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Degree Thesis

Master's level

Japanese influences in Western Literary Modernism as literary self-validation and its orientalist implications

Ezra Pound, W.B. Yeats, Gary Snyder, Jack Kerouac, Vladimir Nabokov, and Japan

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Abstract:

This thesis examines Japanese influences in Western literary modernism as a recurrent pattern of literary self-validation, and it does so by modifying Harold Bloom's concept of the Tessera. Edward Said's theory of Orientalism and its implications on the Japanese influence tradition in Western literary modernism is also examined by outlining five different traits of it and applying them to the authors and to their works. In addition, Vladimir Nabokov's "hidden connection" with Japan, as posited by Akikusa, is investigated in-depth, and through this investigation, he is placed at the terminus of a tradition of Japanese influences in Western literary modernism which has previously not been done. In the final reflections section, a theory is presented pertaining to the fluid ontology of literary influences in general and there the author concludes that they can be perceived as a type of literary mirror which he terms the mirror theory.

Keywords:

Modernism, Orientalism, Western literary Modernism, Ezra Pound, W.B. Yeats, Gary Snyder, Jack Kerouac, Vladimir Nabokov, Japanese influences, Edward Said, Harold Bloom, Tessera, Imagism, Vorticism, Japonisme, The Beat generation, Beatnik, Japan, haiku, Noh-theatre, Poetical selfhood, Othering, Nearing, The mirror theory

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1- Introduction

In this study, a pattern of recurring Japanese influences in Western literary modernism (henceforth abbreviated as W.L.M) is examined; this dynamic intercultural bond and the orientalist implications of finding literary self-validation in Japanese sources is traced throughout the Anglo-American tradition of W.L.M. Authors from three phases of the literary movement are examined:

- 1: The “first” modernists: Ezra Pound and W.B. Yeats
- 2: The Beat Generation: Gary Snyder and Jack Kerouac
- 3: The “last” modernist Vladimir Nabokov

This thesis examines the reason for the recurring Japanese influences in W.L.M by approaching them as a repeated pattern of literary self-validation. This tradition has in this thesis been defined into three phases, and the authors selected from the first phase are Pound and Yeats. The reasons for beginning with them are several, they were not only some of the first prominent figures of Anglo-American modernism, but they were also explicitly influenced by Japanese sources. The second phase focuses on The Beat Generation. The two authors this thesis considers representative from the post-WWII cultural milieu of the United States are Snyder and Kerouac. Snyder and Kerouac are from a later phase of W.L.M and their works have been examined to see whether authors from post-WWII also found literary self-validation in Japanese sources. The last phase of this timeline is represented by Nabokov. One reason for Nabokov’s inclusion in this thesis is his status a key figure in modernism, and according to Duncan White, Nabokov marks the transition from modernism into post-modernism. In other words, he can be described as the “last” modernist of the Anglo-American tradition. Another reason for the inclusion of Nabokov is because his “hidden connection” with Japan, as posited by Shunichiro Akikusa, has remained virtually unexplored. This thesis attempts to place Nabokov into a larger context of a Japanese influence tradition in W.L.M by corroborating the existence of this “hidden connection”. Exploring Nabokov’s latent Japanese influences in-depth and situating him in a larger context of a Japanese influence tradition in W.L.M has never before been done by previous researchers.

This thesis approaches the Japanese influences in W.L.M as a recurring pattern of literary self-validation, which is a wholly new perspective as no previous study has been found that approaches it in this way. The method of the research is based on a modified form of Harold Bloom’s concept of Tesseract, which is based on Hegelian dialectics. By applying this modified form of Tesseract, this thesis shows that the Japanese influences in W.L.M do not necessarily entail something intrinsically new in the influenced author’s work, it is rather an incorporation of new terminology retrieved from the source of influence that further concretizes previously held ideas and beliefs of the influenced author. This thesis contends that one common denominator between Pound, Yeats, Snyder, and Kerouac is that all were able to validate their own beliefs and ideas via Japan due to a projection of their literary selfhood. This thesis posits that this process of projection was facilitated by their general positive view of Japan. Another reason for why Nabokov is included is that he, as the data will show, had a negative view of Japan. Nabokov’s inclusion thus shows how the Japanese influences in W.L.M operate when the influenced author lacks a positive view of Japan.

This thesis also explores the orientalist implications of the Japanese influences in W.L.M by outlining five different traits of Orientalism based on Edward Said’s theory. This approach enhances the novelty of the research as the orientalist tendencies of Japanese influences in W.L.M are virtually by previous researchers.

1.1- Research questions

1. Why does a tradition of Japanese influences in Western literary modernism exist and what are the Orientalist implications thereof?
2. Does there exist a hidden connection between Vladimir Nabokov and Japanese literature as contended by Akikusa; how does it manifest itself in his works of literature, and can it be connected with the larger trends of Japanese influences in Western literary modernism?

This thesis asks what it considers to be two inter-dependent research questions. The first question has been asked in order to explore the reasons for a Japanese influence tradition in W.L.M and its orientalist implications. The analysis of Nabokov's "hidden connection" with Japan has been given a separate research question. The Nabokov section of the thesis is the most extensive because the "hidden connection" with Japanese literature must first be corroborated before it's connection with the overarching trend of Japanese influences in W.L.M can be explored. This thesis extensively explores the "hidden connection" by analysing not only biographical and historical circumstances, but also several of Nabokov's novels. In order to further justify Nabokov's placement at the terminus of the timeline of W.L.M, Poundian influences in his oeuvre are also briefly explored in this thesis. This thesis contextualizes Nabokov's "hidden connection" with Japan by relating it to the general tradition of Japanese influences in W.L.M as literary self-validation. In this sense, the two research questions have been found symmetrical and relevant for the research.

1.2-Modernism- a "notoriously vague" term

Exploring Japanese influences in W.L.M requires a definition of what modernism is. However, it would be impossible for the author to give a concrete definition, because, as this chapter will show, there is no uniform consensus about what it is nor how and when it began. In this chapter, different definitions of modernism are presented and evaluated to illustrate the complexity of an ostensibly simple term.

In *All that is solid melts into air*, Marshal Berman defines the term in a general way. He contends that modernism is intertwined with the experience of "being modern" (13). He states that being modern is "to live a life of paradox and contradiction", a life that is both "revolutionary and conservative" (13). Modernism is thus, a reaction to modernity, which according to Berman, is "a maelstrom of perpetual disintegration and renewal, of struggle and contradiction, of ambiguity and anguish" (15). According to Berman modernism, is the modern man's response to the unfathomable process of modernity around him, and it is not only an aesthetic phenomenon, but a cultural and political one as well. He means that modernism is the ordinary person's way to "...change the world that is changing them, to make their way through the maelstrom and make it their own" (16). He argues that modernism began with Rousseau, whom he calls "the first modern man" (16).

Sara Danius philosophy of modernism is, on the other hand, more materialistic and concrete. It should be noted that Bermann admitted that his idea of the maelstrom is "...a broader and more inclusive idea of modernism than those generally found in scholarly books" (5). Danius sees the emergence of modernism as a phenomenon intertwined with the unprecedented technological evolution that occurred during the late 19th century and early 20th century (Andersson, 25). She means that technological change forced new approaches to one's surroundings (Andersson, 25) and according to her line of argument, altered material conditions transformed the human perceptions in various ways. One significant force in this transformation was the emergence of high-speed vehicles, which became a source of fascination for many authors and artists around the fin de siècle (Danius, 140).

Peter Luthersson does not see the evolved technologies as the primary catalyst for modernism. According to him, modernism can be understood as an intellectual movement advocating individuality in a time when it was threatened (94). This claim can be disputed however, since both communist and fascist dictators appealed to many early modernists, and he was aware of this inconsistency in his argument (Luthersson 202). Despite his contestable claim of the role of individuality in modernism, Lutherson's attempt at defining the term is both concrete and lucid. He claims that modernism is a reaction against the societal conditions caused by modernity (303). This reaction, according to Lutherson, occurred in all forms of human expression (303). It should be remembered that modernism is not solely a literary term, it also signifies the radical changes that occurred in art, music, and other areas of cultural expression as well (Kathleen Kuiper). Modernism as a reaction to modernity, broke with the past and sought after rejuvenation (Kuiper). But it did not simply entail a conscious break with inherited artistic norms and traditions, it also revealed a new way of perceiving time from an asynchronous, non-linear perspective (Kirsty Hewitt).

