Introduction: From "The Beautiful" to "The Dubious": Japanese Traditionalism, Modernism, Postmodernism

STEVEN HEINE AND *CHARLES WEI-HSUN FU*

> When some Orientals oppose racial discrimination while others practice it, you say "they're all Orientals at bottom" and class interest, political circumstances, economic factors are totally irrelevant . . . History, politics, and economics do not matter . . . the Orient is the Orient, and please take all your ideas about a left and a right wing, revolutions, and change back to Disneyland.
>
> Edward Said, *Orientalism*[1]

On the Dubiousness of the Dubious

In 1968, Kawabata Yasunari gave a lecture on the occasion of accepting the first Nobel Prize in literature awarded to a Japanese entitled "Japan, the Beautiful, and Myself" (*Utsukushii Nihon no Watakushi*). In that lecture, Kawabata, known for his eloquent portrayals of traditional Japanese lyricism and romanticism in a contemporary context filled with angst and despair, celebrates Japan's medieval Buddhist poet-priests, including Saigyō, Dōgen, Myôe and Ikkyū. He is especially fond of their vivid appreciation of nature, which inspired his writings, that is conveyed through "elements of the mysterious, the suggestive, the evocative and inferential."[2] Kawabata concludes by explaining that his own works, often perceived by critics as expressions of nihilism, actually reflect "the emptiness (*kyomu*), the nothingness (*mu*), of Japan and of the

Orient . . . [which] is not the nothingness or the emptiness of the West. It is rather the reverse, a universe of the spirit in which everything communicates freely with everything, transcending bounds, limitless."[3] Thus, Kawabata associates the outlook of his modern literary efforts with an essential, premodern Japanese spirit and a transcendental Oriental mysticism deeply embedded in traditional literary arts and religious sentiment that remain incomprehensible to the "Orientalist" gaze of the modern Western observer who projects categories that bifurcate being and nothingness, and presence and absence.

A generation later, in 1993, another world-famous novelist, Kenzaburō Ōe, who in 1994 became the second Japanese recipient of the Nobel Prize, criticized Kawabata and other modern Japanese authors. Known for his postwar critique of Japanese society, Ōe delivered a lecture in New York (published here for the first time, parts of which are similar to Ōe's Nobel speech, "Japan, the Ambiguous, and Myself") entitled "Japan, the Dubious, and Myself," which comments critically on Kawabata's speech that is "bedecked with such beautiful ambiguity." Ōe calls into question, and to a large extent seeks to undermine and reorient, the understanding of Japanese tradition Kawabata presents. On one level, Kawabata's address seems to be quite direct and straightforward in its allusions to the classical period. But, according to Ōe, by emphasizing things ineffable and inscrutable to the West, Kawabata was being purposefully ambiguous. He attempted to cloak himself in the aura of an idealized, antiquated Japan—"a time-encrusted Japanese aestheticism"—so as to avoid communicating with his international audience or even with the Japanese people. Ōe maintains that while evoking "the beautiful" conveyed in medieval songs,

> Ironically, though, Kawabata himself knew that such a Japan did not exist; and, in any case, he knew that he himself was not part of that Japan. He was talking only to the fruit of his imagination, his apparition of beauty. And by so doing, he shut out the real world; he severed all ties with all living souls.

For Ōe, Kawabata's nihilistic tone lies precisely in his unwillingness to confront contemporary reality at the same time that he is claiming that he will not let Western nihilism "weasel its way into [his apparition, the imaginary] bond that united his very being to what he called "Japan, the Beautiful, and Myself."

