

AN EXAMINATION ON THE RECEPTION OF JOSEPH CONRAD IN MODERN JAPAN

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*Abstract: In this article, I will examine the reception of Conrad's works in modern Japan. Based on various writings and records of the reception from the 1910s to the 1940s, I will trace the Japanese reception of Conrad's works. The overview will reveal that there were certain characteristics in the reception of Conrad throughout modern Japan: there were many people who read Conrad's works as English language texts in high schools and universities, but there were few people who considered seriously the importance of their social or political implications during the 1920s and the early 1940s. Many scholars and novelists in modern Japan could not mention or notice the dark side of Japanese colonialism or imperialism through reading Conrad's works. In fact, his "political" novels such as *Nostromo*, *Secret Agent* and *Under Western Eyes*, were not also translated by the end of the Second World War. Finally, I will demonstrate the limitations of the reception in modern Japan as shown in Japanese Conradians' attitudes towards the novelist.¹*

The aim of this essay is to discuss the reception of Joseph Conrad in Japan. About a century has passed since Conrad was first introduced to Japan, and there have been many translations of his works. Even in the first decade of the twenty-first century, three Japanese translations of *Heart of Darkness* were published, and today's novelists like Haruki Murakami pay much attention to the Polish-born English novelist. In view of the situation, however, there are very few academic studies on the reception of Joseph Conrad in this country.² In this essay, based on various writings and records of the reception, tracing the Japanese reception of Conrad's works from the 1900s to the 1940s, we will reveal that there were certain characteristics in the reception of Conrad throughout modern Japan. There were many people who read Conrad's works as English language texts in high schools and universities, and as mere sea novels for youth. Yet, there were few people who considered seriously the importance of their social or political implications during the 1920s and the 1940s. In fact, his "political" novels such as *Nostromo*, *Secret Agent* and *Under Western Eyes*, were not translated by the end of the Second World War. An exceptional case, however, is Manabu Maruyama, an English teacher at the High Normal School in Hiroshima: he pointed out the importance of Conrad's works in a book in 1944. This fact indicates a unique reception of Conrad in modern Japan. We will survey

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¹ The literacy of Japanese people is never inferior to that of Western people. So, in the future, the United Kingdom will continue to be amazed by our [Japanese] English like they are by Conrad's English. ("Editor's note," a 22)

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Maruyama's career from the 1920s to the 1940s. Finally, we will demonstrate the limitations of the reception in modern Japan as shown in Japanese Conradians' attitudes towards the novelist.

I. Towards the Sea: Conrad and the Sea in Modern Japan

Conrad was known as a famous author of English sea literature in the late 1900s in Japan, although the readers of Conrad's works were restricted to scholars and novelists at that time. Soseki Natsume (1867-1916), for instance, introduced Conrad's several works ("Youth", "Typhoon", *Nigger of the "Narcissus"*, and *Heart of Darkness*) in a newspaper article in 1908, which was one of the first well-organized introductions about Conrad in Japan. In the article, Natsume praised Conrad's works, focusing on the sea Conrad described, and said that Conrad was "so zealous to describe the seascape as a magnificent view that he could not depict characters vividly in his works." And he went so far as to say that "he should have devoted himself to describing the great power of the sea like Turner's seascape paintings" (Natsume 335). It is clear that Natsume focused not on the characters but on the land/seascape of nature as a particular aesthetic image. At the same time, he did not mention any of the socio-political problems behind "the land/seascapes of nature" in *Heart of Darkness*.

By the late 1910s Conrad had been widely recognized in Japan as a contemporary English novelist with a dramatic life (born in Poland he had become a mariner before he started to write novels in English, his third language, etc.). For example, Izumi Yanagita (1894-1969), a famous historian about Meiji era, remembered that in 1918:

I was eager to buy many English novels at the Maruzen bookshop. I remember reading books written by Conrad, Wells, Galsworthy, Bennett. They were "the contemporary English novelists" at the time. (Yanagita 594)

In 1924 Conrad and his works gained the attention of the Japanese literary world because of his death. Newspapers published the news of his death, and literary magazines such as *Eigo Seinen (The Rising Generation)* and *Shin Bungei (New Literature)* published memorial issues of Joseph Conrad in that year, in which contributors praised Conrad as a maestro of English sea literature that evoked various images of the sea and tropical areas which people did not know much about. From the 1910s to the 1920s, Conrad became well-known in Japan as a famous contemporary English novelist. Yukio Haruyama (1902-1994),³ a poet and a famous editor, for instance, contributed an article about Conrad to the magazine entitled *Bungei Jidai (Literary Times)* in 1928, which outlined the reception of Conrad in France during the 1920s. Haruyama noted how Conrad's works were popular in France. As an example, he presented the case of André Gide, who had had contact with Conrad and had translated Conrad's works. In addition, Haruyama referred to the existence of a privately-published signed 50-

