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Abstract

The study of Asian cultures from the Western academy has been characterized as Orientalism, the 'goods' in knowledge a cultural parallel to the territorial gains won in the heyday of Western colonialism. For some key Euro-Americans, knowing the foreign Other was an antidote to a perceived dead end of Western science and rationalism. Simply put, Asia resonated as social and philosophic plenitude. In this regard, premodern Japanese poetry, with its 1300 year-old, lyrical tradition, was seen as a tradition of immanence and, therefore, as a welcomed alternative to Western philosophic abstraction. Countering this, I suggest that *utamakura* (canonized, poetic place names) as a regulative, interpretive category from the earliest 7th century anthology of the *Manyoshu* on through the medieval period ending in the 17th century suggests a formidable idealist tradition, which regulated expectations and experience of travel in the premodern period.

One consequence in the collapse of epistemological unity introduced earlier under the anti-Western, multicultural impact of postmodern discourse, is the revamping of Oriental exoticsm. Seemingly out of keeping with the initial postmodern project (dissolution of the subject in history, non-linear narrative), nevertheless, a new variation on the old theme of exoticizing Otherness emerged, originating from those who seek an alternative to Western rationalism.[1] In this light, 'Asia,' more specifically, 'Japan,' is read as a tradition of immanence, with a space/time axis of meaning that is immediate, not needing justification in a transcendent framework. My purpose is to critique the homogenizing gesture of Western postmodernism that ironically levels cultural difference to sameness - a sameness that, in the end, reflects more of the philosophic bias of the "exoticizer" than the particular culture at hand.

[1]This compares with the widely familiar exoticism of "the Japanese economic miracle," attributed to vestiges of feudal, samurai-warrior ethics and a "Japanese" sense of family, homogeneity and cooperation in the manager/employer relationship. Disregarded are the well-documented labor strikes in the 1910's-1920's, as well as, the actual minority of companies fulfilling the larger "family" role. The present lifetime employment, wide ranging benefits etc. all came in response to the labor crisis 65 years ago, not as a "natural" expression of an "indigenous cultural trait." Somewhat more sophisticated, however, are the current arguments comparing a secular Confucianism with the Weberian formulation of the "Protestant Spirit."

The contention is that postmodernism universally applies notions of pluralism that requires an Oriental 'straw man' to situate the Western experience of cultural and philosophic fragmentation; postmodern pluralism can never be a clear break from its own past. On the contrary, a definition of postmodernism, "incredulity toward metanarratives,"[2] remains, by default, framed by the failed attempt towards narrative totality. Skepticism and fragmentation would be meaningless distinctions without the larger context of faith and unity; they mutually define each other, in the present as an expression of Western self-doubt, dating back to the colonial period.

For this reason, hospitable gestures of the multi-cultural kind actually conceal the fact that Western grand narrative slips in through a backdoor, the unsuspected shared context of defeat for all Others who take up the postmodern invitation. It is this wholesale leveling of distinctions under the guise of being more egalitarian, perhaps more democratic, that seems to shortchange the fact that narrative texts from diverse cultures have their own variant traditions

[2]Jean-Francois Lyotard, The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge (Minneapolis: U. of Minnesota, 1985), p. xxiv.

and histories. The characteristics peculiar to a certain narrative form must, initially, be read on its own syntactic/semantic terms, or else run the risk of allowing a global, metanarrative interpretation to recontextualize it. Thus, there is not only an historicism, but many historicisms which need to be separately recognized and dealt with in order to truly see "the particular epoch, the particular life, the particular work,"[3] coming out of a particular narrative tradition. Otherwise, speaking primarily of the Japanese case, it does seem presumptuous to ahistorically lift another culture's narrative form, and reevaluate, therefore reappropriate, it within a structuralist methodology. This kind of all encompassing gesture, seemingly compassionate in its inclusiveness, may be as equally grand and totalizing as any developmental modernist historicism, except for the added nihilism and cynicism towards the project of culture, as such. Thus, postmodernist pluralism may be better seen as a radical, nostalgic[4] gesture that redefines, renames and recategorizes 'the present' narrative of Others 'a past' that is the Western rationalist project. As such, postmodernism has the outward appearance of an

[3]Walter Benjamin, "Edward Fuchs; Collector and Historian," One Way Street,(New York)
[4]Fredric Jameson, foreward, p. xii.

extreme egalitarianism, but an inner life that is informed by a standard notion of modernist progress, albeit defeated. This failure of modernism to deliver its goods characterizes aestheticized diffusion of the postmodern:

> ...religious fellow-travelling proceeds from a sense of the weakness of religion. Modern religious fellow-travelling is nourished on the awareness that the contemporary religious communities are on the defensive; thus, to be anti-religious (like being a feminist) is old hat. Now one can afford to look on sympathetically and derive nourishment from whatever one can find to admire. Religions are converted into 'religion,' as painting and sculpture of different periods and motives are converted into 'art.' For the modern post-religious man the religious museum, like the world of the modern spectator of art, is without walls; he can pick and choose as he likes and be committed to nothing but his spectatorship.[5]

Although Sontag is addressing religious fellow-traveling of the 1950's-1960's, there is, I believe, a similarity in the consequences that follow loss of belief, whether religious or secular. Likewise, for postmodernism, there is a pluralism without a boundary, allowing for a proliferation of denatured options and alternatives. Instead of honoring differences, this more 'open' approach stems from a reductive stylization or aestheticization of culture, a commodification of ideas. Thus, pluralism's equalizing gesture, by leveling individual narratives into a general, abstract

