
· "Celebration of Earthly Immortality: On Nathaniel Hawthorne's 'A Virtuoso's Collection'," *Kinjo Gakuin Daigaku Ronshu*, 199: 44 (March 20, 2003): 349-72. [Louise Imogen Guiney’s "Peter Rugg, the Bostonian" (1891) is translated into Japanese in this article.]

· "SASURAI [Wandering]." Nagoya: Kamiyama, 2003. [Some of the above articles are included in this book.]

Still other topics to explore are in my mind: · A further reading of a riddle of who the virtuoso is · A re-peruse of "Peter Rugg tales" listing geographical places and characters · Drawing up a reconstruction map of places such as Boston in the consciousness of Peter Rugg · A re-peruse of two books: *Walter Austin [grandson], William Austin: the Creator of Peter Rugg*; *James Walker Austin [son], Literary Papers of William Austin* · A peruse of other stories of William Austin · A consideration on the influence of William Austin to many other novels and tales of Hawthorne · A consideration on the relationship between William Austin and other authors · A re-peruse of related literary works mentioned in Harry Levin's *The Power of Blackness*.

**I Dwell in Possibility, a Fairer House Than Politics**

**ZETTSU Tomoyuki (Tokyo Gakugei University)**

Dear Judith,

Please forgive me for writing this private letter openly. I would like to dwell on the future of American literary scholarship in Japan as well as in the States by remembering the seasons of my youth.

One day back there in the good old days when I was writing my master's thesis on the plays of Tennessee Williams and life was full of summertime
promises, I found a copy of your book on the shelf of an English bookstore—_Tennessee Williams’ Plays: Memory, Myth, and Symbol_ by Judith J. Thompson. After reading several pages of the book, I knew that I would never ever find any other critical mind so close to mine. I was attracted to Williams’ literary sensibilities rather than his theatrical possibilities, and you, unlike many other Williams scholars, focused on the textual complexities of his plays. I was moved, for instance, by the comment you made on the poetic name of Wingfield in _The Glass Menagerie_, a name “juxtaposing wing with field” in such a way that “a symbol of transcendence is fused with an image of mundane reality, relentlessly evoking the painful disparity between aspiration and actuality, or between what the characters would be and what they must be.”

A few months later, you kindly read and commented on a paper about _Menagerie_’s intertextuality, abruptly sent from a stranger on the other side of the Pacific, setting in motion what I wish to think of as a beautiful friendship. When I started to study in the States and made a visit to your place in Kansas, you introduced me to your good friend, Beth Schultz. She asked me why I chose to study Tennessee Williams, and I simply told her: “Because he makes me cry.” Being an incurable sentimentalist, I would repeat the same answer if someone asked me the same question.

In your recent letter, you told me that an American university press did not accept your manuscript for a book-length study of Morrison’s _Song of Solomon_, simply because they would not publish studies of single books. What a shame! In my graduate days, I thoroughly enjoyed André Bleikasten’s book on Faulkner’s _As I Lay Dying_, a book focusing on a single work of literature. I know Bleikasten’s method is not in fashion these days, but I can imagine how he felt when he joined a Faulkner conference in 1992 and called into question the politicized “trinity” of American literary scholarship: race, class, and gender. His method, I believe, has something to do with the fact that he is a Frenchman. In France, as well as in Japan, there still remains an aesthetic tradition of “personal” literary criticism, coupled with the practice of a close reading, of an _explication de texte_.

A Japanese critic/dramatist named Fukuda Tsuneari once wrote a superb
essay, "One against Ninety-Nine," in which he maintains: "Since politics, whether good or bad, necessarily leaves a lost one [against ninety-nine], a man of letters must in person reexperience the solitary one's despair, doubt, pain, and puzzlement."

It is important to remember that the personal is the political, but we should also keep in mind that the personal is the poetic. However, it does not follow syllogistically that the political is the poetic; politics and poetics can only be reconciled in the depth of the personal.

Many of today's polemical critics, and especially those who subscribe to cultural studies or postcolonial theories, strike me as being deceptive and impersonal like a stage magician who—to borrow the opening lines of *Menagerie*—gives you illusion that has the appearance of truth. By definition, however, a literary critic should always seek truth in the pleasant of unpleasant disguise of illusion.

Perhaps what I am saying here may be no less naive than a poem Tom Wingfield writes on the lid of a shoe-box. Anyone can see that nowadays the world is lit by lightning. Must we, then, blow out our candles?

An old popular song which Williams liked claims that "fundamental things apply / as time goes by" and that "moonlight and love songs" can be "never out of date," although they do seem to be out of date as far as current trends in literary criticism are concerned. And that is why I sincerely hope that old songs of love, along with your *Song of Solomon* project, will see the moonlight—or better still, the light of day—in the not too distant future.