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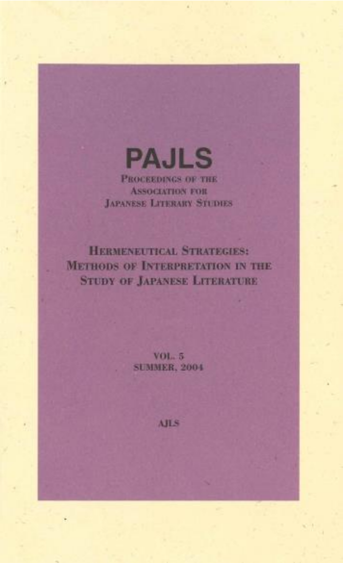

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WRITING THE POLITICAL NOT JUST THE PERSONAL IN TAMURA'S SHŌWA PERIOD FICTION

Anne Sokolsky

"The personal is political," a common phrase used in identity politics and first coined in the 1970s by Carol Hanisch, implies that personal experience is essential in understanding politics. Carol Hanisch, in her essay "The Personal is Political," uses the idea as follows:

> So the reason I participate in these meetings [group therapy] is not to solve any personal problem. One of the first things we discover in these groups is that personal problems are political problems.[1]

A decade later, feminist theorist Catherine MacKinnon applied the idea of the personal as political to feminist consciousness.

> The personal is political is not a simile, not a metaphor, and not an analogy. It does not mean that what occurs in one's personal life is similar to, or comparable with, what occurs in the public arena... It means that women's distinctive experience as women occurs within that sphere that has been socially lived as the personal—private, emotional, interiorized, particular, individuated, intimate—so that what it is to know the politics of women's situation is to know women's personal lives, particularly women's sexual lives.[2]

Certainly, in the case of Tamura Toshiko 田村俊子(1884-1945), one of modern Japan's most noteworthy, if not notorious, women writers, her stories have been evaluated by most Japanese literary critics as expressions of her personal life, and her personal life has been viewed as a stance against Japan's heterosexual patriarchy of the early 1900s. Hasegawa Kei

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[1] Carol Hanisch, "The Personal is Political," in *The Radical Therapist* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1971), p. 152.

[2] Catherine MacKinnon, *Toward a Feminist Theory of the State* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989), pp. 119-120.

長谷川啓, the editor of a three-volume anthology on Tamura's writing career (田村俊子作品集 *Tamura Toshiko sakuhin shū*), states:

> If I can express in a word Tamura's significance, she was a woman who continually violated the model of femaleness. She continually challenged the Meiji ideology of *ryōsai kenbo* [good wife, wise mother] by not having children, being a bad wife, and living by the dictates of her ego. She was a "dangerous woman."[3]

While I agree that Tamura's personal life, especially her sexual relationships, served as a source for many of her stories and essays and her writing was a means of consciousness raising for women, I do not think her personal life is the only source that fueled her literary fire. I believe she was interested in raising her readers' consciousness, but not always did she write about her own experiences to do so, and not always were the issues about female sexuality. This is particularly true in the latter part of her career, which to date has been ignored in most critical analysis of her writing.

Under the maiden name of Satō Toshiko 佐藤俊子, Tamura wrote nine short-stories from 1936 to 1938, when she returned to Japan after an eighteen-year sojourn in North America. As a result of her overseas experiences, she was able to observe and write about the social importance of other people's experiences from the standpoint of a distant observer. In these works, which are either about Japanese immigrants in North America or Japanese nationals trying to survive Japan's militarist regime despite their political beliefs and economic status, Tamura, through coded and nuanced language, ironically challenges assumptions about social constructs such as "pure race," "cultural supremacy," and "unified nation" at a time when these ideas were being used as rhetorical weapons of oppression around the globe. I believe the fiction Tamura produced between 1936 and 1938 reflects the perspective of a writer whose position had changed as a result of the racist nationalism she witnessed on both sides of the Pacific Ocean. Standing on the margins of the immigrant community in North America, but never an immigrant herself, Tamura witnessed with some degree of ironic distance the political of other people's personal experiences. After witnessing the way Japanese immigrants were treated in North America, when Tamura returned to Japan, she seems to have had a different take, as evidenced in her literature, from what the government was espousing to its people about Japanese national pride and cultural superiority. These observations become the source for her Shōwa fiction. Yet to date, these works have been relegated to the margins of Japanese literary criticism because they are deemed inferior in quality to Tamura's Taishō period fiction, which is considered the golden period of her writing. Watanabe Sumiko 渡辺澄子, the editor of *Gendai josei bungaku jiten* (現代女性文学辞典 The Dictionary of Modern Japanese Women's Literature), is representative of the general reception by Japanese literary critics of Tamura's Shōwa period writing.

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[3] Hasegawa Kei 長谷川啓, "Tamura Toshiko hen: Kaisetsu" 田村俊子編：解説 in Sakka no jiden 作家の自伝, vol. 87 (Nihon Tosho Sentā 日本図書センター, 1999), p. 259. All translations of Japanese, unless otherwise indicated, are my own.

