

An Alternative Framework for Teaching Local Studies: Local Literature as Literature of Place

ローカル科目を教えるための新しき枠組み —「場性のある文学」としての郷土文学—

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Abstract: *This paper considers the recent introduction of a general education [kyōyō kyōiku] program at Hirosaki University, and offers a critical reading of the meanings posited by the structural division between “local” and “global” courses. After addressing some of the pedagogical implications for these general education courses, it introduces an alternative perspective for reading locality: by looking at local literature in terms of production (publishing networks), community (discourses of climate), and practice (institutionalization and canonization), it offers a possibility for discussing “the local” without directly reaffirming the cultural capital of the center. After offering a variety of counter-discourses and meta-analyses, the paper concludes by proposing some ways in which this approach may be applied in the classroom to cultivate critical thinking skills and global awareness in compliance with university policy and the Japanese government’s new educational directives.*

Keywords: Locality, Tsugaru, community, place, modern literature

Hirosaki University introduced a general education [kyōyō kyōiku] program for the 2016-17 academic year as part of its process of integrating liberal arts values into its new curriculum. This program includes 27 “global” [gurō baru] and 23 “local” [rōkaru] classes. The former addresses world history, globalizing Japanese culture industries, film studies, etc; it also has “Japan” courses on topics like Japanese culture theory and Japanese women’s literature. In contrast, every single course title with the latter designation begins with the word “Aomori”: Aomori history, Aomori arts, Aomori nature, and so on. The configuration of these classes immediately suggests two questions. First, how does the institution represent the opposition between the “global” and the “local”? And second, what is at stake for the pedagogical mission in offering these as part of a broad selection of mandatory first year courses? In the following pages, I use these questions as a launching point from which to propose alternative perspectives on locality studies based on literary practice and the construction of place. In the conclusion, I then return to these questions in order to begin thinking through a practical classroom application of the new globalized curriculum.

The inclusion of “Japan” themed courses in the “global” category agrees with a common conclusion of modernity studies: that the nation-state is a fundamentally international and ideological construction. The process of inculcating national consciousness in emergent modern communities, particularly through popular discourse,

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literature, and music, has been studied at length.¹ If we accept the premise suggested by this classification, then “national literature” necessarily falls within a global paradigm. Conversely, “local literature” must stand in opposition not only to the global, but also to the national.²

Consider the contents of the Hirosaki University 2016 “Aomori Arts: Modern Literature” syllabus (*Hirosaki Daigaku*, “Aomori no geijutsu: kindai bungaku”). The course covers five authors: Kasai Zenzō, Dazai Osamu, Ishizaka Yōjirō, Miura Tetsurō, and Terayama Shūji. Of the sixteen weeks, eleven are concerned with Dazai Osamu and Terayama Shūji, Aomori prefecture’s most well-known writers. The remaining three lectures focus on Kasai, the “god of the I-novel [*watakushi shōsetsu*]”; Ishizaka, a popular writer best known for the dozens of films based off of his writing, like *Aoi Sanmyaku*; and Miura, who was a recipient of the Akutagawa prize. All of these men were born in Aomori prefecture and wrote about either Aomori or the Tsugaru region (which covers the western half of Aomori prefecture) in some capacity, often citing how they spent their formative years there.

Miura alone was not born in the Tsugaru region; he was from Hachinohe, on the eastern coast of the prefecture. This is important, because there continues to be strong cultural and political distinctions between the internal regions of Aomori Prefecture. The historical literary community was heavily concentrated in Hirosaki city in Tsugaru, and prefectural literary histories reveal a dominance of writers either born in Tsugaru or active among its literary communities. Thus, the inclusion of a Nambu writer in this syllabus opens up the boundaries of Aomori literature to greater inclusivity of authors peripheral to the regional “center.”

However, a non geo-centric perspective reveals that this syllabus is invested in authors who are recognized as participants in a national literature: “major” writers. Miura may have been from Nanbu, but he earned an Akutagawa Prize and later served on its selection committee; Ishizaka may not have settled in Tokyo like the others, but he was recognized with the Kikuchi Kan and the Mita Literature Prizes and left a massive legacy in the national film industry. Kasai, Dazai, and Terayama all lived in Tokyo and participated directly in major contemporary literary movements.