Therefore, Ōe contends that Kawabata—and by extension, Japanese tradition—is fundamentally "dubious," or, in Japanese,

aimai-na. Ōe notes the multiple implications of the term *aimai*, including "shady" or duplicitous, which do not apply in this case as they refer to a deliberate, willful concealing of intentions, and also "vague," "ambiguous," and "obscure," which are evident here despite the otherwise penetrating clarity in Kawabata's fiction and in some passages of his Nobel lecture. The second set of meanings suggests an uncertainty or unsettledness reflecting an unconscious ambivalence or a culturally conditioned failure to come to terms with the real world. The target of Ōe's deconstructivist critique of the deficiency in contemporary Japanese discourse about the meaning of the traditional is not so much directed at Kawabata, but rather at a syndrome that infects a wide range of modern authors and thinkers as well as the Japanese people as a whole, who have let themselves be lulled into and deceived by the ambiguity the intellectuals have created. Writers including Natsume Sōseki, Mishima Yukio, and Abe Kōbō, who are widely read throughout the world, have never wholeheartedly tried to communicate the significance of Japan or of Japanese experience to outsiders but are content to stay within the reinforcing cocoon of Japanese self-interest, or to be hidden by a veil of vagueness and obfuscation. Among the main consequences of this dubiousness in the postwar period are a numbing sense of complacency about the need to compensate other Asians for acts committed by Japan during the Asian-Pacific war and the continual quieting of the voices of marginalized and dispossessed individuals and communities who tend to be excluded from membership in the mainstream of the tradition.

Another implication in Ōe's remarks, especially when they are seen in juxtaposition with Kawabata's speech, is that the dubious quality reflects a two-sidedness or a twofoldness harbored within the discourse by and about Japan, which, in turn, functions on at least two levels. One level of the twofoldness is that there seems to be a breach or a setting off in separate directions between two factions: those twentieth-century writers and intellectuals like Kawabata, Mishima, Tanizaki Jun'ichirō, Watsuji Tetsurō, Yanagita Kunio, and Umehara Takeshi, among others, who assert the priority of traditionalism in interpreting the basis of Japanese culture; and those who in increasing numbers are—from what can be referred to as a postmodern perspective—highly skeptical of traditionalist claims as being little more than an apparition, a collective fantasy generated to a large extent by a nationalist/nativist sociopolitical agenda.

The second level of dubiousness, which is inherent in the first level, is that there is a double sense of critique and affirmation, or

refutation and valorization, in the interaction between the traditional and postmodern perspectives in discourse on Japan. That is, the dubious quality of the relation between the traditional and the postmodern must itself be considered dubious, so that there is a dubiousness, or twofoldness, of the dubious. Ōe criticizes the obscurantist rhetoric of Kawabata, who would likely respond by viewing the critique as part of a modern misrepresentation of the tradition. But while these parties may refute one another, it is also often the case that the reverse is true in that there is a mutual support and legitimation of the seemingly contradictory positions. For example, one aspect of the traditionalist argument is that the integrity of Japanese traditionalism has been able to offset and "overcome modernity" (*kindai no chōkoku*) and thereby establish itself at the forefront of an antimodernist movement. For some interpreters, antimodernism is associated with postmodernism, while for others these terms represent polarized viewpoints that should not be conflated.

Another aspect of the traditionalist standpoint suggests an additional way of viewing the link between the traditional and the postmodern. According to this view, the traditional Japanese way, which emphasizes pluralism, discontinuity, dispersion and differentiation without substratum, has always had a profound fundamental affinity with the perspective that has emerged today as postmodernism. Traditional Japan was thus able to dispense with or circumvent the need to work through a modern period—at least in the Western sense of that term—characterized by structure, systematization, rationality and linear progression. Instead, it has anticipated and smoothly entered into the postmodern era. Postmodernist commentators in the West, including Roland Barthes and Jacques Derrida, tend to confirm this aspect of the traditional view by seeing Japan as a decentric or non-logocentric society in which Oriental nothingness represents the absence of a privileged Signified standing above and beyond (or behind or beneath) what Barthes calls the "empire of signs." Japanese poststructuralists, such as Karatani Kōjin, who points to the absence in Japan of modernity in the Western sense, tend to agree with some of these arguments. But others, like Ōe, take a much more skeptical view of what they consider naive assertions that recreate the apparition of traditionalism in a new setting. In a harsh critique of traditionalism disguised by its antimodernist rhetoric as postmodernism, Asada Akira refutes the duplicitous agenda which betrays itself by endorsing a compliance or false sense of harmony (*wa*) with the nationalist-