> Toshiko's return to Japan after an eighteen-year absence is due to Etsu's sudden death. Under the name of Satō Toshiko, she tried to recover her position in the *Bundan* [literati]. Due to a long period in which she wrote nothing, however, she was not able to recover her old writing talent. Her love affair with the leftist Kubokawa Tsurujirō, nineteen years her junior and the husband of her friend Sata Ineko, became the material for her last story "Yama michi." Needing to flee her past, she left for China, after writing this story.[4]

Another Japanese feminist critic, Kurosawa Ariko 黒澤亜里子 assesses this period of Tamura's writing as follows:

> Finally when Toshiko was in her 50s, as a speaker for the socialist women's freedom movement and as a writer, she reappeared in the *Bundan*. This time, however, Toshiko, whether as a spokesperson or as a writer, was not able to make astute observations about the environment in which she lived.

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[4] Watanabe Sumiko 渡辺澄子 and Muramatsu Sadataka 村松定孝, *Gendai josei bungaku jiten* 現代女性文学辞典 (Tokyo: Tokyodō Shuppan 東京堂出版, 1990), p. 213.

> After her break-up with Kubokawa Tsurujirō, she went to China.[5]

In general, Japanese critics tend to limit their study of Tamura as the archetype of the Japanese New Woman. The New Woman image is a western influenced cultural phenomenon of modernity that began in the United States and England in the late 1800s as a continuation of suffragette ideas, and arrived in Japan in the early 1900s through discussions of western realist drama, otherwise known as *Shingeki* (新劇 New Theatre). The peak of Tamura's prolific writing career, according to these critics, and the most studied part of her writing activity, is from 1911, when her novella *Akirame* (あきらめ Resignation) won first prize in a contest sponsored by the *Osaka Asahi shinbun* (大阪朝日新聞 Osaka Asahi newspaper), to 1918, when after the publication of *Hakai suru mae* (破壊する前 Before the Fall), she left her husband Tamura Shōgyo 田村松魚 (1874 -?) to follow her anarchist lover Suzuki Etsu 鈴木悦 (1886 - 1933) to Vancouver, where she lived for the next eighteen years. While in Vancouver, Tamura wrote poems and essays for a woman's column in *Tairiku nippō* (大陸日報 Daily Continental), a local Japanese language magazine for the immigrant community. From 1936, when she returned to Japan, to 1938, when she left for China, where she worked as a journalist for *Chūō Kōron* (中央公論 Central Forum) and became an editor of a Chinese-language magazine sponsored by the Japanese government titled *Nu-sheng* (女声 Women's Voice), Tamura published more than fifty essays about her impressions of North America and nine short-stories for the literary columns in the major journals and newspapers of the time.[6]

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[5] Kurosawa Ariko 黒澤亜里子, "Kaisetsu," in *Tamura Toshiko sakuhinshū* 田村俊子作品集, vol. 2 (Orijin Shuppan Sentā オリジン出版センター, 1988), p. 436.

[6] The works of this period from 1936 to 1938 include: the trilogy "Chiisaki ayumi" 小さき歩み (Little Steps), which appeared in the October 1936, December 1936, and March 1937 issues of *Kaizō* 改造. The title of the second installment is "Hakkō no kage ni yoru" 薄光の影に寄る一小さき歩み (In the Shadow of the Faint Light) and the third installment "Ai ha michibiku" 愛は導く一小さき歩み (Love Leads). Other short stories include: "Mukashi gatari" 昔がたり (A Past Tale), which appeared in the January 1937 issue of *Bungakkai* 文学界. "Nokosaretaru mono" 残されたるもの(Leftover Things), which appeared in the September 1937 issue of *Chūō Kōron*. "Kōfuku no itteki" 幸福の一滴 (One Drop of Happiness), which appeared in the March 1938 issue of *Shinjoen* 新女苑. "Karihorunia Monogatari" カリホルニア物語 (California Story),

In this essay, I will discuss two of Tamura's short stories written during her brief return to Japan. By comparing one of her first stories "Chiisaki ayumi" (小さき歩み Little Steps), published in 1936 for *Kaizō* (改造 Reconstruction), with one of her last and only discussed works of this period "Yama michi" (山道 Mountain Road), published in 1938 for *Chūō Kōron*, I will show how despite differences in setting, style, and reception by Japanese literary critics, both stories accomplish a similar goal. They both challenge ideologies of cultural supremacy and unified nation that espouse the marginalization of one group from another over arbitrary lines of differentiation.

The trilogy "Chiisaki ayumi" appeared in three installments for *Kaizō* in October 1936, December 1936, and March 1937. The story is about a young Japanese immigrant girl named Jun (ジュン) who lives in Canada. Through the mentoring of a man named Kiram (キーラム), who is a British socialist, Jun is awakened both politically and sexually to her situation as a Japanese-Canadian caught between pleasing her parents' old traditions and trying to be accepted by white Canadian society. Most Japanese scholars regard this work as a literary inferior to Tamura's Taishō period fiction because it is too polemical and the narration often reads like a history textbook. In contrast, "Yama michi," which is read as a confessional of Tamura's love affair with Kubokawa Tsurujirō 窪川鶴次郎 and written in her more familiar *shasei* style of the Taishō period, is the only fictional work of her Shōwa period included in a three-volume anthology on Tamura's writings. Suzuki Masakazu 鈴木正和, a Japanese literary critic who argues for a rereading of Tamura's Shōwa period literature, writes:

> Even today, of the novels that appeared during her brief three-year return to Japan after Canada, "Yama michi" tends to be read as a novel depicting the author's life. Yet, it is an oversight to say that all that is left is "Yama michi"... Rather, what is necessary today is to reexamine the deep meaning held in the words that appear in the novels based on her eighteen-years living in a foreign country like Canada. Also, one needs to look at the connection of Toshiko's feminist ideas that

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which appeared in the July 1938 issue of *Chūō Kōron*. "Yama michi" 山道 (Mountain Road), which appeared in the November 1938 issue of *Chūō Kōron*, and "Bubetsu" 侮蔑 (Scorn), which appeared in the December 1938 issue of *Bungei Shunjū* 文芸春秋.