Despite the vagueness of the term, described by Danius as "notorious" (6), there are some general characteristics of modernism that help dispel its ambiguity. Not the least the aforementioned yearning to break with the past. One can say that breaking with the past entails a purposeful distancing from established literary and artistic conventions, and a search for new sources of inspiration; this process of breaking with traditions is exemplified in Pound's exhortation to "make it new" (Eric Bledsoe).

The author believes that Luthersson's definition of modernism as a reaction against the societal conditions caused by modernity is the best succinct definition of the term, despite its failure to define what modernity; this concept is defined by the author as the transformation of society occasioned by material, political, and cultural changes occurring at a rapid rate, and modernism can be said to be the reaction against this societal metamorphosis.

Various researchers have different opinions on when modernism began. Berman traces its beginnings to the 18th century (17); Danius argues that the 1880's mark the start of modernism (6); and some even claim that modernism first began to flourish in 1922 with the publication of James Joyce's *Ulysses* (Ashendri Wickremasinghe). The end of modernism and its subsequent transition into post-modernism is almost as difficult to define. Researchers have placed Vladimir Nabokov in the middle ground between late modernism and post-modernism (White, 23). In consequence, Nabokov can be regarded as one of the "last" of the modernists in the Anglo-American tradition.

In the end, modernism is a nuanced concept that has been approached from different perspectives, this thesis contends that Luthersson's definition of modernism is a suitable middle ground between Danius overly materialistic perspective and Berman's somewhat vague, but poetically phrased philosophy of the maelstrom.

1.2.1- An overview of literary modernism

The previous chapter has shown that modernism is in fact (to use Danius' expression) a "notoriously vague term". The author of this thesis argues that Luthersson's definition of modernism as a reaction against modernity is the most succinct way one can summarize the concept. The question then remains; how does this reaction manifest itself in literature? It is difficult for this thesis to provide a categorical answer as to *when* literary modernism began. As shown above, some researchers trace literary modernism back to the 18th century (Berman, 17). There is no consensus when literary modernism began, but its roots are often traced to the late 19th century (Judith Ryan et al). Modernist authors sought to break with tradition and Victorian morals

which they believed to be defunct in a society that had been fundamentally altered by the rise of capitalism and industrialization (ibid). Mary Ann Gillies remarks that the new literary techniques (such as stream-of-consciousness) and the exploration of how an individual human being can fare in a changed world represent a “complex response across continents and disciplines to a changing world” (2-3). Although pre-WWI authors such as Henry James and Joseph Conrad are regarded as modernists, the movement is primarily associated with the interwar-period. The unprecedented brutality of World War I gave rise to an extreme disillusionment and hopelessness which was made manifest in many works from the interwar-period including T.S Eliot’s poem *The Wasteland* and D.H Lawrence’s *Lady Chatterley’s lover* (Judith Ryan et al).

In short, literary modernism represents a dramatic shift in how authors and poets explored the human experience. Ezra Pound, whose Japanese influences are explored in this thesis as literary self-validation, encouraged his fellow writers to “Make it new!” during the early 20th century. Perhaps this exhortation by Pound can be seen as the most succinct description of literary modernism. Its authors sought to make it new, they sought to break with the poetry and literature of the past in order to respond to an unstable present.

1.3- A critical analysis of Said’s theory of Orientalism and its applicability to the thesis

Although there exists a relatively wide corpus of literature regarding Japanese influences in modernism, few researchers have examined the orientalist traits of these influences; this absence has motivated the thesis’s author to examine them from this angle. However, such an examination is not without its problems, as the source of the framework is *Orientalism*, a much contested and controversial monograph by Edward Said. In *Orientalism*, Said elaborates on the term as a concept which describes the complex relationship between East and West (20). Originally, this was an umbrella term that included all studies that in some way, shape or form pertained to the Orient (25). Said’s failure of providing a single concrete definition of Orientalism has led to fierce criticism. Bruce Thornton described the book as an “incoherent amalgam of dubious postmodern theory”¹ and in the view of Martin Kramer, Said commits a “semantic sleight of hand”². Çağrı Tuğrul Mart et al attempts to understand the controversy of Said’s monograph by examining the history of its criticism. They conclude that “[the] many factual methodological and conceptual errors” can explain its long history of controversy (370). But out of all researchers, Ibn Warraq possibly aims the fiercest criticism against Said. According to him, Said is “guilty of the major intellectual errors he ostentatiously denies in the twenty-fifth anniversary preface” (qtd. in Çağrı Tuğrul Mart et al, 371). He also claims that Said wilfully misrepresents the work of many scholars and accuses him of “systematically misrepresenting Western civilization as a whole” (qtd. in Çağrı Tuğrul Mart et al, 371). Some researchers have even resorted to ad hominem attacks and claim that Said was “a bad scholar and a bad character” (Henry George). Others have focused their criticism on historical inaccuracies in *Orientalism*. Ernest Gellner attacks Said’s contention that the West dominated the East for over two millennia because it fails to account for the existential threat which the Ottoman empire posed to Europe until the 17th century (3). Said’s claim that the European interest in the Orient began in the Middle east has also been strongly criticized as there exist proof of European academic conferences about China and Japan that predate the conferences on the Middle East. An

¹ See: “Golden Threads” <https://www.city-journal.org/article/golden-threads>

² See: “Dangerous knowledge” <https://www.commentary.org/articles/martinkramer/dangerous-knowledge-by-robert-irwin/>

alternative chronology of the Western academic interest in the Orient has thus been called for (Josephson, 192).

1.3.1- Why and how the concept will be relevant to the thesis

After delineating the book's faults and the history of its controversy, it might seem unwise to use the work as the basis for analysing Japanese influences in W.L.M. Despite its shortcomings, the author still believes that Said's theory of Orientalism is pertinent to this thesis, and since, previous researchers such as Stephen Smith, Richard Minear and P.L Pham show that Said's theory can be used as a framework to facilitate an understanding of the intercultural history between Japan and the Western world, the author is reassured of the applicability of Said's theories.

Does the author make an ontological and epistemological distinction between Japan and Europe?
Does the author seek to restructure Japan in their writings?
Does the author forcibly juxtapose Japan and Europe?
Is Japan exoticized in the author's writings?
If so, does the exoticization stem from an avidity of Japanese culture or cultural chauvinism?
Table 1.1 Five traits of Orientalism looked for in this thesis

Said ascribes various definitions to Orientalism which he claims are interdependent, and three of them are:

1: "Orientalism is a way of coming to terms with the Orient that is based on the Orient's special place in the European Western experience" (19)

2: "A style of thought based upon an ontological and epistemological distinction made between the Orient and the Occident" (20).

3: "[A] Western style for dominating, restructuring and having authority of the Orient" (21).

Said also states that Orientalism is the "the ineradicable distinction between Western superiority and Oriental inferiority" (42).

In this thesis, Said's theory of Orientalism will be rendered into an applicable framework by examining five orientalist characteristics of the Japanese influences in W.L.M. The characteristics, outlined in Table 1.1, are based on Said's various definitions of Orientalism and they will be applied in the analysis of the different authors' works to ascertain their relation to Japan and the implications of how the influences manifest in their works of literature. The third trait "forcible juxtaposition" might become conflated with the first trait. It denotes a distinction between Japan and the West that *forces* Otherness into it. By forcing Otherness, this thesis refers to a process of Othering that attempts to find dissimilitude where none, or very little, exists.

1.4-Method

According to Vera Nünning and Ansgar Nünning there are "basic operations of reading" indispensable to literary research (15). These operations include many essential aspects such as close reading, research on authors and their respective contexts, and the study of secondary literature. Two of Nünning's basic operations that are core elements in this thesis are: "close reading" and "research on authors, their works and respective contexts" (15). These two core elements will be combined to conduct a "flexible reading". Which the author believes to be necessary since he agrees with the claims of the literary researcher Kari Hanson-Park, that literature is a cultural entity that exists in a wider socio-cultural context (57), and he also believes that if one focuses solely on a text's thematic, semantic, and grammatical structure, one may miss the wider context it is situated in. Other researchers have also criticized the overly text-oriented focus of close reading, such as Peter

Rabinowitz who has even claimed that close reading “rests on faulty assumptions about how literature is read” (218). This thesis thus aims to conduct a flexible reading by combining the traditionally text-oriented focus of close reading with a wider context-focused approach.