[5]Susan Sontag, "Piety without Content," Against Interpretation (New York: Dell, 1981), p. 250-51.

idealization, produces an inconsequential subject, for whom the critical faculty has been disengaged from the discussion of truth. Political passivity is reinforced by turning the question of truth into that of fashion. Ultimately, therefore, both grand narrative or failed grand narrative operate from an aestheticization of culture that renders impotent any specific culture's narrative possibilities or implications. Further, there is a greater loss of clarity: the former polarization of the religious versus the secular was more clearly discernible, whereas a culturally diffuse situation that masks its metanarrative presuppositions is that much harder to identify and deal with. With circumstances this ill defined, quite possibly, pluralistic 'options' really mean 'no options,' all the while concealing the metanarrative hegemony in the guise of the plural, the collective:

> The collective language attractive to the writer who suspects his isolation of romanticism, is no less romantic: he usurps the voice of those for whom he cannot speak directly, as one of them, because of his language, through reification, is as divorced from them as all are from each other; because the present form of the collective is in itself specchless.[6]

[6]Theodor Adorno, Minima Moralia (New York: Verso, 1978), p. 220

> ...the formal problem involved might be expressed this way: how to do without narrative by means of narrative itself?[7]

Adorno and Jameson are pointing out the contradictory notions that are applicable to the postmodernism's dilemma: a subject in history is assumed in order to deny the subject; pluralism is universalized in order to deny epistemological unity. Within the brief confines of this paper, I propose to deny the postmodernist interpretation of Japan, by providing a short analysis of how Japanese narrativity has actually been categorically aestheticized into transcendent ideals in its own, literary heritage. Of course, differences do exist between Japanese and Western narratives, but the striking "modern" features of Japanese narrative, when understood on their own terms, reveal quite absolutist idealizations and rigid canonicity. Indeed, aestheticization of language in literary narrative has become so categorical that the domination of the subject/poet under the literary canon is complete. Thus, the structuralist aspects of non-linear narrative, lack of subject in history, etc. exist, not for lack of a metanarrative, but rather, because of one.

[7]Fredric Jameson, p. xix

There are numerous examples of codification in literary narrative, but I will focus in on utamakura, "poetic place names," to illustrate the way transcendent idealism dictates the expression of the subject/poet, creating an elaborate aestheticization of language to register meaning within a self-referential language system. As the grand narrative that utamakura signfies is a process of secularization, the lack of a religious world view would not seem to guarantee the disappearance of metanarrative. On the contrary, what appears as a narrative fragmentation describes the extent to which idealization of literature has occurred. The literary ideal ('what to say,' 'when to say,' how to say,' etc.) are so canonized that there is little room left for self-expression, only the aesthetic construction of poetic allusions referring to the ideal. If there is a lack of self or subject, it is because the idea of subject, the categories by which it can experience the world, are so set that it no longer needs mentioning, not because 'postmodernism' is English for 'Japanese narrativity.'

> The Platonic foundation of western thought does not merely authorize, but rather necessitates abstraction. Nothing analogous to the Platonic form developed in Japan. Japanese poetry, from

> the Manyoshu (8th c.) to Meiji(19th c.), reflects a native semiotics grounded in a complete identification of phenomenon and noumenon. The kami ("divine force") revered in the Shinto religion, are the objects (or persons) by which these forces manifest themselves. This provides the model for a signification system in which sign and meaning are one; interpretation implies no delay--meaning is immediate..
>
> ..'Time' is understood and conveyed through specific encounters with nature and society; it does not become a 'structure' of the universe or a 'category' of experience, extrinsic to a given situation...
>
> ..Each moment is an absolute..the initial perception of the object is not the beginning of a progression toward a withdrawn divinity..[8]

Earl Jackson is positing a counter tradition of Japan as immanent and diametrically opposed to the idealization of Platonic forms. Since my argument basically runs contrary to this view of Japanese narrativity, I include the above quote as a background for the discussion. Jackson is arguing that there exists in Japan, a totally separate epistemological order that denies, within its own system, notions of narrativity as traditionally defined in the West. Implicitly, the suggestion is that the current epistemological crisis in the West stems from certain assumptions about truth and the universe; since Japan supposedly never shared those assumptions, the crisis never occurred. In other words, the Western philosophic breakdown is not so much "crisis" as

[8]Earl Jackson, Jr., "Time of the Sign/Sign of the Times," unpublished article, U. of Minnesota, 1985.