³Haruyama Yukio was famous as an introducer of the latest western modernism. His knowledge of the western literature was superior to any other critics and scholars between the late 1920s and the 1930s. There were many of his insightful essays on Joyce, T. S. Eliot, Proust, and Gide, which influenced many young Japanese artists.

copy-limited edition of Conrad's works. Haruyama was the only person to mention these limited books in Japan. His article shows his high regard for Conrad. If so, why did not Haruyama pay as much attention to Conrad's works as Gide, and why did not he share common consciousness of a resistance to colonialism with Gide?

When Haruyama published an essay in 1929, he wrote that "when I read a letter from a friend who lives in Taiwan, it always evokes a tropical image of a house with a veranda like a scene of Conrad's work" (Haruyama 23). In *Almayer's Folly* and *Lord Jim*, for instance, a veranda is a symbolic place where both Almayer and Jim confess their desires, guilt and despair. For Haruyama, however, the veranda was nothing more than a tropical image of Taiwan, which he had not yet visited. Even though Haruyama had known of a close relation between Conrad and Gide and was deeply familiar with Modernism movement, he did not mention or was not able to notice the dark side of Japanese colonialism or imperialism through reading Conrad's works. These comments on Conrad's works were typical in the reception of Conrad from the late 1920s to the 1940s. Few people could discuss the problems of Japanese colonialism by reading Conrad's works, while Gide criticized French colonialism. In 1933, for instance, Tetsutaro Yoshimura, a young critic, wrote that "I can understand the situation of British colonialism through reading Kipling's works" (Yoshimura 11). Then he wrote:

I think that the tropical scenes of Conrad's works are very different from those of other western novels. The sea Conrad described does not represent freedom and joy. ... I feel his sea stories very strange, so I am convinced that his works are very different from other western sea stories. (Yoshimura 11)

While Yoshimura was aware of the strangeness or uniqueness of Conrad's works, he was so puzzled by Conrad's sea stories that it was difficult for him to explain clearly the characteristics of Conrad's works. Even in the early 1930s, people who read Conrad's works recognized just a limited aspect of his works. In fact, Japanese scholars, critics and novelists did not refer directly to a close relation between Gide and Conrad, that is, how *Heart of Darkness* exerted great influence over Gide's *Voyage au Congo*, although Gide's books enjoyed a large number of readers in Japan during the 1930s. It seems that Conrad's works did not have a huge impact on Japanese literature and did not lead to deep connections with Japanese novelists, such as the literary connection between Shoyo Tsubouchi and Shakespeare, that between Hideo Kobayashi and Rimbaud, and that between Sei Ito and Joyce.

II. Conrad, a High school, and Navy in Hiroshima: As an Object of English Lesson from the 1930s to the End of the War

By the 1930s, however, Conrad's works had earned many readers in high schools and universities because his works had been used often in school as English textbooks from the 1930s to the 1940s. Kenzaburo Ohashi, a scholar of American literature, wrote that when he was a student at the Tokyo University of Foreign Languages in the 1930s, he read one of Conrad's short novels in a class. In fact, in 1930, Conrad was ranked eighth as English textbooks in high schools (Erikawa

76). In 1935, Yaichi Aizu (1881-1956), a poet, Japanese art scholar, and high school English teacher, taught high school students with “Youth” as a textbook to learn English. Saburo Shiroyama (1927-2007), a novelist, wrote a memoir of his youth in the late 1940s, when his private tutor gave him Conrad’s “Youth” to practice English in order to pass an entrance examination of a university.

Although there were people who continued to read Conrad’s works in Tokyo, his works may have got more and earnest readers in Hiroshima than in Tokyo, because at two schools in Hiroshima (the High Normal School of Hiroshima and the Imperial Naval Academy) Conrad’s works were selected as English textbooks during the 1930s.⁴¹

In 1932, for instance, Manabu Maruyama (1904-1970), an English teacher of the High Normal School, chose Conrad’s works as English textbooks. Maruyama was born in Kumamoto Prefecture in 1904. He entered the High Normal School in 1922 and graduated in 1925. Then, he was inducted by the army for two years. After that, he taught English at a junior high school in Kumamoto until 1929. Then he started to study English literature at the Hiroshima University of Literature and Science as one of its inaugural students in 1929. On graduating from the university in 1932, he was hired as an English teacher at the High Normal School of Hiroshima. Maruyama, interested in Conrad and his works since the 1920s, confessed that his actual experience of the sea in youth led him to an interest in reading Conrad’s works. According to his memoir, his voyage across the Pacific Ocean in 1923, connected him with Conrad.