In conjunction with the flexible reading, a theoretical framework based on Harold Bloom’s theory of literary influence described in *The anxiety of influence* has been formulated. Bloom makes the valid contention that literary influences are neither direct nor simple (xviii) and he further claims that literary influences are a neglected mechanism from the study of literary history (Martin Duwell). To concretize literary influence, Bloom outlines six steps which he describes as “revisionary ratios” and denotes the second ratio as “Tessera” (14). Bloom’s Tessera applies Hegelian dialectics to understand the relationship between a poet and precursor poets. According to Bloom, during the process of Tessera, the influenced poet develops on his/her predecessor’s work and evolves it into new conceptual terrain (14). However, neither Bloom’s Tessera nor any other of his revisionary ratios are fully applicable to this thesis because they pertain to the dynamics between two individual authors. In this thesis on the other hand, the reason for the profusion of Japanese influences in W.L.M will be

Thesis: A cultural and or societal problem is identified in the Western world. The author attempts to resolve this problem.
Antithesis: Japan is elevated as an Antithesis to the author’s Thesis. The author who posited the Thesis projects his own literary selfhood into the Antithesis.
Synthesis: The author constructs an image of Japan as an Antithesis to the West and restructures it to coincide with their own proposed solution to the Thesis. The author becomes empowered and finds his literary aspirations validated by the Antithesis, and the Synthesis is the usage of new terminology retrieved from the Antithesis’s cultural productions.
Table 1.2 The three steps of the modified Tessera

explored, and such a goal requires a wider approach. The concept of Tessera has thus been modified in accordance. The Hegelian dialectics of Tessera have been altered to better coincide with this thesis’s goal of approaching Japanese influences in W.L.M as a recurring pattern of literary self-validation.

Table 1.2 illustrates the Hegelian dialectics of the modified Tessera. Note the interdependence between the Thesis and the Antithesis. Japan as an Antithesis is shaped by the author’s Thesis and is their proposed solution

thereto. This method accentuates the paradoxical roots of Japanese influences in W.L.M, as Japan is both Othered by the influenced author but also Neared as they project their own literary selfhood into the Antithesis by an either conscious or subconscious process of reconstruction. This method approaches the Synthesis of the influence not as the genesis of intrinsic novelty, but as the concretization of the author’s own literary aspirations via terminology retrieved from the Antithesis. In other words, the novelty occasioned by the Japanese influences is only ostensible.

2- Previous research

2.1- Research on Japanese influences in W.L.M

Ezra Pound’s Japan by Andrew Houwen: in this monograph, Houwen analyses the significance of the connection between Ezra Pound and Japan. He provides a nuanced image of the poet and shows that Pound’s Japanese influences do not simply encompass an interest in haiku poetry and that his interest in Japan was not superseded by his interest in China; they were both lifelong fascinations. Houwen examines Pound’s lifelong fascination with Japan and contends that his Japanese influences are far wider than what previous researchers have acknowledged. *Ezra Pound’s Japan* thus determines *how* Pound was influenced by Japan and does not dwell on *why* he was

influenced. Houwen does not approach Pound's Japanese influences as literary self-validation, nor does he analyse Pound's research with Hegelian dialectics. This thesis, therefore, develops on Houwen's research by examining Pound's Japanese influences as the result of a self-confirmation of his previously held aesthetic and literary beliefs.

Various texts by David Ewick, including *Orientalism, Absence and Quick firing guns: the emergence of Japan as a Western text*: Ewick has written extensively on the intercultural connection between Japan and Western literature, and his wide encompassing research has been frequently consulted for this thesis. *Orientalism, Absence and Quick firing guns* concerns the emergence of Japan in Western literature. Ewick narrates how the perception of Japan evolved rapidly in the West after the Perry expedition in 1853. This article focuses on the widespread Orientalist views of Japan that thrived in the West in conjunction with the emergence of Japonisme. Although Ewick thoroughly describes the orientalist aspects of the Euro-American perception of Japan during the latter half of the 19th century up until the aftermath of the Russo-Japanese war, he does not evaluate the orientalist implications of Japanese influences as literary self-validation in W.L.M. Therefore, this thesis tries to expand on Ewick's research by analysing the orientalist implications of the Japanese influence tradition in W.L.M.

Stone cottage: Pound, Yeats, Modernism by James Longenbach: Longenbach makes the contention that the small stone cottage on the Sussex countryside where Pound and Yeats spent the winters of WWI was the birth-place of modernism. This thesis questions this assessment due to the fact that modernism is such a complex and wide phenomenon whose genesis cannot be traced to a specific location or year. Be that as it may, Longenbach's book has still been of relevance for this thesis because it investigates how Pound worked with the Noh-manuscripts bequeathed to him from Ernest Fenollosa's widow. Longenbach does not, however, explore Pound's approach to the Noh as literary-self validation, nor does he evaluate the orientalist implications of Pound's relationship with Japanese poetics. In consequence, this thesis builds on Longenbach's research by providing a new perspective on Pound's, and Yeat's approach to Japanese sources.

2.1.1- Studies regarding Orientalism

Two studies that analyses the orientalist characteristics of historical Western perceptions of Japan have been consulted: *Edward Said and the Japanese: British representations of Japan in the years before the Sino-Japanese war* by Stephen Smith and *Orientalism and the study of Japan* by Richard Minear. These studies explore the representations of Japan in different modes of cultural expressions in the West. They show, in their own respective way, how Europe (primarily the British Empire) dehumanized Japan by portraying it as an effeminate fairy land. The second study quoted above: *Orientalism and the study of Japan* does not specifically focus on cultural representations of Japan in the West; it is rather a justification of applying Said's theory of Orientalism to studies of Japan. However, neither Smith nor Minear examines the Japanese influence tradition in W.L.M and its orientalist implications, therefore this thesis brings a new perspective by using Said's theories as a framework for understanding why literary modernists were influenced by Japanese sources.

Orientalism and Representations of Music in the Nineteenth-Century British Popular Arts by Claire Mabilat. This monograph does not pertain to the orientalist aspects of traditional Western representations of Japan in the West. It primarily focuses on the dynamics between the British empire and the Near-East and how the latter was represented in the former. One focal point in Mabilat's research is the Western treatment of the Oriental female body and how the traditional Western approach to the Oriental Other often is erotically charged. This research has been of particular

relevance for this thesis's exploration of Nabokov's eroticization of Japan and his recurring exploitation of the Japanese female body. Although Mabilat does not examine Nabokov, her research has nevertheless been beneficial for this thesis which expands on her research by providing further examples of Western eroticization of the Oriental Other, specifically the Japanese Other.

2.1.2- Previous studies in comparative literature

The Anxiety of Influence by Harold Bloom: Bloom's monograph has an immense significance for this thesis. Bloom analyses the dynamics between an individual poet and previous generations of poets, and his main argument is that the creative process of an individual poet is hindered by their desire to become a part of a larger canon. This, according to Bloom, can lead to anxiety, hence the name of the work. In the monograph, Bloom proposes six "revisionary ratios", and as explained above in the method chapter, it is Bloom's Tesseract that form the basis for this thesis's method. However, Bloom's monograph does not explore Japanese influences in W.L.M, nor does it explore their orientalist implications. He mainly focuses on how later English poets approached the literary heritage of previous esteemed poets from the English tradition (one main focal point for Bloom is the legacy of Shakespeare). This thesis contributes to the research on literary influence by approach the Japanese influence tradition in W.L.M from a novel perspective derived partially from Bloom's framework.

Owen and Sassoon: The Reality of Literary influence by Mya McKinney: McKinney's study, an examination of two British WWI poets, is ostensibly of little relevance for this thesis. It has, however, been consulted as it accentuates the importance and complexity of literary influence. This study shows how personal experiences and trauma can shape the literary voice of an author, by narrating the shift in the poetry of the British war poet Wilfred Owen. McKinney argues that the romantic, Keatsian voice of Owen developed into a more realistic tone of brutal honesty due to the horrors he experienced during the War. McKinney's study has been of relevance for this thesis because it justifies its approach to the Japanese influences in W.L.M. McKinney shows how biographical circumstances and individual personal experiences dictates how an author develops their literary self-hood. This has been of particular relevance to the Nabokov section as it traces Nabokov's "hidden connection" with Japan to the Russo-Japanese war. This thesis thus further corroborates the contention of Mckinney that personal experiences and trauma can shape the literary voice of an author.