it is, simply, "unnecessary." However, my contention is that the self-referential, phenomenological language system of Japanese narrative did not refrain from becoming its own kind of transcendent idealism, honoring the aesthetic codes established in the canon (represented in my example, by utamakura), and not the lived experience of the subject/poet in relation to the external world. All the consequences of metanarrative, including the dominance of the individual under a totalizing system, occur in Japanese narrative. This tension between lived and canonical experience under the idealization of utamakura will be shown by first analyzing two poems from the Manyoshu poetry anthology (8th c.), where the imagery for the eventual development of aestheticized ideals have their ancient origins. Then, the "Suma" chapter from the "novel," Genji Monogatari (11th century) will be briefly seen as the firm establishment of the poetic ideal. Due to aesthetic appropriation of MYS images, a contradiction occurs in "Suma" in which Genji's (main character) actual experience no longer matches the canonized notions of experience as defined by the early MYS images. Finally, a close look at a court woman's travel diary, Lady Nijo's Towazugatari (14th c.), will reveal how aesthetically

codified set phrases have become idealized into narrative form. Lady Nijo's own observations are secondary to the canon's definition of experience. In anticipation of the potential failure in using texts foreign to the reader, I liken this development of utamakura's idealization, its effect on the subject's perception, to cinema or photomontage. In both cases, similar idealism or unity results from disparate fragments made of images of the immanent world. By recontextualization, framing and sequence, these fragments are, (seemingly), radically juxtaposed to create a new spatial/temporal or, at least, compositional order. But, as in utamakura, what emerges out of this new radical project is a potent form of historicism, of portraiture, thus, photomontage was even open to fascist manipulation.[9]

The Phenomenological Idealism of Utamakura

[9]Dawn Ades, Photomontage (New York: Thames/Hudson, 1986), p. 41. Although Ades acknowledges manipulation of photomontage by the left and the right, she definitely favors the possibility of the art form as possessing revolutionary, subversive qualities appropriate for leftist use. My point here is that there is nothing inherently revolutionary or non-historicist about photomontage. The history of photomontage shows that, if anything is clear, it is that the the technique is well-suited for ideological appropriation as such, whether for the left or right.

> The experience of lived time is different from and more fundamental than the mechanical measurement of clock time. The latter is impersonal and objective, whereas lived time is personal, as well as dependent on the environing world within which the subject lives. It is a *Gestalt between* the rhythm of the person and the symbolized, institutional paces of that world...
>
> Spatiality as lived, humanly oriented space is a perceptual horizontal extension. It is more fundamental than any objective, measureable space. Yet it is not just personal and private, but intersubjective. Society provides for certain symbols and institutions to organize spatial orientation, within which perceptual connections then become possible.[10]

In the above quote, Donald Lowe contrasts the various loci that constitute perception of space and time: the individual subject's experience within a symbolic, social order vis-a-vis the objective dimensions of the physical universe. Therefore, in order to understand the meaning of any particular spatial or temporal description be it "nation," "living room," "BC/AD," "century," or "r x t=d," one must understand the relation between the subject who utters the description and the symbolic order of the social reality. The truth about space and time is not self-evident. To cite one example, the word "century" seems innocuous as a critical category, but arguably, came into usage only about 170 years ago as a self-designated notion of progress

[10]Donald Lowe, History of Bourgeois Perception (Chicago: U. of Chicago Press, 1982), p. 35, 59.

following the French and American Revolutions.[11] As a time frame, century was then retroactively applied, becoming a standardized grid by which history was defined and categorized. Thus, what became objectified as an all-encompassing category belied the political conditions that prompted its birth and the philosophic assumptions that shaped its growth.

Equally powerful and complicated as a critical category, utamakura (poetic place names) operate as organizing principles for perceptions of space and time in Japanese literature. Already implicit in the term is the subject/object relationship: over time, the subject/poet layers the material world with varying thicknesses of human naming and labeling. Initially, non-differentiated space is acted upon by the human subject, resulting in an objectified geography, that is, utamakura. Thus, there is a contradictory process at work in the development of utamakura: the subject/poet contributes to a literary canonization of place which then exists as an objectified ideal, exerting authority over the perceptions of succeeding subject/poets. The created begins to define the creator. The perceived becomes a standard for

[11]Susan Sontag in a public lecture, "Tradition of the New; Must we be Modern?," given at Minneapolis Institute of Art, March, 1985

subsequent perceivers. Therefore, how a given place takes on meaning and how that meaning then governs personal experience is the underlying issue. My contention is that, for various reasons, utamakura serves as an axis of perception upon which the coordinates of religious, socio-political and literary signification rest. In relation to place, a subject/poet's own lived experience is supplanted by the literary/cultural milieu symbolized by utamakura. By studying the sequence of literary expression in the corresponding cultural context, it is possible to see how and what utamakura signify. By analyzing the literary devices that harvest utamakura's meaning, the mechanics of its symbolic order can be unveiled. In a limited way, this I will focus in on Suma Bay, outlining the twists and turns of meaning that have marked the development of this location as an utamakura place name. The literary devices (lyrical and narrative) peculiar to each work will be studied to show how the subject/poet esteems the written canon, the deepened sediment of allusion in literature, over personal experience. Thus, that phrases become part of poems, that poems get appropriated into anthologies and narratives, describes the development of utamakura: individual phrases/poems yet recontextualized into codified

form. Not only poetic mechanics, the codifying into form is the "tagging on" of essences. The act of human naming attributes qualities, not only poetic labels, through rhetorical skill. Further, as the emphasis on a place's qualities is stressed, the actual place recedes in importance. In this way, a religious, somewhat more empirically based orientation increasingly becomes a self-conscious, literary one in which no external referent to the universe is necessary. Instead, as storehouses of poetic allusions reposing in a literary and cultural memory, utamakura do not assume a descriptive authority of "what is," but rather, propose an imperative of "how to feel and perceive."

