“In a ‘Borrowed Tongue’: the Representation of Japan in the English Language by Nitobe, Okakura, and Uchimura”

Matthew Mizenko

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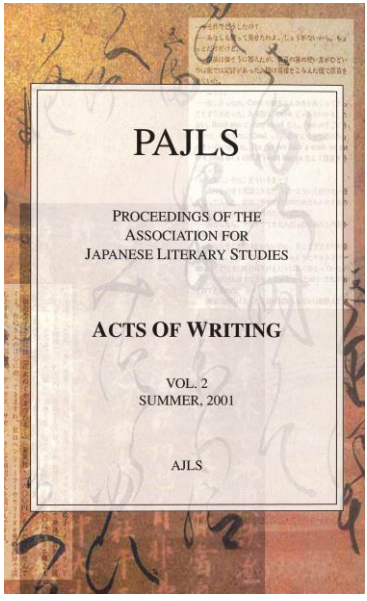

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IN A "BORROWED TONGUE:" THE REPRESENTATION OF JAPAN IN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE BY NITOBE, OKAKURA, AND UCHIMURA[1]

MATTHEW MIZENKO

The year 2000 marked the hundredth anniversary of the publication of one of the most controversial texts in modern Japanese history: *Bushido, the Soul of Japan: An Exposition of Japanese Thought,* by Nitobe Inazô (新渡戸稲造, 1861-1933). This enormously successful book, one of a small number of influential texts written in English by Japanese authors during a period of approximately fifteen years (ca. 1895 to ca. 1910) with the intention of "explaining" Japan to the West, had an impact far greater than the author could have imagined, producing a basis for representations of Japan for writers ranging from Ruth Benedict to James Fallows, who to at least a degree succumbed to Nitobe's insistence that what he called *bushidô* (武士道), the "way of the samurai," described the key principles of Japanese society and culture. From a contemporary academic perspective, it would be difficult not to read Nitobe's book as an exercise in self-Orientalizing that advanced the *Nihonjinron* (日本人論)-centered ideological agenda of the Japanese elites by naturalizing a largely invented tradition and compounding this gesture by associating it with the correspondingly invented tradition of chivalry. Its descriptive value considerably diminished, *Bushido* has become something of a curiosity, valuable as a primary source for the study of Japanese ideology and intellectual history, but otherwise destined for the inactive storage sections of scholars' libraries. Nevertheless, *Bushido* has remained in print in its English edition, while also remaining widely available in numerous Japanese translations (it is especially popular among nationalists), as is the case with Okakura Tenshin (岡倉天心 [or Kakuzô

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(覚三)], 1862-1913) and his *The Book of Tea* (1906), a text with an agenda similar to Nitobe's and equally flavored by *Nihonjinron*, except that it takes as its point of departure an aesthetic "tradition" rather than a social one. On the other hand, a book by Uchimura Kanzô (内村鑑三, 1861-1930), *How I Became a Christian: Out of My Diary* (1895), follows another path to its expression of Japanese superiority by implying that Japan is capable of becoming more "Christian" than the nations of Western Europe and North America.[2] In all three cases, however, any claims to Japanese parity or superiority in the quality of its civilization is contextualized within an acknowledgment of Western power—in particular, the knowledge-power of representation. That is, the texts are in a sense reactive: they concede the hegemony of the West, they desire to explain Japan to the West using its language, and they seek, as Nitobe put it, to "gain the comprehension" of the West.

Although this paper will give some consideration to Uchimura and Okakura, its major focus will be placed on Nitobe's *Bushido,* a text which, as I have suggested, is valuable less for the facts of its descriptions and arguments than for its historical significance as a discursive gesture. A number of scholars, including Yuzo Ota, have demonstrated convincingly the historical inaccuracies and questionable interpretations contained in the book. What interests me in my own reading is the performative significance of his writing and publishing the book when he did, and what this act meant in the context of the perceived power relations of the West and Japan at the time.