To no detriment of the author of this syllabus, this selection of authors follows a conventional, great works sensibility. Moreover, it aligns with the university’s interest in promoting the region to local and foreign students: see how many authors from Aomori have made a national impact? However, this syllabus also inadvertently reifies the cultural capital and elite position of Tokyo, while also re-presenting the quotidian, popular imaginaries of rural Japan that have become so commonplace: Aomori either as a romanticized land of mother’s milk and idealized pastness (e.g. Ishizaka’s *Aoi sanmyaku*), or as a backward and untimely albatross doggedly clinging to the necks of any writer attempting escape from its smothering oppression (e.g. Terayama’s *Den’en ni shisu*). And so a doubt lingers: if the larger structure of the course is invested in a Tokyo-oriented set of values—regardless of if the intent is to destabilize the norms of the popular imaginaries generated from them—to what extent can it be considered a truly “local” course?

The remainder of this paper proposes a new framework for engaging with “local literature,” and does so through surveying different aspects of the processes of the historical Tsugaru literary community, focusing on theorization of climate, publishing practices, and institutional networks. This paper serves the double function of gathering together a set of texts, actors, locations, and questions from which an innovative “local literature” general studies course may be assembled.

¹ E.g., on discursive construction, see: (Barthes, 1977), (Anderson, 1983); on nation-building in Japan, (Mack, 2010), (Yeonsuk, 2010), (Burns, 2003), (Oguma 2002).

² It is important to clarify that it is not my intention to affirm distinct categories of the local and global as objectively measurable; rather, I am investigating the discourse of a national university.

SKETCHING LITERARY COMMUNITIES IN JAPAN

Mount Iwaki is truly magnificent! I love and feel great pride in the land of this mountain. But feeling is not enough: it is the duty of artists who received the gift of life in Tsugaru to bring that magnificence to life as unadulterated beauty.

– Watanabe Teiichi (Kon, pg. 155, 1983)

Watanabe Teiichi suggests that it is the primary role of a localized literatus to construct place through its literary veneration. This positive discourse of Tsugaru as place has been a continuing theme of the historical local literary establishment, or “*chihō bundan*.” By illuminating the formation of the literary community’s consciousness and practices of place, we can make visible a Tsugaru-as-place realized in literary practice and professional relationships.

Bundan is a key word in the history of modern literature in Japan, most often applied to the Tokyo literary establishment: “the” *bundan*. This *bundan* is overtly social, and contributed to the rise of the socially-driven I-novel. *Bundan* members were products of the same educational institutions, residents of the same neighborhoods, and occupants of similar social positions (Fowler, 1988).

The *bundan* of Tsugaru was likewise formed through shared networks, experiences, and spaces. Tsugaru boasts a robust literary history with a large number of creative writers who worked across literary and popular spheres, and who self identified using terms like “Tsugaru *bundan*” [Tsugaru literary establishment], Tsugaru poetry establishment, regional literary establishment, and local literature. These labels give some contour to that community’s particular understanding of placeness. The appropriation of the *bundan* label contributed to a consciousness of place-based community, and reflexively gave meaning to Tsugaru, itself.

Secondary literary works, publishing, and professional networks are also important parts of this process. However, they often trend toward a nationalized, centralized literary community: literary histories, anthologies, and studies of “great works” tend to validate the centralizing forces of the nation-state project. For example, it has been argued that anthologies and literary prizes are mechanisms for reinforcing the imagination of the nation (Mack, 2010). This is even true of anthologies in translation: one representative anthology of modern Japanese literature checks all of the “important” names; however, it contains only a single work by a Tsugaru author: Dazai Osamu (Rimer and Gessel, 2005).