imperialist status quo. As some critics argue, "when the postmodern 'scene' in Japan is seen as merely another way to express Japan's cultural uniqueness in order to explain its superiority to the West, the discourse on the postmodern can never hope to be anything more than an inexpertly concealed attempt to cover up the aporias that dogged the earlier modernist discourse, even as it seeks to fulfill the role of a simulacrum."[4] The situation can become even more complicated than this because the imperial sense of postmodernism has already smuggled and in so doing distorted Western categories, wittingly or not, into its mode of discourse. "In short, postmodern Japan theory has transformed the agenda of Western postmodernism—which originally was concerned with artistic, literary, and hermeneutical problems—*into a set of highly competitive, nationalistic self-images.*"[5]

In discussing the connection between traditionalism and postmodernism, the question of modernism, and in particular its origins in the Tokugawa "early modern" (*kinsei*) period, must be confronted. To some extent, the traditional, as the premodern, and the postmodern, as a development subsequent to the modern, stand in sequential relation to modernity that necessarily defines the boundaries of their advency and withdrawal. Yet, another aspect of the dubious quality is that the traditional and the postmodern do not only or even primarily refer to historical stages. Rather, as in the case of the argument that Japanese tradition represents an incipient postmodernism, these terms designate modes of discourse or rhetorical devices disconnected to sequence or chronology. In the generation since Kawabata's lecture, the contours of the debate have been reoriented from a consideration of the question of what lies at the base of the success of Japanese culture as a modern entity to the question of Japan's success as a postmodern phenomenon in a way that casts doubt on the consequences of modernization.

For example, in his 1957 work, *Tokugawa Religion: The Cultural Roots of Modern Japan*, Robert Bellah, influenced by sociologist Talcott Parsons, was concerned with analyzing "the role of Japan's premodern culture in its modernization process,"[6] especially the impact of Tokugawa merchant ideology on its rapidly successful economic growth in the postwar period. In his introduction to the 1985 reissue of the book, however, Bellah questions whether the results of that rapid growth—the breakdown of social relations, the lack of loyalty to a *furusato* (home village) or to a genuine sense of community—"undermine the very conditions that made that growth possible . . . [and] whether the newly prosperous life [the

Japanese salaryman] enjoys does not threaten his hold over tradition."[7] It is also important to note that Bellah ultimately attributes any weakness in his book not to anything lacking in his description of Japan, but to "a weakness in the modernization theory I was using." Bellah's comment seems to suggest, somewhat ironically for a sociological approach, that description is theory, or that so-called fact cannot be separated from the rhetorical structure in which its expression is encased. While Bellah challenges modernity in terms of a new appreciation for the traditional, and Karatani argues that Japan has passed directly from the traditional to the postmodern without ever having had to undergo the intermediary stage of the modern, Ōe suggests that the whole notion of tradition is a convenient modern invention, a nostalgic rhetorical flourish. Furthermore, Asada argues that Japan, rather than having skipped over let alone surpassed the modern, is an example of "infantile capitalism," especially when contrasted with European societies, that is just now entering into a modern period.

Aims and Themes

The central, underlying theme of this collection is to explore the implications of dubiousness by considering the question of the uniqueness and creativity of Japan as seen in terms of the interplay of traditional and postmodern perspectives. These perspectives are at times conflicting and competing with one another while in other circumstances, as the issues and orientation are shifted, they become overlapping and complementary standpoints. Japan is distinctive both in its role as a non-Western country that has become highly modernized and more productive economically than the West and as a modern nation sustained by and continuing to promote its traditions. As Ōe's comments vis-à-vis Kawabata suggest, one of the fascinating things about Japanese culture is that, on the one hand, it seems to have held onto its native, localized traditional foundations with a greater sense of determination and celebration than most societies and, on the other hand, it appears to have attained a position as an international leader of postmodernist developments.