For the purposes of this presentation, I will omit any lengthy consideration of Nitobe's biography, except to note that he was born into a samurai household (as were Uchimura and Okakura), studied at Sapporo Agricultural College (along with Uchimura, among others), continued his studies in the U.S. and Europe, married a Philadelphia Quaker named

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[2] Such implication is found in the extremely harsh criticism of Western Christianity on the one hand, and praise for Japanese and Asian spirituality on the other. In the years following the publication of this first book, Uchimura developed the "nonchurch" *(mukyôkai)* movement, which through its nonsectarian "purity" claimed superiority over Western organized Christianity. For a discussion of these issues, see Miura, 65-113.

Mary Patterson Elkinton, and pursued a multifaceted career as an educator, diplomat, colonial official, and apologist for Japan.

Most germane to this paper's topic is the attention paid to Nitobe by Yuzo Ota and others as one of a few Japanese of his generation who were particularly accomplished in the English language. Carol Gluck, in her attempt to create a "chronologic" of Meiji Japan, helps us place Nitobe and his cohort in a historical context described by Hirakawa Sukehiro, who, after noting Basil Hall Chamberlain's observation as to the fluency in English of certain naval officers, writes that "the generation born around 1860 produced an elite better able to communicate in foreign languages than could its successors. Men like Okakura Tenshin (b. 1862), Uchimura Kanzô (b. 1861), and Nitobe Inazô (b. 1861) all wrote books in English, and Mori Ôgai (b. 1862) probably did more than anyone else to introduce Western literature to Japan."[3] Indeed, it cannot be denied that Okakura (*The Ideals of the East* and *The Book of Tea*), Uchimura (*How I Became a Christian*), and Nitobe (*Bushido*) all wrote significant books about Japan that were published from 1895 up to 1910. This period of activity—in which, to borrow from Salman Rushdie's phrase, Japan "wrote back," the subject constituted by Orientalism found speech[4]—came after a turning point identified by Gluck as follows:

> there is the seemingly overdetermined break in the late 1880s and 1890s—my imagined "canonical moment." For the tea ceremony in "the world of taste," the practices of punctuation in the realm of prose, the "harmonious cooperation" between oligarchs and party politicians in the halls of power—and so much else—mid-Meiji saw a codification wrested from the conflict and contestation of the preceding decades.[5]

Gluck notes that "Meiji has long been broken in two around 1890, when the constitution and the emperor system resolved the institutional issues

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[3] Hirakawa, 91.

[4] Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin, 33.

[5] Gluck, 22-23.

under debate since before the Restoration," a resolution that, I would add, finds its most potent expression as state ideology in the Imperial Rescript on Education. She goes on to mention how "imposed conceptual schemes" such as "religion" and "literature" resulted in an attempt within Japan to re-conceive and re-construct the indigenous "traditions" to fit these new categories. Some of the newly invented traditions, such as bonsai, sumo, and *wa* or harmony, Gluck writes, "have [since] survived with their deceptive transparency all too intact." For students of Japan, "one way to burst the conceptual bonds is to study the Meiji construction of the categories themselves. And another is to resist their transparency, distrust them, and show what it was that they concealed or effaced."[6] To Gluck's list of ideological developments and newly invented traditions I would add the codification of *bushidô* and tea as representations of and prescriptions for Japanese social and cultural values.

If we were to try to situate Uchimura, Okakura, and Nitobe within the problematic established by Gluck, we would see that their enunciations of "Japan" and "Japaneseness" could emerge only after the success of the Meiji elite's political and ideological agenda, and of the social and cultural "codification" that she identifies. The apparent resolution, at least on the most visible level of the elites, including the media, of what had previously been "contested," produced a framework for the representations put forth by these mediators (or, in Nitobe's self-analogy, "bridges") between Japan and the West. These mediators or interpreters (at one point Nitobe described himself as performing interpretation, or *tsûyaku)* were attempting to wrest control of the representation of Japan from the West.

In the 1870s, as part of its program for the modernization of the Japanese educational system, the Japanese government established Sapporo Agricultural College for the dual purpose of creating a class of officials who would oversee the development (or colonization) of Hokkaido, and also achieve a high degree of proficiency in the English language. The college was modeled after similar institutions in the United States, and William J. Clark, the president of one such school, Massachusetts Agricultural College, was hired to a one-year contract as

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[6] *Ibid.*, 25.

its first head. There can be little doubt that the school was merely one manifestation of the larger national agenda of building up Japan's military and economic strength while also learning as much as it could about the West, which had and still constituted a threat to the sense of Japan's security and independence. And beyond the government's utilitarian agenda, it was clear that there were people of the elite, including those to be educated at schools such as Sapporo Agricultural College, who saw the West as a superior civilization in many respects—one to emulate as well as study.

