An Introductory Comparative Study of Themes of Place and Nature in British and Japanese Colonial Literature

イギリスと日本の植民地文学における「自然界」と「場」をめぐる比較文化的な研究の初歩

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Abstract

This working paper introduces into comparison some broad literary themes which characterize British and Japanese imperial/colonial writing, providing material and perspective applicable to a contemporary liberal arts education in Japan. The study was undertaken in preparation for a continuing study of place and *furusato* (home/origins) in Japanese-language literature, particularly in the context of the Japanese occupation of Manchuria (and, later, Manchukuo). This paper provides context for that project through a comparative survey with an eye toward the themes of colon-becoming-nature and depictions of colonial lands as "no-place place" identified in my previous research. I conclude that differences in time period, time scale, language, and diversity of geographic locations hamper direct comparison, while I did discover some small overlap in the theme of literarily portraying place as an object of empire.

Keywords: British colonial literature, Japanese colonial literature, Manchuria, Manchukuo, place, nature

This working paper introduces into comparison some broad literary themes which characterize British and Japanese imperial/colonial writing. This work will be used in the future to support a more targeted analysis of place and *furusato* (home/origins) discourse in Japanese language literature in Manchuria (and, later, Manchukuo). The present paper, however, is a broad survey spanning the several centuries of British empire and drawing on texts written between the years 1780–1918 in the first part, and Japanese continental writing from the 1930s until Japan's defeat and colonist repatriation in 1945 in the second part.

Reading literary works both as socio-historical documents and as the object of poetic analysis offers tangible rewards for the student in pursuit of a liberal arts education. The broad comparative literary analysis is a useful tool for liberal arts education, as it presents a cross-cultural and intergenerational view of literature contextualized within global historical events. The purpose of liberal arts education (sometimes termed "general education") is to develop in students critical thinking skills across a broad array of disciplines, cultivating thoughtful citizens capable of functioning in intercultural and otherwise diverse contexts (see, e.g., Blayney, 1912; Most & Wellmon, 2015; Lewis, 2018, pp. 19–21). Thus, the place of the present study in the literary, historical, comparative-cultural, or area studies classroom should be clear, as asking questions about the nature of modernity (here, via the interactions

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between cultural production and imperial history) has direct implications on the student's relation with the modern state, i.e. their evolving concept of citizenship. Furthermore, it has been argued that attention to Japanese subject matter—especially in comparative contexts—in liberal arts curricula offers a potential counterbalance to the cultural-imperialistic pitfalls inherent in the direct importation of the foreign educational paradigm (Etzrodt, 2020). This paper additionally demonstrates some of the legwork undertaken to support more specialized research in comparative literatures and comparative cultures.

The vast differences in time period, time scale, language, and diversity of geographic locations poses significant challenges to this comparative work. Yet, paralleling Elleke Boehmer's (2018) project elucidating a "postcolonial poetics," I hypothesized that there may be specific aesthetic commonalities to imperial/colonial literature which inform or otherwise structure the broad genre's more overt socio-political commentaries. To state one of my preliminary conclusions up front, as early-modern Orientalist and Romantic British writing predated modernist Japanese writing in terms of technique, I found no clear examples of the deployment of the certain species of nature metaphor (what I term "poet becoming nature" and "no-place place") which I have previously identified in some Japanese-language Manchurian literature (see, e.g. Solomon, 2019). That said, I did discover some small overlap in the theme of literarily portraying place as an object of empire.

British Colonial Examples

I rely on Boehmer's *Empire Writing: An Anthology of Colonial Literature 1870–1918* (1998) and Gibson's *Anglophone Poetry in Colonial India, 1780–1913* (2011) for the survey of British imperial writing.[1] Boehmer includes selections from about 65 writers broken into rough chronological divisions of "early decades," "1880s and 1890s Canadian poetry," "The *Bulletin* writers of the 1890s," "fin de siècle," "The South African War (1899–1902)," and "later decades." The writers span the globe from Africa to Australia, Canada, Europe, and India, and write in diverse genres including poetry, political tracts, and short and long prose fiction. Gibson's volume has a narrower focus, containing in broad chronological order poems by 39 poets (not including appendix) writing in English in colonial India—although, as her copious biographical background notes attest, even limiting selections to writers "in" colonial India proves challenging in the context of unprecedented transnational mobility.