Which of these directions is the more pertinent and applicable one? Reflecting the dubious quality, there are several approaches to this issue. One school of thought emphasizes the distinctive features of Japanese traditionality, including (according to Nakamura

Hajime's categories) formalism, communalism, naturalism and intuitionism, as the essential cultural tendencies providing the key to understanding classical and current intellectual and artistic formations. Another approach, which seems to be opposite and yet also in some ways reinforces the first approach, is influenced by Western poststructuralist commentators who see Japan's focus, from earlier times to the present, on empty spaces or nothingness as representative of a postmodern discourse or "text" consisting of an open-ended universe of decentric, deconstructive signs and signifiers devoid of substantive essence or teleology. Yet a third possibility, in some ways a variation of the second, or postmodern, option and in other ways a refutation of this, is to argue against the cultural exceptionalist thesis known as *nihonjinron* ("Japanism" or "Nihonism") by suggesting that the notion of Japanese uniqueness is itself a myth generated by nationalistic and particularistic trends operative at least since the Tokugawa era.

It seems clear that the discursive gap on the first level of dubiousness—the breach between traditionalism and postmodernism—has widened considerably in the several decades since Kawabata's lecture. There has been a remarkable variety of developments both within and outside of Japan and Japanese discourse, many of which are critically discussed in Steve Odin's article, contributing to the influence of postmodern perspectives. Perhaps the first major turning point was the appearance of Roland Barthes' *The Empire of Signs* in 1970 followed by the application of various aspects of postmodern methodology (poststructuralism, deconstructivism, semiotics, narratology, intertextuality) in the works of a range of scholars from the late 1970s on. These works, which are quite diverse in approach and in no way constitute a school of thought, include among others Noel Burch's semiotic approach to modern cinema, Robert Magliola's Derridean view of traditional philosophical issues, H. D. Harootunian's Foucauldian examination of Tokugawa era nativist thought, Bernard Faure's literary critical studies of Kamakura-era Zen, and Peter Dale's deconstructivist approach to contemporary intellectual history involving the *nihonjinron* theory. Some of the important contributions to postmodernism in Japan in the 1980s include: Karatani's semiotic study of the origins of modern Japanese literature, *Nihon kindai bungaku no kigen (Origins of Modern Japanese Literature)*;[8] Asada's work *Kōzō to chikara* (Structure and Power), which, in introducing French poststructuralist theory from a Marxist viewpoint, became an instant media sensation (referred to as the "AA phenomenon"); the wildly popular novel *Nantonaku*

kurisutaru (Somehow, Crystal), a deceptively simple work using descriptive language in very innovative and sophisticated ways; the devastating social critique in the films of Itami Juzo, including *The Funeral*, *Tampopo* and *Taxing Woman*; the semiotic theories concerning Japanese culture of Yoshihiko Ikegami[9] and the hermeneutic philosophy of Sakabe Megumi;[10] and the art of Masami Teraoka, which reworks traditional "floating world" style and imagery to make a scathing commentary on the foibles of modern life, as in "31 Flavors Invading Japan/French Vanilla" and "Condom Trade Wars."[11]

It must also be noted that another major development in 1980s' Japanological discourse was a recorded conversation between then Prime Minister Nakasone and Umehara, leading representative of the so-called New Kyoto school, which reraised much of the prewar nativist and nationalist rhetoric. However, due to the impact of the postmodernist developments, traditionalism can no longer be considered the only or even the dominant view, and it has become complemented or perhaps even surpassed by the postmodern perspective in interpretive studies of Japan. Odin maintains that "against the background of the differential logic of acentric Zen Buddhism, the art, literature, cinema and other sign systems in the Japanese text have been analyzed as a fractured semiotic field with no fixed center." Yet postmodernism as applied to Japanology is a multiperspectival view. Steven Heine's article suggests that another aspect of dubiousness is that postmodernism is not a uniform position, but has taken on two distinct, contradictory yet overlapping perspectives (which are evident in this volume's essays): a valorization of the tradition as an incipient postmodernism, and a critique of the illusory, triumphal claims of traditionalists often smuggled into some form of postmodern rhetoric. According to Heine's analysis of various discourses concerning "sacred familism" (*ie*), it is necessary to develop a methodological approach that encompasses, without being bound by any particular model, the full range of discursive possibilities as well as their counterparts and critiques situated in continuing, decentric hermeneutic interaction.