These circumstances became even more complicated as a result of the intention of Western educators such as Clark to use their positions in Japan to engage in Christian education and conversion. After arriving in Japan, Clark refused to accept his post until he received permission to conduct Bible-based moral education as part of the curriculum, and after the government's reluctant acceptance of his terms, he went on to urge his students to sign a "Covenant of Believers in Jesus," which the majority of them did.[7] Thus, in spite of the popular catchphrase, "Eastern ethics, Western science," it was clear that at least in the case of Sapporo Agricultural College, Western science was to be accompanied by Western (Christian) ethics.

Uchimura and Nitobe were among those who signed the covenant, and they and other students established their own Christian congregation, which also served as their social circle. They received their education entirely in English, they socialized in English, and they adopted English names, and even personae. Uchimura took the name Jonathan, and Nitobe Paul, and they signed their (English-language) letters with those names. In *How I Became a Christian,* Uchimura described one noteworthy episode in the students' lives, in which they staged a debate between Christians and "infidels:"

> we divided the members [of the church] into two parties by lots, Charles, Jonathan, Frederick and Edwin falling into the Christian side, and Francis, Hugh, Paul, and "Kahau" into the skeptic or infidel side. A Warburton, a Chalmers, a Liddon and

[7] Miura, 17-21.

> a Gladstone were arrayed on one side, and a Bolingbroke, a Hume, a Gibbon and a Huxley on the other.[8]

The debate degenerated into a very emotional argument that nearly resulted in fisticuffs, and the young scholars decided to avoid similar activities in the future as a result. But as this one example demonstrates, there was a desire on their part to emulate noted figures from the West, their circumstances approaching what Homi Bhabha has described as "mimicry," or the imitation by the colonized of the colonial dominant culture. In Japan's case, of course, there was no colonial authority on site, but there was, however, a strong sense of a power-inflected relationship between a dominant Western culture and an inferior or aspirational Japanese one. What Bhabha has claimed to be the "subversive" potential of such mimicry was perhaps to emerge during the visits of our hybridized intellectuals to the West, whenever they strayed from their stereotyped identities as Orientalized others and sought to establish themselves as speaking subjects—an act that was transgressive in and of itself.

All three writers constructed individual narratives of hope and disillusion in describing their encounters with the West. They maintained rather idealized visions of the West until they actually went there and experienced the degree to which they were dismissed, patronized, or feared. They had all aspired to mediate in some way between Japan and the West—Nitobe famously referred to himself as a "bridge" between the two cultural spheres—but once in the West, they discovered that even their cosmopolitan, hybridized identities did not dissociate them from their Japaneseness, and all the concomitant representations.

Uchimura wrote that prior to his journey to the United States, "My idea of the Christian America was lofty, religious, Puritanic. I dreamed of its templed hills, and rocks that rang with hymns and praise."[9] Indeed, he gave no credence to those who insisted otherwise: "I was often told upon a good testimony that money is all in all in America, and that it is *worshipped* there as Almighty Dollar; that the race prejudice is so

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[8] Uchimura, 50-51.

[9] *Ibid.*, 105.

strong there that the yellow skin and almond-shaped eyes pass for objects of derision and dog-barking; etc., etc. But for me to credit such statements as these as anything near the truth was utterly impossible. The land of Patrick Henry and Abraham Lincoln, of Dorothea Dix and Stephen Girard,—how *could* it be a land of mammon-worship and race-distinction!" (105-06). Needless to say, Uchimura was disabused of these fantasies by the realities of the United States in the 1880s. Not only did he find that the practice of Christianity in America was far from the ideal that he had established in his mind, but he also encountered a wide range of prejudice, from outright hostility to smiling condescension. Even among missionary groups, he discovered that there was interest in him only to the extent to which he fulfilled their fantasies of the conversion of heathens. They had no desire to listen to anything beyond such confessions.