Generally speaking, the development of utamakura can be seen as a gradual and multi-faceted process of secularization in which the untamable, spiritual power of Nature gives way to increasing human dominance. Throughout most of the MYS period, the importance of a physical place was not fanciful as harsh circumstances and uncertainties surrounding travel meant that most people remained within a circumscribed geography. It is the gradual ability to turn an area of perceived chaos and potential danger into that of civility that is reflected in the

eventual establishment of utamakura. The unknown becomes recognized. A place becomes a place name. Therefore, although most places were not known as utamakura until the Heian period (9th-12thc.), the initial recognition of key spots can be traced to the wanderings of the ancient traveller, as found in the MYS.[12] Even during this early period, there are complexities in the changing political and linguistic role in dominating space. Before the poets, there were the ancient travellers for whom alien space meant disorientation, as well as, separation from loved ones. It is the language and context of ancient travel that serves as material for the later aestheticization into poetic idealism. The incantations that tame a wild space in the MYS are generally similar to the later poetic devices that aestheticize into literary spaces. Eventually, these spaces, designated by utamakura, function as a "phenomenology of perception"[13] in which the basis for knowledge is self-contained and intersubjective within a symbolic order of poetic signification, an idealism with transcendent overtones.

[12]Okumura Tsuneya, Utamakura, vol. 52(Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1977), p. 9-11.

[13]Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Phenomenology of Perception,trans. C.Smith(London: 1962), p.XX This is in reference to his idea that rationality need not be transcendentally based, but instead, be founded upon the immanent world: "...the only pre-existent Logos is the world itself."

Acknowledging the concealed spiritual-linguistic properties in the early MYS period is fundamental because utamakura represents the opposite end of the spectrum: aesthetic/literary ideals appropriated by poetic language. As such, utamakura signifies the ontological break from a pre-secular tradition, a growing anthropomorphism in language and outlook. It seems that a self-consciousness arose vis-a-vis confrontation with the divine and social realms. As travellers left the capital (present day Kyoto) and faced an alien environment, a self-awareness surfaced; the religious world view that legitimated life in the capital no longer served as an immediate ideological background, once in the country. Stripped of spiritual and cultural supports, the traveller is made aware of his language, his body. It is precisely this ability to tag a quality like divine power onto language, appropriate its use in bridging the gap between Self and Other that is at the heart of the utamakura issue. This linguistic ability to attach an essence or power to place becomes aestheticized, thus secularized, in a way that smacks of the ancient use of spiritual words. As secular ideals, utamakura come to dominate the subject/poet's perception of a

literary place. As will be shown later, the utamakura ideal eventually becomes an ahistorical, aesthetic category with access, no longer by faith in incantation, but by poetic rhetoric.

Utamakura as Canonization of Experience

In the scheme laid out thus far, utamakura emerges, not only as famous place names, but also signify complex socio-political and epistemological ideals. In the forming of these ideals, utamakura is also a humanism, describing the increasing stature of man's relationship to the divine, nature and the social. In terms of nature, the relationship became easier with time; the unknown and feared became common and, very gradually, travel became an act of pleasure. Though not as obvious within the time frame of this paper, utamakura also changed in meaning as people from the lower classes were able to participate in travel. Where the court's mobility reflected a domination of nature, the commoners' travel indicated a mobility vis-a-vis the social structure. Thus, as more commoners are physically mobile, what is feared as an unknown and what develops as an aesthetic change, reflecting a difference in the relationship and experience

of power. Roughly speaking, the shifts in interaction to place parallel the relationship of art and travel in Western Europe. Sacred spots are worshipped by pilgrimages; the same areas are appreciated as a style by later art majors and historians; and finally the places are apprehended as commodities of experience by modern mass tourists. In either tradition, places are important for what they have "officially" come to represent.[14] In the Japanese context, utamakura have come to reflect a literary canon, famous poems of famous places.[15]

Because utamakura are lodged in human consciousness, there is a certain separation from space and time; one does not actually have to experience a place, just refer to the experience. Consequently, "lived time," actual traversing effort, is less emphasized than the place itself as known by allusions. Not too surprisingly, it is in some cases doubtful that actual

[14]Ironically, too, "doing Europe" comes to mean "being done by Europe" in the sense of having simply been at key spots. There is often, among travellers facing the duress of a heavy itinerary, a sense of sacrificing the personal in order to fulfill the canon: "As long as we're here, I guess we should go to..."

[15]Consider the compilation of some fifty utamakura dictionaries between tenth and seventeenth centuries: Noin Utamakura by Priest Noin(988-1050AD) is a major example.

travel occurred; an entire literary passage may be constructed to simply fill out a diary or poem with the stamp of legitimacy that utamakura symbolize:

> Noin claimed to have actually travelled there (Shirakawa Barrier) in order to compose the poem, but a story circulated that he hid himself during the time required for the journey and sunbathed on his road to make his story credible.[16]

More subtly, one's actual perceptions may be supplanted by what the literary canon holds dear, making for interesting contradictions between actual and imaginary experiences. As these "experiences" became ahistorical, they also became codified. Fixed associations to certain places became standardized with dictionaries published to codify the links: "Mt. Fuji was not Mt. Fuji without smoke; Yoshino became the epitome of spring and cherry blossoms, etc."[17] In such cases where the external world has already been perceived and idealized into a literary self-referent, thus, the subject/object interaction already codified, what role does the poet play in literary production? It seems that the poet's role is in mastery of the allusions that convey

[16]Plutschow, "Utamakura," chp III, Japanese Travel Diaries of the the Middle Ages, Mss 1980, p. 50.