Boehmer's introduction offers one central thesis: that the literature of empire was not simply taken up by two sides of the imperial dynamic—the colonial versus the subaltern—but rather that empire, literature, and their respective centers and peripheries were all plural. The British empire was so expansive that it necessarily contained competing and contradicting discourses produced by different subjects writing in different stages of imperial development across wildly differing local contexts. Boehmer thus rejects the simplicity of center/periphery negotiations in favor of a multifarious regional network of relations and discourses containing both binary representations of us/them and an obfuscating mixing of fear of and desire for the Orientalized other (Boehmer, 1998, pp. xxi–iv). However, Boehmer offers little interpretation of specific literary aspects of her writers' production, save the observation that white women—often a rarity in British colonial contexts—were used to represent racial (and perhaps spiritual) "purity." Conversely, subalterns were often feminized in order to subvert them to the masculine machine of imperialism (Boehmer, 1998, p. xxvii).

Gibson's introduction speaks more directly to the literary-analytical issues of concern to the present paper. She addresses the literary theming of Anglophone colonial Indian poetry, identifying a pervasive Orientalism (and self-Orientalism) throughout the period, as well as larger waves of poetry of exile, devotional, and satirical poetry

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[1] In order to keep the references list a reasonable length for this short survey paper, works from these anthologies have not been individually enumerated.

(Gibson, 2011, pp. 18–22). She also places emphasis on generational influences, identifying the first cohort of writers to be dominated by fortune-seeking men (Gibson, 2011, pp. 2–3). The case was the same in Japan's first imperialistic forays into the Korean peninsula and northeastern China (Van Compernolle, 2016, p. 166). The adventurers and soldiers would be supplemented by British colonialist subjects born in India, as well as British Indian subjects who would travel back and forth between the colony and metropole. Regardless of the identity of the poet, however, most literary writing in English was produced with a British reader in mind, and therefore poems are littered with footnotes on flora, fauna, and vernacular terminology (Gibson, 2011, pp. 28–29).

There is a long tradition of branding "native" others in a dichotomy with a Euro-American self as less-than or other-than human. The rhetoric of other-as-past, and subsequently other-as-pre-modern/civilized/cultural was demonstrated by the post-colonialist anthropologist Fabian (1983) to be a "denial of coevalness" (p. 31). The resulting rhetoric of civilization versus barbarity, culture versus nature, the native signifier of alterity is often juxtaposed or conflated with nature imagery. This is true of "aborigine" peoples across the globe, and most particularly true in the case of modern and colonialist literature. One extreme example late in the imperial period, Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* (1902), frames the subaltern as an appendage of the land; in a skirmish with the imperialists, the latter seem to fire upon the continent itself. But examples less extreme in their animalification abound as well: in Boehmer's anthology, works by Anthony Trollope, Henry Morton Stanley, Marcus Clarke, Toru Dutt, Isabella Bird, H. Rider Haggard, Sara Jeannette Duncan, J.A. Froude, J.J. Thomas, Floura Annie Steel, Isabella Valancy Crawford, Archibald Lampman, Henry Lawson, Barbara Baynton, Robert Louis Stevenson, and Joseph Conrad either foreground natural imagery or deploy nature (plant and animal) metaphor in their works.

