded in politics, not in the narrow sense of tendentious arguments, but in its self-awareness as an epistemological arrangement of disciplines and geographic areas responding to a complex world and its cultures, both high and low. In an atmosphere of intellectual honesty, all Area Studies

work would be conceived as acts of translation, in which scholars would grapple with foreign materials in their own terms and strive to render clearer what seemed opaque. They would link their analyses to larger intellectual problems through a language of theory that did not swallow up the original object. They might even arrive at original theoretical insights. Their "grappling" with foreign textual and lived experience would be accomplished through the same tools used in the work of translation: the deep and wide, but careful and close reading of the archive. These translators' sensibilities and analytical skills would be honed by expansive reading across disciplines and in a range of theory, and guided by rigorous disciplinary training in the tools of interpretation. They would possess the flexibility to recognize the value of humility before an awesome undertaking, and the place in their work of other intangibles like intuition and talent. Japan Area Studies would no longer call a Japanese kimono a farthingale, but it would understand why, even now, no better word might be found.

---

[1]"Translation from Japanese: A Symposium," Yearbook of Comparative and General Literature, number 14, 1965, p. 54.

[2] My thanks to an anonymous reader of this essay for reminding me of this, and for making other valuable suggestions.

[3]Masao Miyoshi, "Against the Native Grain: The Japanese Novel and the "Postmodern" West" in Off Center: Power and Culture Relations Between Japan and the United States (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991), p. 67. The study of Japan by non-Japanese goes back almost two millenia and, through its first centuries, was developed by those interested in conquest or conversion. The first known written record about Japan by an outsider dates to a Chinese text dating from the year 54. In the thirteenth century Marco Polo “introduced Japan” to Europe, and in the sixteenth century Jesuit missionaries produced the first studies of the people and their language. From the first, translation in its multiple forms was to become a primary tool in the process of cross-cultural communication. The first translation of Japanese words into Western languages appears in a 1593 Latin text discussing the conjugation of verbs in Latin, Japanese and Portuguese, published by Emmannuelis Alvari e Societate Jesu, and in the same year Father Luis Frois wrote a history of Japan; a Japanese-Latin dictionary was published in 1595; in 1603 the first dictionary of Japanese in a modern Western language (Portuguese) was published, and Father Rodriguez wrote the first grammar in 1604. The first writing about Japan in English was a history of Japan written by the German doctor Engelbert Kaempfer, published in 1727, and then translated into Dutch, French, and German. Peter the Great, with the guidance of a shipwrecked Japanese, initiated the study of Japan in Russia with the opening of a Japanese language school in St. Petersburg in 1737. The first translation into English was Ernest Satow's, of an 1865 "Diary of a Member of the Japanese Embassy to Europe in 1862-63 (literally, "A Confused Account of a Trip to Europe Like a Fly on a Horsetail”). In 1882 Basil Hall Chamberlain published his translation of the ancient chronicle Kojiki. William Aston translated the ancient chronicle Nihongi in 1886 and the thirteenth-century Buddhist prose-poem Hojoki in 1893. The first chair of Japanese studies was inaugurated in 1909 at the University of Hamburg, and the School of Oriental and African Studies in England began teaching the language in 1917. The earliest British Japanologists, including Rutherford Alcock, Ernest Satow, William Aston, and Basil Hall Chamberlain, served as diplomats in Japan. Chamberlain also became Professor of Japanese Language at Tokyo Imperial University in 1886. Aston's grammar appeared between 1871 and 1873, and his history of Japanese literature, still in print today, in 1899. And in 1904 the first translation of a modern novel appeared in English. Little of this early work on Japan was free of institutional interests; as university professors, Chamberlain and Ernest Fenellosa were employees of the Japanese government. See Yasuko Makino and Masaei Saito, "National Approaches: Parallel Developments or Schools of Great Masters--some remarks on the history of Japanese

Studies in Europe," in A Student Guide to Japanese Sources in the Humanities, Center for Japanese Studies, The University of Michigan, 1994, p. 61; Hide Ikehara Inada, Bibliography of Translations from the Japanese into Western languages from the 16th century to 1912 (Tokyo: Sophia University Press, 1971); and Edward Fowler, "Rendering Words, Traversing Cultures: On the Art and Politics of Translating Modern Japanese Fiction," Journal of Japanese Studies, volume 18, number 1, 1992, pp. 1-44.

[4]From 1,535 to approximately 4000 in 1989. See Patricia Steinhoff, Japanese Studies in the United States: The 1990s (Ann Arbor: The Association of Asian Studies, 1996), p. 6.