[17]Plutschow, ibid, p. 48.

the associations of an utamakura place. Thus, poetic devices become profuse once utamakura are established. Possibilities for poetic play increase, as the material is "all on the table," eventually even leading to the working of separate phrases into a smooth narrative. If religious ideals and power were invoked by spiritual language, it seems that secular/literary ideals are activated by poetic devices.

Suma Bay

Because of this paper's limitations, it is important to briefly explain the nature of the Japanese anthology tradition and poetic allusions. The MYS anthology of roughly 4,500 poems is the first major poetry anthology and the most unique for its heterogeneity: court nobles, farmers, etc. all contributed to the collection. A century afterward, anthologizing became an official matter of the court, starting a string of collections under the title, Imperial Waka Anthology. With an official court committee, poetry was categorized and amalgamated into

anthology form, thus, reflecting the aristocratic taste of the compilers. Individual poems became known, not for their individual status, but as poems in this or that anthology. Further, within the anthologies, topics like love, travel and seasonal themes categorized all the poems accordingly. Genji Monogatari's "Suma" chapter functions as an anthology in the sense that the novel is largely composed of a string of poems, recontextualized by direct quotes and even worked into narration. Thus, particular places like Suma Bay took on the meanings as established in the anthologies, thereby denying the lived experience or perception of later poets. Suma became known for qualities and illustrative figures set in the "Suma" chapter of GM. Consequently, later poets constantly allude or use lines from already canonized poems in order to repeat the canonized meanings. For this reason, I believe that utamakura, which represents these canonized meanings; actually signify transcendental idealism touched off by allusions.

Politically, in the 7th-8th centuries, the Yamato (ancient term for the Japanese nation) court undertook a massive census campaign (Taika Reforms) of topographic and religious

features in the outlying provinces to the court's five main provinces. Not only physical features, the census standardized local myths found in the outlying areas and replaced them with those of the Yamato court. Consequently, an impressive ideological hegemony was accomplished in which nature and myth were turned into a codified canon, reflective of court culture. The places that the early Yamato census takers established while on the road represented the early precedent for later utamakura, secular/aesthetic ideals that constrict the perception of subject/poets. Thus, I would like to look at the early MYS imagery from two poems and their gradual appropriation into idealized, aesthetic categories.

MYS #947

Suma no ama no	The Suma fisherfolks'
shioyaki kinu no	saltburning clothes of wisteria fiber
fujikoromo	is of loose weave
mato ni shiareba	I am still unaccustomed to it.

imada kinarezu

MYS #413

Suma no ama no	If the Suma fisherfolks'
shioyaki kinu no	accustomed to their saltburning clothes,
narenaba ka	for even a day,
hito hi mo kimi o	might I forget you.[18]
wasurete omoiwamu	

As environment is concerned, Suma becomes associated with several images: 1) the ama[19] or fisherfolk; 2) the burning of salt or brine; and 3) the coarse clothes of the ama. As fixed images creating a literary world, they contribute to an intertextual reading henceforth. Considering the difficulty of travel and the aristocrats who did the travelling, it seems clear that an "edge of the world" experience is being symbolized. As the notes for #947 state, Suma

[18]Nihon no Koten, 60 vol., MYS, vol. 2, 3 (Tokyo: Shogakkan, 1984).

[19]Aoki, p 46, 121; "ama" is sometimes translated as female, but is still unclear. Izumo Fudoki records "ama" as a general term entailing abalone divers, salt gatherers, as well as, common fishermen.'

represented the "hazune" (outskirts)[20] of the capital. Thus, the perception of this rustic, humble setting must be understood from the eyes of one who has left the capital and, especially for the times, is experiencing a threat of sorts. Although the sources are lost, since Suma was one of the outlying provinces to be dominated under the Taika Reforms, undoubtedly, prayers were then offered for travel safety.[21] In this light, separation from love is defined by the clothes metaphor, expressing an overall differentiation of place and culture. This clash of home ("capital") and foreign ("Suma") should also explain a class or cultural conflict occurring. The rather crude texture of the work clothes becomes a beautiful and intimate metaphor for this upper class traveller's perception of himself, of his body: a semiotics of adornment in which how clothes look and feel depends upon the wearer's station in life. As such, like any other statement of manner (eating habits, degrees of bodily cleanliness, etc.), clothes represent culture.

[20]NNK, MYS, p. 312.

[21]Numerous examples, including those by Origuchi Shinobu, are retold in Plutschow's Utamakura, p. 42-43.

Consequently, in both poems, not being used or accustomed to the rough clothes is like not being used to leaving the capital.

Poem #947 adds the dimension of love, raising the interpretive level of clothes texture and unaccustomed to one involving human relations. It seems that the evolution of utamakura entails adding interpretations to an already accepted body of allusions, until a satisfactory amalgamation of poetic resonances is formed. I am assuming that the codified nature of both MYS poems reflect a distillation. At this early stage, the element of loneliness due to separation from a lover is introduced in #947. A fairly complex poem, it points up the tension of being at one place in body and at another in spirit or memory. Finally, the theme of separation, a hallmark of Suma, is metaphorically expressed in the fiber of the clothes, themselves; large gaps (mato ni) between the coarse warp and woof threads symbolize alienation from a loved one. These are the clothes that the traveller is not accustomed to wearing.