Having mastered the discourse of Orientalist scholarship under his teacher Ernest Fenollosa, Okakura went on to have a short but brilliant career working with the East Asian collections at the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, while also receiving the patronage of Isabella Stewart Gardner and her circle, but as we shall see, even his texts reveal an undercurrent of anger at the prejudices and stereotypes directed at the Japanese.

Nitobe is said to have dictated the text of *Bushido* in English on the beach at Monterey, California, while recuperating with his wife, Mary, after they had both suffered a series of physical illnesses along with mental exhaustion. This was a time for recuperation, and for Inazô, it was an opportunity to revisit some issues remaining from the past. He presents his motivation for writing the book in its introduction:

> Between Lafcadio Hearn and Mrs. Hugh Fraser on one side and Sir Ernest Satow and Professor Chamberlain on the other, it is indeed discouraging to write anything Japanese in English. The only advantage I have over them is that I can assume the attitude of a personal defendant, while these distinguished writers are at best solicitors and attorneys. I have often thought,—"Had I their gift of language, I would present the cause of Japan in more eloquent terms!" But one who speaks in a borrowed

> tongue should be thankful if he can just make himself intelligible.[10]

The apparent deference shown by Nitobe towards such famed Orientalists as Hearn and Chamberlain is undercut by his appropriation of authenticity as a "defendant," that is, a "real" Japanese person, and his description of them as being "at best solicitors and attorneys," or those who "represent" defendants in courts of law. Nitobe's discursive gesture rewards further unpacking. First, it is apparent that he does not condemn these Orientalists totally; it is just that he believes that he should be able to represent himself, that is, to seize control of his representation. At this point, the import of his words strays from his legal metaphor into the territory described by Edward Said, who describes Orientalism as a discourse or a system of representations that could "be discussed and analyzed as the corporate institution for dealing with the Orient—dealing with it by making statements about it, authorizing views of it, describing it, by teaching it, settling it, ruling over it: in short...as a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient."[11] When Western scholars write about the Orient, all of the elements of their texts "add up to deliberate ways of addressing the reader, containing the Orient, and finally, representing it or speaking in its behalf" (20). Said claims that "because of Orientalism the Orient was not (and is not) a free subject of thought or action" (3). Nitobe understands the power of representation, and he seeks to become a speaking subject, to speak as a Japanese person to the West. Returning to the legal metaphor, his description of himself as a "defendant" is most telling, resonating with the impact of all the negative and condescending images and stereotypes that had emerged in years of Orientalist discourse concerning Japan—as if it were in some sense a crime to be Japanese.

The trepidation Nitobe expresses in the quoted passage from *Bushido* is understandable. Attorneys are always implicated in the legal culture of representations, and its attendant discourse both of which may be regarded with suspicion by the defendant, who is the only outsider in

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[10] Nitobe, xii-xiii.

[11] Said, 3.

the courtroom. Defendants may seek to argue their own cases, but they usually decide against doing so once they realize that they do not have access to the discursive system that controls their destinies. For this very reason, it is typically the paranoid or the deranged—or the politicized—who tend to insist on representing themselves, often to catastrophic effect. Nitobe is well aware of these pitfalls, which leads us to consider the possibility that his anxiety about representing himself is not only on the level of linguistic competence, for by all accounts he was extremely fluent in English, but rather on the level of discursive competence and legitimacy. The "borrowed tongue" to which he refers is not merely the English language, but also the very discourse of cultural representation.

How, then, is Nitobe to make himself "intelligible?" After all, he is a member of a "race" that had been subjected to all of the representational tropes of Orientalism, ranging from disparagement for its supposed femininity and passiveness, to apprehension over its purported barbarism, godlessness, and Oriental despotism. Here is Nitobe's strategy:

> All through the discourse I have tried to illustrate whatever points I have made with parallel examples from European history and literature, believing that these will aid in bringing the subject nearer to the comprehension of foreign readers.[12]

To what is Nitobe referring when he invokes the "comprehension of foreign readers?" Certainly, much of the Orientalist literature on Japan did not need to employ analogy in order to describe the exoticized culture of Japan. But *Bushido* is not merely a descriptive text, but also something akin to a legal brief. It is meant not only to elicit comprehension, but also to be convincing in making a case for Japan. In order to accomplish this, the representation of Japan has to be domesticated, and Nitobe seeks to do this by employing the analogy of chivalry, as we shall see.