The concentration of literati in the capital undoubtedly contributes to the representation of “Japanese literature” as being a property of the center (Fujita, 1977). One literary historian bluntly suggests that “many [Tsugaru writers] were alienated by the literary conditions in the provinces, and traveled to the capital to fulfill their burning desire to join the central *bundan*, only to return home, unable to succeed” (Long, 2012, pg. 40-1). The publishing industry was founded in Tokyo and grew with government intervention (Mack, 2010). Now, eighty percent of approximately 3,700 domestic publishers are located in Tokyo (Japan Book Publishers Association, Ch. 2). Institutions of higher education are also concentrated in the capital region: approximately 220 institutions, compared to just 52 in the entire Tohoku region (*Knowledge Station*). These conditions have long tempted artists to migrate to the capital.³

Yet many writers from Aomori prefecture continue participating in “Tsugaru” even after moving away. These

³ Prominent examples of Tsugaru natives emigrating to Tokyo for education and employment include the aforementioned Dazai, Terayama, and Kasai. Satō Kōroku, Akita Ujaku, Fukushi Kōjirō, Kon Kan’ichi, etc, also gained local prestige by penetrating and being recognized by the central *bundan*.

networks include spaces of literary interaction like localized anthologies, literary histories, regional newspapers [*chihō shi*] and local publishers, as well as other literary institutions like museums, which exert similar forces on Tsugaru itself.

By shifting between scales of analysis, we can illuminate patterns of literary history otherwise invisible. The following is an adaptation of Long's theorization of scale shifting (2015). For example, when zooming in on the Tsugaru *bundan*, we can observe a local gravitation toward Hirosaki city, a hub of education and the local artistic community.⁴ Yet from a distant perspective, Tsugaru gets lost on a national map so heavily weighted toward the center.

There are many small-scale Japanese-language publications and local institutions that contribute to a social imaginary of Tsugaru—but one which is not necessarily recognized beyond their limited scope of distribution. These range from Tsugaru-themed magazines to literary coterie journals to local literature anthologies. These publications help rewrite the meaning of authors' places in history: Dazai Osamu not as a *burai* [ruffian], Terayama Shūji not as an *angura* [avant-garde], Fukushi Kōjirō not as *modan shugi* [modernist], and Kasai Zenzō not as *shizen shugi* [naturalist] writers, but each as Tsugaru writers who participate in its literary communities, bringing their specific ideological perspectives and artistic methodologies to bear on Tsugaru-as-place. In other words, rather than identifying “important” authors to the national literature, and rather than tracing the work of a single figure who moves between discrete realms of “center” and “periphery,” I instead want to use Tsugaru as a filter through which to observe networks of actors who appropriate its name.

THE TSUGARU BUNDAN: CLIMATE

Seidō Rokurō's *Furusato no shi to shijin* [Poems and poets of the *furusato*], Fujita Tatsuo's *Aomori ken bungaku shi* [A literary history of Aomori Prefecture], and Ono Masafumi's *Kita no bunmyaku* [The context of the northern literary landscape] are three important texts in establishing the history of the Tsugaru *bundan*. While of diverse genres, they reveal some striking similarities.

To begin with the writers: Fujita Tatsuo was born and educated in Hirosaki and lived and conducted research there as well. Ono was born in Iwate Prefecture to a Tsugaru-native father, and he moved to Aomori city as a child. He was educated at Tokyo Imperial University, but returned to Aomori Prefecture to become an educator. Seidō is a Tsugaru native, but graduated from Hosei University and lists a Tokyo residential address in the back of his book in 1984. He may have left his home for good, but he also asserts: “leave *furusato* if you may: the soul will find its way back” (1984, pg. 10). Thus, while the three men seem to exhibit some diversity in their backgrounds, each is able to demonstrate some kind of bona fides as a voice of Tsugaru and the authority to write Tsugaru.

