# “Seattle’s Little Tokyo: *Bundan* Fiction and the Japanese Diaspora”

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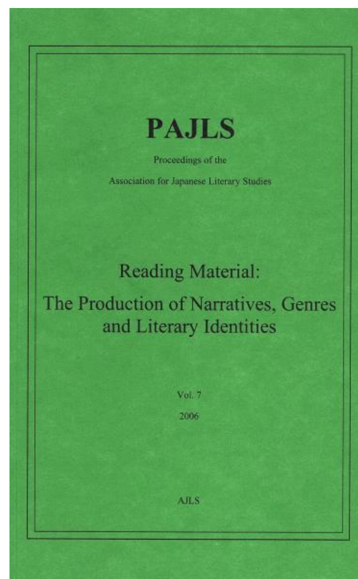


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# Seattle's Little Tokyo:

# *Bundan* Fiction and the Japanese Diaspora

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In 2004, Harvard University Press published *The World Republic of Letters*, an English translation of Pascale Casanova's 1999 *La République mondiale des Lettres*.[1] The book enjoyed the support of such luminaries as the late Edward Said, who helped make the English translation possible. In the *London Review of Books* Perry Anderson summed up Casanova's project as follows: "Here the national bounds of Bourdieu's work have been decisively broken, in a project that uses his concepts of symbolic capital and the cultural field to construct a model of the global inequalities of power between different national literatures, and the gamut of strategies that writers in languages at the periphery of the system of legitimation have used to try to win a place at the centre."[2] For Casanova, this center is definitively Paris. She claims, for example, that Marguerite Yourcenar's *Mishima, ou la vision du vide* brought Mishima Yukio to the attention of the French and thus initiated his global consecration.[3] Such a claim grants – as does the central premise of the book – too much power to Paris in decades during which that city's centrality had long since begun to decline.[4]

The book's larger object of research – the function of power in the literary world – is of course an important one. One of the greatest weaknesses of its approach, however, is that it considers nations to be the irreducible minimum unit in this arena of global literary competition.

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[1] Pascale Casanova, *The World Republic of Letters*, trans. M.B. DeBevoise (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004), and Pascale Casanova, *La République mondiale des Lettres* (Paris: Seuil, 1999).

[2] Perry Anderson, "Union Sucrée," *London Review of Books* 26:18 (23 September 2004).

[3] Casanova, *World Republic*, 115, referring to Marguerite Yourcenar, *Mishima, ou la vision du vide* (Paris: Gallimard, 1981).

[4] According to the Japan Foundation's database of translations, more than a dozen book-length translations of Mishima had appeared in English alone by the time Yourcenar's book was published, the earliest appearing in 1953. By 1974, reviews of eleven of his books and seven articles about the author himself had appeared in the *New York Times*. In an article from 2 August 1970, the paper describes him as an author "who deserves and probably will be awarded the Nobel Prize for literature the next time Japan's turn comes around." Whether or not recognition in the *New York Times* constitutes "global consecration" is a legitimate question, but the same question could be posed to Casanova concerning Yourcenar's book.

In this sense, Casanova lacks Bourdieu's rigorous historical specificity – which preserved an historically demanded deference to national boundaries without naturalizing them – and remains tightly wedded to those boundaries even as she tries to capture a global system in her purview. "Literary capital," she asserts, "is inherently national."[5] While at moments she recognizes the historicity of nationalism as the dominant ideology by which individuals are grouped and distinguished, she often fails to present her nation-centered system as similarly historical. As a result, nations seem to have historical roots but ahistorical – and therefore inevitable – futures. While the nation has been the dominant logic by which we imagine so much during the modern period, not the least of which is literature, it is not the only logic by which people have conceived of literature or their world, nor is it the only way people can. Literary historians have a responsibility to question even this most fundamental frame, which so often defines the object of knowledge.