At night with glittering stars, on the Pacific Ocean, I was much excited to hear sea stories, which an old sailor told on the deck of the ship. Thanks to the experience of the voyage, I got interested in the sea and enthusiastic about English sea novels such as Conrad’s and Maugham’s at the time of the normal school. Moreover, as I became an English teacher, I adopted their works as English textbooks. (Maruyama 146)

This is a valuable document for pinpointing a relation between Conrad’s works and a young Japanese scholar. His passion for Conrad’s works continued during his university years. When he graduated from the university in 1932, he wrote a thesis about Conrad’s works.

However, his study of Conrad at the university was not related to his actual experience of the sea in high school years because it is called a certain taxonomic style. He did not research the contents of Conrad’s works. When he published his first essay in 1934 “on the shade and shadow in Conrad’s works,” summarizing the thesis written in 1932, he did not mention the sea with glittering stars; instead, he attempted to show how “shadow” and “shade” in Conrad’s works reveals “the uniqueness of Conrad’s prose style” (Maruyama, c 53). In this essay, he focused on the language itself, because his purpose of research might be called a kind of stylistics or lexicology, which listed usage examples of “shadow” and “darkness” in Conrad’s works. He pointed out that “in almost all Conrad’s works, the word ‘shadows’ is often used, but few studies proved the fact by statistical approaches” (Maruyama, c 50). Referring to OED, he investigated the frequency of the usage of “shade” and “shadow” compared with that in several Conrad’s works. Then he

⁴¹I have written on the reception of Conrad’s works in Hiroshima in more detail elsewhere: see Wakita, “Conrad and Modern Japan.”

wrote that “Conrad tended to use the meaning of ‘shade’ as adjective usage” (Maruyama, c 53).

As a scholar, Maruyama stressed that literally scholars must be a neutral introducer to classify scientifically many literary methods, as if a teacher was explaining literary theories in a lecture without his own opinions.⁵ He emphasized the importance of not “being subjective” but “being neutral” and of “being scientific” in the literary studies (Maruyama, a 34-35).⁶ He thought that an English scholar must clearly distinguish a study on the English language from literary criticism. He preferred “objective methods on literature” as a kind of linguistics (lexicology, stylistic, syntax, etc.) to subjective methods like subjective methods of reading literature.

According to the memoir of one of his students, however, Maruyama often had conversations with his students in an attempt to stimulate students’ interests in Conrad’s works. Maruyama’s passion for Conrad led his students privately to publish a book entitled *Conrad Kenkyu* in 1935. In that book, an editor said that “owing to a lot of advice of Professor Maruyama, we could complete this magazine” (“Editor’s Note” 152). It was clear that his students published the magazine under the direction of Maruyama, and Maruyama’s approach considerably influenced the articles in the magazine. Thus, there were several articles on stylistics and lexicology of Conrad’s works such as “On the Style of Prose of Joseph Conrad” and “On the Words of Conrad.”

Maruyama’s students who wanted to become English teacher at high school or junior high school perceived Conrad’s works as examples to learn English. These students’ approach is similar to that of Maruyama’s 1934 essay. One student, for instance, wrote that “Conrad used nouns and adjectives more frequently than verbs and pronouns” and that “Conrad had a tendency to use long phrases in his works” (Maki 23), while he pointed out “126 nouns, 156 adjectives and 66 verbs in *Nigger of the “Narcissus”*” (Maki 24).

Like Maruyama, his students paid attention not to the contents but to the characteristics of words and phrases in Conrad’s works by employing statistical approaches. In doing so, they did not show their own personal interpretation of Conrad’s works. One student stated that “I am not going to say my feelings about Conrad’s works” (Masuyama 28).

⁵Maruyama published his first book entitled *Bungaku kenkyuho (A Study of Methods in Literature)* in 1934. Conrad’s works were referred to more frequently than those of other novelists in order to explain the literary methods. In this book, he referred to *Heart of Darkness* as a travel novel. Although Maruyama’s comment on *Heart of Darkness* was very short, it was among a few articles on *Heart of Darkness* in the 1930s in Japan.