Nitobe presents two reasons for writing the book. First, "The direct inception of this little book is due to the frequent queries put by

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[12] Nitobe, xiii.

my wife as to the reasons why such and such ideas and customs prevail in Japan" (xii). This seemingly innocuous element becomes a bit more serious when we recall that Mary never learned to speak Japanese with any proficiency. In effect, Nitobe thus describes himself as something akin to a "native informant" for his wife.

The more significant impetus for writing the book is revealed through the following anecdote.

> About ten years ago, while spending a few days under the hospitable roof of the distinguished Belgian jurist, the lamented M. de Laveleye, our conversation turned during one of our rambles, to the subject of religion. "Do you mean to say," asked the venerable professor, "that you have no religious instruction in your schools?" On my replying in the negative, he suddenly halted in astonishment, and in a voice which I shall not easily forget, he repeated "No religion! How do you impart moral education?" The question stunned me at the time. I could give no ready answer, for the moral precepts I learned in my childhood days were not given in schools; and not until I began to analyse the different elements that formed my notions of right and wrong did I find that it was Bushido that breathed them into my nostrils. (xi-xii)

This moment is worth trying to imagine. Nitobe and the distinguished professor must have been discussing the secularist institution of Meiji-era education.[13] The educational system known to the Belgian, on the other hand, was certainly Christian to the core. Underlying the conversation was undoubtedly the representation of the Japanese as a race of infidels or heathens. As a result of various Meiji government policies, a secularized educational system had been established, and although the importance of moral education was stressed, such education was secular, or Confucian, and not "religious" in any strict sense. But since M. de Laveleye can

[13]It is worth noting that according to Byron K. Marshall, among others, the Meiji government had stressed, in such policies as the Gakusei Plan of 1872, the importance of secularized moral and ethical education. Marshall, 30-33.

imagine moral education only in religious form, he draws the harsh conclusion that is expressed as his rhetorical question: "How do you impart moral education?" The question was delivered in "a voice I shall not easily forget," reports Nitobe—one can only try to imagine the emotion, the incredulity, and the condescension contained in that voice. The professor's utterance carried with it the implicit assumption that there is no moral education in Japan. Indeed, given that Nitobe was a Christian, the Belgian jurist may well have expected Nitobe to agree with him. But the question "stuns" Nitobe, who interprets it as an accusation against Japan, and he finds himself unable to respond. It was not until ten years later that Nitobe finally found his voice.

Moments such as that described by Nitobe, when the shock of recognition of how one is regarded as Japanese finally hits home, are not rare among Meiji-era visitors to the West. We may recall Mori Ôgai (森鴎外)'s fictionalized representation of himself in "Maihime" (舞姫) as a "queer Japanese" sitting in German cafés, or as encountering suspicion from carriage drivers and Elis's mother. Natsume Sôseki (夏目漱石) related how, when looking into store windows in London, he saw himself as he imagined the British saw him—as a monkey. Uchimura described his anger at encountering the intensity of American racial prejudice, not only against Japanese and Chinese, but blacks and other minorities as well. He also expressed his frustration with being called to perform as if he were a "tamed rhinoceros" in the zoo or circus of the American missionary movement. To be Japanese and resident in the West meant having to endure countless insults, and to experience feelings of insecurity that sometimes produced gestures of overcompensation (thus Ôgai's Japanese student tutors Elis in German literature and thought, and even corrects her linguistic deficiencies). When Inazô married Mary, the *Philadelphia Inquirer's* report of January 2, 1891 carried the headline, "Weds an Oriental Husband: Mary Patterson Elkinton, Quakeress, Marries Inazo Nitobe, Japanese" (Inazô's race obviously trumps his religion, since he was also a Quaker, but was described as Japanese), and a subheading reads, "A Young Woman's Sacrifice for Love's Sweet Sake." What exactly was that sacrifice? "The fair Quakeress went through the formula [the vows] which severed her from country and family and binds her to a foreign people of another race." The article also gave Inazô the backhanded compliment of noting that he was "rather

above the size of most of his countrymen." The constant reminders of their otherness cannot but have made a lasting impact on Meiji travelers in the West, no matter how elite their status, no matter how convinced they may have been of Japan's stature in the world.