A major vehicle for displaying the new postmodernist thinking and research was the 1989 collection, *Postmodernism and Japan*, edited by Masao Miyoshi and H. D. Harootunian and featuring articles by Karatani, Asada and Ōe in addition to numerous prominent Western scholars.[12] While some of our planning is indebted to the topics treated in that book, the main difference between volumes is suggested by the respective titles. *Postmodernism and*

Japan focuses on the postmodern "scene" today, that is, the relation between modernism and postmodernism. As the editors point out, "Nearly all of the papers consider the spectacle of the modern and how the Japanese have tried to extract the guarantee of stable meaning from a ceaselessly changing landscape and wrenching social transformations in daily life."[13]

Our volume deals primarily with the traditional element in Japanese culture as seen either in light of or in contrast with postmodernism, that is, the dubious relation between the traditional and the postmodern. Each of the articles, which, after the first two articles that introduce the central themes, are presented more or less in chronological sequence in terms of the historical material under consideration, offers an in-depth analysis of the origins and development of an important aspect of Japanese culture. These aspects include religion (Zen and Pure Land Buddhism, Shinto and folk religions, Confucianism and Tokugawa-era ideology), philosophy (classical Buddhism and the contemporary Kyoto school), literature and the arts (medieval poetry and drama, modern novels and films), and social behavior (family life, suicide, feminism, and sexuality as well as nationalism, militarism, and economic productivity). Some papers deal specifically with key examples of traditional religious thought and literature, such as Shinto ritualism and aesthetics, the literary theory of *waka* poetry, Noh theater, and *yūgen* aesthetics, and the view of truth expressed in the classics including the *Manyōshū* poetry collection. For example, Richard Pilgrim examines the pre-Buddhist "religio-aesthetic paradigm" of *ma*, a sense of betweenness or empty spaces that refers to spatial and temporal gaps, fissures, crevices or intervals in light of postmodern notions of difference and discontinuity. The notion of *ma* is rooted in folk religiosity yet has a strong impact on the literate/intellectual traditions including Noh drama and various applications of the Buddhist doctrine of *mu* (nothingness) in meditation and art. Several articles analyze how traditional culture is appropriated by and reflected in modern arts, including fiction and films. For example, Sandra Wawrytko shows how prominent examples of postwar cinema become a "murky mirror," recalling a primordial Shinto symbol, at once critically reflecting and liberating—despite also displaying the biases of male directors—traditional views of women as self-sacrificing and repressed. Wawrytko focuses on the role of sexuality, the most sensitive and psycho-socially revealing of topics, often in relation to the films' view of the repressive and egalitarian aspects of Buddhist thought and institutions. In addition, Dale Wright dis-

cusses the significance of Nishitani Keiji's Zen-based philosophy of religion. Wright deals with tradition as a realm of discourse, which he argues is independent of and thus should resist contemporary Western categorizations of the antimodern and the postmodern, which themselves may inevitably be undermined, as the basic Buddhist philosophy of existence suggests, by the pervasiveness of the impermanence of all aspects of existence.