> appeared in her Meiji and Taishō period writing, such as "Kanojo no seikatsu" [彼女の生活 Her Life] and the continuation of these ideas into Toshiko's final years with the publication of the magazine *Nu-sheng,* which called for the freedom of Chinese women. To date, such a connection has yet to be clearly stated.[7]

Tamura's "Chiisaki ayumi" is a prime example of the connection Suzuki discusses. On the one hand, the story is similar to Tamura's Taishō fiction. It centers on the problems of a young woman who although in a relationship tries to maintain a sense of self, in particular a form of female articulation. Yet, on the other hand, a new more politicized layer is added to Tamura's depiction of this young woman's self-awakening. The beginning of "Chiisaki ayumi" is a mixture of Tamura's old poetic style of her Taishō period fiction in which she included details about nature to reflect her protagonists' inner thoughts. Yet the beginning departs from her old elusive style to include details about that which would be unfamiliar for her Japanese readers—the experience of Japanese immigrants. The story begins:

> Jun, walking shoulder to shoulder with her three friends, left the school dorm. This northern country did not have a spring. Even though trees had buds. These buds became thin and withered, and a gloomy shadow left its permanent stain. (Chiisaki ayumi, 103)[8]

Despite the wintry gloom, the story actually begins in June and summer vacation is about to begin. Jun is watching her white friends shop for beach bags and swimsuits. While they will go to beach resorts and mountain villas, Jun must return to her parents' farm in the countryside to help pick strawberries for the summer. Tamura describes how despite the friendship between Jun and these white girls, there is an understood barrier between them.

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[7] Suzuki Masakazu 鈴木正和, "Satō Toshiko 'Bubetsu' wo yomu: Ibunka kara mita Nihon e no shiza" 佐藤俊子「侮蔑」を読む：異文化から見た日本への視座, *Shōwa bungaku kenkyū* 昭和文学研究, vol. 29 (October 1994): 45–46.

[8] Satō Toshiko 佐藤俊子, "Chiisaki ayumi" 小さき歩み, *Kaizō* 改造 (October 1936): 102-132.

> Jun also read the same magazines and knew of the latest trends in beach bags, swim suits, hats, and travel that her friends were discussing. But she did not participate in this discussion. When summer vacation came, she would return to her parents' farm to help pick strawberries. And she would swim in an old bathing suit in the nearby river in her village. She was just like the girl who had an unlucky fate in the book *Not Of The White Race* [白い人類でない]... When conversations with her friends touched upon their daily lives, Jun was accustomed to being left out. She felt "I am a different person." (Chiisaki ayumi, 103)

One example of how Tamura departs from her usual Taishō period style of ambiguous language and psychological rather than plot driven stories can be seen in the following paragraph in "Chiisaki ayumi." In this passage, instead of Tamura's usual poetic and nuanced language that leaves her intent somewhat unclear, there is great detail about the reason why white female factory seamstresses feel threatened by female Japanese immigrants, who are vying for the same jobs.

> Jun was asked why Japanese women were willing to work for cheap wages. She could not answer the question because this was the first time she had been made aware of the situation. Because Japanese women did good work for low wages, more white women came from distant locations just to hire these women. Mrs. Rebis told Jun in a tone of bombastic animosity how Japanese women were threatening white women's lifestyles and wages...
> Jun listened to the problems of the white women who were criticizing Japanese women. Jun felt their pain as if it is was in her blood. Yet, strangely, she was not embarrassed by the ways of these Japanese people. Rather, Jun felt sympathy toward these women, who seemed so unenlightened and unable to even imagine cooperating with white people. (Ai ha michibiku, p. 29)[9]

In another section, the narrator explains why Jun's father migrated to Canada and the problems he faces as an immigrant.

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[9] Satō Toshiko, "Ai ha michibiku" 愛はみちびく, *Kaizō* (March 1937): 22–62.

> Jun's father, Shōzō (正蔵), had come to North America with dreams of establishing his own business as a way to improve his situation. Yet, he could barely earn enough money to live. When he was young, he did not have the confidence to start his own business. Instead, he lived like a vagabond... Eventually he was able to get his own farm and he called for his wife from Japan... Soon farmers would come to him with their problems... Their problems included: the friction between those who produced and those who sold the products; the unification of white and Japanese farmers; Japanese fishermen who became farmers, but did not know how to farm... The white capitalists, who owned the canneries, promised to buy the strawberries of Japanese farmers at a cheap price. Japanese, thrilled that they had a contract with the canneries, agreed to this deal... For this reason Shōzō wanted to have a union of Japanese laborers to stand up to white capitalists who owned these canneries... Japanese and white farmers had a difficult time cooperating because Japanese would enter into such cheap contracts with cannery owners. (Chiisaki ayumi, p. 122-124)

One reason for these long descriptions that seem to be passages out of a history textbook rather than a piece of literary fiction is because Tamura was in many ways trying to educate her Japanese readership about a world they did not know. Suzuki Masakazu explains the detailed narrative in "Chiisaki ayumi" as follows.