⁶ While Maruyama had studied philological aspects of Conrad’s works since the 1920s, he was an ethnologist, too. This means that he was much interested both in Conrad’s works and in ethnology from the 1920s to the 1940s. In fact, while he was an English teacher in the High Normal School, he had been eager to collect folklores about the coastal regions of Hiroshima since the 1920s. He was one of the early ethnologists in Hiroshima. Besides, he was in contact with Yanagita Kunio, and then took part in *Minkan Densho (The Magazine of the Folk Tale)* edited by Yanagita. After the Second World War, Maruyama was famous as not so much a scholar of English literature as an ethnographer. Unfortunately, Maruyama never wrote about the relation between his studies on English and his ethnology, or did not write any sensational diary like Malinowski in field works. He, however, can be placed in the border between a scholar of English and an ethnologist.

Their methods could be categorized as philology and stylistics, which were popular and traditional fields in the Normal School of Hiroshima.⁷ Chiaki Higashida (1910-1992), a professor of the Imperial Naval Academy near the High Normal School since the mid-1930s, recollected that philology and stylistics were studied actively in the High Normal School under the influence of Tadao Yamamoto, who was a professor at the High Normal School, a senior of Higashida at the Imperial University of Tokyo, and had also been a co-worker of Maruyama since the 1930s. Higashida wrote that “Mr. Yamamoto was very much interested in stylistics, so I often participated in the activities of a reading club in the High Normal School” (Higashida, c 35).

It is interesting that Higashida himself also had studied stylistics at the Imperial University of Tokyo. According to Higashida’s memoir, he had been interested in D. H. Lawrence, Conrad, and especially in stylistics since the early 1930s. At the time, D. H. Lawrence drew the attention of people and Higashida published a philological essay entitled “On the Prose Style of D. H. Lawrence” in 1937, when he became professor at the Naval Academy. Later in 1943, Higashida published an essay entitled “On the Early Prose of Joseph Conrad.”

In his essay, based on objective facts, Higashida wrote that “the study of stylistics reveals personal characteristics of the author” (Higashida, b. 57). Thus, “Conrad’s works were good samples for stylistics because he was very much interested in creating general appropriate expressions of English, which were not influenced by the theme he chose” (Higashida, b. 56). Higashida also explained that “Conrad had tendencies to repeat several words and phrases as having the same meaning. The repetition gives emotive impression in his works” (Higashida, b. 62), quoting several long passages from the scenes of the south sea and southern islands in Conrad’s works (*Almayer’s Folly*, *An Outcast of the Islands*, “Typhoon” and *Lord Jim*). Finally, Higashida pointed out that “this repetition shows the passion with which Conrad was trying to express all the delicate nuances in English” (Higashida, b. 62).

When he published “*Nostramo no bunsho*” (“On the Prose of *Nostramo*”) in 1946, just one year after the end of the Second World War, Higashida focused on the usage of adjectives and abstract nouns in *Nostramo* and *Chance*, because he thought that the use of those words were one of the characteristics of Conrad’s prose. He concluded that “Conrad succeeded in creating impressive prose by adopting a lot of abstract nouns with multiple meanings.” (Higashida 41)

Both essays focused only on the linguistic aspects such as words and phrases like Maruyama’s first essay about Conrad’s works in 1934. Higashida insisted that “stylistics can discover the most sophisticated mode of a national language, and confirm the value of its expressions in literature which excellent authors created in their mother tongue” (*Ichikawa* 36), but he proceeded to discuss a case of foreign languages as follows:

If we start to study stylistics on foreign languages, we might firstly refer to authors who have peculiar prose style. In that sense, Conrad’s works are

⁷The High Normal School was established in order to train English teachers of junior and senior high schools, who were required both to translate English correctly and to explain English grammar adequately. Aesthetic reading was not required; pragmatic skills of English were essential to them.

suitable for a study. . . . Particularly, his early works show a unique English style. We find that he did not write English fluently in his early works, but the more he tried to write his works in English, the more he created an original style of English. (*Ichikawa* 36)

It was important for Higashida to emphasize Conrad's English as non-native during the Second World War. When he used *Lord Jim* as an English textbook at the Naval Academy in 1941, he wrote in its introduction that the novelist acquired honor in English literature although "Conrad was born in Poland," and emphasized that "he started to learn English at the age of 20," and "English was his third language" (Higashida, b. 33-34). He asserted that Conrad was an outsider in English literature, and that his works were not categorized as pure English literature, even if his works were written in English.