Genji Monogatari's "Suma" Chapter

"Suma" employs a rich mixture of MYS images and expands them into an environment. In the process, a courtly, aesthetic appropriation of ancient poetry creates a fanciful literature of eclectic style blending many traditions into one expression. The chapter begins with the self-

conscious recognition that Suma expresses an aristocratic historicity: "people of worth had once lived there..." In fact, although Genji expresses fear in going to a place without a human legacy, "More remote, I fear, my place of exile than storied ones." the fear is more of desolation than isolation. Genji is worried that there will be no more aristocrats: "deserted but for the huts of fishermen, and even they were few." Significantly, the fear of no legacy appears as Genji's boat passes the dilapidated Oe station, one of the original outposts set up during the Yamato Court's effort to institutionalize outlying areas in the 7th century.[22] This continual juxtaposing of city-court versus country-commoner is also aestheticized; less a real threat than in the MYS period, Genji's fears seem stylized and couched in terms of fulfilling a pattern or playing a role. Thus, in packing items for the Suma trip, Genji is assembling the necessary props for feigning rusticity: "He would take only the simplest essentials for a rustic life..He carefully refrained from anything which in its ostentation might not become a nameless rustic." All the MYS images and implications of salt fires, fisher folk, distance from the capital and coarse clothes are

[22]NNK, GM, ibid, p. 31. Also, Aoki, p. 7-8.

frequently used throughout the chapter. "Suma" is drawing way back from the world of the MYS for cultural authenticity: "Boats and voyages are important motifs of death and rebirth in archaic traditions; it can be no accident that Genji having nearly lost his life in a terrible storm at Suma reaches the haven of Akashi in the Priest's small boat."[23] Thus, on one level, by including purification rites, with their subsequent provocation of nature, "Suma" as utamakura fits the ancient world. On a different level, "Suma" displays an aesthetic reordering of the ancient images, projecting contradictory examples between actual and ideal notions of experience.

In the clothes metaphor, class issues and alienation are highlighted. Repeatedly, the fact that Genji is now wearing simpler, rougher clothes with the effect of seeming rustic is mentioned. Not a mere statement of how "clothes make the man," these preoccupations with dress convey a change in station of life ("unfigured silk"), by the travel soon to be embarked upon. The new rustic look from a Heian court sensibility has aestheticized the earlier MYS sense

[23]Norma Field, The Splendor of Longing in the Tale of Genji (Princeton: Princeton U. Press, 1987), p. 67-68.

of foreignness and displacement into the curious or novel. Thus, a far cry from the coarseness of fisher folks' work clothes, Genji's version makes him seem more beautiful for the solemnity that is conveyed:

> Since he was now without rank and office, he changed to informal dress of unfigured silk, more elegant, and even somehow grand, for its simplicity...he could not help noticing that loss of weight had made him even handsomer.
>
> "I am skin and bones."[24]
>
> Genji's dress was somewhat rustic... It was plain garb and intentionally countrified, but it became the wearer...

Besides Genji's body (a courtly ideal of beauty) turning rustic clothes into fashion, there is the transformation of nature into scenery. Like the way Western landscape painting changed as travel became easier, it seems that Suma now reflects the aristocratic ease that produces a gaze or view: "..the scenery at Suma was especially pleasing." Most complex is the narrative of Genji

[24]Interesting to compare with the aestheticization of disease(TB) in the early 19th century. Thinness, being drained of energy, was becoming an aristocratic appearance at the point of their decline of power: "They were created through new notions about clothes('fashion') and new attitudes toward illness. Both clothes(outer garment of the body) and illness(a kind of interior decor) became tropes for new attitudes toward the self." Susan Sontag, Illness as Metaphor(Hammondsworth: Penguin, 1977), p 32.

painting landscapes of Suma and finding them inferior to the actual scenery. Genji, the courtly connoisseur of beauty, outdoes Genji, the painter, while the entire written episode is a testimony to his aesthetic sensitivity. Thus, the change in attitude, the way GM turns MYS rusticity into notions of beauty is, I believe, descriptive of the power of utamakura's idealization.

Further, although the early speculations of Suma (before Genji's arrival) anticipate a harsh environment ("cave among the rocks"), it becomes clear that the real problem is on a social level: loneliness while at Suma and political chaos at the capital. Unlike the MYS formulation of capital versus countryside, "Suma" is ambivalent all the way around. The capital is a hostile world, yet "had its share of pleasant memories" while Suma is peaceful, but nobody for company. Thus, in the end, what surfaces is a sense of the transience of life. The polarization of capital/countryside is being somewhat leveled into a general statement of chaos and recognition of life's contradictions. Indeed, early on, Genji moved women to tears due to the "awareness he brought of transience and mutability." For this reason, aesthetic ideals seem not

terribly disconnected from Buddhist concepts of life as illusion. Intriguing is how, once the aesthetic has been liberated, the religious can be reappropriated under notions of beauty:

> There was a profusion of flowers in the garden. Genji came out, when the evening colors were at their best, to a gallery from which he had a good view of the coast. His men felt chills of apprehension as they watched him, for the loneliness of the setting made him seem like a visitor from another world. In a dark robe tied loosely over singlets of figured white and aster-colored trousers, he announced himself as 'a disciple of the Buddha' and slowly intoned a sutra, and his men thought that they had never heard a finer voice.