> The conversations are few, and the narrator's explanations are at times excessive. Her tendency was to write in a journalistic style and to earnestly explain the prejudice toward "immigrants" to Japanese who looked down on immigrants. Although her explanations might seem excessive at times, the theme of these works should be seriously considered.[10]

Maruoka Hideko 丸岡秀子, Tamura's peer, offers another explanation. She contends that because of the oppressive atmosphere in militarist Japan, writing about another country's social problems was a safer topic for writers to pursue.

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[10] Suzuki Masakazu, "Satō Toshiko 'Bubetsu' wo yomu: Ibungaku kara mita Nihon e no shiza," p. 55.

> During a time when Japanese fiction was influenced by gathering information from the laboring class, along with the deepening darkness that influenced the Japanese writing environment with the unnatural death of Kobayashi Takiji resulting from police torture, Toshiko's work focused on problems of foreign laborers... Toshiko had just come back from Canada and barely half a year had passed when she wrote "Chiisaki ayumi." Because she was in a fog, it was still too early for her to take material from Japan. Therefore, she could not help but write a work that was based on material from Canada. However, perhaps another reason was the condition of the time. It was easier to write about the foreign than about Japan.[11]

Despite the excessive historical narrative in "Chiisaki ayumi" that seems to diminish Tamura's usual complex literary style, the story is important because Tamura unravels the faulty logic of various ideologies such as the Christianity of Jun's mother and the socialism of Jun's mentor, Kiram. By doing so, she reveals the hypocrisy behind most ideologies that purport themselves to be based on some assumed virtuousness or truth.

Jun's mother professes herself a Christian who believes in humanitarianism. In reality, she is a snob. In the same breath she espouses her Christian faith, she segregates herself from other Japanese immigrants, including a *Burakumin* (部落民 outcaste), whom she deems beneath her socially. Considering herself to be upper class, she despises her life in Vancouver, where she has to live amidst Japanese immigrants whom she resents, though she herself is Japanese. She dreams of returning to Japan, where she believes she can have a better life, although she and her husband came to Canada to seek just that. The hypocrisy of her beliefs is exposed when the mother states that the Japanese immigrants are all lower class. The father attacks her flawed logic by stating, "There are no lower class or upper class immigrants. They are people. Based on what you are saying, you should despise yourself. And you should despise your husband as well. In fact, shouldn't you also despise your great God? " (Hakkō no kage ni yoru, p. 76).[12]

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[11] See Maruoka Hideko 丸岡秀子, *Tamura Toshiko to watashi* 田村俊子とわたし (Domesu Shuppan ドメス出版, 1977), p. 169.

[12] Satō Toshiko, "Chiisaki ayumi: Hakkō no kage ni yoru" 小さき歩み：薄光の影による, *Kaizō* (December 1936): 71-104.

Through the mother's comical sense of class superiority, Tamura reveals the lack of unity in the Japanese immigrant community. Tamura reverses the signification process by having the mother, a marginalized person by Canadian white society, separate from the very group in which outsiders have placed her. The mother's attitude exemplifies what Minh-ha advocates. The mother reverses the "naming process" and "baffles its contours."[13] What Minh-ha specifically is referring to is the falsity of anthropology as a "science" in which outsiders, mainly white men, come to "native" cultures to describe and analyze them through codes that show no understanding of the true nature and value of the supposed marginalized person's culture. To counter this bias, Minh-ha advocates that women who are objectified by these "scientists" dismantle the power behind the naming process in the following way.

> Knowledge requires a certain dialectic of information and control, and I think it may help to reverse our roles once in a while, more for the emergence of a certain awareness than for the gratification of aping... Constantly changing my point of departure or arrival, I trace, void, retrace with the desire to baffle rather than bring out contours. Some lines, some curves may emerge, whose totality will always differ. The further I persevere, the more liable I am to let myself be riddled with doubts...I am therefore not concerned with judging the veracity of his discourse in relation to some original truth—a veracity he always implies through his scientism, professionalism, or "scholarism."[14]

One can apply Minh-ha's ideas in an analysis of Jun's mother. The mother unwittingly challenges the veracity of the white "we" versus the Japanese "other" by choosing to separate herself from other Japanese because she views herself above them in terms of class. In this way, not only is she an agent of objectification, but she reconfigures the boundaries of the group in which she has been placed by white Canadians by removing herself from it. The mother asserts:

> Living among these lower class people in this lower class society is painful. How much longer must I endure this? There are no civilized people here. It is just a collection of society's

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[13] Trinh T. Minh-ha, *Woman, Native, Other: Writing Postcoloniality and Feminism* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1989), pp. 48-49.

[14] Ibid.