Higashida suggested in the introduction that Conrad was equated with Japanese naval students in learning English and that Conrad's works were the most appropriate textbooks to study English at the Naval Academy. In fact, Higashida deleted the second part of *Lord Jim* from the English textbook, which was one of the most mysterious, strange and demoniac in Conrad's works. Thus, *Lord Jim* was transformed from a dangerous story into a simple sea voyage story.

On the one hand, the reception of Conrad's works at the Naval Academy was a unique case, given the reception of other western literature in modern Japan. The reception displayed an adverse situation of Japanese scholars of English in the early 1940s because those scholars including Higashida and Maruyama always faced a necessity to justify their English language education to those who opposed to it. Exceptionally the Naval Academy, however, had encouraged students to study English, because the Navy had inevitably required a lot of information about the British Navy and the United States Navy to win the war. Young English scholars like Kenzaburo Ohashi, for instance, continued to be employed by the Navy. It may not be an exaggeration to say that the Naval Academy was the best and safest institution to teach and study English literature including Conrad's works in the early 1940s. Higashida claimed:

Fortunately, until the end of the Second World War, the Naval Academy allowed us to continue to study English literature. So we did not feel ashamed for teaching and studying English. (Higashida, c. 35)

During the war, Higashida taught English with *Lord Jim* as an English textbook; moreover, he read a paper entitled "On Joseph Conrad" in 1941 at a seminar of the Naval Academy in order to discuss western literature.⁸ Unfortunately, Higashida never recorded on the seminar in detail, but it is clear that he played a major role in the reception of Conrad not only in Hiroshima but also in Japan as a whole during the war.

III. Between the Sea in Conrad's Works and Imperial Japan

In a conversation with Shinobu Orikuchi (1887-1953), a famous folklorist, poet and novelist, Kunio Yanagita (1875-1962) said that he was interested in "a role of ship in Japanese culture," (Yanagita 215); then he pointed out that there had been

⁸The seminar was called "Kinyo Kai" (Friday Group) in the naval academy.

much fewer Japanese folk tales about the sea than about the land. Orikuchi agreed with Yanagita and said that “many old poems on the subject of the sea did not sing joy, happiness or familiarity” and “Japanese people had a tendency to avoid talking about the sea” (Yanagita 215). Unfortunately, Orikuchi did not describe the conversation in more detail.

Yanagita had been very much interested in Japanese sea culture for a long time. He asserted that the sea had influenced strongly Japanese culture since ancient times. In his essay, “Kaijo no Mich” (“The Road of the Sea”) written in 1961, Yanagita claimed that ancient people in south Asia had sailed for the islands of Japan: he called the route “the roads of the sea” and regarded it as the sources of Japanese original culture. When Yanagita wrote an essay entitled “Kaijo Bunka” (“On a Culture of Shipboard”) in the magazine *Kaiyo* (*The Ocean*) in 1934, he emphasized how both the sea and the ship strongly influenced Japanese cultures and that a history of the ship in Japan would be a very important theme to consider the culture.⁹

Kaiyo, which was a conservative magazine to encourage the amity and unity of Japanese mercantile mariners, published various articles about the sea including current sea information, sea ethnographies like Yanagita’s essay, and Japanese sea poetry; yet, it did not include sea novels. It is unclear why sea novels were never published in the magazine, although a writer in *Kaiyo* pointed out that it was important to create original Japanese sea fictions for “all Japanese people” (Nakamura 67) as well as to translate famous western sea novels.

Instead of original Japanese sea fictions, some essays in Conrad’s *The Mirror of the Sea*, in which he wrote a lot of seascapes and shipboard affairs, were translated in *Kaiyo*, as if these essays would compensate for the lack of Japanese sea novels in the magazine. They seem even to provide rich samples of the sea cultures Yanagita discussed. In an introduction to the translation, the translator emphasized that “*The Mirror of the Sea* was suitable work to learn about the sea” (Tsuchida 42). The fact that *Kaiyo* included the translation of some parts of *The Mirror of the Sea* shows that Conrad’s works had considerable effect on Japanese modern sea literature. This would prove a lack of ideas about Japanese sea cultures as Yanagita claimed them. Yet, when Higashida annotated *Lord Jim* at the Naval Academy in 1941, Imperial Japan designated July 20 as “Umi no Kinenbi” (the Memorial Day of the Sea) to enlighten people on the importance of maritime affairs. According to the government, July 20 was a historic day for Japanese mercantile service, because the Meiji Emperor came back to Yokohama from Aomori on 20 July 1876 not by a naval ship but by a passenger ship named Meiji Maru. For this reason, the government declared that the tour symbolized the completion of Japanese modern mercantile system.