In the above section, the beauty of Genji's voice(his appearance, too) in a lovely setting of nature is interwoven with otherworldliness. The aesthetic and the Other seem to mutually describe a categorical idealism that borders on the religious.

The contradictions between utamakura as an ideal and the lived experience of the subject/poet are shown in Genji's experience at Suma. No longer a place for its own sake, Suma is endowed with canonical experience, thus, Genji cannot help but be self-conscious towards his own personal account. Also, travel has become significantly easier by this time (Settsu was one

of the five official Home (Goki) Provinces by 757AD).[25] In examining Genji's first impressions of Suma, the constant tension between the Suma experience as defined by the canon and the contradictory nature of Genji's true feelings will become clearer.

Actual Suma Reality: a short trip; done before, a known; amusing cottages, pleasing garden and charming house; "felt like home"; mail service; servants/workers; more beautiful than earlier imagined.

Suma Alienation: s eparation from lover; nobody to talk to; troubled circumstances behind departure; new to Genji- he had never been before.

From the study of the text, it seems apparent that Genji knew he was following the steps of past exiles to Suma or nearby Akashi: Sugawara Michizane, Ono Takamura, Ariwara Yukihira, Minamoto no Takakira, etc.[26] Therefore, a tension exists in the face of historical precedent and contemporary circumstances. The question is, how does one succeed or justify the telling of personal experience from the point of view of the canon, when the actual conditions no longer

[25]Biesler, p. 43.

[26]Field, p. 93.

exist? Exile had already become domesticated and, alas, this had all been said and done before. Of course, separation from love was very real, but the ominous note of finality posed by the Suma trip was uncalled for. It seems that the text resolves these contradictions by continually affirming that, although done before, this was all new to Genji, thus, valid as experience:

> --He had never been on such a journey, however short.
> --All the sad, exotic things along the way were new to him.
> --It was a familiar poem, but it seemed new to those who heard him.
> --Genji's new house was some distance from the coast.
> --The fences and everything within were new and strange.
> --unfigured silk brought new pangs of sorrow, for they were
> unlike anything he had worn before.

The sense of newness ("mezurashi," "naritamawanu") coincides with the MYS description of being unaccustomed to the rough dress of the fisher folk, but the difference is that the ontological threat to the body and to identity no longer existed. Thus, Suma is not a bad place at all, but for the separation of lovers. It seems that an actual threat is transformed into an aesthetic sensitivity that experiences disorientation from an angle of beauty and love. Consequently, the poetic allusions almost all center on the sorrowful parting from lovers. The

sea is no longer a symbol of topographic alienation; the shedding of tears, a pain touched off by human memory, is the ubiquitous motif. Utamakura is now an aesthetic category in reference to Heian court life. Thus, the looking back to the city/capital becomes an ongoing reference to play off the location of Suma. To state it differently, the idealization of utamakura is actually the displacement of the outside, the foreign, by the aesthetics symbolized by the city. Utamakura then becomes a consciousness built up over time upon foreign spaces, a rural development of an aesthetic order.

A Tourist Mentality: Lady Nijo's Towazugatari

Book V, 24 (1302-3)

> The prospect of a sea voyage so intrigued me that I decided to retrace the travels of Emperor Takakura, who had once visited the Isukushima Shrine in Aki province... But it proved to be lonely at sea, and when I learned we were passing Suma Bay, I thought of the courtier Yukihira, and wanted to ask the breeze 'blowing through the mountain pass'* the location of the house where Yukihira had 'lived with tears and dripping seaweed.'**

> ..I listened to the waves lapping beneath my pillow and felt the full force of autumn's melancholy+I saw myself as 'the boat vanishing behind an island in morning mist'++. I understood Genji's feelings when he begged his roan to carry him back to the capital.@[27].

Although Laurence Biesler notes the uniqueness of Nijo's Towazugatari (apparently, no other comparable work describes such wandering by a former court personality)[28], the interplay of poetry and prose displays the subject treating herself as an object in light of the canon. Like Genji's self-consciousness in embarking on a trip to Suma, Nijo acknowledges the precedent of Emperor Takakura. Different now is her stated aim in going through the mapped trek to repeat actions, emotions and poetry. The blend of the religious and secular is clear as Nijo's project is surely literary, as well as, spiritual. Also, because of the relative ease of her travel by that time, it is plausible to see more of the familiar activities/mentalities ascribed to modern tourists. The legitimate proof of travel to famous places in photographs attests to the canon's grip on reality

[27]Karen Brazell, trans. The Confessions of Lady Nijo (New York: Anchor Press/Doubleday, 1973), p 227. *: Shokukokinshu(13th c.) #876, **: KKS #962, +: "Suma" chapter, ++: KKS #409; @: "Suma" reference.

[28]Laurence Biesler, The Origins of Popular Travel in Pre-modern Japan," Phd diss.(Ann Arbor: University Micro-film, 1985).

and, more important, on the traveller's mind. The photographs signify the objectification of place that has become an all-important standard of experience.