Now I would like to turn my attention to a consideration of Nitobe's association of *bushidô* with chivalry. Some of the earliest Western observers of Japanese society had drawn an analogy between the samurai class and the European knighthood. This was a highly motivated discursive gesture, containing both positive and negative implications that Japanese civilization was "archaic" compared to that of the West. Inasmuch as the analogy utilized a romanticized image of "noble knights," who in the popular art and book illustrations of the nineteenth century were often portrayed as gentle and even effeminate, it constructed a Japan of sentimentality, exoticism, and desire, especially in the context of the industrializing, urbanizing, and democratizing West of rampant capitalism, pragmatic and utilitarian social mores, and an emerging commodity culture communicated through mass media. Also contained in this analogy, however, was the atavistic violence and brutality—most vividly expressed by accounts of *seppuku*, or ritual suicide—of a culture that was seen as at once gentle and cruel.

But if what was called chivalry was an understandable fad in many countries in the West, beginning with the elites, for whom it had the greatest ideological resonance, and percolating down, like much of elite culture, through the literate middle classes, then we can see how Nitobe's appropriation of *bushidô* was significant for its cultural politics as well as its descriptive utility, for Nitobe's *bushidô,* in the context of late-nineteenth century Japan, carried ideological weight similar to that of chivalry. Nitobe's version of *bushidô* encompassed an elitist nostalgia, a statist ideology of loyalty, discipline, and duty, and a private desire for the nurturance of his mother, Seki, who had taught him this moral code at home. Numerous observers have identified Nitobe's *bushidô* as an invented tradition; indeed, Yuzo Ota[14] has gone so far as to claim that Nitobe, thanks to his Westernized, English-based education, knew

[14] Ota notes Nitobe's "rather shaky grasp of individual facts" of Japanese history, in his "Mediation Between Cultures," 245.

virtually nothing of the facts of Japanese history. Moreover, the "chivalry" upon which Nitobe relied in order to gain the "comprehension" of his Western readers was itself nothing more than an invented tradition.

Ultimately, Nitobe's *bushidô* effaced more than it revealed. Its apparent transparency has turned out to be maddeningly opaque. It was a set of representations that could be re-scripted in accordance with the motivations of its readers. Written in English for an Anglo-American audience, Nitobe's book did not reach the peak of its popularity until Japan's success in the Russo-Japanese War (1905-1906) made the Western world take notice of Japanese military power and seek an explanation for its newly acknowledged strength. It was only after this wave of popularity, five years after its initial publication, that the book was translated into Japanese. That is, the book did not appear to be worthy of a Japanese mass audience until it was legitimized by its huge influence in the West.

The geographical site of the composition of Nitobe's book—the beach in California—reflects its positional ambiguities, for it was as far removed from the cultural centers of Europe and America (New York, Philadelphia, Boston) as it was from Japan. On the beach, Nitobe was a displaced intellectual, a hybridized cosmopolitan inhabiting an interstitial space between East and West. The liminality of his location may seem, in retrospect, to reflect the ambiguities and incongruities of his textual project. The book was a shadow-play of representations, and perhaps inevitably, considering its unrooted discourse, it left itself particularly vulnerable to appropriation and exploitation.

We do know that Okakura was troubled by the Western readings of Nitobe's book. Of course, by the time he published *The Book of Tea* (1906), there was no doubt as to Japan's imperialistic agenda, which only complicated the task of those who, like Nitobe and Okakura, sought to represent Japan to the West. As Okakura wrote in the introduction to his book:

> The average Westerner, in his sleek complacency, will see in the tea ceremony but another instance of the thousand and one oddities which constitute the quaintness and childishness of the East to him. He was wont to regard Japan as barbarous while she indulged in the gentle arts of peace; he calls her civilized