Seidō is not only anthologist and poet, but he also authored a biography of Fukushi Kōjirō, a Tsugaru literatus. He relates his motivations in extremely personal terms: “...Fukushi Kōjirō was a pioneer in the history of poetry, has been recognized as a unique poet, and attained status appropriate [to those achievements]; however, for some reason his prominence has faded over time, even locally [*kyōdo ni mo*]. I am extremely disappointed and concerned by this development” (1989, pg. 178). The author is implicated in Tsugaru through emotional investment and personal identification. Saving Fukushi from oblivion preserves part of Seidō's identity and it elevates Fukushi within the Tsugaru *bundan*. The imperative to recover or maintain the author's *furusato*-qua-identity by delineating a place-based literary community becomes quite clear in Seidō's opening remarks. He writes:

⁴ Tōōgijuku academy, established in Hirosaki in 1872, figures here as well, as it produced Kuga Katsunan, Satō Kōroku, Kon Kan'ichi, and others. Terayama Shūji's father was a graduate, and Fukushi Kōjirō had a short tenure as a teacher there. This institutional history connects these artists, who would continue supporting and corresponding with each other (Kon, 1983).

We often hear the words *furusato* paired with loss [*sōshitsu*], but everyone holds a deeply rooted [*nedzuyoi*] affectionate attachment for the *furusato*. ...It was from that feeling that I recently started looking into my *furusato*'s literature, history, and people. While I found this information to be abundant, I was pained to find how little so many of these cases were generally known about and felt a strong imperative to inform the world about them (1984, pg. 7).

The intensely personal language of “*furusato*,” “feeling,” “pained,” and “felt a strong imperative to inform” are not the dispassionate words of a literary historian, but those of a member of a community with deep-felt sympathy for its future development.

The Tsugaru *bundan* is further defined by the role of locality in the production of literature:

...although we talk about “Aomori prefecture,” the two regions of Tsugaru and Nanbu each have their own unique climates [*fūdo*]. It would be difficult to understand and appreciate the literary works created there without that knowledge. It is the same as...not know[ing] the language of the land where they live [*tochi no kotoba*]. There are wind and clouds, mountains and rivers everywhere. But the natural environment and local customs [*fūbutsu*] of the north country [*kitaguni*] contain a spirit and way of life that is felt viscerally, that can only be known by living there and experiencing it yourself (1984, pg. 8-9).

Ono, too, refers to “the severe northern climate,” which he describes as a “great commonality” [*daidō*] between its people. This commonality overrides “differing history and geography” within the broader region, while acknowledging that at scale there “are environments which give shape to the ‘little differences’ [*shōi*].” The influence of the great commonality is subtle, and relationships between literati are not completely determined by a diachronic yearning for Aomori-past; it is more likely influenced by the spirit of the times and pressing needs of the contemporary cohort. Thus, Ono does not overemphasize the role of the environment, but recognizes the common backdrop it provides (1973, Vol. 1, *jobun*). The Tsugaru *bundan* recognizes this phenomenon as well, such as demonstrated by the following rumination: “As I think about [artists and writers from Tsugaru], the connection to the Tsugaru climate naturally comes to mind...Tsugaru-jamisen and Tsugaru *min'yō* [folk song]...the Neputa summer festival and *idako* [sic] shamanesses...were given birth to by this climate” (Takagi, 1990, pg. 107).

The wide-ranging introduction to Ono's third volume, “Climate and Literature,” cites Hippolyte Taine's “race,” “milieu,” and historical “moment” (1973, Vol. 3, pg. 1).⁵ He raises Flaubert's recognition of the remarkable “individual talents” of artists (1973, Vol. 2, pg. 1). He criticizes destructive agricultural policy causing the “loss” [*sōshitsu*] of *furusato*, the foundation of “state of mind” [*shinden*], the “ground upon which spiritual tradition stands.” He also references the “talent education movement,” emphasizing human education through environmental exposure (1973, Vol. 3, pg. 4). In short, Ono focuses on the “milieu” of Aomori literature, which is largely derivative of historical environmental conditions. Or, as *Seidō* puts it, “Before a single poem is composed, it is incubated by those seasonal changes, a variety of different environments, aspects of the poet's upbringing, and the productive processes that support his everyday life” (1984, pg. 9).

These men inherited a great deal from pre-war discourse on the nature of “Japan.” This includes Watsuji Tetsurō's treatise *Fūdo* [Climates], which argued that national character is derived from physical climate (Watsuji, 1961; Oguma, 2000). Fukushi Kōjirō also wrote on the problem of environment in forming individual character and tradition (1967). He relied in part on the work of Auguste Comte, who linked politics, thought, and the environment, through a logic of direct influences, cause and effect (1865). These approaches shared the assumption that physical environment directly affects the nature of society, and by extension, artistic creation.