[5] Patricia Steinhoff, "Japanese Studies in the United States: The Loss of Irrelevance" in The Postwar Development of Japanese Studies in the United States--A Historical review and Prospects for the Future (Tokyo: International House of Japan, 1993), p. 24.

[6]Steinhoff, p. 28.

[7]Steinhoff, p. 28.

[8]Certain fields of study, like religion, have been interdisciplinary by nature, without such institutional causes. See Helen Hardacre, "The Postwar Development of Studies of Japanese Religions," in The Postwar Developments of Japanese Studies in Japanese Religions, edited by Helen Hardacre (Brill: Leiden, 1998), p. 219.

[9]David W. Plath and Robert J. Smith, "How "American" are Studies of Modern Japan done in the United States?" in Harumi Befu and Josef Kreiner, eds., Otherness of Japan: Historical and Cultural Influences on Japanese Studies in Ten Countries, (Munchen: Iudicium-Verl., 1992), p. 206. After 1947 national character studies turned to the Soviet Union and China, but from 1946 on, the mantle of studies on Japan was carried by former members of the Civil Information and Education Section of the American occupation, like Herbert Passim, who undertook the first field studies since that done by John Embree. The opening of the University of Michigan research center at Okayama University in 1950 went hand in hand with the scholarly eschewal of national character studies, replaced now by more microscopic, community studies by scholars who had studied language at army language schools. From 1960, on rural lifestyles studies decreased among American scholars, and new categories, such as the environment, urban planning, work, suicide, etc. came to the fore. See Takao Sofue, "An Historical Review of Japanese Studies by American Anthropologists: The Japanese Viewpoint," pp. 232, 238.

[10]Roger Bowen, "Japanology and Ideology: A Review Article," in Comparative Studies in Society and History 31 number 1, 1989, p. 185.

[11]Bowen, p. 186. It should be noted that although this stance of lofty disengagement persisted throughout the 1960s and 1970s, it was decidedly not true of sinologists, who did not hesitate to express their political convictions far more than Japanologists, in journals like the Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars.

[12]The inaugural conference was sponsored by the University of Michigan and held in Hakone, Japan. The six books produced by the endeavor are: Changing Attitudes Toward Modernization, ed., Marius Jansen; The State and Economic Enterprise in Japan, ed., William Lockwood; Aspects of Social Change in Modern Japan, ed., Ronald Dore; Political Developments in Modern Japan, ed., Robert Ward; Dilemmas of Growth in Prewar Japan, ed., James Morley; Tradition and Modernization in Japanese Culture, ed., Donald Shiveley.

[13]Hardacre, p. xiii.

[14]Harry D. Harootunian, "E.H. Norman: His Life and Scholarship, ed. Roger Bowen", Journal of Asian Studies, no. 4, 1988, p. 878.

[15]Sofue, p. 238.

[16]Plath and Smith, p. 217.

[17]Stephen Vlastos, "Panel Discussion," in Japanese Studies in the United States: The Loss of Irrelevance, p. 47.

[18]Miyoshi, p. 167. Sylvia Yanagisako also raises the question of the relationship of Asian-Americans to Asian Studies: "The unspoken Gentlemen's Agreement of mutual exclusion between Asian Studies and Asian-American Studies betrays their mutual commitment to a structuralist-functionalist theory of personality, culture, and society. This holistic vision of cultural and social integration justifies the boundary between Asian Studies and Asian-American Studies, treating it as a natural geographic feature in a topography of academic spaces." See "Asian Exclusion Acts," p. 6.

[19]Richard Okada, "Disciplines, Areas, and Premodern Japanese Literature," p. 6.

[20]Andrew Gordon, "Taking Japanese Studies Seriously: Draft for the 25th Anniversary Project of the Reischauer Institute of Japanese Studies, "p. 5.