The working of poetry into narrative--a textured narrative of allusions-- is amazingly close to the style discussed in GM's "Suma" chapter. Lady Nijo quickly ties the voyages through Suma Bay with the exile references of Yukihira and Genji. She intentionally sees herself as one passing through Suma-utamakura, noticing the poetic landmarks along the way, while superimposing the literary upon the actual. Putting on poetic garb, she sees what Yukihira may have seen, feels what Genji might have felt. Indeed, she claims to have "listened to the waves lapping beneath (her) pillow." She even objectifies herself within a poem as "the boat vanishing behind an island in morning mist".[29] Within this section, Nijo pinpoints two key passages from "Suma": 1) Genji's first impressions of Suma upon arrival, and 2) continuation of the narrative sequence after a long reflection of "back at the capital" sorrow. This section clearly shows that Nijo's preference for the canon dictates and validates her experience of a journey. In contrast,

[29]Towazugatari (Tokyo: Kazama Shobo, 1966), p. 619; Brazell, p. 229, 231.

it is striking how two later instances in which her past lived experience actually matched the narrated travel. She acknowledges that a particular dance attended at Itsukushima Shrine and worshipping the Gion deity at Sato shrine filled her with nostalgia, but the moment passes without reflection or comment. Memory of her lived past is subsumed by the cultural one.

Finally, it is not that Nijo has nothing to say regarding her own life, but rather, what her idea of a trip is. She may express disappointment over parts of her journey, but, importantly, the discontent stems from false expectations set up by the canon. The "real" world has become aesthetically padded. The impulse to fulfill the literary canon is so strong that one wonders whether she actually made certain parts of the trip or fictionalized them to justify a line of poetry. The extent the latter is true may be the extent to which these responses seem like clichés, a drawback that results from standardizing, not only images with their prescribed responses in poetry, but the respondents, themselves.

In analyzing the development of utamakura from an epistemological concern, I have attempted to focus in on the relationship between aesthetic categorization and language. As the

central feature of humanness, language's role in bridging the gaps between self and the external world seems rather obvious. Not so clearly formulated, however, is the very notion of the self understood in a highly complex framework of knowledge, which is the case with utamakura. Especially now, with the longstanding Western project of individual man arriving at truth of the real having collapsed, it seems problematic to say anything about the self or the world without ambivalence and, ultimately, without contradiction. Utamakura indicates that these contradictions are not limited to the Western tradition, but characterize, in a unique way, the subject/poet who, in seeking to perceive the actual world, ends up constructing an idealized one. Thus, although aesthetic language and a humanizing of nature may describe secularization, my contention is that an idealization occurred, regardless:

> Reality has always been interpreted though the reports given by images; and philosophers since Plato have tried to loosen our dependence on images by evoking the standard of an image-free way of apprehending the real. But when, in the mid-nineteenth century, the standard finally seemed attainable, the retreat of old religious and political illusions before the advance of humanistic and scientific thinking did not--as anticipated--create mass defections to the real. On the contrary, the new age of unbelief strengthened the allegiance to images.[30]

[30]Susan Sontag, On Photography (New York: Dell, 1973), p. 153.

Though Sontag is addressing the iconography of images in the long history of Western visual arts, my argument is similarly taken with the relationship between secular and sacred ideologies. In either case, sacred places or literary utamakura both seem categorical in their ability to dominate and detach the self's perception, to render the subject as an object. Therefore, examining this idealization, from either angles of the aestheticization of politics or the depoliticization of art, seems irrelevant in the long run. Ideals of either persuasion, sacred or profane, created by human rendering, eventually became inflated symbols of human passivity in the face of a regulation of perception, and the effacement of the perceiver.

More examples could be analyzed, but hopefully, the precedence of idealism in Japanese narrative is now clear. What is intriguing about the Japanese case is how transcendence gets worked out in religious texts (Noh plays), as well as, the more secular travel diaries. Even in the anti-transcendence of Buddhist enlightenment, in which detachment from the self/subject is the goal, the contradictions of narrativity and idealization occur. Noh plays, powerfully renarrating the story of a famous lover or warrior, along with the earthly desire that needs to

be overcome, end up apotheosizing the attachment by virtue of having to rework, for all posterity, the same tale. Also, ironically, the spiritual antidote needs to emphasize the desire to be rid of desire that, inevitably, stirs up the memory of desire. In other words, the reality of a subject in history, acting, naming and struggling with the external world in history, seems unavoidable.

In recognizing, even superficially, the preponderance of allusion making to refer to transcendent ideals and the resultant appearance of structuralist narrativity, one may see a similarity to Lyotard's discussion of allusion and the unpresentable:

> The postmodern would be that which, in the modern, puts forward the unpresentable in presentation itself; that which denies itself the solace of good forms, the consensus of a taste which would make it possible to share collectively the nostalgia for the unattainable; that which searches for new presentations, not in order to enjoy them but in order to impart a stronger sense of the unpresentable...
>
> Finally, it must be clear that it our business not to supply reality but to invent allusions to the conceivable, which cannot be presented. And it is not to be expected that this task will effect the last reconciliation between language games..and that only the transcendental illusion (that of Hegel can hope to totalize them into a real unity.[31]

[31]Lyotard, p. 81-82.

If anything is learned form the utamakura example, it should be the warning that Lyotard's declaration, "let us wage a war on totality; let us be witnesses to the unpresentable..." is, perhaps, doomed. As Japanese narrativity indicates, transcendent illusions are not exclusive from allusion making, in fact, they go together. If this knowledge of the Japanese case could be learned, there is a remote chance that adjustments could be made, theories altered, agendas rescheduled. However, under the leveling effect of postmodern pluralism, such a knowledge (wisdom, really) is by definition, that which is unpresentable and Other.