Literary works and the Metaphysics of Influence by Kari Hanson-Park: Park ascribes a metaphysical value to literary influence. She argues that literary texts do not exist as stand-alone entities, but as public artifacts that are "mind-independent elements". In other words, Park means that the cultural role of a text is situated in a state of flux. She does not, however, explicate the relative and fluid aspects of literary influence. Therefore, through the mirror theory proposed in the end of this thesis, a new perspective on textual relativity and how literary influences operate as a phenomenon is proposed.

2.1.3- Studies regarding the Beat generation

The shaping of Gary Snyder's Ecological Consciousness by Ayako Takahashi. Takahashi's brief essay delineates East-Asian sources that have been important in the development of Snyder's ecological consciousness. Takahashi focuses primarily on Snyder's Chinese and Indian sources. In addition, her article does not examine Snyder's relationship with his East-Asian sources as a literary self-validation of his own ecological ideas. She mentions that "Snyder turned to Eastern philosophy

for poetic inspiration” (1), however she does not explore in-depth the ontological nature of this process, nor its orientalist implications which this thesis does.

A Note on Japanese allusions in Gary Snyder’s poetry by Katsunori Yamazato. As may be inferred from the title, Yamazato’s article is brief. He makes the contention that “[w]hile Buddhist and Chinese allusions have gradually been identified and explicated, the equally important Japanese allusions in Snyder’s poetry have attracted little attention” (1). Yamazato means that there exists a wide array of allusions to various Japanese sources throughout Snyder’s prose and poetry (1). Some of the allusions to Japan mentioned by Yamazato are analysed in this Thesis, such as the quotation from Snyder’s *Myths & Texts*. However, unlike Yamazato, this thesis explores the Japanese influences in Snyder’s poetry as a part of a larger pattern of literary self-validation. Snyder’s Japanese influences are, in this thesis, analysed as ostensible novelty, and not as intrinsic novelty. Yamazato delineates different Japanese allusions in Snyder’s poetry without placing them in a larger context of a recurring pattern in W.L.M. Therefore, this thesis expands on his research.

Haiku and the Beatific vision of Jack Kerouac by Albert Battistelli. Battistelli’s article examines the thematic aspects of Kerouac’s haiku and how they coincide with his rough-hewn spirituality and unconventional “beat-buddhism”. In addition, Battistelli also relates Kerouac’s haiku to his “beatific vision”. But Battistelli’s article does not approach Kerouac’s haiku as a type of literary self-validation and how Kerouac reconstructed the Japanese Other to coincide with his own view of poetical spontaneity, which this thesis does, in consequence, expanding on Battistelli’s research.

The masculine urge of Jack Kerouac’s haiku by Richard Iadonisi. Iadonisi, much like Battistelli, focuses on the thematic elements of Kerouac’s haiku. He argues that Kerouac uses the haiku as a poetic medium to explore his dissatisfactions, including his doubts of his own masculinity. Iadonisi means that Kerouac used Japanese poetics to convey and communicate his own ideas and beliefs, which has been of relevance for the chapter on Kerouac in this thesis. *However*, Iadonisi does not contextualize this communication as a self-validation and concretization of his ideas, nor does he analyse Kerouac’s poetical communication with a method rooted in Hegelian dialectics. Therefore, this thesis gives a new perspective on the Japanese literary influences in Kerouac’s oeuvre and their placement in a larger pattern in W.L.M.

The Best Minds of My Generation: A Literary History of the Beats edited by Bill Morgan: this work is problematic to classify because it is partially autobiographical and partially a source of previous research on the Beat Generation. It is, however, denoted as previous research because Ginsberg’s lectures consist of literary historical investigations. However, some of his lectures are less complex and consist virtually solely of anecdotal musings. Despite the inconsistency in the quality of his lectures (which Ginsberg himself was aware of), the work has been described as situating “the Beats in cultural history in a way that no other exploration of their work does” (Steve Silberman). Ginsberg’s lectures provide general view of the Beat Generation’s literary and poetical ambitions and their cultural significance in post-WWII American society.

2.1.4- Previous research regarding Nabokov

Nabokov’s hidden connection with Japanese literature by Shunichiro Akikusa. This brief article is of great importance for this thesis, since Akikusa is the first researcher that posited a ‘hidden connection’ between Nabokov and Japanese literature. This thesis investigating the veracity of Akikusa’s contention by exploring a wide array of Nabokov’s works not mentioned by Akikusa. Akikusa focuses primarily on Nabokov’s passion for lepidopterology and that Hearn’s writings on butterflies in Japanese culture must have left a lasting impression on the Russian author. Akikusa

does not explore this “hidden connection” in-depth, he rather delineates it as a peculiar instance of an unexpected intercultural bond in world literature. This thesis goes much more in-depth and corroborates Nabokov’s “hidden connection” with Japan by closely reading several novels unmentioned by him. In addition, this thesis also examines biographical circumstances from Nabokov’s life that may have given rise to Nabokov’s negative view of Japan. Nabokov’s negative view of Japan, analyzed in-depth in this thesis, is an aspect of the Russian author fully unexplored by previous researchers. In short, this thesis expands upon Akikusa’s article by examining Nabokov’s “hidden connection” with Japanese literature with a much wider scope. This connection is subsequently contextualized by relating it to a larger pattern in W.L.M (something which Akikusa also does not do in his article).

The Asian philosophical concepts in Vladimir Nabokov’s Original of Laura by Siqi Wang.

As can be inferred from the title of the text, Wang does not necessarily focus on a hidden connection between Nabokov and Japan. She rather focuses on how different philosophical concepts manifest themselves in *The Original of Laura* and how they can be related to Nabokov’s understanding of East-Asian philosophy and religion. Wang touches upon the likelihood that Phillip Wild, the protagonist of *The Original of Laura*, is a parodic caricature of Yukio Mishima. She does not, however, relate this caricature to a larger pattern of Japanese allusions in Nabokov’s oeuvre. This thesis explores this caricature of Mishima more in-depth and places it in a larger connection of Nabokov’s hidden connection to Japanese literature.

A Rhetoric of Absence. Japanese motifs in V.V Nabokov’s last novel by Irina Marchesini.

Marchesini’s paper explores Japanese motifs in *The Original of Laura*. She explores that a connection with Aubrey Beardsley’s aesthetic has shaped the linguistic and thematic structure of Nabokov’s last novel. In this sense, Marchesini investigates Nabokov’s connection with Japan *indirectly*. Her investigation is indirect to the extent that she primarily focuses on how Beardsleyan aesthetics (modelled after Japanese art) shaped Nabokov’s final novel. Although Marchesini contends that Nabokov had a fascination with Japanese culture, she does not relate this fascination to a larger hidden connection between Nabokov and Japanese literature. In addition, although Marchesini writes about Nabokov’s erotic fascination with Beardsleyan motifs, she does not place it in a larger context of Nabokov’s connection with Japan. This thesis develops upon her description of Nabokov’s erotic fascination and relates it to a larger context of his hidden connection with Japan and denotes it as Nabokov’s poetics of eroticism. In this sense, this thesis expands upon Marchesini’s research.

Nabokov and the Art of painting by Gerard de Vries and Barton Johnson. This extensive monograph delineates Nabokov’s fascination with the art of painting and verbal visuality. De Vries and Johnson analyse the entirety of Nabokov’s oeuvre and trace references and allusions to 108 different artists. The chapters of primary interest are the 5th and 8th chapter as they analyse the latent importance of Beardsleyan aesthetics in Nabokov’s works. However, it should be noted that De Vries and Johnson do *not* explore Nabokov’s hidden connection with Japan. Their analysis of Beardsleyan influences in Nabokov’s oeuvre are, in consequence, not related to a larger context of Nabokov’s Japanese connection. This thesis complements their research by further analysing the Beardsleyan connection and relating it to Nabokov’s hidden connection with Japan.