The founder of the Memorial Day was Shozo Murata (1878-1957), the telecommunication minister, who had been a famous president of the Osaka Marine Company since the early 1930s. When the Japanese navy needed quickly many ships for the Sino-Japanese War in 1937, he took the initiative in integrating Japanese mercantile companies into one group to offer mercantile ships for the Navy. As a result, he took office as the minister of the state in 1940, and then he was installed as a senior adviser of the army in 1942. As a powerful supporter and leader of both the Imperial Navy and the mercantile marine, Murata

⁹See, “Kaijo bunka.” 1940. *Kaiyo*. 484, 1-26.

was a key person who could handle the relationships between the Navy and the mercantile companies.

During the war, Murata continued to claim an importance to maintain a trading region on the sea because he was worried that people were less interested in the sea than in the land such as Manchuria. Murata came up with the idea of “the Memorial Day of the Sea,” which would give a good chance for the people to realize the importance of the sea as the necessary territory of the Imperial Japan. His idea was successful because many magazines had special features on the Memorial Day in July 1941.¹⁰ *King*, a bestseller literary magazine, for instance, published various articles about the sea such as “Across the Pacific Ocean,” “Japan is the Number-one Fishing Industry in the World” “The Current Affairs Related to Ships,” “The Pacific, Our pond.”¹¹ Unlike *Kaiyo* in 1934, Conrad’s works were never published in *King*. The articles in *King* focused on socio-political matters, and referred to hostile relations between the Imperial Japan, the United States and the United Kingdom across the Pacific. Those articles criticized mainly the policy of the United States and the United Kingdom.

At the beginning of the 1940s, the sea and the south islands were not only recognized as romantic or fictional topoi like Haruyama wrote in the 1930s but also became the most important territory for the forthcoming war against the United States. In *King*, an editorial article entitled “The Pacific Ocean Was Our Pond,” for instance, insisted that “basically all the Pacific Ocean belonged to the Eastern people. Our ancestors were moving freely around the Pacific Ocean like a pond. Therefore, it is quite right that we, the Eastern people, must regain the Pacific Ocean, although nowadays the United States occupies half of the Pacific Ocean.” (“Taiheiyo” 110) In the same way, a naval officer writing in *King* suggested a possibility of war against the United States and claimed that the imperial Japan must keep the territory of the sea and expand it against the United States.

As a result of growing concern about the ocean in the 1940s, however, scholars did not ignore English sea novels. When Masanobu Oda (1903-1945), a scholar of English literature wrote an essay entitled “The Sea and the Idea of British Culture” in 1941, he argued that Conrad was fascinated by the adventure spirit of the mariners because “Conrad indicated that the awe of the spirit on the sea represented the soul itself of the old British Empire” (Oda 140). Then, Oda explained that the sea in Conrad’s works shows not so much allegory about human existentialism as a socio-political idea of the sea in the British Empire. Oda concluded that “when I wrote the essay, I always thought about the islands of Japan. I wonder how many people who walk around Ginza know how far the sea is from the area. And there would be much more people who think that Japan is always saved by *kamikaze* historically” (Oda 140).

Moreover, in July 1941, *Kokubungaku*, one of the most famous journals on Japanese literature, featured Japanese sea literature from ancient to modern times. In the magazine, Togoro Koike, a famous scholar of the Edo era, wrote an essay on the idea of the sea in Edo literature. He claimed that the reason for the failure

¹⁰For example, *Shin Seinen* (New Youth), *Jituwa Yomimono* (The true magazine), *Oru Yomimono* (All Reading).

¹¹See, *King*. 1941. 33(8). 10-35.

of pre-modern Japanese literature to create masterpieces of the sea was because of *sakoku* (seclusion policy) throughout the Edo period. Then he wrote:

Someone like Theodor Jozef Konrad Krozeniowski (Conrad's real name) did not appear in the Edo period. In addition, modern Japan has not been able to produce good sea literature. (Koike 66)

In addition, we can guess that a single modern Japanese sea novel comparable to Conrad's or Melville's had not appeared through the history of modern Japanese literature. Yet, it is interesting that his comment suggested that Japanese literature compensated for its lack of sea literature with Conrad's works. In a sense, although Conrad wrote sea novels in English, the works had been received as a standard reference for Japanese sea literature even in 1941, and Conrad was so famous that even a scholar of Edo literature knew the original name of the Polish-born novelist's in 1941.