In addition to the dominance of a national model, there is another issue that remains under-explored in Casanova's work: the relation of peripheral writers to literary centers of power. These two issues are interconnected. For Casanova, national units seem to be relatively homogenous within themselves; they are also at varying distances from a single ultimate center of global literary production, Paris. There are advantages to thinking about the global literary marketplace as a competitive one between nations. For instance, it recognizes the impact of global flows of information and capital in literature that can be overlooked when political or linguistic boundaries determine the object of knowledge. Casanova's nation-centered model, however, ignores the existence of a multiplicity of power relations: various levels of peripheries and centers. Diasporic communities provide one avenue to exploring these various levels. By examining the relationship between Japanese diasporic communities (in this case, the community in Seattle) and the nation's literary center, Tokyo, for example, the complex series of relationships that exist within a "national literature" become readily apparent.

The term "diasporic communities" is meant to differentiate them from the formal colonies of the Japanese Empire, though they share many commonalities. The Japanese government's approach to emigration, in fact, has been described as having been a "project to extend Japan's influence abroad," with Japanese migration a "part of an imperialist strategy."[6] As Tokutomi Sohō wrote in 1894, "our future history will be a history of the establishment by the Japanese people of new Japans everywhere in the world."[7] Hawaii was one of the earliest destinations of this informal expansion, but after the Hawaiian islands came under United States territorial rule in 1898, many new emigrants began going to the mainland instead: the population of fewer than 15,000 Japanese in the United States in 1899 had grown to one of nearly 40,000 on

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[5] Casanova, *World Republic*, p. 34.

[6] Dirk Hoerder, *Cultures in Contact: World Migrations in the Second Millenium* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2002), p. 376.

[7] Tokutomi Sohō, *Dai-Nihon bōchōron* (Tokyo: Min'yūsha, 1894), p. 17. As quoted in Akira Iriye, *Pacific Estrangement: Japanese and American Expansion*, 1897-1911 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1972), p. 44.

the West Coast alone by 1904.[8] Seattle was one of the primary destinations of these Japanese immigrants, due in part to the trans-Pacific passenger route Nihon Yūsen created between Yokohama and Seattle in 1896.[9] In Seattle, a "Japantown" existed from at least 1891 – a year in which one city map already showed a "Mikado Street" – and the Japanese population had increased to more than 5000 by the turn of the century.[10]

In 1907, a young man named Okina Kyūin (1888-1974) arrived in Seattle, where he would live the next seven years before moving to California for another ten.[11] Unlike most emigrants to the United States, we know a great deal about Okina because after his return to Japan in 1924, he went on to become the head editor for the *Shūkan asahi* magazine and made a name for himself first in the Tokyo literary establishment and later in his hometown of Toyama.[12] Though this suggests that he may be more exceptional than representative, the information we have about his life and work provides us with an unusually clear record of the literary activities of early members of these diasporic communities and their relationship with the Tokyo literary world.

In considering the relationship between the Tokyo-centered publishing industry and the writing activities of diasporics, it must first be established that publications from this "center" did indeed reach those distant communities. What sort of access did early diasporics have to texts produced in Tokyo? We know that Okina had access to such magazines as *Taiyō*, *Chūō kōron*, *Shinchō*, *Waseda bungaku*, *Bungei kurabu*, and *Bunshō sekai*.[13] At the time, businesses like the Furuya Trading Company handled magazines from Japan; in 1908 customers could get

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[8] Iriye, *Pacific Estrangement*, p. 85.

[9] Nakagō Fumiko, "'Iminchi bungei' no senkusha Okina Kyūin no sōsaku katsudō: 'Bungakukai' no sōsetsu kara 'Ishokuju' made" *Ritsumeikan gengo bunka kenkyū* 3 (1992), p. 4.

[10] Brian Niiya, ed., *Japanese American History: An A-to-Z Reference from 1868 to the Present* (New York: Facts On File, 1993), p. 308. This was never the largest community; the prewar Japanese population in Seattle peaked in 1940 at roughly 7,000 (309).

[11] A former student at the private Junten Middle School in Tokyo, Okina moved to the United States at 19 in order to work and to study, and was not formally an *imin*. Nakagō, "'Iminchi bungei,'" p. 5.