2.2- Materials

2.2.1- Primary texts

Much of the material that has been consulted for this thesis consists of primary texts. The poems of Ezra Pound (with exception of *The Cantos*) have been read in the Library of America edition edited by Richard Sieburth and the quotations from *The cantos* have been retrieved from the edition published by New Directions. Some of Pound's shorter essays and prose texts have been accessed digitally, while his letters, have been retrieved from three different editions: *The Letters of Ezra Pound, 1907-1941* edited by D. D. Paige; *Ezra Pound's Letters to Alice Corbin Henderson* edited by Ira Nadel; *Ezra Pound to His Parents: Letters 1895-1929* edited by David Moody et al. W.B. Yeats's dance plays have been read in the edition published by Leopold Classic Library, and his poems have been read in the Oxford World's classics compilation. Yeats's various prose writings are retrieved from the anthology *Uncollected Prose* edited by John P Frayne, while his letters have primarily been sourced from Ann Saddlemyer's compilation of correspondence between the poet and his wife. Snyder's poetry and prose have been read in the extensive Library of America editions and Kerouac's poetry has been read in the *Book of Haikus* edited by Regina Weinreich. All other prose texts by Kerouac have been read in print in the Penguin Modern Classics editions. A majority of the quotations from Allen Ginsberg are sourced from the prose texts in *Essential Ginsberg* edited by Micheal Schumacher. With the exception of *Speak Memory*, every text by Nabokov read for this thesis has been the Vintage publishing editions. For *Speak Memory*, the Everyman's library edition was used.

2.2.2- Biographical Materials

Biographical texts which have been particularly relevant for the investigation into Nabokov's "hidden connection" with Japan have also been consulted. Two biographies about Nabokov have been read. They are *Vladimir Nabokov: The Russian Years* and *Vladimir Nabokov: The American Years* both written by Brian Boyd. These extensive monographs document various minutiae of Nabokov's life and have been described as giving the reader full access to the depths of his art³. While Boyd's biographies are extensive, they do not explore Nabokov's connection with Japan. A remarkably caustic letter written by Nabokov is sourced from Boyd, but it should be noted that the letter's significance for an overarching trend of a Japanese connection in Nabokov's works is not explored in the slightest by Boyd which is however done in this thesis.

Autobiographical texts have also been utilized, including Yeats's *Autobiography* and Nabokov's *Speak Memory*. The latter has been essential to gain further insight into Nabokov's artistic thinking and to find further evidence of his hidden connection with Japan. Consulting autobiographies is often frowned upon in academic contexts due to the possibility that the author distorts the truth and glosses over uncomfortable facts (Omoregie). However, Jayaannapurna defends the genre and describes it as a valuable source for literary research (28), and this thesis agrees with the latter's assessment. He is however aware of the problematic aspects of such materials, and they have been consulted with caution. An autobiographical text that is classified with some difficulty is *The Best Minds of My Generation: A Literary history of the Beats* edited by Bill Morgan, as this collection of

³ See: <https://press.princeton.edu/books/paperback/9780691024707/vladimir-nabokov?srsId=AfmBOorr5Lp-YielJtMhpZzXy4El2uP8rjUHgr2ceOljAXwMsGBBJkZv>

Ginsberg's lectures on the Beat generation consists both of research and autobiography, it can therefore be used both as a primary and secondary text.

3-Background

3.1- Japonisme: The aesthetic roots of Japanese influences in the West

Ever since Marco Polo described a mythical island of gold by the name of “Zipangu” located somewhere of the coast of China, Japan has fascinated the Western world (Miyazaki Masakatsu). In the 16th and 17th century, during the golden age of sailing, trade began between Japan and the West. However, the shogunate became suspicious of foreign tradesmen and begun to fear political and religious subversion. This fear sparked the declaration of *sakoku* (meaning “locked country”) in 1639 (Everett Munez), which entailed a policy of total isolation from the outside world. This policy would last for more than two centuries until the Perry Expedition in 1853 (Encyclopaedia Britannica), led to the borders of Japan being forced open, which occasioned a massive influx of Japanese art objects into Europe. Collecting Japanese art was no longer a past time reserved only for wealthy aristocrats, it was disseminated among ordinary people and artists in lower classes as well (Lambourne, 13). In the 1870's, only two decades after the Perry expedition, Japanese art objects had become a central part of European cultural life. The widespread demand for Japanese bibelots and the emergence of Japanese influences in Western art had become consecrated with the name *Japonisme* (Ono, 1).



Fig 1.1 *Symphony in White no 2*. Note the vase on the mantle and the fan in the woman's hand.

It is often claimed that it was the French artist Felix Bracquemond who first began to stimulate the interest of Japanese art in Europe due to his “discovery” of Hokusai in 1856 (Artsy editorial). However, this thesis challenges this claim because there is little evidence that Bracquemond's discovery caused reverberations outside of his small Parisian circle of artists. Instead, this thesis traces the roots of Japonisme to 1862, when Sir Rutherford Alcock, Great Britain's first diplomat to Japan, privately funded the “Japan booth” which displayed over 1500 Japanese art objects at the international exhibition in London (Widar Halen, 33). The British designer Christopher Dresser was one of the many artists who came into contact with Japanese art at the “Japan booth” (Halen, 33). The American painter, James McNeill Whistler, who belonged to the same artistic circle as Dresser, likely visited the exhibition as well, as it was after the exhibition Whistler began working on his first paintings with Japanese motifs. Although Fig 1.1 does not reflect a technical or thematic emulation of Japanese art, it presages the influences from Japan that strongly shaped the evolution of Whistler's art and the formulation of his artistic philosophies. The

artistic world of the 1800's was relatively small, and Whistler was acquainted with other artists who began to experiment with Japanese art as well, including Bracquemond and the Belgian artist Alfred Stevens, the latter being credited as one of the first collectors of Japanese art in the Parisian art community (Thomas, Bernadette). From the 1860's up until the turn of the century, Japonisme was so strong a cultural movement in Europe (particularly in Paris) that it has been noted that “even the

way the fashionable Parisienne stood and moved between 1860 and 1900 was, so to speak, imported from Japan” (Wichmann, 6).



Fig 1.2 *The Balcony, Variations in flesh colour and Green*



Fig 1.4 Kiyonaga's *Ukiyo-e*

Two years after the London exhibition in 1862, Whistler began working on Fig 1.2, *The Balcony, Variations in flesh colour and Green*. The painting reveals how Whistler began to see Japanese aesthetics as a source of beauty, an opinion that would later become fully concretized in the *Ten'o clock lecture*. The Western models in the foreground, dressed in kimonos and toying with Japanese props have a placid and dreamlike expression. In the background one can see a gigantic heap of slag, which subtly evokes



Fig 1.3 Whistler's sketch

Hokusai's image of Mount Fuji. This thesis interprets Fig 1.2 as a commentary by Whistler on the hard reality of industrialization's ugliness compared to what he saw as the pristine beauty of Japan. Note the pose of the lady with the red sash in Fig 1.2 and compare the pose with that of the model in the background of Fig 1.3, which is Whistler's preliminary sketch of the painting. It reveals a clearer emulation of the technical aspects of Japanese art. The pose of the lady at the balcony in Whistler's first sketch of the painting is undoubtedly an emulation of the pose of the lady at the right in Fig 1.4 which is an *ukiyo-e* by the Kiyoshi Kiyonaga. Although *The Balcony* is ostensibly an ordinary painting that uses Japanese objects to invoke a, so to speak, exotic aura, closer examination shows that it is also a careful interpretation of technical elements of Japanese art.