Examples of note fall into three broad categories. First, the animalification of the colonial alter. In a most astounding display of orientalism, Trollope describes "the deportment of the dignified aboriginal [as] that of a sapient monkey imitating the gait and manners of a do-nothing white dandy" (Boehmer, 1998, p. 21). Bird, following form, describes a native Malaysian man as "primitive," but writes approvingly of his "tiger-like" eyes as he hunts and springs "with a feline leap" to battle an alligator (Boehmer, 1998, p. 82). This swarthy figure is quite the opposite of Stevenson's description of a docile and "elephantine" Oriental sovereign of the tiny kingdom of "Apenama" in the Pacific. This king is not only greedy and easily duped by western visitors, but he is also feminized by his depiction as ignorantly donning women's apparel (Boehmer, 1998, p. 201). Froude describes a scene in the West Indies of an adventurer accosted by animal-like natives: "The crews of a dozen other boats then clambered up the gangway to dispute possession of the rest of us, shouting, swearing, lying, tearing us this way and that way as if we were carcases[sic] and they wild beasts wanting to dine upon us" (Boehmer, 1998, p. 117). He goes on to mention the inhuman practice of "a state like that of Hayti[sic], where they eat babies..." (Boehmer, 1998, p. 119). Barker creates a further demonic image by describing a Jamaican man as an "ogre" (Boehmer, 1998, p. 305). Thomas compares the people of the West Indies—"nine-tenths of them were pure black"—to "bees in swarming time" (Boehmer, 1998, p. 122). In a similar gesture toward the subaltern as less-than, Steel describes native servants as "children in everything save age" (Boehmer, 1998, p. 127). Swinburne labels the enemy "wolves" and "dog" (Boehmer, 1998, pp. 275– 6), whereas Henley's paean portrays Britain as carrying out God's mission, England a noble "lion," her colonies a gift of "whelps" (Boehmer, 1998, p. 286).

In the second formulation, Baynton flips the formula in her Australian interpretation: now, it is not the aboriginal, but the female settler who is dehumanized. First, she is derided as a "cur" by her husband before later becoming a "ewe," her child a "lamb," at the mercy of a villainous "dingo" tramp (Boehmer, 1998, pp. 185, 188). Similarly, Conrad's colonial criticism portrays British ivory traders as the victims of an insidious and violent insanity, culminating in murder. The descent from the height of civilization is summed up in the self-appellation "beastly" (Boehmer, 1998, p. 268). Leacock, skewering the would-be adventurer in his satirical work,

aims the following words at his fellow Britons: "Men are only animals anyway. They like to get out into the woods and growl round at night and feel something bite them" (Boehmer, 1998, p. 348). McKay, a "native colonial," strikes back against the dehumanizing of colonial subjects through a combination of revolutionary language and reversing of colonial discourse. In one poem, he rejects the possibility of dying "like hogs" to the teeth of "mad and hungry dogs," "monsters," "a murderous, cowardly pack" (Boehmer, 1998, p. 377). In Baughan's short story, the animalization targets neither ethnic nor national other, but a younger generation who is abandoning its parents' cultural ways. In it, she translates an old Maori grifter woman's names for her mark as "pigeon" and "fish" (Boehmer, 1998, p. 390)

A third category of nature imagery involves the personification of colonial land or intimate interweaving of colonial meaning and environment. For example, Haggard's short story revolves around the reading of mysterious codes and maps in seeking out the hidden treasure of Solomon's mines. The author of these notes literally feminizes the landscape, describing the mountains as "Sheba's breasts" peaked with a "nipple." The adventurer's desire to penetrate the mine beyond the "breasts," would result in the figurative raping of the feminine-coded subaltern continent (Boehmer, 1998, p. 92). Greece Chunder Dutt personifies India as a whole (Gibson, 2011, pp. 168–70) and Manmohan Ghose personifies Ireland (his poetic motherland) as a woman with ivy in her hair (Boehmer, 1998, p. 359). Duncan, an early Canadian nationalist, invokes a plant-based metaphor to explain the latent growth of an epic Canadian literature, writing that "A nation's development is like a plant's, unattractive under ground. So long as Canada remains in political obscurity, content to thrive only at the roots, so long will the leaves and blossoms of art and literature be scanty and stunted products of our national energy." She goes on to lament that Canadian schoolchildren have "only the provincial variety of maple leaf vegetation that they may reasonably be expected to toast [in song]" (Boehmer, 1998, p. 99). Froude repeats the same metaphor with reference to the West Indies colonies, deeming that "the plant of civilisation as yet has taken but feeble root, and is only beginning to grow" (Boehmer, 1998, p. 120). Crawford, Roberts, and Lampman each also alternately invoke images of wild nature identified with non-civilized "Indians" and tamed nature (orchards, farms) representing the order of the Canadian nation (Boehmer, 1998, pp. 164–167, 169–171). In contrast to Canadian nature, which was so similar to familiar European climes, Stephens rejoices in Australia's abundant and unruly natural world, the chaos of which he finds conducive to the production of literature (Boehmer, 1998, pp. 189–191).