[12] Okina Kyūin, *Okina Kyūin zenshū*, 10 vols. (Toyama: Okina Kyūin Zenshū Kankōkai, 1971). Itsumi Kumi, *Waga chichi Okina Kyūin: sono seishōnen jidai to tobei* (Tokyo: Orijin Shuppan Sentaa, 1978) and *Okina Kyūin to imin shakai 1907-1924: zaibei jūhachi-nen no kiseki* (Tokyo: Bensei Shuppan, 2002).

[13] Okina, *Okina Kyūin zenshū* 2:39. He notes that he had these sent from bookstores, though it is unclear whether the bookstores were in Seattle or Japan. We should also be aware of the possibility of historical revisionism, with the older Okina concerned about establishing his *bona fides* within Japan and thus exaggerating or at least foregrounding texts from the "center" at the expense of texts that would not be recognized by the literary establishment there.

magazines only six weeks after publication.[14] Okina was able, for example, to purchase the 1923 inaugural issue of *Bungei shunjū* at the Goshadō bookstore in San Francisco.[15] It is likely that books were harder to come by, at least in the early years: sometime in or after 1910 he wrote to his brother in Tokyo asking him to send books.[16] He also had access to newspapers from Japan, the largest of which were available for sale through a Seattle distributor.[17] Despite this, Okina read Shimazaki Tōson's novel *Haru*, which was published between April and August 1908 in the *Tōkyō asahi shinbun*, by borrowing the paper from a friend whose wife would send them to him from Japan in bundles each month.[18] There was one last way diasporics gained access to newspaper novels from Japan: according to Okina, Japanese-language newspapers in the United States regularly republished works without permission.[19] It has been suggested that as a result much of the fiction Japanese in the United States read around this time was serialized fiction in newspapers and magazines from Japan.[20]

An article from 27 March 1908 reveals not only the access North American Japanese had to information about the Japanese literary world, but also the unexpected advantages of being

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[14] See Furuya Shōten advertisements in the *Tairiku nippō* from 20 February 1908 and 16 March 1908 announcing the arrival of January and February issues, respectively. These advertisements are for the Vancouver branch of Furuya Shōten, which was based in Seattle and where Okina himself would later work. Note that the delay may have been longer, since Japanese readers probably received issues before the first of the month.

[15] Okina, *Okina Kyūin zenshū* 4:186. *Bungei shunjū* launched in January 1923; Okina returned to Japan in April 1924. It is unclear exactly when he purchased the issue.

[16] Okina, *Okina Kyūin zenshū* 2:215. His brother sent him poetry collections by Ishikawa Takuboku and Yoshii Isamu. The estimate of 1910 comes from the publication date of Yoshii's first poetry collection, *Sakehogai* (1910). Okina describes the "bundles of newspapers, magazines, and letters" he would receive all at once because they came [from Tokyo to Seattle, or from Seattle to Bremerton?] by boat. Okina, *Okina Kyūin zenshū* 2:108. See also 2:256, where Okina talks about "these novels, which boats brought from Japan."

[17] A Nichibei advertisement from 12 November 1913 for the Goshadō bookstore in San Francisco shows that it was offering subscriptions to newspapers throughout Japan and its colonies. Reproduced in Hibi Yoshitaka, "Nikkei Amerika imin issei no shinbun to bungaku," *Nihon bungaku* 53:11 (November 2004), 23-34. Note that this does not mean that the bookstore actually carried stock of all of these newspapers, merely that it could arrange for subscriptions to them, likely through a large Tokyo-based distributor such as Tōkyōdō.

[18] Okina, *Okina Kyūin zenshū* 2:39.

[19] Itsumi, *Okina Kyūin to imin shakai*, p. 229, and Okina, *Okina Kyūin zenshū* 4:327. I have found little evidence that this was widespread with *bundan* fiction. On the other hand, it may have been common with *kōdan*, such as the telling of *Satomi hakkenden* by Seiryūsai Gyokusō (正流斎玉窓) that was serialized in *Hokubei jiji* in 1920. See the 7 January 1920 issue for an example installment. This is consonant with Hibi Yoshitaka's findings in his article "Nikkei Amerika imin issei no shinbun to bungaku" of serialized fiction in San Francisco papers between 1896-1920. When it did happen, though, it happened very quickly after publication of the original; see Hibi's example of Matsui Shōō's novel, *Sanzoku geigi*.