When comparing Whistler's painting *Old Battersea Bridge* (Fig 1.5) with the *ukiyo-e* picture by Hiroshige (Fig 1.6), one can discern how important the technical aspects of Japanese art became for his later production. *Old Battersea Bridge*, a part of Whistler's nocturne series, was painted in the 1870's, a decade when new aesthetic theories based on Western artists subjective interpretation of Japanese art emerged throughout the West. Japanese paintings became, in short, the antecedents for new ways of perceiving and interpreting the world. Whistler was, however, not the only Western artist at the time who immersed himself in Japanese art. Groundbreaking painters of impressionism and Art nouveau studied it as well (Colta Feller Ives). Whistler however became a synecdochical figure for the European

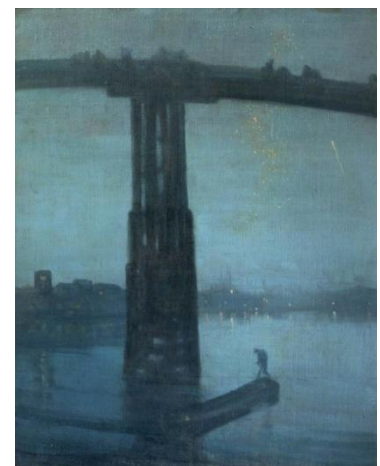


Fig 1.5 *Old Battersea Bridge*

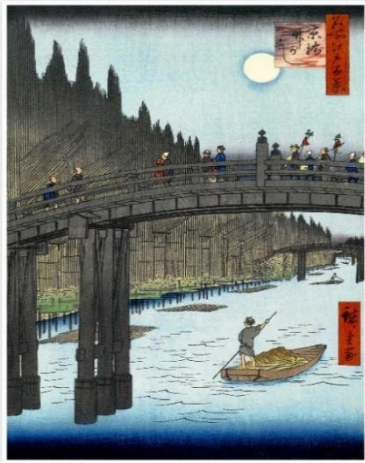


Fig 1.6 *ukiyo-e* by Hiroshige



Fig 1.7 An example of Beardsley's monochromatic style

was a monochrome colour scheme. The structural resemblances of his art and Japanese *ukiyo-e* are apparent when comparing his painting in Fig 1.7 and the *ukiyo-e* in Fig 1.8. The comparison shows that Beardsley treated the clothing of his figures with a visual language akin to that of Kitagawa Utamaro who painted the *ukiyo-e* in Fig 1.8. Besides the similitude of visual language, one should also note the peculiar lines in the bottom right corner of Beardsley's illustration. Their inclusion serves possibly the role of a reductive imitation of the calligraphy often present in the corners of traditional *ukiyo-e* illustrations. Beardsley, in all likelihood, incorporated the vertical lines into his illustrations to accentuate the exoticness of his oriental source of aesthetics. In short, these two pictures illustrate how Japanese art was used as a means by Beardsley to explore "new"

art world at the time, because his production showed that Japonisme was not merely a superficial phenomenon, it also denoted the emergence of new and innovative spatial perspectives based on Japanese art. In his *Ten o Clock lecture*, which was his most lucid statement of his aesthetic beliefs, he describes "the story of the beautiful" as complete in Japanese art (30). This quote is regarded in this thesis as a *pars pro toto* symbol revealing how strongly Japanese art allured Western artists at the time.

The imagist poet and art scholar Laurence Binyon, although critical of Whistler's interpretation of Japanese art, described that Whistler amongst other artists were liberated by Japanese aesthetics, and that the widespread study of Japanese art, marked the end of restraining artistic traditions in the West and revealed "a new kind of balance of forms, a new method of spacing, a new simplicity of motive" to European artists (*Landscape in English art and Poetry*).

As later data will show, Japanese aesthetics mediated by the art of Aubrey Beardsley exerted a noteworthy influence on Vladimir Nabokov. Therefore, it has found it pertinent to briefly narrate how Beardsley interpreted Japanese art and conveyed it to the West. Aubrey Beardsley, despite dying at the young age of 25, was able to become a seminal figure of Art Nouveau, an international artistic movement that flourished in Europe at the end of the 19th century (Jeffiner Kinnaird). As the name suggests, its purpose was the creation of a brand-new artistic style. Beardsley belonged, to be precise, to the circle of Art Nouveau artists known as the decadentists and was the most important exponent of visual decadence in late 19th century Brittan (de Vries & Johnson, 64). He had a strong predilection for eroticism and unexplored sensations,

often achieved via licentious eccentricities (Encyclopaedia Britannica). A hallmark of his art style, as visible in Fig 1.7,



Fig 1.8 *ukiyo-e* by Kitagawa Utamaro

compositional and technical aspects of painting; his futuristic vision of new, erotic, and sensuous art was markedly influenced by his obsession with what Paris Shih describes as “oriental premodernity”.

3.2- The Japanologists

In conjunction with the visual revolution of Japonisme that marked the emergence of Japan as a painting, Japan also emerged in the West as a text. In 1904, just a few years before the inception of Imagism and only fifty years after the Perry expedition, more than three thousand monographs regarding Japanese culture had been printed in the English language alone (Ewick, 91). Many of these monographs and their authors have been forgotten today, some with good reason according to David Ewick (91). This chapter provides a brief overview of four Japanologists whose works were essential for the emergence of a deeper cultural and literary fascination with Japan in the West. Japanologist, a relatively vague term, is defined by Michele Fuji as “...essentially a Japan expert- somebody who specializes in Japanese language, culture, history and literature” (Kokoro Media).

F.V Dickins (1838-1914) can be regarded, to some extent, as the first Japanologist in England. His first work on classical Japanese poetry, specifically an interpretation of *Hyakunin Isshū* was published as *Hyak nin is 'shiu or Stanzas by a Century of Poets, Being Japanese Lyrical odes* (1866) only a little more than a decade after the forcible opening of Japan's borders (Ewick). Forty years later, he published the monograph *Primitive and Mediaeval Japanese Texts* (1906) which Pound specifically acknowledge in the preface to his Noh-interpretations (Ewick). However, Dickins's importance for Pound's contact with Japanese literature is seldom recognized by Poundian scholars (Houwen, 69), despite the fact that his two-line interpretations of Japanese poems and his usage of the term *Hokku* echoes Dickins' works (Houwen, *ibid*).

Although Dickins published his interpretations of *Hyakunin Isshū* in 1866, it is claimed that Basill Hall Chamberlain (1850-1935) was the author of the “first knowledgeable study of Japanese poetry in a European language” (Ewick). Chamberlain's monograph *The classical poetry of the Japanese* (1880) alongside other works about Japan consolidated his reputation as one of Europe's foremost Japanologists at the turn of the 19th century (Ewick). In 1902, Chamberlain published the extensive essay *Basho and the Japanese Poetical Epigram* which was combined with the monograph into a single volume, *Japanese poetry* (1910) hailed as a definitive work of reference at the time (Ewick). Chamberlain was initially critical of what he called the “Japanese poetical epigram”; he initially did not even perceive it as poetry (Houwen, 47). He, however, voices a very different opinion on the matter in 1902, possibly due to Lafcadio Hearn's popularization of “hokku” in the West (Houwen, 6). J.B Harmer contends that Chamberlain was the primary source through which Pound first encountered Japanese poetics (133). He produces evidence from Pound's journal indicating that the American poet was introduced to the works of Chamberlain by his college friend and fellow poet John Gould Fletcher. This claim is challenged, however, both by Yoshinobu Hakutani and Toru Kiuchi who both contend that Pound's source for Japanese poetics was not Chamberlain, but the Japanese poet Yonejiro Noguchi (Houwen, 68). However, circumstantial evidence indicating that Pound was likely aware of Chamberlain's work can be found in *Plays of Old Japan* by Mary Stopes and the French haiku interpretations by Paul Louis Couchoud. The former, an important conceptual source for Pound's and Yeats' Noh translations frequently quotes Chamberlain (Ewick). The latter even credited Chamberlain's writings as his source of interest in Japan (J.B Harmer, 30). Since it can be proven that Pound read both, the possibility of him being aware of Chamberlain and his work increases.

According to Ewick, “Hearn’s writings about Japan more than any to this day has shaped Western perceptions of the country”. Lafcadio Hearn (1850-1904) was such an influential Japanologist that he has even affected how the Japanese themselves have perceived their own nation (Ewick., Askew, 1). Hearn wrote about variegated topics pertaining to Japan; but contrary to Dickins and Chamberlain he wrote little about Japanese poetics. But his works increased Japan’s “general aura of the exotic” (Ewick), which in turn stimulated the widespread interest for the country and its culture. There is no concrete evidence indicating that Pound read Hearn, which is peculiar considering his avidity for Japan. There is however strong evidence that Yeats admired Hearn and that his fascination with Japan was stimulated by his works. Yeats admired him to the extent that he claimed that his monographs were “empirical evidence for the rebirth of the soul” (*Explorations*, 51). In addition, there exists also a connection between Nabokov and Hearn’s *Kwaidan*. Akikusa’s short and brief exploration of Nabokov’s hidden connection with Japan delineates the Russian author’s interest in the writings of Hearn.