Other pervasive images spread throughout the volumes include discourses of civilization and enlightenment, racialism and eugenics, as well as a smaller number of machinic metaphors. Poets and writers used these broad categories to address topics of developing nationalism and Britain's "white man's burden" (literally the title of one of Rudyard Kipling's poems) (Boehmer, 1998, p. 273).

Yet, among all of the writers cited above, few used plant or animal metaphors to describe the colonial self. Rabindranath Tagore obliquely identifies poets with "bees" plying their "minstrelsy" (Gibson, 2011, p. 315), as George Anderson Vetch used the image of a frail canary to parallel his personal exile from Scotland (Gibson, 2011, pp. 92–93). Similarly, "cosmopolitan" poet Toru Dutt implies the equation between poet and plant in her opening lines "The flowers look loveliest in their native soil / Amid their kindred branches..." (Gibson, 2011, pp. 297). Perhaps Lawrence Hope's poem "Atavism" provides the most direct and literal figure of the animal-self, as the three short stanzas are written from the perspective of some predatory animal (a tiger?) on the hunt. This de-humanization of the poet is further complicated by the humanization of the "Kadapu tree / That bled as a man might bleed" (Gibson, 2011, p. 325).

Japanese-Language Manchurian Examples

My survey of Japanese-language colonial literature in Manchuria draws from a wider range of sources. As they

lie closer to the heart of my ongoing project, the readings of the Japanese works are closer than those above. The two main literary magazines of the Manchukuo period (1932–1945) were *Manshū Roman* (located in Shinkyō) and *Sakubun* (based in Dairen [Dalian]). For the purposes of this survey, I have also looked to literary anthologies, including Aoki Minoru's *Manshū nite*, Asami Fukashi's *Miyaohoi*, Akihara Katsuji's *Yoru no Hanashi*, Takagi Kyōzō's collected works, Sakai Enji's *Gakeppuchi no uta*, and Shūeisha's *Senka Manshū ni agaru*. This broad collection of writers includes some native Japanese who migrated to Manchuria, some born on the Asian mainland, some who toured Manchuria and other colonies, and, to a limited extent, subaltern writers proficient in Japanese language. My readings focus again on nature metaphor and the topic of place.

The first striking theme, the impetus for this entire study, is the depiction of poet/writer becoming-nature. The nature of "becoming" in my reading straddles that of conventional metaphor and a Deleuzian state of immanence. This latter conception is based on a post structural subjectivity, an understanding of human being to be an ensemble of patterns of action. "Becoming-animal" in this sense does not mean mimicry or physical transformation, but rather the incorporation of patterns of being involving (for example) animal life (Deleuze & Guattari, 1986, pp. 271–360). The most deceptively obvious example of this image is Anzai Fuyue's "*Haru*" (Spring) (Ellis, 2004, p. 486). The poem obliquely implies a parallelism between the poet and butterfly, whereas the examples I draw from below tend to adopt the point of view of the animal/plant in a much more direct way. Still, the animal and plant imagery in my survey tends to fall more in line with conventional metaphor than Deleuze's scheme; however, the metaphor is deployed in demonstration of a quality of what one might term "becoming-Manchuria." In this way, we can already expect to find a contrast with the majority of nature metaphor deployment identified above in British colonial literature, which either takes the subaltern as its object or posits the colonial in a subjective struggle against the new environment.