In the same year, Mamoru Osawa, a scholar of English literature, translated *Almayer's Folly* into Japanese. He wrote in his introduction to the translation:

British readers might understand *Almayer's Folly* only as a sort of a simple exotic story. The book, however, gives us, Asian people, new perspectives different from those of British people. In this sense, we have a closer connection with Conrad than British people, even if he used English to write novels and became famous in England. These years, we have occupied Kainan Island and Amon, and furthermore Shinnangun Islands are absorbed into the territory of the Imperial Japan. Now the imperial Japan is expanding its territory near Borneo, which is a scene in *Almayer's Folly*. . . . Meanwhile, I had been impressed deeply by the big change over a span of six years. When I was translated the book in 1933, I felt myself playing in a fairyland of *Almayer's Folly*. But now, I am very surprised at the reality of the book. This is the time to introduce the book in an appropriate spotlight. I believe that a number of young people will be rapt in the book. (Osawa 256)

Osawa stressed that Imperial Japan could create a new value different from that of the west by reading Conrad's works, although he did not make it clear what that value was. He thought that *Almayer's Folly* could eventually give readers real images of the southern areas (*Nanyo* in Japanese) and the sea in the 1940s.

Conrad's works were not a kind of fairy tales of southern islands like Haruyama and Yoshida imagined in the 1930s. Haruyama himself, however, also paid attention to an importance of Japanese sea literature. When he published an essay in 1939 on the future of the land and the sea literature in Japan, he emphasized that Japanese sea literature must produce a new tradition, and must not write simple picturesque images but observe "transportation, intelligence and business on the colonized sea" like "Conrad's and Kipling's works" (Haruyama, c. 23). In this essay, Haruyama valued English colonial literature rather than French one because the former seemed to him to be more wholesome than the latter. Thus English colonial and sea literature did not give rise to any doubt about colonialism as the works of Andre Gide, which criticized the occupations of Congo and other areas under the western control. For Haruyama, Japanese colonial literature must not criticize an organic integration of the inland (*Naichi*) and overseas territories (*Gaichu*) because both authors and readers must have "a common recognition about colonized areas of the Imperial Japan" (Haruyama, c.

24). In 1941, Mitsusuke Yonekubo, a leader of a union, translated a Conrad's sea novel *Nigger of the "Narcissus."* Yonekubo, who had been a mariner and writer from the 1910s to the 1920s, wrote in the preface that he emphasized the importance of ruling the sea as the territory to all Japanese people.¹²

In the 1940s, Yonekubo and Haruyama argued that Conrad's works were instructive for the creation of a Japanese colonial or sea literature, while they ignored or could not realize how Gide, who criticized western imperialism and colonialism, had been significantly influenced by Conrad's works. Eventually, modern Japanese literary figures such as Yonekubo and Haruyama, who had not been able to notice politically dangerous aspects of Conrad's works, had seemingly grasped Conrad's works as useful textbooks to understand about south Asia and the south and to rule them, just as Higashida used Conrad's works as English textbooks at the Naval Academy in the 1940s.

IV. On a Limitation of Reading "Conrad" in Modern Japan

It is interesting that the situation of Maruyama was completely different from that of Higashida, Haruyama, and others from the late 1930s to the 1940s because he spent most of his time in the Army. Maruyama was conscribed by the Army in 1937.¹³ He was dispatched to China right away and went into battle at the front. In 1941 he was discharged from the military, but was re-conscripted from 1943 to 1945 as an officer of the 16th Western Troops of Kumamoto. In 1944, as a captain of the Imperial Army, he published a book entitled *Eikokujin No Toakan (A British Idea about East Asia)*, which introduced British history of colonialism and criticized its violent rule over Asia with reference to works of Somerset Maugham, R. L. Stevenson, Lafcadio Hearn (aka, Yakumo Koizumi) and Conrad.

Maruyama wrote that "Conrad tried to indicate something unknowable in the dark world. But Conrad knew enough to be unable to write the unknowable in his works because he was a thorough realist unlike Stevenson's romanticism" (Maruyama, b 98-99). What Maruyama called "realist" was different from the general meaning of the word as is seen in Hardy, because Maruyama's idea of realism did not tend to focus on sociopolitical problems. He claimed that Conrad was such a realist that he was not interested in "the mechanism and discipline of western society" but in "human destiny" as a kind of philosophy: "The sea and strange lands Conrad wrote about reflected human destiny abstractly" and "he could be called a fatalist" (Maruyama, b 101). And he added, "Conrad liked the storm-swept sea because it is a mixture of love and fear. Moreover, he preferred to write about Asian people who had wildness and mystique" (Maruyama, b 107). It was important for Maruyama to focus on Conrad's sea as an allegory of fatality or philosophical problems. He avoided criticizing Conrad's prejudice against "Asian people."