[21] Gordon, p. 6.
[22] Gordon, p. 27.
[23] Gordon, p. 23.
[24]Martin Colcutt, "Panel Discussion," p. 44.
[25]Steinhoff, The 1990s, p. 118.
[26]Steinhoff, p. 242.
[27] Steinhoff, p. 147.
[28] Steinhoff, p. 160.
[29] The American Japanologist perception of the need for language skills has continued to grow in all areas: in 1993 57% thought it indispensable to understand Japanese (52% to speak, and 67% to read); 10% thought it not necessary at all. One should hardly be surprised at the high correlation between ability and perceived utility.(ibid.,87) Even given these differences among fields, there has been an overall weakening of affiliation studies among Japanologists within Japanese studies. In 1984, 30% of scholars submitted for publication work solely on Japanese studies; by 1995 this had shrunk to 16%. Japanologists' choices of affiliation have also shifted. Between 1984 and 1995, the percentage of Japan scholars who turned to a Japan specialist in their own discipline for critique of their work had risen from 57% to 70%; the percentage of those who turned to a non-Japan specialist in their own discipline rose from 21% to 43%; of those who turned to a specialist in other disciplines from 10% to 22%; and of those who turned to a non-Japan specialist in other disciplines from 2% to 12%. Not surprisingly, humanists are more likely than social scientists to seek out Japan specialists in their own discipline. More than half of social scientists turn to non-Japan specialists in their own disciplines, while under 40% of humanists do so. This might imply that the continued viability of area studies depends on the centrality of the humanities. Steinhoff, The 1990s, pp. 87, 156-59.
[30]Edwin McClellan, "The Study of Japanese Literature in the Unites States," p. 72.
[31]Van Gessel, "Teaching "The Devil's Own Tongue": The Challenges of Offering Japanese in a College Environment," ADFL Bulletin volume 28, number 2, 1997, p.7.
[32]Miyoshi, p. 11.
[33]Gessel, p. 9.
[34]Despite these difficulties, or perhaps in ignorance of them, Japanese language enrollments have increased dramatically since 1960, when according to MLA figures 1,746 students were enrolled nationwide. This number increased seven-fold by 1980, to 11,506; and then truly boomed in the next six years, almost doubling to 23, in 1986, then doubling again by 1990, to 45,717. In these four years, Japanese had grown by 95%, while Russian had grown by 30% and Spanish by 29%. No doubt these figures represent the impact of Japan's economy, along with media images of a rising Japan that presented trade barriers and possibly jobs for language speakers. Steinhoff, The 1990s, p. 9.
[35]John M. Rosenfield, "Japanese Art Studies in America in 1945," in Hardacre, p. 189.
[36]"Blurring the Disciplinary Boundaries: Area Studies in the United States," in American Behavioral Scientist volume 33, number 6, 1990, p. 731.
[37]The disciplines chosen by doctoral students do not accord with this hegemony. In 1995, political science accounted for 14%, and comprised the biggest single discipline, but the combination of humanities or humanities-inflected disciplines accounted for a far greater number: history 13%, literature 11%, anthropology 10%, linguistics 9%, art history 5%, religion and philosophy 5%, sociology 4%, education 3%, performance 3%. (Economics accounted for 3%.) Steinhoff, The 1990s, p. 38. From 1970 to 1993 the number of students declined by one-third to 16.3%; language and literature remained steady at 22%; economics increased slightly from 4 to 6%, and art history from 5 to 6%; anthropology dropped from 10 to 6%, political science from 10 to 8%. Seen in larger clusters, the humanities (history, art history, philosophy, religion and literature) in 1995 accounted for 38%; social sciences (anthropology, economics, political science, sociology), 31%, language and literature, 6%, the arts (performing and practicing) 3%, interdisciplinary studies, women's studies, urban studies, and Asian studies 5%. Steinhoff, pp. 28-29.
[38]"The News Everywhere: Does Global Thinking Threaten Local Knowledge? The Social Science Research Council Debates the Future of Area Studies," Lingua Franca, May/June 1996, pp. 55-56.
[39]The National Interest, 1994, p. 13.
[40]"A New Tour of Babel: Recent Trends Linking Comparative Literature Departments, Foreign Language Departments, and Area Studies Programs," ADFL Bulletin, fall, 1995, p. 108.

[41]Holquist, p. 111.
[42]Holquist, p. 112.
[43]Richard Poirier, The Renewal of Literature, Emersonian Reflections (New York: Random House, 1987), p. 48.
[44]Edward Fowler, "Reflections on Hegemony, Japanology, and Oppositional Criticism," Journal of Japanese Studies, volume 22, number 2, 1996, p. 401.
[45]Such examples are rare, however. English-language scholarship on Japan has not had a significant impact in Japan. Most is produced for Japan specialists outside Japan, and requires citation of sources in both languages. stein. Citation indexes reveal that American Japan specialists are still fairly invisible, bypassed by American scholars for native Japanese scholars in Japan. While this can be taken as a sign of internationalization of American research, it reveals a resistance to homegrown specialists. Indeed, three quarters of the scholarship on Japan by Americans is not by specialists: one quarter is by American social scientists working in collaboration with Japanese; and one half by non-specialists alone, relying on English-language sources. Steinhoff, The 1990s, p. 33.

A survey sponsored by the Japan Foundation in 1993 speaks to the question of scholarly relations between Japanese and Americans. Less than 5% of American scholars of Japan know no Japanese scholars; less than one quarter know less than five, and over one-third more than 10. American scholars sought out these relationships to keep abreast of scholarship, maintain access to research facilities, have their work critiqued; many also indicate they share a common culture of research activity, teaching, and mentoring of graduate students. Steinhoff, p. 110.