Takagi Kyōzō's use of becoming-nature began development in his Manshū poetry (c.f. *Wa ga chinkonka* (My personal requiem), Takagi, 1983–1990, Vol. 2, pp. 11–52), but the technique is crystallized most clearly in the short story "*Fūjin*" (Dust in the wind) (Takagi, 1983–1990, Vol. 1, pp. 75–87). Most of the named characters use kanji for animals (monkey, shark, tiger), have an animal nickname (tanuki, sea squirt, white sow) or are described as having the behaviors of an animal (guinea pig). This most salient theme is explored in the dueling nicknames of protagonist Saruwatari "The Tanuki" and his foil Torazō "The Sea Squirt." Both nicknames are contradictions: they should represent deterritorialization (the tanuki's transformative *henge* magic, the sea squirt's metamorphosis from larva to ventricle), but are explored to a necessary end not of transcendence, but of arrest. The sea squirt evolves into an immobile and repulsive ventricle (just as Torazō becomes bedridden and disfigured by syphilis): it is a symbol of arrest and decline. The characters discuss the tanuki in connection with the "Bunpuku chagama" fairy tale—a magical transforming tanuki who becomes stuck in a half-evolved state. Over the course of the story, both men seem to have glimpses of becoming but this never is fully realized in a liberating deterritorialization. In this and other stories, Takagi compares colonial subjects like himself to fallen leaves to be tossed upon the winds of history, as well as deploying images of becoming a plant in several poems.

Sakai Enji's collection of poems *Gakeppuchi no uta* contains one work about becoming plant, as well as several which utilize images from insect life. In "Sabaku no shokubutsu" (Desert plant), a rider abandons his horse and finds himself buried in the desert sands. In doing so, he effectively transforms into a rotting vegetation in the inhospitable continental landscape (Sakai, 1967, pp. 24–25). Other works in the volume are specifically interested in insects and reptiles, written from the perspective of a locust, long-horned grasshopper, dragonfly, slug, and serpent (and one brief, antagonistic mention of birds). They represent the poverty, smallness, and powerlessness of the poet. "*Namekuji no uta*" (slug's song) is the clearest articulation of his project (Sakai, 1967, pp. 28–31). By taking the form of a slug, something kicked about by the boots of men and run over by carriages and automobiles,

he articulates the colonial poet's insignificance and impotence. Provocatively, he chooses an insect whose shape is that of an amorphous blob; it is repulsive, but also undefined. It begins primed to become a "body without organs," a deterritorialized subject-becoming, and ultimately, showered with salty tears, begins to dissolve the borders of that body into the world around it. The fear pervading this work signals deterritorialization, perhaps in a socio-political context of surrendering the poet's national identity.

Akihara Katsuji's "*Yoru no hanashi*" (a story at night, 2012) offers another minor example, this time of becoming-plant. Akihara was intensely concerned with the problem of Japanese "home," and wrote critically about the needs and methods of creating new emotional ties on the continent. In this short story, the protagonist grapples with the loss of his home in Japan and concludes that he must plant new trees in the barren landscape of Manchuria (Katsuji, 2012, p. 65). The concept of planting Japanese trees in the empty Manchurian landscape was not unique to him. However, he goes further, expounding upon a theory of "transplantation," writing:

> I once read something that described education as the extracting of the various roots that humans lay down. It said that etymology of a word meaning "to educate" is to "extract roots." To cite in more detail, the true meaning of education is the freeing oneself of the environment (*kankyō*) which gives form to human character. Many people, at least forty years ago, certainly heard these words. I, too, learned them, and repeated them myself. Not "native place" (*kokyō*), but "second home" (*ikyō*): among trees and bushes, those that have experienced more transplantations have improved in value proportionally. I, too, recognize that stunning truth. In this story tonight, I at least wanted to clearly bring this idea out in relation to naichi and Manshū. However our thinking is, we are compelled to walk along this path. We must raise authentic Japanese people from the new Manchurian continent (Katsuji, 2012, p. 69).