⁵ These terms are alternatively translated as “race,” “surroundings,” and “epoch” (Taine, 1871, pg. 10).

Ono also specifically cites *kenminsei* inspiration. *Kenminsei* is a belief that residents of each prefecture have unique attributes. The number of books on *kenminsei* ballooned from 20 in the 1930s to 41 in the 1970s, and 61 in the 1980s, placing Ono and Seidō's works at the height of the idea's popularity (*Webcat Plus*). Seidō describes Aomori folk as Tohoku people who are characterized by "delicacy," "anger," and "a critical nature." They have a "mental life" [*seishin seikatsu*] which cannot be communicated in standardized Japanese, but can only be spoken in "dialect" [*hōgen*] (Seidō, 1984, pg. 10). Other postwar discourses saw Tsugaru described using local vernacular *joppari* [aloof or obstinate], *efurikoki* [to put on airs, to make a show of things], and *na nadaba* [spirit of independence] (Daijō, Rausch, and Suda, 1998). There are even discourses of cultural *fūdobyō*, endemic diseases specific to Tsugaru.⁶

This is all to say that there was interest in local specificity during the 1970s and 80s, and that proponents were split between measured philosophical approaches and place-based essentialism.

THE TSUGARU BUNDAN: PUBLICATIONS

Publishing networks are layered over place. My survey of 43 Tsugaru and Tsugaru-affiliated authors shows the vast majority of publications coming from Tokyo publishers, including Chikuma (217), Kodansha (216), Shinchōsha (196), and Kadokawa (155). Yet authors published across 457 other venues, including Hirosaki-based Tsugaru shobō (68) and Kitagata no machi-sha (30) (*Webcat Plus*).⁷

Publishers like these two locate both the text and its audience. Kitagata shin-sha [northern press]'s identity is connected to its location in Hirosaki, and its mission statement is to publish "books based on the theme of 'cultural transmissions from the north'" (*Onoprint*).⁸ It is distinctly localized. The publisher is located both physically and discursively in Tsugaru, and is explicitly invested in defining or promulgating information about that place.

Ono published "A landscape full of literature" in the magazine *Kita no Machi* [The northern district] in Aomori city before serializing *Kita no bunmyaku*.⁹ The casual format and limited distribution of the publication brought his "Tsugaru" directly to a "Tsugaru" audience. The collection was later published by Kita no machi-sha in four volumes. Ultimately, over half of Ono's publications are from either Kita no machi-sha or Tsugaru shobō.

Fujita proposes a very open-ended interpretation of "Aomori Prefecture Literature." He defines his parameters in his very first sentence: "It may be debatable whether the label 'A Literary History of Aomori Prefecture' is appropriate to this project or not, but my intention was to try to weave together a narrative of historical facts of the literature created during a particular time within the climatic space [*fūdo teki kūkan*] of Aomori Prefecture *without regards to whether its authors are regional [chihō sakka] or central [chūō sakka]*" (1977, pg. 1, emphasis added). Indeed, he includes non-native writers like Masaoka Shiki, Shimazaki Tōson, Ōmachi Keigetsu, and Wakayama Bokusui. Fujita additionally distinguishes between writers "blessed with certain professional connections" who made it in Tokyo, and those who had literary talents equal to Tokyo-based writers, but were unable to thrive in the center (1977, pg. 2, 147-8). Those authors constitute the core participants in Fujita's Tsugaru *bundan*.

Fujita goes on to assert that it was via contact with the central *bundan* that "modern literature" came to the "Aomori prefecture *bundan*" (1978, pg. 1-2). He stresses the opposition between center and periphery, and in doing so ascribes an outsized role in the creation of the Aomori *bundan* to the central *bundan*, suggesting that literary

⁶ Matsuki Akitomo uses *fūdobyō* as one method of defining "Tsugaru" among others including family names, festivals, history of medicine, and vernacular language (Matsuki & Matsuki, 1983).