Ernest Fenollosa (1853-1908) was a professor of art history specializing in Japanese art at the Tokyo Imperial University (Encyclopaedia Britannica). He had an influential position as an *o-yatoi gaikokujin* (hired foreigner) at the end of the 1800’s and was a prominent figure in the Japanese art scene at a time when the nation underwent modernization of an unprecedented rapidity (Encyclopaedia Britannica). The few works published by Fenollosa during his lifetime pertain almost solely to art history. Strangely enough, Fenollosa’s manuscripts, left unfinished due to his sudden death, caused greater reverberations than the works he produced when he was alive (Ewick). Among his many manuscripts was the first draft of an extensive work on Noh theatre, and by the ineffable vicissitudes of fate, Pound became the literary executor of the manuscripts. Mary Fenollosa, the surviving widow, met Pound in London during the autumn of 1913 and asked him to edit and publish the manuscripts after only three weeks acquaintance (Yoko Chiba, 121). The exact reason why Mrs. Fenollosa made this relatively sudden decision is unknown. Chiba, however, identifies two major incentives: her liking for Pound’s poetry and Pound’s correspondence with Yonejiro Noguchi, who was a friend of her deceased husband (121). The manuscripts also included the first draft of the essay *The Chinese Written Character as a Medium for Poetry*, which would become the basis for Pound’s ideogrammic method (Ewick). The Fenollosa manuscripts were Pound’s and Yeats’s primary source for their acquaintance with Noh theatre, and if Mrs. Fenollosa had not bequeathed the manuscripts to Pound, then perhaps neither he nor Yeats would have developed an image of Japan as an Antithesis to the West. One can only conjecture how Pound’s and Yeats’s progression as poets would have gone if they had not become acquainted with the Noh theatre. By bestowing the manuscripts to Pound, Mary Fenollosa unknowingly altered the very course of English language poetics. In short, the importance of the manuscripts cannot be overstated.

4- Results

4.1- An elaboration on Ezra Pound's Japanese influences

Ezra Pound's literary heritage is characterized by a dichotomy of praise and denouncement (Louis Menad), over the years, he has been hailed as a prophetic poet and denounced as a fascist madman (Menad); he had a vivacious personality and a strong belief that true understanding of the human condition can only come through the fine arts (*Ezra Pound & Japan: Letters & Essays*, 4). Pound departed from the United States in 1908, at only 23 years old, because he felt that the cultural environment of the U.S did not satisfy his literary and artistic demands. One year before his departure, the young Pound expressed his intense yearning for Europe in a short poem titled *In durance*:

Homesick

After mine own kind that know, and feel

And have some breath for beauty and the arts (*Poems & Translations*, 90)

However, after his arrival, he became quickly disillusioned by the cultural milieu of England and other nations of Europe. After some time, Pound concluded that both society and culture needed rejuvenation, which is exemplified in his famous exhortation, "Make it new!" (Olga Nikolova). In 1909, the very same year he came to the U.K, he encountered Laurence Binyon, a specialist in Japanese art and important critic during the aforementioned described period of Japonisme (*Ezra Pound's letters to his parents*, 157). At the time, Binyon superintended the print room at the British museum where a multitude of *ukiyo-e* and other Japanese paintings were being displayed. Rupert Arrowsmith claims that Pound became immediately interested in Japanese art after his first visit at the print room (103). However, this thesis finds little data to support this claim. Although Pound revealed interest in Binyon's work on Japanese art in 1909, his first explicit interest in Japanese art began in 1911 after he had read Binyon's *Flight of the Dragon* (*Chronicles*, 85-86) and begun his correspondence with the Japanese poet Yonejiro Noguchi (*Ezra Pound & Japan*, 5, 13).

Pound was later introduced to the Poets Club (F.S Flint, 71), which he must have felt was a club of kindred spirits, because there was a uniform consensus amongst its members that European verse needed some type of rejuvenation (Flint, 71), echoing his own state of mind. Pound, due to his effervescent personality, quickly became a central member of the group and became acquainted with the primary form of poetry that his fellow members had experimented with before his arrival: namely, Japanese poetry (Flint, *ibid*). The other members of the group had already experimented with the idea of a condensed poetical image based on their interpretation of Japanese poetics, and Pound consolidated their nascent philosophy into *Imagism*, a literary system advocating for a unified, condensed image. It has often been narrated how *Imagism* has its roots in Japanese poetics, and that the literary system is made manifest in Pound's "hokku" *In a station of the metro*:

The apparition of these faces in the crowd:

Petals on a wet, black bough (*Poems & Translations*, 287).

However, this thesis contends that it would be erroneous to claim that Pound became fascinated with the condensed poetical image *after* coming into contact with haiku poetry. Pound had experimented with it before coming into contact with Japanese poetics through the poet's club. This

thesis therefore contends that Pound approached Japanese poetics with a distinct notion about the condensed poetical image. Since he had taken his M.A in Romance languages in 1906 and studied the South European bards for their condensed poetical expression several years earlier (*Selected Prose*, 30) His exploration of the condensed poetical image in *The Spirit of Romance*, which was the result of his studies in the works of medieval bards such as Arnaut Daniel, Dante, and Guido Cavalcanti shows that the first seeds of Imagism appeared before a deeper contact with Japanese poetics. Pound expressed admiration of Daniel's line "pensar de lieis m'es repaus" ("it reposes me to think of her"), which expressed a clarity and lack of unnecessary rhetoric that made it the perfect poetical statement (*Selected Prose*, 43). He also admired it for its combination of two elements into a harmonious whole (*Selected Prose*, *ibid*). This anticipates his later philosophy of Imagism and Vorticism. This thesis therefore argues that when Pound eventually formulated the three tenets of Imagism:

1. "Direct treatment of the "thing", whether subjective or objective.
2. To use absolutely no word that does not contribute to the presentation.
3. As regards rhythm: to compose in a sequence of the musical phrase not in sequence of the metronome" (Bruce Elder, 72).

he did not solely base them on Japanese poetics; he rather *confirmed* them via Japanese poetics. This thesis means that Pound's idea about the condensed poetical image existed before he had approached Japanese poetics, and by subsequently coming into contact with Japan, he was able to validate his literary telos via a Japanese Other.

Based on his own interpretations of Japanese poetics, Pound formulated the notion of a "Japanese sort of knowing" and that Japan was a "very old, very quiet civilization" (*How I began*). This thesis contends that *In a Station of the metro*, marks the definitive beginning of Pound's image of Japan as an Antithesis to the West and that Pound projected his poetical selfhood by associating his own works with the "Japanese sort of knowing". In *How I began*, Pound deprecates the modern condition of the Western world and states that he was not surprised that his poem *In a station of the metro*, was not well received by English critics. Pound, however, reasons that the Japanese people, unlike the English, are constitutionally inclined to realize the significance of his poem because its brevity can only be appreciated by a "very old, very quiet civilization" (*How I began*).

In 1914, one year after formulating the tenets of Imagism, Pound developed another literary system, Vorticism, and since the controversial poet is not famous for his lucidity (Adam Kirsch), it is difficult for this thesis to give a definitive answer as to what Vorticism entails. However, based on firsthand sources, this thesis defines Vorticism as a more intensified form of Imagism that not only focuses on the unity of visuality, but of space and temporality as well. Pound once defined the idea as an "arrangement of space and line" (*Egoist*, 306-307) and wrote that visual antecedents of Vorticism can be found in the Japanese inspired works of Whistler (*ibid*). Whistler was so essential to Vorticism that Pound even claimed in his essay on the subject that one should cease reading if one were unfamiliar with the pictures of Whistler (*ibid*). He expands upon the so called "Japanese sort of knowing" in his essay on Vorticism and claims that the Japanese have a constitutional predilection for the "superposition" of images (6). Pound writes that the "hokku" and Noh-plays prove the possibility of a "long Vorticist poem" (10). In other words, Pound sees Noh and Japanese poetics not as the *source* of his literary ideas, but rather as confirmations thereof. In addition, Pound, although ostensibly praising the Japanese, makes use of an orientalist trope in the essay. In the opening paragraph he narrates an anecdote of a small girl going to an electric light switch and asking her

mother: “Mama, can I *open* [Pound’s emphasis] the light” (6), he sees the girl’s phrasing as proof of the “age-old language of exploration” (ibid). This anecdote transitions into Pound’s claim that “[t]he Japanese have had the sense of exploration. They have understood the beauty of this sort of knowing” (ibid). What Pound indirectly does is that he concretizes the “Japanese sort of knowing” by equating the Japanese adult with the European child.