A subsequent work, "*Kawa to yama*" (rivers and mountains), depicts a Japanese gone partly native, living in the mountains as a logger. After a life-threatening encounter with bandits, he is forced to return to civilization from the mountains. In that moment, the narrator opines, "But of course [the Japanese man] yearned to cry out, 'Since you've come all the way to Manchuria, put down some roots here (*ne wo hayashitamae*)!'" (Katsuji, 2012, p. 80). Unfortunately, the theme of poet becoming-plant and becoming-animal so strong in the works of Akihara, Sakai, and Takagi do not appear with regularity in other period works I have surveyed.

I divide the second broad theme of interest—that of place—again into the theme of "home" or "lost home" (*furusato, kokyō*) and "no-place place." The former aligns with the topic of British "exile" poets and was a central issue of Japanese colonial literature as well (Kawamura, 1990; Wakamatsu, 2007). The topic of lost home—and the necessity of building a new home in colonial lands—was addressed in different ways depending on the writer's political position. Establishing an image of "no-place place" is a precondition for developing "home" in a foreign land; Japanese writers had to conceive of their actions as setting and populating a frontier space rather than of displacing prior occupants.

Tokunaga Sunao's "Sen'itai" (advance unit) is a perfect example of the political messaging worked into contemporary literature. The story follows a character attached to a *kaitaku* (development/colonization) unit. He is heavily afflicted with homesickness throughout and is finally repatriated after a firefight with some "bandits" and suffering post-traumatic stress disorder. When the man returns to Japan, he finds his home village preparing a village division immigration plan (*bunson iju keikaku*) (Tokunaga, 2012, p. 116). The narrator laments that the men had left home with the goal of building a new *furusato*, but that it was impossible to achieve without women or children (Tokunaga, 2012, p. 121). At the conclusion of the novella, the protagonist has a change of heart and finds a new desire to "return home" to Manchuria. Importantly, the place of Manchuria is discursively vacated, described as an "ocean" (*umi*) (Tokunaga, 2012, p. 111). Depopulated in the colonist's mind, the land lay open, awaiting settlement. The oceanic image—that of a barren landscape awaiting Japanese occupation—is brought to

fruition in Kitamura Kenjirō's novella "Shunren" (celebrating Chinese new years) in which the "wasteland" of Hailar (in inner Mongolia) is developed into the country's first airport (Tokunaga, 2012, p. 260).

The home village plan for "division immigration" or the creation of branch villages depicted by Tokunaga is historically accurate. These plans, described in detail and typologized by Futamatsu Hiroki (2015, pp. 64–95), were intended to further the project of Japanese empire and to alleviate the burden of the overpopulated Japanese countryside through mass emigration. The most famous and extreme example was that of Ōhinata Village, the eponymous subject of a novella by Wada Tsutō (1964). The piece addresses the themes of *furusato* and the place of Manchuria directly: when the village decides to split and send half of its inhabitants overseas, they are enticed by letters from the advance unit describing the land as heaven on earth, full of endless potential (Tsutō 1964, pp. 160–162). In this case, the author acknowledges that 3000 Manchurians and 1000 Koreans live in their destination; however, they are treated as exploitable labor and a potential source of friction down the road—not as legitimate occupants of the land (Tsutō 1964, p. 164). Ultimately, many settler-colonists would become dependent upon the exploitable labor of their neighbors (Kawamura, 1990, 54–55). In terms of creating a new *furusato* abroad, the members of Ōhinata Village bring all of their possessions, including junk, because these things carry the proverbial blood, sweat, and tears (*te no abura, teaka*) of their ancestors. One woman is seen bringing her family's Buddhist mortuary tablets (*ihai*), reflecting the goal of establishing a new spiritual connection to the land (Wada, 1964, pp. 168–169). It bears note that this propagandistic work is virtually absent of conflict: the village is suffering from overpopulation and poverty, and when one of its patriotic sons suggests the bold plan, there is barely a hint of hesitation among them. Conversely, Aoki Minoru offers a critique of the literary discourse of Japanese second homes (*ikyō*) by invoking the selfsame trope of spiritual home, writing in one short tale of an elderly Manchurian man decrying Japanese development, as it prevents his (dead) son's soul from recognizing and returning home (Aoki, 1980, p. 167).