> lowest humans...Christianity is the only thing that has rescued me from this vile society... In Japan, there are no lower class people like the people with whom I must rub shoulders here. In Japan there are only civilized people and I want to return to that society. (Hakkō no kage ni yoru, p. 74)

This vocalization on the mother's part defies what Minh-ha refers to as the perceived silence of "them."

> A conversation of "us' with "us" about "them" is a conversation in which "them" is silenced. "Them" always stands on the other side of the hill, naked and speechless, barely present in its absence.[15]

The mother, although considered a "them" by white Canadians, is not invisible within her own community as she voices her discontent. Moreover, Tamura's presentation of the mother through her story to another community of readers, Japanese nationals, who are also viewed as "them" by western societies, enables the mother's complaints to be heard by Japanese nationals that at the time were both the victim of and a mimicker of colonial racism.

The mother's stance is complex not just because she chooses to view herself as different from those with whom she has been grouped, but also because she has a nostalgically distorted memory of Japan. This disjunctive memory foreshadows what Bhabha refers to as a false rendering of the past.

> The enunciation of cultural difference problematizes the binary division of past and present, tradition and modernity, at the level of cultural representation and its authoritative address. It is the problem of how, in signifying the present, something comes to be repeated, relocated and translated in the name of tradition, in the guise of a pastness that is not necessarily a faithful sign of historical memory but a strategy of representing authority in terms of the artifice of the archaic. That iteration negates our sense of the origins of the struggle. It undermines our sense of the homogenizing effects of cultural symbols and icons, by questioning our sense of the authority of cultural synthesis in general.[16]

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[15] Ibid., 67.

[16] Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 1994), p. 35.

The inaccurate memory of Jun's mother is a result of her forgetting why she left Japan in the first place. Yet to survive the harsh reality of her immigrant existence, perhaps, such a fantasy of "home" is necessary.

The mother's religious hypocrisy is further manifested in her racism toward *Burakumin*. One day, Jun is cleaning dishes, after laborers working in her father's fields have finished their lunch. Jun is about to wash some dishes, when her mother tells her not to mix the plate of a *Burakumin* laborer with the plates of other Japanese.

> Among the people picking strawberries, there was one who was said to be a "xxx person."[17] When the mother told Jun to place the utensils he used separately from the others, Jun asked "why?"
>
> The mother responded, "The reason is beside the point. They are dirty so keep them away from the other utensils."
>
> "Why are they dirty?"
>
> "That person is of a different class. He is of a class that can not mix with humans."
>
> "Such a class exists? In Japan? That person does not seem dirty to me."
>
> "Jun you don't understand. Just be quiet and put his stuff aside as I told you."
>
> "This is not right, Mom." Jun replied.
>
> (Hakkō no kage ni yoru, p. 78–79).

Tamura's inclusion of *Burakumin* in this story has perhaps two goals. First, once again she shows the disunity among Japanese in which there is a social hierarchy despite the Japanese government's rhetoric at the time that Japan was a unified nation-state. Second, Tamura is further dismantling the mother's credibility in her beliefs, and thus perhaps anyone's stance of cultural supremacy, by showing how ignorant the mother is. The mother espouses that she wants to return to Japan because there are no lower class people there, yet the *Burakumin* is a reminder that, in fact, Japan has varying classes of people. The mother chooses to see what she wants to in order for her schema of the world to work.

Through Tamura's depiction of the class snobbery of Jun's mother, she creates a Japanese community that is far from coherent. Jun's mother fights with everyone. Her conflict with her husband reveals gendered divisions of the marginalized community in which they live. Her conflict with her daughter reveals generational divisions of their community. Finally, her racism toward *Burakumin* and her disdain of lower-class Japanese reveals the socio-economic divisions of this community. Through Tamura's ironic portrayal of the mother, the false premises upon which ideas of pure race and cultural supremacy are created, as well as the disunity of the "other" are underscored.

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[17] The *fuseji* (x marks) appear in the original text.

The mother is not the only character under Tamura's scrupulous attack. Tamura exposes the inconsistencies of people's ideological beliefs with their actions through her depiction of Kiram's attitude toward Jun and his unrealized racism and sexism. Through Kiram's encouragement, Jun gives a speech to fellow Japanese immigrants who work as seamstresses. For the first time in Tamura's corpus of literature, Tamura creates a woman who has an effective public voice.

> Jun stood on the podium. Though her face turned red out of embarrassment, with all her might, Jun called for the good will of the people gathered before her. She told of her own personal experience in which she had suffered from racism and for this reason, she noted, the life of *Nisei* is dark. But thanks to Mr. Kiram, she announced, she had been led down a path of hope. (Ai ha michibiku, p. 59).

Jun's speech is received with applause and Jun has a greater sense of self.

Yet this scene, which on the surface seems to be a victory both in terms of race and gender, actually is just the opposite. Jun's ability to appear on stage is dependent on an outside source, Kiram, who both in terms of gender, as a male, and race, as a white person, holds the reins of power as he "leads" Jun onto the stage. By depicting Jun's mental and verbal empowerment through a white male, Tamura subtly criticizes Japanese society. If Jun, by virtue of her heritage, is read as Japan, and Kiram as the West, the power paradigm between them is not only sexualized, but also racialized, suggesting that Japan cannot achieve a sense of social equality without the assistance of an outside, in particular Western, power.