[20] Itsumi, *Okina Kyūin to imin shakai*, p. 217.

abroad. That day, the Vancouver-based newspaper *Tairiku nippō* published a short article on the banning of the February issue of *Bungei kurabu* in Tokyo because of a story by Ikuta Kizan titled, "Tokai." As Jay Rubin describes in *Injurious to Public Morals*, the Procurator Koyama Matsukichi (who eventually became the Minister of Justice) "felt that naturalism [as represented by "Tokai"] posed so grave a threat to the nation that a public example had to be made."[21] The case led to a precedent being set for censorship by Judge Imamura Kyōtarō, who claimed that the "jurist's standard of judgment [lies in] that which would naturally seem to arouse a sense of defilement when viewed in the light of the moral concepts of the general populace" – a subjective standard that, as Rubin points out, foreshadowed Learned Hand's similar decision in 1915.[22] Readers abroad, however, enjoyed an unexpected advantage, which the article explicitly identifies: "go ahead and read it at Komura's or Furuya's. Thanks to being overseas [where it had already been shipped and was out of the reach of Japanese authorities], you can buy this banned book [*sic*] and read the so-called sensual descriptions of this illicit novel."[23]

Readers overseas regularly found themselves in reading circumstances significantly different from those of readers in Tokyo. This fact undermines expectations that authors may have had vis-à-vis their readers. It is likely that readers in North America, for example, were not privy to all the personal details of authors' lives that Tokyo readers were provided through literary gossip columns. Okina wrote that he was not aware of such matters "because he had become familiar with the writers of the Meiji and Taishō periods overseas."[24] Edward Fowler has written about how these details "contributed immensely to the critical consciousness of the *shishōsetsu* as being uniquely true to life and therefore the only *shōsetsu* form of any importance to Taishō letters" and how "in such a climate, the writer freely assumed readers' familiarity with – and curiosity about – the details of his personal life."[25] To the extent then that we can believe Okina's claim, it puts the reception of this most notorious of Japanese literary genres in a different light.

Okina was probably not an exception in his ignorance of the fine details of literary practice in Tokyo. It is unclear how much the average Japanese living in Seattle knew about the Tokyo literary world, and thus just how "central" the Tokyo *bundan* was. In this regard, it is

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[21] Jay Rubin, *Injurious to Public Morals: Writers and the Meiji State* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1984), p. 83. Apparently Ikuta had the reputation of being "the super-star of injury to public morals" (88).

[22] Rubin, *Injurious*, pp. 88-89.

[23] 27 March 1908 *Tairiku nippō*.

[24] Okina, *Okina Kyūin zenshū* 4:202.

[25] Edward Fowler, *The Rhetoric of Confession:* Shishōsetsu *in Early Twentieth-Century Japanese Fiction* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), p. 128.

consistent with Richard Torrance's findings in his work on Izumo.[26] On the one hand, Okina says that even among newspaper reporters the majority had no idea who Izumi Kyōka was, and while some knew the names of Ozaki Kōyō and Tokutomi Roka, almost no one had read widely from their works. Only the most recent immigrants, Okina recalled later, talked about authors such as Sōseki.[27] That is not to say that they did not read; in addition to the serialized fiction from Japan mentioned above, literature published locally was also a central form of entertainment for many. One Hirano Seizaburō, who emigrated to Seattle in 1908, said, "what I looked forward to was reading works of literature that ran in the Japanese-language papers. I myself did not compose poetry, but I befriended the literary youths who were always debating at the Mitsuwadō bookstore and I was always sticking my head into papers like the *Asahi* [旭] *shinbun* and the *Taihoku nippō*. I followed the works of those literary youths with great interest."[28] This was despite a level of poverty that left him struggling to remain fed.