⁷ What this analysis misses is the variety of coterie journals and local newspapers which are absent from the Webcat database.

⁸ Kitagata is a subsidiary of Onoprint/Ono *insatsujo*, an omnibus publisher also based in Hirosaki.

⁹ The Hirosaki local literature museum's biannual newsletter borrows this publication's title for its own, the "*Kita no bunmyaku nyūsu*," demonstrating the prominence of *Kita no bunmyaku* text in the contemporary Tsugaru *bundan* landscape.

innovation was a property of the center, a hand-me-down gift to the provinces.

Ono is more ambivalent. He initially praises artists for finding success in the “crucible” [*rutsubo*] of Tokyo, yet he acknowledges that a smaller city could serve as a similar kind of tempering device (1973, Vol. 2, pg. 2). Here, Ono changes the scales of perspective: centers and peripheries can be imagined at different levels of locality, and their functions can be replicated at scale. At the same time, he follows Fujita’s pragmatic appraisal of the symbolic capital of the center: to legitimize oneself in the countryside, one must go to the center; to gain recognition in the center, one must go abroad.¹⁰ Yet in the following sentence he reverses again, asking “to become an artist, is it really necessary to go to the capital?” Counter examples are rare, but illuminating them is his *raison d’être* (1972, Vol 2, pg. 3-4).

The cross-section of these secondary works, and those of other literary-historical collections, anthologies, local literature museums, literary memorials, government websites, and even classroom syllabi, reveals the processes of institutionalization of the historical Tsugaru *bundan*: those who make it into the books take on central positions in the community’s contemporary imaginary; those who do not fade into the background. T.S. Eliot’s essay on minor poetry gestures in a similar direction; that “major” poets and “minor” poets occupy different literary spaces, and that those designations are reflexive (Eliot, 1946).

One interesting example is the volume *Hōgen shishū: Tsugaru no shi* [A dialect poetry collection: poems of Tsugaru]. During its initial printings, beginning in 1964, the collection contained Ichinohe Kenzō’s “*Neputa*,” Takagi Kyōzō’s “*Marumero*” [Marmello], Ueki Yōsuke’s “*Ebota kakigishi*” [Hedge of Japanese privet], and the short anthology “*Kagawara shū*” [Collection of grasses] (Ichinohe Kenzō et al., 1964). However, beginning in 1986, Koeda’s collection has disappeared from new reprints (Ichinohe Kenzō et al., 1986). The six contributing authors to Koeda’s work include Matsuki Toshio, Kimura Sukeo, Hihori Sōta, Kamata Kihachi, and Kaimai Hayako. Their erasure from this work mirrors their erasure from representation in broader historical discourse: these are the “minor poets” of the Tsugaru “dialect poetry” movement.

THE TSUGARU BUNDAN: REGIONAL INSTITUTION

The complexity and sheer volume of participants in this community history make a representative reckoning virtually impossible.¹¹ One convenient database to investigate this question is the epitome of the popular curation of knowledge: Wikipedia. The Japanese Wikipedia page for “*Aomori-ken shusshin jinbutsu ichiran*” [table of significant persons born in Aomori prefecture] lists 34 categories of “*bunkajin*” [cultural producers] in addition to politicians, industrialists, athletes, etc; and 38 names under the sub-heading of “*sakka*” [writer], all of whom were born in Aomori prefecture and notable enough to merit mention.¹² Persons are divided by genre or literary field, resulting in a queer isolation of “journalists” like Kuga Katsunan and Toyabe Shuntei, dramatist Kikuya Sakae, and “thinker” [*shisōka*] Awaya Yūzō from the Aomori *sakka* with which they are typically grouped. Despite the

¹⁰ Indeed, Takagi Kyōzō’s poetry only gained popular recognition after selected translations into English by James Kirkup and Michio Nakano appeared in 1968 and 1969 (Yamada, 1979).