In order for Manchuria to be discursively constructed as a potential "home" for Japanese settler-colonists, it had to first be vacated of inhabitants, culture, history—in other words, its placeness: it had to be reconstructed as a no-place place. I have discovered some instances of this framing throughout literature of the period, as well as during the repatriation period—Abe Kōbō's 1957 novel being a superlative example. From the colonial period, Aoki Minoru's (1980) characters gaze upon an empty and monotonous scenery from their train car in "Ajia nite" (it happened in Asia) This is perhaps contradicted in the subsequent text "Manshū nite" (it happened in Manchuria), in which the trip into the heart of Japanese-developed Manchuria becomes progressively populated with landscape and civilizational details. He reproduces the more familiar oceanic trope in "Kōya no naka ni"—literally locating the Japanese protagonist "In the Steppes"—describing the small village as an "island" in a "sea" of nothing (Aoki, 1980, p. 193). Contemplating his isolation, the first-person protagonist muses that "I am suffocated by a feeling like we've been left at the bottom of a deep ocean" (Aoki, 1980, p. 204).

Questions of the connections between land, place, and home can be pursued further into the realm of the legal and phenomenological relation between Japan, continentals, and Manchuria. Many of the stories collected in *Miyahoi*, for example, feature characters subsisting on income from land or rents rather than labor, recalling the Marxian critique of the liquefying effects of capital. Tomita Hisashi's "Sasōchi" (grass and dunes, 2000), reprinted in the same volume, is an extended rumination on the complex relationship between land, ethnic groups, and the belatedness of the Mongolian society of northern Manchuria. The story opens on a no-place place image of a dry riverbed and follows several years in the life of a young Mongolian boy as he witnesses the failures of the traditional Banner government to protect his clan from Chinese migrants. The crucial cultural conflict is in the Mongolians' nomadic lifestyle and communal ownership of land, versus the sedate farming Chinese. The story critically poses the Mongolians and Chinese along different stages of development, reflected through their relationship to place.

The implication is that Japanese capitalism, represented by the highly developed cities of Dairen and Shinkyō (both absent from the novella), is a stage further along the historical development of the Asian mainland.

Concluding Observations

The Manchurian land itself was a major economic objective of the imperial Japanese state. Establishing branch villages or otherwise supporting mass emigration was an effective avenue for alleviating population burden on the Japanese countryside while simultaneously developing a massive industry of cash cropping to support the empire (Bix, 1972; Driscoll, 2010). Although of a different time in terms of period and scale, these objectives followed the model previously set by western European colonial powers. And just as the British empire was often concerned with the "white man's burden," Japan aggressively pursued its project of civilization and enlightenment throughout its empire. Thus, we can expect to find certain parallels in cultural production as well.The above reading in colonial literature paid special attention to mobilizations of images of home, land, and nature. This study was largely inspired by the early discovery of Takagi Kyōzō and Sakai Enji's depictions of the colonist-settler self as de-humanized or otherwise integrated into the Manchurian landscape. Depictions of the colonial space of Manchuria often additionally paint it as a no-place place awaiting Japanese development into a second "home." The images of writer becoming-nature suggest something of the transplantation of colonists into that empty scene.

That said, as I mention in the introductory paragraphs to this report, the literary techniques of the largely Romantic and Orientalist British writers simply do not track strongly enough with those of the modernist Japanese writers of the early- to mid-twentieth century to draw a one-to-one comparison. The concept of appropriate literary material, literary subjectivity, and political dimensions of writing in the two cases are too disparate. Perhaps reading in a contemporary imperialistic context, say that of Nazi Germany, may offer more parallels to the Japanese case. Still, in both the British and Japanese texts we can observe the perhaps obvious correlation between the transplanted writer and place, where "place" is often strongly colored by nature and othered indigenous populations.

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