Those who did follow the literary world, however, were occasionally able to meet literati from Japan, such as when Okina met Shimada Seijirō and Tamura Toshiko.[29] Apart from these authors who had traveled overseas, it seems clear that few Tokyo authors had imagined that these North American readers even existed. Authors such as Suzuki Miekichi were both surprised and pleased to discover years later, when Okina met them in person in Japan, that their works had been read and enjoyed in the United States.[30] That is not to say, however, that trans-Pacific contact between writers and readers was non-existent. Izumi Kyōka, for example, assured Okina that he remembered the letter the short-lived [Izumi] Kyōka-kai had sent them from Seattle.[31]

The Kyōka-kai, which Okina helped found in 1908, was one of a number of literary groups in which he was involved and which show us how important literature was to many diasporics.[32] Other literary groups preceded this one – a *haikai* group called the Shikō-kai (The Seattle Society) began around 1906 – and others quickly followed it – a *tanka* group called the

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[26] Richard Torrance, "Literacy and Modern Literature in the Izumo Region, 1880-1930," *Journal of Japanese Studies* 22:2 (1996), pp. 327-72.

[27] Okina, *Okina Kyūin zenshū* 2:98.

[28] An oral history recounted in Itō Kazuo, *Zoku: Hokubei hyakunenzakura* (Seattle: Hokubei Hyakunenzakura Jikkō Iinkai, 1972), p. 86.

[29] Okina, *Okina Kyūin zenshū* 3: 284-88 and 299-302. Okina met Shimada sometime before 1924, because Okina says Shimada was not yet 25 years old.

[30] Okina, *Okina Kyūin zenshū* 4:85.

[31] Okina, *Okina Kyūin zenshū* 4:191.

[32] There is some debate about who founded the group. Okina claims to have co-founded it with Sugano [Shibakarō] (菅野芝華郎, 2:98), but Fujioka Tessetsu claims it was founded by [Shibakarō] and Nijimura (2:100). Fujioka also says the group met only 2-3 times before dissolving.

Kōsuto-kai (The Coast Society) started in 1910.[33] In 1909, Okina organized the Bungakukai (The *Belles Lettres* Society), which at its peak had 40-50 members.[34] These groups were devoted not only to the discussion of existing literary works, but also the production of new works. The Bungakukai, for example, drew its members from the various contributors to Japanese-language newspapers, some of whom lived as far away as Wyoming, Idaho, Oregon, and British Columbia.[35] For these writers, Seattle was the center and they were writing on the periphery; this was the literary establishment around which they oriented their activities.

The writers of this so-called "Seattle *bundan*" took advantage of the publication opportunities provided by the various print media in and around the city, which included monthlies, such as *Tensei* and *Donchiki;* weeklies such as the *Nichibei hyōron*; and newspapers such as the *Hokubei jiji*, the *Asahi* [旭] *shinbun*, and the *Taihoku Nippō*. Each of the newspapers had literary columns and solicited fiction.[36] Needless to say, these papers enjoyed only limited circulation relative to their Tokyo- or Osaka-based counterparts; at the time, according to Okina, a newspaper with a circulation of two- to three-thousand copies was considered large.[37] It should be noted that one of the largest papers, the San Francisco-based *Nichibei shinbun*, reached a circulation of 25,000 in succeeding years.[38] *Nichibei* in particular received a large number of submissions, including works from Okina. For *Nichibei*'s New Year's novella competition – the newspaper had selected and printed one winning piece each year since at least 1916 – it received 55 submissions in 1920.[39] This *bundan*, in contrast to the Tokyo *bundan* to which it compared itself, was not organized on a commercial model: authors were never paid for their works.[40] Okina consistently identified the lack of remuneration as a primary stumbling block in creating an immigrant literature.[41] In contrast to the dominant discourse in Japan of the

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[33] Okina, *Okina Kyūin zenshū* 2:99. Nakagō, "'Iminchi bungei,'" p. 5.

[34] Okina, *Okina Kyūin zenshū* 2:100.