In addition to the developments in the field of Japanology, another important influence over the past two decades in calling for a rethinking of Japanese tradition in light of the postmodern has been Edward Said's attempted overcoming of the phenomenon of "Orientalism." Said analyzes the cultural stereotyping of the Orient by centuries of ethnocentric Western commentators who disguise their insensitivity to the challenge of cultural relativism. Although Said is mainly concerned with the effects of Orientalism on Islam and the Near East, his analysis of the structures and restructures of such thinking also applies in many respects to the way Japan and the Far East has been perceived and represented. According to Said, the Orient is never objectively described because it is always seen through a filter of cultural misperceptions or wishful thinking and fantasy about the indecipherable, mysterious Other, so that the Orient is not a geopolitical place but a rhetorical device, an arena of ambiguity reflecting views often unknown or unrecognized by their holder: "In the system of knowledge about the Orient, the Orient is less a place than a *topos*, a set of references, a congeries of characteristics, that seems to have its origin in a quotation, or a fragment of a text, or a citation from someone's work on the Orient, or some bit of previous imagining, or an amalgam of all these . . . [T]he Orient is a re-presentation of canonical material guided by an aesthetic and executive will capable of producing interest in the reader."[14]

An intriquing recent literary attempt to identify and weed out the roots of Orientalism concerning Japan (and China) is the award-winning play (and film) *M. Butterfly*, which author David Henry Hwang refers to as a "deconstructive *Madame Butterfly*."[15] Written over eighty years after the original opera by Puccini, in which a dominant American male mistreats a submissive, unprotesting Japanese woman, Hwang's play tries to turn the tables on Orientalist myth-making. The play is based on a true story demonstrating how cultural misperceptions of the Orient have contributed to the decline of the West, as symbolized by a French diplomat who is unable due to distorted assumptions about Oriental demureness to recognize the sexual identity of his Chinese spy/lover after their

twenty-year relationship and who, in the play, commits suicide after donning the transsexual garb of his ironic heroine, Madame Butterfly.

One of the main implications of the deconstructivist approach to Orientalism is the recognition that postmodernism often contributes to the causes, rather than to the demise, of the problematics of mystification and obfuscation, or of dubiousness in the negative sense of ambiguity and vagueness. As Said points out, "One aspect of the electronic, postmodern world is that there has been a reinforcement of the stereotypes by which the Orient is viewed . . . [so that] standardization and cultural stereotyping have intensified the hold of the nineteenth-century academic and imaginative demonology of 'the mysterious Orient.' "[16] Yet, it is an interesting and important irony, which Said himself does not dwell on, that in the case of Japan, at least, much of the myth of inscrutability and uniqueness is generated by and for the sake of the Orient over and against the West, so that the position embraced by Kawabata and representatives of the Kyoto school is accused by Bernard Faure of creating a "reverse Orientalism" (or "Occidentalism"). Another twist involved in this context is that Hwang reports that he first considered calling his play "Monsieur Butterfly" as a counterpoint to Puccini but abandoned the idea because he felt that *M. Butterfly*, "far more mysterious and ambiguous," would more effectively eradicate the effects of Orientalism. At the same time, it is often the case that the professional Orientalists, who are subject to Said's critique, are the ones striving to de-mystify and de-Orientalize the deficient standpoint in which traditionalism and postmodernism are conflated by virtue of their shared ulterior—nationalist/nativist—motives. But, it can also be asked, are the de-Orientalizing Orientalists liberated from their own biases for or against the dubiousness they observe and interpret?

This situation frequently leads to a dizzying, rhetorically dazzling and sociopolitically disturbing Disney-ish realm in which Orientialists seeking to defuse the effects of Orientalism accuse Orientals of reverse Orientialism, and are in turn subject to being accused by traditionalists of perpetuating the problematics of Western categories they seek to overcome. As Jean Beaudrillard notes, a consequence of the postmodern era is that "all the hypotheses of manipulation are reversible in an endless whirligig. For manipulation is a floating causality where positivity and negativity engender and overlap with one another, where there is no longer any active or passive."[17] Or, to paraphrase Heidegger's comment on the dubious-