Though Kiram is presented overall as a positive force in Jun's life, Tamura nevertheless complicates her portrayal of Kiram when she reveals the unwitting racism of even this most idealistic of idealists. Kiram's impression of Jun and Japan reveals his unrealized hypocrisy. He views Jun as sweet and believes her sweetness comes from an essence found in Japan. The irony is that neither Kiram nor Jun has been to Japan.

> Kiram looked at Jun. The beautiful Japanese girl was looking at the sea. She was thinking deeply about something. Kiram said to her while laying his newspaper on his lap, "I have from time to time heard stories about Japan from Mochida. It seems to be a country that has a tradition of beauty." Though he looked at Jun's face with an expression that sought her agreement, Jun, actually had no idea what Japan was like. Kiram continued to gush. "Your wonderfully pure heart, I believe, stems from Japan's tradition of beauty." (Ai ha michibiku, p. 42)

In this scene, which reflects the title of the story, Kiram's love that "leads" Jun essentializes Jun to be a beautiful Japanese girl with a pure heart, revealing his racist and sexist stereotypes even in his positive projection of feelings onto her.

One of Tamura's final works, "Yama michi," appears on the surface to be quite different from "Chiisaki ayumi" in terms of setting and style. Unlike "Chiisaki ayumi," which is set in Canada, "Yama michi" is poetically set on a mountain road on a fall day in Japan. The style is similar to Tamura's earlier Taishō fiction, especially "Ikichi" (生血 Lifeblood), which was published in 1911 for *Seitō* 青鞜. "Yama michi," similar to "Ikichi," is not plot driven. Rather, like "Ikichi," "Yama michi" is written in a lyrical *shasei* style that describes a couple's mainly silent walk through nature. Despite the surface differences of the two Shōwa period stories Tamura wrote, "Yama michi" and "Chiisaki ayumi," both are an attack against ideas of pure race and national unity. In "Yama michi," Tamura achieves this attack through what seems to be a parting of two lovers. While in "Chiisaki ayumi" long descriptions about the situation of Japanese immigrants in North America dominate the narrative, in "Yama michi," the narrative is centered on how the sunlight scatters on fall leaves, the sensation of dampened *tabi*, and the cry of the *hōjiro*'s (頰白, Japanese bunting) sweet voice as it is overshadowed by the menacing black *mozu* (百舌鳥, shrike).

In "Yama michi," written a month before Tamura left Japan, Tamura criticizes Japan's militarism through a mournful tone of nostalgia for a lost Japanese aesthetic that can never been regained. For Tamura, nostalgia is not complicit with Japan's nationalist and militarist agenda, as it frequently was for other writers of the time, but rather calls for a humanism that emphasizes beauty devoid of political propaganda and nationalist agendas. Tamura evokes this lost aesthetic through poetic motifs commonly found in *haiku* poetry to create a somber mood of parting.

In brief, the structure of "Yama michi" underscores the unidirectional movement of two nameless protagonists referred to solely as *otoko* (男, man) and *onna* (女, woman). Most of their time spent walking together is in silence. The man seems fixated on finding an *hōjiro*, and the woman is consumed with her own internal thoughts about their precarious future. In Tamura's Taishō story "Ikichi," the couple walks in silence as well, but through the hot streets of Asakusa, as the woman is tormented by regret for having spent the night with her heartless lover. Most of "Ikichi" is about the woman's desire to flee from her lover.

In "Yama michi," four entrances and exits of the *hōjiro* demarcate the lyrical prose. With each entrance, the *hōjiro*'s sweet voice appears to be increasingly threatened by the loud shriek of the *mozu*.[18] The story begins with the simultaneous introduction of the two main literary motifs of the work, the movement of the couple toward the reality of their lives and the *hōjiro*'s desultory movement.

> "The hōjiro is chirping."
>
> Two people were walking on a mountain road in an *onsen* town. Autumn had just begun.
>
> "You're right."
>
> The man stopped to look for the small bird in the thicket of the tree.
>
> "Here he is," the man said, spotting the bird immediately.
>
> "Where?" the woman asked. She was having trouble finding the small bird. From a space amidst the trees, the sun's golden color scattered under the blue sky. The top of the man's head touched the top of the woman's head as they both looked up at the small thin branch. The woman searched with her eyes toward the direction she had been told by the man. The woman mistook the outline of the leaves that were thinly gathered together to be the bird's body. (p. 291)[19]

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[18] According to the *Kōjien*, the *mozu* is famous for imitating the sounds of other birds and animals. In the winter, when it migrates from the North to the South, it becomes aggressive about defending its territory and sends a high-pitched shriek from the top of a tree branch to warn others not to trespass. The *mozu*'s cry is dubbed, "the loud cry of the *mozu*" (百舌鳥の高鳴き). See *Kōjien 広辞苑*, 4th edition (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten 岩波書店, 1995), p. 2538.

[19] All quotes from "Yama michi" are taken from the following source. Tamura Toshiko, *Miira no kuchibeni/ Hakai suru mae* 木乃伊の口紅／破壊す

The *hōjiro* seems to be a voice of the people as the man stresses that the bird is "a singer of folk ballads" (p. 292). Thus, the man claims, they must find the bird.

Though the scene ends with the bird flying away out of the couple's gaze, the man does not cease looking for the bird. Meanwhile, the focus of the next scene shifts to the woman's internal thoughts as she conflates the bird's departure with her feelings about her lover.