[35] Nakagō, "'Iminchi bungei,'" p. 5.

[36] Okina, *Okina Kyūin zenshū* 2:97.

[37] Okina, *Okina Kyūin zenshū* 2:98.

[38] Nakagō, "'Iminchi bungei,'" p. 6.

[39] Nakagō, "Nichibei shinbun jidai," p. 80.

[40] The newspapers' involvement with fiction was clearly economically motivated. Serialized fiction created regular demand for the newspapers and therefore performed a valuable function. To this extent, the production of fiction was commercial.

[41] Nakagō Fumiko, "'Iminchi bungei' no senkusha Okina Kyūin no sōsaku katsudō: 'Bungakukai' no sōsetsu kara 'Ishokuju' made" *Ritsumeikan gengo bunka kenkyū* 3 (1992), p. 7. The newspapers, in turn, accepted literary

commercialization of literature as an inevitably corrupting influence, Okina implicitly recognized the *enabling* aspect of the commercialization of literary production.

The stumbling block did not prevent Okina and others from writing prolifically for these papers; Okina wrote 62 pieces between 1909 and 1913 alone.[42] Okina's works were being read outside of Seattle as well. An article that appeared in the Hawai'i *Nippu jiji no zappō* in 1911 praised a story of Okina's that the journalist had read in Los Angeles's *Rafu asahi shinbun*.[43] The response Okina received about his works, in fact, gave him the impression they were being read all over the United States.[44] Although rare, on occasion the transmission of works between Japan and the United States reversed. In 1910 or 1911 Okina's "Oshi [啞] no on'na" appeared in *Teikoku bungaku*, where a middle school friend had become an editor.[45] He published three well-received works in that journal.[46] Sometimes works traveled in reverse more informally. An acquaintance of Okina's from the United States, Yamazaki Hokumei, took a copy of Okina's *Ishokuju* (1923) – "the first short story collection written since the establishment of a Japanese community (*zaibei dōhō shakai*) in the United States"[47] – to Tayama Katai, who was his neighbor in Tokyo.[48] This fulfilled a strong desire of Okina's, which he expressed in his preface to the collection, that he would "rather show it to the people in Japan than to the Japanese living in the United States."[49]

There is no doubt that some individuals in Seattle considered the Tokyo literary establishment even if they were not fully aware of the activities of that establishment. This is most obvious in Okina's occasional replacement of the term "Tokyo *bundan*" with "central *bundan*." Okina wrote about how he "aspired to the central *bundan*," though he also said – somewhat disingenously – that he had abandoned that aspiration after his brief return to Japan in

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contributions because they allowed them to print more pages of advertising (6). Hibi, "Nikkei," points out that serialized fiction also kept readers purchasing the newpapers.

[42] Nakagō, "'Iminchi bungei,'" p. 7.

[43] Okina, *Okina Kyūin zenshū* 5:404.

[44] Nakagō, "'Iminchi bungei,'" p. 15.

[45] Okina, *Okina Kyūin zenshū* 2:124. The friend was Yamada Toshikazu.

[46] Okina, *Okina Kyūin zenshū* 4:356.

[47] Quoted from the preface to *Ishokuju* in Nakagō Fumiko, "'Iminchi bungei' no senkusha Okina Kyūin no sōsaku katsudō: 'Bungakukai' no sōsetsu kara 'Ishokuju' made" *Ritsumeikan gengo bunka kenkyū* 3 (1992), p. 1.

[48] Okina, *Okina Kyūin zenshū* 3:82.

[49] Quoted in Nakagō, "'Iminchi bungei,'" p. 18.