Though the influence of English-language Japan scholarship on Japanese scholars has not been great in terms of amount of work translated into Japanese (only 29% of Japan specialists have publications translated into Japanese; 24% have written in Japanese) a number of books have been quite influential in Japan. For example, E.H. Norman's Japan's Emergence of a Modern State (1940) was translated in 1947. It appealed to broad range of Japanese scholars--reaching both the Marxists, whose reemergence was sparked by the postwar rebirth of social sciences, and the non-Marxists, who were attracted Norman's liberal humanism. Japanese anthropologist Sofue Takao points to Ruth Benedict's The Chrysanthemum and the Sword (1946), which was translated in 1948 and became a best seller in Japan in 1949, and John Embree's 1939 Suye Mura, 1939, as a source of new research methodology in rural sociology. The translator of the book wrote in 1987: "To me, Embree's book was a kind of mystery for a long time...John Embree did not speak any Japanese, and yet he was able to write such a wonderful book, which became one of the most important classics in the study of the Japanese rural village." Sofue, p. 232.
[46]"When misapplied," he continues, "it can be harmful, even lethal, and the proper dosage is not easy to discern." See John Rosenfield, "Japanese Art Studies in America Since 1945," in Hardacre, p. 168. The dismissal of new styles of theorizing can be seen throughout the volume. Historian Harold Bolitho quips that "it is obvious that, notwithstanding all the posturing, when the principles are translated into practice the postmodernist bite proves considerably less painful than its bark." Important to Bolitho is the question, "What were the Japanese people of the time really like?" and though this is certainly worth asking, it is certainly not all there is to ask, and need not yield the conclusion that scholars struggling with new ideas are merely pouring old wine into new bottles: "In Japan, at least, the wave of the future does not seem to have overtaken the past." One wonders why, to Bolitho, heavy citation of Japanese scholarship is necessarily better than heavy citation of Western, and why the latter need be dismissed for that reason. Harold Bolitho, "Tokugawa Japan: The Return of the Other? " in Hardacre, pp. 106-110.
[47]Jennifer Robertson, "When and Where Japan Enters: American Anthropology Since 1945," in Hardacre, p. 307.
[48]Japan in the World, ed. Masao Miyoshi and H.D. Harootunian, (Durham: Duke University Press, 1993), p. 69.
[49]Fowler, "Reflections on Hegemony," p. 408.
[50]Japanese studies, like other area studies, was born in the political press of the Cold War. According to Bruce Cummings, "to be in "Korean studies" or "Chinese studies" was daily to experience the tensions that afflicted Korea and China during the long period of the cold war." "Boundary Displacement: Area Studies and International Studies after the Cold War,"
[51]The translation of modern Japanese literature is primarily a postwar phenomenon. The first postwar translations of modern Japanese literature, published primarily by Knopf, were, in Edward Fowler's view, chosen for their evocations of exotic Japaneseness and their thematizing of a search for the past. Japan had

been an enemy and was now an ally, alluring to Western readers for its sensuality and beauty. This, Fowler argues, set a "very broad consensus" on translatable literary values: the elusive, misty, delicate and taciturn. These novels include Kawabata Yasunari's Snow Country in 1956, Ooka Shôhei's Fires on the Plain in 1957, Mishima Yukio's The Sound of the Waves in 1954, The Temple of the Golden Pavilion in 1957, Confessions of a Mask in 1958, Natsume Sôseki's Kokoro in 1957, Dazai Osamu's Setting Sun in 1956. The extent to which Japanese have presented these very same values to the world should not be overlooked; and in recent years the norm has been translations of edgier, more fractured and disturbing novels speaking from Japan as a modern nation with modern woes to other sufferers of modernity; or translations born of a playful post-modern sensibility; or of popular genres like detective fiction and comics.

While the early translators from Japanese made their sporadic contributions, translations into Japanese were made in the hundreds and thousands. The trade imbalance in translation continues into the 1990s: of the almost 50,000 titles translated world-wide per year, 2,011 out of 2,754 translated into Japanese are from English; while only 54 titles of 1,086 translated from Japanese are into English. Edward Fowler, "Rendering Words, Traversing Cultures: On the Art and Politics of Translating Modern Japanese Fiction," Journal of Japanese Studies, volume 18, number 1, 1992, pp. 1-44.

[52]McClellan, "Translation,"p. 57.

[53]Fowler, "On Naturalizing and Making Strange: Japanese Literature in Translation," Journal of Japanese Studies, volume 16, number 1, Winter, 1990, p. 131.

[54]Fowler, p. 132.