> since she began to commit wholesale slaughter on Manchurian battlefields. Much comment has been given lately to the Code of the Samurai—the Art of Death which makes our soldiers exult in self-sacrifice; but scarcely any attention has been drawn to Teaism, which represents much of our Art of Life. Fain would we remain barbarians, if our claim to civilization were to be based on the gruesome glory of war. Fain would we await the time when due respect shall be paid to our art and ideals.
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> When will the West understand, or try to understand, the East? We Asiatics are often appalled by the curious web of facts and fancies which has been woven concerning us. We are pictured as living on the perfume of the lotus, if not on mice and cockroaches. It is either impotent fanaticism or else abject voluptuousness.[15]

The sarcastic, even mocking tone of this passage comes as a surprise to those of us who maintain an image of the gentility of Okakura's prose, and indeed, the tone of his writing turns conciliatory soon enough, with this chapter ending in an invitation for East and West to "share a cup of tea" and "dream of evanescence, and linger in the beautiful foolishness of things" (9). But the sentiments expressed before the perhaps performative fantasy of reconciliation betray an exasperation with being forced into the role of the represented, and a desire to assume control of representation, to become the speaking subject, to talk back to the West.

In a different context, but in words that have some applicability to this discussion, Rey Chow writes,

> To put it in very simple terms, a non-white culture, in order to "be" or to "speak," must (1) seek legitimacy/recognition from white culture, which has denied the reality of "other" cultures all along; (2) to use the language of white culture (since it is the dominant one) to produce itself (so that it could be recognized and thus legitimized); and yet (3) resist complete normativation by white culture.

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[15] Okakura 1906/1964, 2-3.

This passage, taken from Chow's essay, "Theory, Area Studies, Cultural Studies," reads almost as if it were written about our three writers, who sought to represent Japan to the West, in the English language, while also being concerned about Japan being reified or subsumed through the vehicle of their representations. But the futility of their projects was determined at their inception. Nitobe's and Okakura's representations were doomed by their dependence upon "traditions" that were newly invented to suit the purposes of the Meiji state, as Gluck noted, and instead of complicating Western images of Japan, they only hardened them into the Orientalist categories of "hard" (*bushidô*) and "soft" (tea), or violent and effeminate. Such readings became dominant, despite our authors' attempts to present more nuanced representations. But at least Nitobe and Okakura were widely read. Rather than focus on representing Japan, Uchimura offered harsh critiques of Western society and culture, and of organized Christianity. Unsurprisingly, Uchimura had great difficulty in finding a Western publisher for his book, which was finally issued by a small religious press in a tiny printing.

And thus, in spite of Japan's material successes at the turn of the last century, the culture of Orientalism maintained its hegemony. The three authors, compromised by their complicity with the official Japanese agenda (in their acceptance and active support of Japanese nationalist ideology and its trappings) on the one hand, and the refusal of the West to hear them on the other, were doomed to failure. It would be an impossible task for them to become the speaking subjects they wished to be.

In spite of the apparent applicability of Chow's formula to our writers, we must be cautious about possibly overstating their case. They were members of the old samurai class and were therefore among the elite, a factor reinforced by their access to education and their internalization of a concept of duty to the nation, and their nationalism often conflicted with professed values. As a Quaker, Nitobe was expected to honor the peace testimony, but he gave strong support to Japanese colonialism and imperialism, and he became notorious late in life as a defender of the Manchurian Incident of 1931. Okakura's book, *The Ideals of the East,* opens with the sentence, "Asia is one,"[16] an

[16] Okakura 1904/2000, 1.

expression of a pan-Asiatic ideology that was offered by Japanese militarists as a rationale for the crimes they committed on the continent. Even Uchimura, who was fired from a teaching position for showing disrespect to the Emperor, was such an ardent nationalist that he claimed that Japan would become superior to the West even in its practice of Christianity.[17]

Nevertheless, I hope I have been able to suggest how there was an irruption of Orientalist and colonialist influences into the historical moment that I have sought to describe. An acknowledgment of such phenomena should work to complicate, in a helpful way, our understanding of the course of modern Japanese history. However misguided and compromised they were, our three authors produced texts that sought to resist a hegemonic Orientalist discourse by seeking to claim for themselves the right to represent Japan.

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[17] This gesture recalls Ôgai's character who tutored the German girl in the German language, and constitutes a reversal of the Orientalist trope, famously represented by Fenollosa in the Japanese context, of the superior civilization possessing a greater appreciation for the culture of the inferior one.

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