Even if Maruyama had been reading many Conrad's works since the 1930s, he did not get to understand the discourse to connect Conrad's works with colonialism and imperialism of modern Japan. He, as a result, explained that Conrad's sea and strange lands were based on a kind of romanticism, as did other Japanese Conradians in the 1920s and in the 1930s.

¹²See, Yonekubo, *Nashisaku go no kokudo*. 2-3

¹³This was the second conscription. The first conscription was in 1926.

He certainly claimed that Conrad talked about “the crimes of the civilization of the West.” At the same time, he disregarded the fact that there had been a lot of violation of colonialism and imperialism behind “the scene of the sea and strange lands of Conrad’s works” and thus he could not draw precisely a figure of Conrad as a critic of the West. “Conrad was neither a cosmopolitan nor a simple orientalist like Lafcadio Hearn.” (Maruyama, b 340) 340 Maruyama’s comments on Conrad were ambiguous throughout the book. The reception of Maruyama shows not simply the limitations of his recognition of Conrad’s sea, but the limitations of a typical mode of the reception of Conrad in modern Japan. In 1973, for instance, about 30 years after the Second World War, Mitsuharu Kaneko, a famous poet and painter, wrote a book about his south Asian trip in the mid-1930s.

The south sea as light green tiles was very much different from the Japanese ocean. I did not want to swim in the sea because I felt it malicious at the bottom. There was no doubt that Conrad, who was born in Ukraine and researched the area, might have had the same feeling about the sea, too. The ocean is on the right and the trees on the left in the beach. This landscape bothered me. (Kaneko 136)

The sea drawn by Kaneko could be connected with the receptions of Conrad from the 1910s to the early 1940s: authors from Natsume to Haruyama and Kaneko accepted the sea Conrad depicted as simple pastoral or romantic areas rather than socio-political territories among imperial countries.

There has been a feature in the reception of Conrad in modern Japan, in which many people have read Conrad’s works but few have discussed earnestly and seriously the political aspects of the works. When *Apocalypse Now*, Francis Ford Coppola’s film adaptation of *Heart of Darkness*, was released in Japan in 1980, Shohei Ooka (1909-1988), a novelist, a soldier surviving in a fierce battlefield of Second World War in Leyte island, Philippine, was very interested in the movie because he had read *Heart of Darkness* translated by Yoshio Nakano (1903-1985) in 1941 and other Conrad’s works in English. As Ooka was a friend of Nakano’s, he asked Nakano by phone about the circumstances of translating *Heart of Darkness*. Nakano replied: “I don’t remember the details of the situation at the time” because “it was a long time ago.” Then, Nakano promised that if he could discover some documents about the translation, he would call back Ooka soon. Yet, Ooka answered immediately “No, thank you” (Ooka 58).

Why did he refuse Nakano’s offer? Although Ooka, who was a translator of Stendhal’s works, was famous for his strong inquiring mind about western literature, he showed less interest in the reception of *Heart of Darkness* in Japan. This attitude of Ooka, however, was not a rare case but similar to that of other Japanese Conradians. In addition, Nakano never recorded the situation of the translation in 1941, either. Translators had a tendency to avoid talking about the reception of Conrad. When the Russo-Japanese war started in 1904, the editor of *Eigo Seinen* announced that the serialization of “Tomorrow” with footnotes was replaced with “Youth”, because “Youth” was more appropriate than “Tomorrow” during the war time.¹⁴ It was clear that the editor had become nervous about the

¹⁴See, Saito Hajime. *Teikoku nihon no eibungaku*. 39-60.

war. After that, “Tomorrow” never appeared in the magazine, but in 1941 “Tomorrow” was serialized in the naval bulletin called *Sui Ko Sya Kiji*. It was translated by Professor Higashida for one year. Why did Higashida choose that gloomy work to translate? After the war, Higashida became the first president of the Stylistics Association in Japan. However, he never left any detailed records on the reception of Conrad during the Second World War. The translation of “Tomorrow” in the bulletin is not recorded in his bibliography. Maruyama never talked about the relation between the reception and the war, either.

Among those who played major roles in the reception of Conrad in modern Japan, no one has gone toward the heart of darkness of Conrad’s works. The memories of the reception have been buried in oblivion. Surely there are not many records of the reception of Conrad in modern Japan. Then, do we have no connection with the genealogy of the reception of Conrad? We must not forget that we are the very part of the history of the reception of Joseph Conrad.

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