¹¹ There are many examples of spatialized representations of these relationships in the Museum of Modern Aomori Literature, the Hirosaki City Local Literature Museum, the former Hirosaki City Library, and in Ono’s *Kita no bunmyaku*. Their singular inability to holistically represent the *bundan* is telling. The museums and their websites also provide biographical timelines, permanent displays, rotating special collections, resource catalogues, and a variety of pamphlets and other literature. These combined with the work of individual authors, scholars, and anthologizers makes for an endlessly complicated proliferation and reinterpretation of the Tsugaru, or Aomori, *bundan*.

¹² Wikipedia provides guidelines establishing “notability,” theoretically ensuring a base-line of objectivity. Notability requirements include a provision of mention in reliable secondary sources. The anthologies and histories surveyed in my research function as many of those secondary sources, and none of them list such an explicit rationale for the authors they chose to detail (*Wikipedia*, “Wikipedia: Notability,” 19 July, 2016).

capricious nature of the classification system, each name is included because of the objective fact of the place of birth. Other figures with significant connections to the prefecture are relegated to the bottom of the page under the heading “*Aomori-ken yukari no jinbutsu*” [significant persons connected to Aomori prefecture] (*Wikipedia*, “Aomori-ken shusshin no jinbutsu ichiran,” 19 July, 2016).

The construction of the Tsugaru *bundan* elsewhere is more capricious: writers are chosen for logistical reasons, or those hailing from outside may be given prominence. Perhaps the most egregious example of how overreliance on the Tokyo *bundan* can marginalize Tsugaru is Matsuki Akira’s *Tsugaru and modern literature*, which devotes a single slim chapter to an author actually born and active in the region, even then using it to explicate his influence on the central *bundan*. The remainder of the monograph is concerned with those “important” writers from Tokyo who wrote about the region (1973).

The sheer diversity of the Tsugaru literary scene necessitates strategic trimming. The most comprehensive compilation of regional authors appears on the Museum of Modern Aomori Literature website, with 352 authors (*The Museum of Aomori Literature*, “Aomori-ken yukari zen sakka ichiran”).¹³ The list is described as “a comprehensive summary of Aomori prefecture-connected writers,” and contains individuals who merely visited and wrote about Tsugaru.¹⁴ The Hirosaki City Local Literature Museum [*Hirosaki shiritsu kyōdo bungaku-kan*] is adorned with a large painting called *Kita no sanrei* [northern peaks], depicting 45 authors’ names color-coded according to “local birth,” “local relationship,” and “other.”¹⁵ In both cases, association plays as strong a role as the place of one’s birth. Ono Masafumi’s *Kita no bunmyaku* contains portraits of 193 Tsugaru-native writers (1972). Fujita’s *Aomori-ken bungaku shi* lists a total of 178 writers, and includes extended discussion on approximately 24 of them. Here too, the purview extends beyond the scope of Aomori-born writers (1977, 1978, 1980).¹⁶

The Museum of Modern Aomori Literature website also lists “thirteen representative writers of Aomori Prefecture,” eleven of which were born in Tsugaru (*The Museum of Modern Aomori Literature*, “Aomori-ken wo daihyō suru 13 nin no sakka”). Six different authors, including Ono Masafumi, appear on another page entitled “traces of local literature” (*The Museum of Modern Aomori Literature*, “Kyōdo sakka no kiseki”). The Hirosaki City Local Literature Museum’s scope is narrower, including only writers affiliated with Hirosaki City. It hosts a permanent installation dedicated to ten writers, three of whom are not singled out for recognition on the other homepage (*Hirosaki City*).

The lack of a definitive cohort of writers representing the Tsugaru *bundan* attests to the subjectivity in evaluating the most important voices from the region. 34 authors receive exceptional focus across the institutions addressed above, yet a cross-section reveal only seven—Satō Kōroku, Kasai Zenzō, Fukushi Kōjirō, Ichinohe Kenzō, Ishizaka Yōjirō, Takagi Kyōzō, and Dazai Osamu—to be held in common amongst the majority. Five of the seven found success outside of Tsugaru.

¹³ This includes Tsugaru, as well as the Nanbu and Shimokita regions in eastern Aomori. Tsugaru is overwhelmingly represented: of the few non-Tsugaru authors who appear intermittently in the *bundan* narratives, Ōtsuka Kōzan has the greatest representation precisely because he was involved with the literary debates and *Tōnippō* newspaper.