ness inherent in the relation between Being and beings in Western metaphysics, "The question has become ever more questionable." Heidegger, who, like many of the Japanese traditionalists he personally and philosophically influenced, is often accused of crafting a neo-conservative romantic philosophy to conceal his support for fascism, responds to the ever more questionable question by developing a ludic notion of "purposeless play." Heideggerian play, based on pre-Socratic and Germanic mystical sources, has been hailed by Western philosophers as a forerunner of postmodern thought and by Japanese intellectuals thinkers for its correspondences to traditional Buddhist conceptions of nonsubstantive reality. But as Faure cautions in his essay on the Kyoto school, the stakes involved in coming to terms with the dubiousness of Japan cannot be underestimated, and we must vigilantly watch for and be willing to step out of the snare of responses that are deliberately rhetorically couched in ambivalent metaphor. "Obviously," Faure writes, "we have to face the problem of our participation in *nihonjinron* discourse—even when we believe that we can remain critical. Thus, even a project like the present book—admittedly a hybrid collection of scholars—raises questions: for it is not clear whether the outcome will be a genuine critique or another attempt at containment." For Said, the overriding problem is how to free interpreters from their implicit, unconscious involvement in Orientalist discourse, but it is equally imperative for Japanologists to be liberated from their participation in the discourse of Nihonism created in the Orient.

The contributors to this volume suggest innovative ways of achieving a constructive compromise between critique and containment, participation and liberation, through the application of critical/self-critical methodological approaches. For example, Charles Fu shows that an analysis of the complexity of the tradition, which is by no means monolithic, yields surprising, illuminating results. Fu is critical of conventional interpretions of the "economic miracle" in Japan and other East Asian countries which stress the role of Confucianism in a simplistic, uniform manner. Fu emphasizes the need to carefully examine the differences in the Confucian traditions in the respective countries (especially between China and Japan), to assess the development of Confucian influence between the Tokugawa and the modern era, and to take more fully into account other aspects of Japanese society and religiosity. Fu concludes by highlighting the "multilayered structure" (*jūsōteki kōzō*) of the Japanese tradition as a key to understanding the possibilities for an ideological revitalization of Confucianism.

While several authors, including Odin and Wawrytko, cite affinities with Nietzschean multiperspectivism, other authors employ the postmodern literary critical category of "intertextuality," which breaks down conventional barriers between text and context, author and reader, subjectivity and objectivity, as an effective tool both to reflect and to assess the tradition. For example, Haruo Shirane sheds new light on the technique of "allusive variation" (*honkadori*) in Shunzei's *waka* poetry from an intertextual standpoint. According to the conventional view largely based on modern (nineteenth-century romantic) Western interpretive models, the 5-line, 31–syllable *waka* is seen as a discrete poetic entity which, in mimetically depicting nature, often evokes earlier poems to express the author's individual invention. According to Shirane's view influenced by Barthes, Harold Bloom and Julia Kristeva, the "*waka* was also a genre that functions within an elaborate fabric of rules, conventions, and literary associations, within a highly codified, intertextual context . . . in which the primary stress was not on individual invention but on . . . subtle, imitative variation of pretexts and traditional literary associations." Yumiko Hulvey, who provides translations and plot summaries of some of Enchi Fumiko's writings for the first time in English, discusses Enchi's modern intertextual allusions to traditional literary sources and to references to female shamans (*miko*) that are radically reoriented from the perspective of a contemporary feminist narrative strategy. Enchi's feminism employs the older symbols and images in ways that emphasize empowerment rather than submissiveness in order to subvert the authority of social and religious patriarchy. John Maraldo shows that tradition, including the Japanese philosophical tradition, is not a static entity passed down over time. Instead, the emergence of tradition is a dynamic process of intertextual creativity that takes places retrospectively as well as progressively (into the past and the future), or is "created and re-created, formed and reformed by, among other things, the translation of texts—a translation as much into the past as of it." The articles by Wawrytko and Hulvey disclose various perspectives of Buddhism and Shinto from a feminist perspective, and the articles by Faure, Wright and Maraldo provide alternative views of the philosophical and political implications of the Kyoto school.