> "Look, the bird has flown away," the man pointed. The woman suddenly looked toward the direction in which the bird had hurriedly flown away. The hidden thoughts of the man's love seemed to have soared with the bird. This lingering regret made the woman abandon thinking about the useless pursuit of love that had left the tree and flown into the sky, where the small bird had disappeared. (p. 293)

On the surface, this scene can be read as revealing the woman's resignation to end the relationship with her lover. The woman repeatedly refers to the bird's voice as *kawairashii* (可愛らしい), meaning loveable and cute. This cute voice becomes connected with poetry, in particular love poetry.

> "What a sweet bird! That bird's voice is so distinct from other birds' voices," the woman thought. The deep chirping of the bird remained constant in the woman's ears due to the faint lingering echoes of its voice, and seemed to be vibrating purposefully to the rhythm of a song about poetic love. (p. 293–294)

Later in the story, the *hōjiro* seems to be in captivity.

> The man hearing this voice off in the distance said, "Perhaps the bird is being kept as a pet?"
>
> "The bird's cry has disappeared," the woman noted.
>
> The man wandered around the forest in search of the bird. The small bird was not to be found.

る前, eds. Tamura Toshiko kai 田村俊子会 (Kōdansha Bungei Bunko 講談社文芸文庫, 1994), pp. 291-307.

> "It seems the bird is being kept as a pet," the man said. (p. 300–301)

The fact that the *hōjiro*, once free, might now be captured, and the inability of the couple to figure out who is holding the bird, can be read as Tamura's own hints about how insidious control can be and how elusive freedom can become.

While the man searches for the bird once again, the woman continues to think about leaving the man. At the same time, she also thinks about keeping a *hōjiro* of her own to comfort her after they separate: "'Should I keep a *hōjiro*?' The woman imagined after parting from him because the man said this was the bird he liked the most" (p. 302). The captured *hōjiro* paradoxically becomes a potential source of comfort for the woman as a relic of a past attachment that she can no longer maintain in its natural setting.

> The woman thinking about separating said, "I should do so by my own strength, while I can separate from him."
>
> The man asked her what she was thinking about.
>
> "About parting."
>
> "Still?" the man said taking out a cigarette and lighting a match. "Why don't you desire me more?"
>
> "If I desired you more, what would happen?" the woman asked.
>
> "Did you forget our promise of the night before?" the man asked. (p. 302-303)

This sad conversation of parting is set against the scenery of fall.

> Suddenly, the impression of lost love intermingled with the bright light were carved on the man's cheeks. Amidst the fall colors, this light scattered brightly.
>
> "That cloud," the man said while looking up toward the sky, "look at it." The cloud seemed to have moved toward the woman's heart.
>
> "That is a fall cloud," the man said.
>
> The small white fluffy clouds painted a pattern in the pale blue sky. The sun shone in all four directions. The change of the scenery, as dusk gradually approached, moved over the earth.
>
> "Soon it will be night, won't it?" the woman thought as she looked at the distant mountain. (p. 303)

In this sad scene of the *hōjiro*'s captivity and the woman's thoughts of parting from her lover as the day ends, Tamura seems to imply a premonition of a dark future. At this sad moment in the story, the couple arrives at a point in the mountain road where it divides into a symbolic fork in the road. They glance upon another couple referred to in the story as *otto* (夫, husband) and *tsuma* (妻, wife). The "man" and "woman" watch as the married couple tries to push a stalled car down the mountain road.

> The road divided into two. To carry bundles of wood gathered from the mountain, there was a road for cars that lead into town. The couple walked down along the right side of the mountain road. A car carrying bundles of wood came down the road from the mountain.
>
> The husband stood in the front pulling the stalled car. The wife, from the back, pushed. The couple [the man and woman] watched this married couple with interest as they passed before them.
>
> "They are married, aren't they?" the woman asked.
>
> The struggle that this married couple was going through over their car resembled the general struggle of a married couple's life—the woman thought as this vision permeated her field of vision. (Yama michi, 304)

Soon after this scene, the story ends with the woman staring at a *hōjiro* that has flown away to some distant place after being chased by a black *mozu*.

With the bird's departure, everything comes to an end: the day, the couple's relationship, and perhaps the world as they see it. The final lines of "Yama michi" connect the various threads of the story. The gaze and the bird become unified in the woman's body, which is enveloped by the setting sun of a fall day on a traditional *onsen* mountain road.

> 'The bird has disappeared," the woman remarked, looking back toward the bird's path of flight.
>
> The man also looked back.
>
> The faint color of the sun as it began to set obscured the nearby trees from which the bird had flown. The bird passed over them and their life to a distant place. The shadow of the small bird remained in the woman's field of vision as if an indelible black spot rested over them. (p. 307)

Thus this story, like most of Tamura's earlier Taishō period fiction ends with ambiguity and sadness centered on the female gaze.