¹⁴ Despite the extensiveness of the list, certain names are absent, including Shimazaki Tōson, Yanagita Kunio, and Yosano Akiko, each of whom had an important relationship with Tsugaru. Non-natives listed include Satō Hachirō and Ōmachi Keigetsu.

¹⁵ The chart is painted so that each author’s name appears at the summit of a mountain, roughly dispersed in chronological order from past to present. In this way, these writers are literally written into an imaginary and ordered landscape.

¹⁶ The vast majority of the names appearing in the timelines are identified with Tsugaru birth places, and Hirosaki city clearly stands as the home to the greatest number of literati discussed.

This brief survey of climate, publishing networks, and public literary institutions presents a mere handful of strands of the endlessly complex tapestry of local and national, literary and historical, and socialized and institutional networks running through the Tsugaru region.¹⁷ By illuminating this complexity, I have gestured toward some of the invisible operations hidden within the educational apparatus at Hirosaki University. The *kyōyō kyōiku* program usefully raises the categories of the “global” and the “local”: I hope to have begun to demonstrate how fruitful engagement with the operations of these labels can be.

This article is not intended to be a purely theoretical exercise; as alluded to in the introductory section, I believe that this type of critical approach fits well with the liberal arts aims of the university, and is a good example of how a modern, critical approach can be brought to literary studies in the undergraduate classroom. In this final section, I offer an outline for the practical application of such an approach.

A “Tsugaru Literature, Local Literature” course would be implicitly framed by questions of minor literature by explicitly raising questions about “the local” and “place.” Students would read secondary materials, like Matsumoto Hiroaki’s work on the “discovery” of “the local,” to gain critical perspective. They would analyze liminal works, like those of Fujita Tatsuo and Ono Masafumi, and practice conducting the type of meta-analysis engaged in above. They would also read works produced by a variety of authors within the literary field germane to the themes of locality and place, not merely those venerated as national icons; not only poetry and novels, but also literary debates and commentaries. They should be acquainted with the depth of place-consciousness cultivated by Fukushi Kōjirō and the adherents to “regionalism” and “vernacular literature” movements. Students would be directed to the public library archives and local literature museum, so that they can witness the institutionalization of literature within the contemporary local landscape.

The questions raised at the beginning of this piece with regards to the university’s motivations for establishing a “global” and “local” educational program also come to bear on the form of the course. The “vision for the future of Hirosaki University” includes planks of both “regional vitalization” [*chiiki kasseika*] and “globalization,” following from the Ministry of Education’s new “Plan for National University Reform,” which both emphasizes the need for Japanese universities to “globalize” through the increased presence of foreign students and instructors, and expansion of the number of classes offered in English (*Hirosaki Daigaku*, “Hirosaki Daigaku shōrai bijion”; *MEXT*, 2016).

Developing a “local literature” course to be conducted in English and employing CLIL (content and language integrated learning) techniques may seem counterintuitive, but it would aid in fulfilling these directives. CLIL education has enjoyed increased attention in Japan following the launch of the Global 30 project, in 2008, and offers opportunities for integrating native and non-native English speaking classrooms and improving opportunities for cross-cultural communication. Furthermore, innovative use of “parallel texts,” paired Japanese and English translations, can lower the hurdles to participation in the English-speaking classroom, increase comprehension, and prompt higher-level language students to engage with questions of translation (Tanaka & Morita, 2016). Parallel texts for vernacular or classical literature can also benefit students in tackling less familiar linguistic forms, while simultaneously providing stimulating “language, culture and metacognition” learning (Armstrong, 2015, pg. 8).

In summation, Hirosaki University’s new curriculum is a mandate for educators to rethink the ways we teach the global and the local and help students develop critical thinking skills. I offer local literature as one field in which the oppositions between the local, national, and global can be deconstructed in meaningful ways, while simultaneously and pragmatically fulfilling the spirit of the university’s educational mission.

¹⁷ Following Appadurai’s “cultural flows” and Condry’s theorization of the “*genba*”: (Appadurai, 1996; Condry, 2001).

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