1912.[50] Nonetheless, Okina was not alone in his recognition of a power hierarchy with Tokyo at its summit. According to Okina, readers often wrote him that he "should not to waste time (*magomago shite*) with the Seattle *bundan*, but quickly progress on to Japan's central *bundan*."[51] It was not necessary for diasporics to be fully conversant in Tokyo literary gossip for the imagination of a superior realm of literary creation to affect them. As Casanova writes, "The existence of a literary center is... twofold: it exists both in the imaginations of those who inhabit it and in the reality of the measurable effects it produces."[52]

The succession of periphery-center relationships does not end at this second iteration, however. If Paris was the center of world production and Tokyo the center of Japanese production, Seattle aspired to its own centrality. In support of Okina's 1909 proposal for his Bungakukai, a fellow Seattle-based author wrote, "at the very least our Seattle *bundan* must seize control of the West Coast Japanese *bundan* and force it to progress until it can participate in the Tokyo *bundan*."[53] This is a hierarchy in which relative positions are not fixed. Nor did challenges to centrality end there. When Okina moved to the nearby city of Bremerton and organized a *haiku* group there, another writer claimed Okina was trying to challenge the Seattle *haidan*.[54] A recognition of this infinite sequence of center-peripheries is important, as it challenges a view of literary history that depends too heavily upon national boundaries. If a series of such relations exists, then why privilege those that involve nations over those that occur at other levels of social organization? Perhaps the value of the center-periphery binary itself is limited. Ideally, a new conception would recognize a multiplicity of power fields within which a writer operates, and thus also recognize writers' identities as being (as Stuart Hall described diasporic identity) "defined, not by essence or purity, but by the recognition of a necessary heterogeneity and diversity; by a conception of identity which lives in and through, not despite, difference; by hybridity."[55] The nation is, after all, only one arena in the literary field and only one aspect of the writer's self-identification.

At the same time, the central importance of national identities, even among diasporic writers and readers, should not be underestimated – particularly with regard to the control nation-states had over individuals. This is where Casanova's argument, when properly historicized, has the greatest value. Japanese in the United States faced increasing amounts of discrimination, beginning with restrictions on immigration imposed by the Gentleman's

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[50] Okina, *Okina Kyūin zenshū* 2:391.

[51] Okina, *Okina Kyūin zenshū* 2:125.

[52] Casanova, *World Republic*, p. 24.

[53] Okina, *Okina Kyūin zenshū* 5:377.

[54] Okina, *Okina Kyūin zenshū* 5:384.

[55] Stuart Hall, "Cultural Identity and Diaspora," *Theorizing Diaspora*, eds. Jana Evans Braziel and Anita Mannur (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2003), p. 244.

Agreement of 1907-08 and culminating in the Immigration Act of 1924. At the same time, there was significant motivation for males, including Okina, to remain in the United States; one of the greatest sources was the compulsory military duty they faced were they to return. Okina wrote to his father that he planned to return to Japan when he turned 33, beyond the maximum age (32) for compulsory service.[56] The maximum age was extended to 37 in 1918, which was probably one of the main reasons Okina remained in the United States until his father's failing healthy forced him to return at the age of 36.[57] In both cases, political identities defined by the nation-state exerted influence on the producers and consumers of literature, and thus on literature itself. As Casanova argues, "the construction of world literary space proceeded... through national rivalries that were inseparably literary and political."[58] Nation-states are, after all, real, even if the nations upon which they are often putatively based are not defensible ontologically. While one must remain aware of the contingent nature of the various framing concepts that populate the literary field, such as the nation-state, one must also recognize that historically these concepts (and the political realities that informed them) had very real effects.

Thus it may be true that, as Casanova claims, power in the literary field is fundamentally tied to the nation-state. Okina's case, however, shows us that competition and the exercise of power is not limited to a competition between internally coherent nations. Similarly, an historical examination of the formation of such power structures, and the rise of the nation-state as the central formative logic of societies, shows us that these are historical contingent, not ontologically necessary, phenomena. Okina Kyūin's case prompts us to question this currently dominant frame; this is particularly relevant in area studies, where the nation-state so often defines the object of knowledge. A complex interplay of forces is missed if one sees the literary capital that Okina Kyūin so consciously craved as simply being "inherently national."

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[56] Nakagō, "'Iminchi bungei,'" p. 10.

[57] Nakagō, "'Iminchi bungei,'" pp. 17-18.

[58] Casanova, *World Republic*, p. 35.