Hasegawa Kei interprets the *hōjiro*'s entrance from the first scene to the last and the setting of the mountain road in purely romantic terms devoid of any socio-political implications. She writes,

> The positive and negative aspects of love's trajectory are effectively implied through the description of the mountain road, which is an established meeting spot for any couple's illicit secret love and by the appearance of the *hōjiro* from the story's opening to its final moment.[20]

I contend, however, that if "Yama michi" is read in conjunction with the other works of fiction Tamura produced during the same period, then the *hōjiro* can represent not just the flight of love, but also of an aesthetic that no longer survives in the dark world of wartime Japan. Moreover, the married couple's struggle to push the car down the road can be interpreted as a sign of wasted effort, both emotional and political. Enveloped in a tone of nostalgia, "Yama michi" is about the anguish that results when a woman decides to not only leave her lover but also her country, which is no longer socio-politically palatable. The unidirectional trajectory of both the *hōjiro*'s flight, as it is chased by the *mozu*, and the couple's walk down the mountain road, conveyed through Tamura's poetic descriptions of fading natural beauty, underscores the pathos of eternal loss, resulting not just from love, but also from Japan's socio-political situation. Considering when the story was written, the same month in which Prime Minister Konoe made a radio announcement about a "New Order" in East Asia, this story, I believe, can be read not only as a love story about parting, but also as a political story about the parting from an old way of life that is soon to be threatened as indicated by the menacing *mozu* bird the lurks in the background of this story and the married couples wasted effort at pushing the car down the road to no avail.[21]

Tamura's lack of ease with her "home" country is expressed in essays she wrote both when she first returned and just before she left Japan. In 1936 for *Bungei shunjū* she wrote in an essay titled "Hitotsu no yume" (一つの夢 One Dream). In this piece, she notes that there is something unfamiliar about Japan, which should be her home:

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[20] Hasegawa Kei, "Kaidai" 解題, *Tamura Toshiko sakuhinshū*, vol. 2, p. 454.

[21] By 1941, this would turn into Japan's policy of 'The Greater East Asia Co-prosperity Sphere.' W.G. Beasely, *The Modern History of Japan* (New York: Praeger, 1967), pp. 259, 268-269, and 271.

> Since I have just gotten back from Japan, there are many things I do not understand. I feel in a daze about Japan that seems as if it is being attacked with an unrest from somewhere in its core. The meaning of this movement has yet to be clear to me.[22]

In a later work, "Uma ga inai" (馬が居ない There are No Horses), published in 1939 for Bungei 文芸, Tamura comments about the changing landscape of Japan. In particular, she notes that scenes she used to be familiar with are gone. While on a train headed toward Shinjuku with a friend, Tamura writes about how the friend laments that there are no longer any horses to be seen.[23] The friend remarks, "There is not even one horse. There should be tons of horses in the field, no matter what the time of year" (p. 173). Tamura also begins to feel sad that she cannot spot any horses. She writes, "My heart is overwhelmed by the infinite sadness over the painful thought that there are no longer any horses to be seen" (p. 173). The essay ends with Tamura contrasting the beautiful red autumnal foliage with the sadness of the lone horse in the field.

> Outside the window, the mountains' fall foliage sparkles... As we proceed deeper into the mountain, the fall colors become richer and more detailed. When my friend and I look at the rice fields, we once again search for the horses. But nowhere are horses to be found. "There are no horses," my friend once again laments. (p. 174)

Through this contrast of nature with the disappearance and misuse of horses, Tamura seems to imply that nature's beauty continues unobstructed, despite destructive human tendencies.

The nine stories Tamura wrote from 1936 to 1938 are significant because through coded literary motifs, as well as complicated character portrayals, often about Japanese immigrants rather than Japanese nationals, Tamura was able to bypass Japanese censorship and challenge political ideologies that divide and conquer people using arbitrary divisions of segregation as a weapon. Thus she not only challenged Japan's militarist policies that by the late 1930s were based on ideas of cultural supremacy and pure race to justify its aggression against its Asian neighbors, but she also condemned any ideology that espouses virtuousness based on the arbitrary separation of "We" versus "Them" as is shown in the Christianity and racism of Jun's mother and Kiram's unrealized essentialism. These political works are not specifically based on Tamura's personal, in particular sexual, life. They are the result of her movement between East and West that enabled her to witness with a critical and distant eye the personal experiences of other people and to "review" her own country with a new set of eyes once she returned to Japan. While the diverse writing styles of canonized writers such as Mori Ōgai, Natsume Sōseki, and Shimazaki Tōson, to name a few, are recognized without any erasure or silence in critical analysis of their varied writing styles, the same is not true for Tamura. Thus to date, Tamura is viewed solely as a voice of early modern Japanese feminism. While this is true, this is only half of Tamura's writing story. Her later works also reflect Tamura's Meiji and Taishō period feminist ideas of sexual and economic equality between men and women as well as the encouragement of women to articulate themselves. Yet, these later works also add a broader form of humanism that is not limited to the plight of Japanese women in the Meiji and Taishō eras. The personal of everyone's life, male and female as well as Japanese and non-Japanese, became the concern of Tamura's Shōwa period writing.

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[22] Satō Toshiko, "Hitotsu no yume: Aru wakaki puroretaria fujin sakka ni okuru" 一つの夢：或る若きプロレタリア婦人作家におくる, *Bungei Shunjū* 文芸春秋, 14:6 (June 1936): 264.

[23] Satō Toshiko, "Uma ga inai" 馬が居ない, Bungei 文芸, vol. 5, no. 12 (December 1937): 172-174.