From a broader view, the intertextuality involved in the relation between various aspects of the Japanese tradition can be also seen as a matter of "intra-textuality," especially when the tradition is placed in an encounter with and relativized by its otherness.

Masao Abe stresses that for the traditionalist perspective to remain viable in the postmodern world it must be open and responsive to the differences and criticisms generated by the Other. Despite very different orientations concerning the fundamental debate, for both Abe and Ōe this openness includes hearing the marginalized, alternative, subversive voices within the culture (a dialogical intratextuality) as well as engaging in a throughgoing, genuinely openended dialogue with international traditions, especially Western science, literature and religion (a dialogical intertextuality)—all of which is essential for mutual and for self-understanding.

Finally, please note that Japanese names are presented in the traditional order, with surname first, except when cited for English-language writings, such as our contributors Masao Abe and Kenzaburō Ōe.

Notes

1. Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage, 1978), 107. Said here makes an ironic comment on remarks by Gibb, which Said feels suggest that any attempt to break open the lock of cultural stereotyping that comprises the structures of Orientalist discourse is a fantasy, a wandering into "Disneyland." For Said, however, it is Orientalism that is characterized by the Disney-ish quality.

2. Kawabata Yasunari, *Japan, the Beautiful, and Myself*, tr. E. G. Seidensticker (Tokyo: Kodansha, 1969), 44–45. For an examination of Kawabata's discussion of classical Japanese poetry, especially Dōgen, see Steven Heine, *A Blade of Grass: Japanese Poetry and Aesthetics in Dōgen Zen* (New York: Peter Lang, 1989).

3. Kawabata, *Japan, the Beautiful, and Myself*, 41, 36 (slightly altered).

4. Masao Miyoshi and H. D. Harootunian, eds., *Postmodernism and Japan* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1989), xvi–xvii.

5. Winston Davis, *Japanese Religion and Society: Paradigms of Structure and Change* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1992), 256.

6. Robert N. Bellah, *Tokugawa Religion: The Cultural Roots of Modern Japan* (New York: Free Press, 1985), xi. This is a reprint of Bellah's 1957 work which carried a different subtitle, "The Values of Pre-Industrial Japan."

7. Ibid., xvi.

8. Another influential work by Karatani is *Hihyō to posuto-modan* (Criticism and Postmodernity) (Tokyo: Fukumu shoten, 1985).

9. Yoshihiko Ikegami, ed., *The Empire of Signs: Semiotic Essays on Japanese Culture* (Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins Co., 1991).

10. Sakabe Megumi, *Kamen no kaishakugaku* (Hermeneutics of Masks) (Tokyo: Tokyo Daigaku shuppankai, 1976).

11. Howard Link, *Waves and Plagues: The Art of Masami Teraoka* (San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 1988).

12. Many of the articles in *Postmodernism and Japan* also appeared in a 1988 issue of *South Atlantic Quarterly*. Miyoshi and Harootunian have published a subsequent volume, *Japan in the World* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1993), which develops similar issues and themes.

13. *Postmodernism and Japan*, xvii.

14. Said, *Orientalism*, 177. Note that Said uses the term *topos* in this context in contrast to "place," while in the philosophy of Kyoto school thinker Nishida Kitarō, based on Platonic sources, *topos* is understood as the place (*basho*) or concrete manifestation of absolute nothingness. Yet Asada Akira from a Marxist standpoint accuses Nishida's notion of a so-called empty place of having a "fairy tale" quality harboring imperialist implications; see "Infantile Capitalism and Japan's Postmodernism: A Fairy Tale," in *Postmodernism and Japan*, 273–78.

15. David Henry Hwang, *M. Butterfly* (New York: Plume, 1986), 95.

16. Said, *Orientalism*, 26.

17. Jean Beaudrillard, *Simulations*, tr. Paul Foss, Paul Patton and Philip Beitchman (New York: Semiotext(e), 1983), 30.