During the winters of WWI, Pound hired as a secretary by W.B. Yeats, immersed himself further in Noh theatre when he worked on the Fenollosa-manuscripts in a small stone cottage in the Sussex countryside (Longenbach, xi). The significance of Noh theatre for Pound’s poetics and his perception of Japan as an Antithesis has been vastly underestimated; disregarding Noh’s importance for Pound is a relatively common pattern in Pound studies. Hugh Kenner, author of *Pound’s era*, even writes that Pound did not dedicate much thought to the Noh and that he was more interested in Chinese poetics instead of Japanese poetics (60). Although Chinese poetics were important for Pound, one cannot neglect the significance of Noh. The perception amongst Pound researchers that Chinese poetics was of greater importance for the poet is likely based on Pound’s letter to his friend and lawyer John Quinn where he writes, “I find Noh unsatisfactory... it’s all too damn soft” (*Letters to John Quinn*, 147). Neglecting the significance of Noh for Pound due to one single letter written in an acerbic tone is fatuous. From this statement, this thesis infers that Pound must have written the letter in a moment of frustration stemming from the fact that *Certain Noble Plays of Japan* (1916), the result of his long work with the Fenollosa manuscripts, was both a commercial and critical failure (Ewick, 17). In addition, the Pound researchers who neglect the significance of Noh in his poetical worldview, fail to acknowledge that he expressed a strong passion for Noh theatre for the rest of his life. In a similar tone to his earlier “homesickness” for Europe, Pound now began to express a certain sense of nostalgia for “old Japan” (*Ezra Pound & Japan*, 73). Unlike Europe, which Pound now had become acquainted and subsequently disappointed with, thus losing its status as an Other in his mind, Japan was still a distant Other wherein he could continue projecting his own literary selfhood and find confirmation of his own beliefs thus satiating his *hiraeth*. The author contends that Pound’s expressed “homesickness” for Japan is further evidence that he associated himself with the nation, thus further merging his poetical selfhood with the Antithesis.

The winters when Pound studied the Noh-manuscripts also coincide with the emergence of his fascist ideals. One key event in his life that needs to be analysed in-depth in order to understand his formulation of these ideals and the reason for him beginning to associate Japan with a sort of mythic stability that Europe sorely needed, is the death of his close friend Henri-Gaudier Brzeska in World War I. After Brzeska died in 1915, Pound suffered a profound sense of grief (Brice Rhyne), which coincides with the emergence of his view of Japan as a “very old, very quiet civilization”. This thesis asserts that the death of Pound’s friend likely stimulated the view that Japan, specifically ancient Japan, was a symbol of societal stability and harmony, themes present in several of the Noh-plays with which he worked. Thus, when Pound worked on the Noh-manuscripts in Stone cottage, he likely began seeing Japan as a framework of a societal harmony far superior to the instability of the Western world. This thesis finds that this can be virtually proven by one letter he sent to his mother where he stated that: “[a] Japanese invasion is the only thing that will civilize the West” (*Ezra Pound to His Parents*, 384). The author thus concludes that the death of Pound’s close friend, the French artist Henri Gaudier-Brzeska in WWI stimulated his belief that the Western world was unstable, and that stability could only be provided via sort of autocratic harmony, reminiscent of the one he believed was represented in traditional Noh-plays.

He came to be particularly fascinated by the play *Takasago* and the two pines that play a central role in its story. The two pines of *Takasago*, a symbol of Japanese national unity, transcending ordinary spatial and temporal restrictions, became a symbol of perpetual harmony and regeneration in Pound's mind. He saw the play as proof of the harmony between an autocratic ruler and his subjects formulated with the "intensification of a single image" (*The Letters of Ezra Pound*, 69). The pines, appear early in *The Cantos*, the anthology of poems which he began composing in conjunction with his initiation into Noh theatre. As early as Canto IV, the pines of *Takasago* are used as a politico-poetical motif:

The pine at Takasago

Grows with the pine of Ise (*The Cantos*, 15)

In the poem, the two pines bridge spatial, cultural, and temporal gaps. They appear after an extensive description of destruction and the brutal deaths of mythical and historical figures. In Pound's poem, the pines are "the light rains" (*The Cantos*, 15) and "the liquid and rushing crystal beneath the knees of the gods" (*The Cantos*, 15). In other words, Pound begins to use motifs from Noh to concretize his own ideas of regeneration and autocracy. In his introduction to the Noh-play *Tamura*, it becomes apparent that Pound saw confirmation of his fascism through the play. The play concerns the life of Sakanoue no Tamuramaro, a *shogun* from 9th century Japan (*The Classical stage of Japan*, 199). Pound must have been captivated by how the play venerates a strong, central, imperial rule. In its introduction he writes: "this play is to be regarded as one of those dealing with the pacification of the country and the driving out of the evil spirits" (*The Classical stage of Japan*, 241). This thesis finds textual evidence in Pound's article *Totalitarian Scholarship* which indicates that *Tamura* and the play *Kagekiyo* validated Pound's beliefs in "men of action" (*Totalitarian Scholarship*, 95-96). When Pound moved to Rome and became Mussolini's unofficial minister of propaganda, he characterized *Il Duce* in ways that echoes his description of Sakanoue no Tamuramaro in the preface to the play. Mussolini, in Pound's mind, was a strong man who employed the sons of Italy under a unified and collective will (Tim Redman, 168). This thesis argues that his admiration of Mussolini as an autocrat who pacifies and roots out evil echoes his admiration for the hero of *Tamura*. In other words, Pound confirmed his nascent fascist worldview via Noh-theatre. This notion of a mythic stability and unending unity of government, poetry, and art, revealed by the Noh continued to fascinate him until his death; this engagement with the Noh can be evinced in Canto CX, written shortly before his death. In the poem, the spirit of the water iris in the Noh-play *Kakitsubata* is used to denote corporeal and societal regeneration (*The Cantos*, 778). The numerous allusions to the Noh in *The Cantos* show that Pound saw it as a source of terminology wherewith he could better denote and concretize his own thoughts regarding regeneration, literary rejuvenation, and even fascism.

The strongest evidence of Pound confirming and developing his totalitarian world view via the Noh can be found in a 1938 number of Oswald Mosley's fascist periodical *British Union Quarterly* wherein Pound claims (using only capital letters) that "THE STATE SHOULD MOVE LIKE A DANCE" (44). The dance of harmony he describes in the article is a thinly veiled description of a Noh-play, and the opinions expressed in this article are anticipated in a letter he wrote to the American poet Alice Corbin Henderson in the early 1920's wherein he implicitly fuses together literary and societal coherence using the Noh as framework. (*Letters to Alice Corbin Henderson*, 113). This thesis argues that the "very old, very quiet civilization" of Japan became in Pound's mind

the Antithesis to Western instability and “low” culture, and the data shows that he found in Japanese poetics a source of stability and harmony that the Western world simply could not provide

The greatest evidence of Pound, seeing himself in Japanese poetics is that he once described it as “the greatest parallel to my own thought” (*Plays modelled on the Noh*, 14). This thesis argues that this shows that Japanese poetics was not a source of intrinsic novelty for Pound. It was rather an alluring Antithesis to the West that provided him with sufficient terminology to better formulate and develop his own poetical and even political ideas. The data shows that Pound did not see Imagism nor Vorticism as literary systems derived from Japanese sources. He rather saw Noh and the “Japanese sort of knowing” as equivalents to his own thought. Through this perceived equivalence, Pound validated his own “sort of knowing” by relating it with the “Japanese sort of knowing”.

Thesis	Pound proposed the rejuvenation of not only Western poetry and literature, but society as well.
Antithesis	Pound saw in Japanese poetics a validation of his own thought.
Synthesis	The Synthesis of Pound’s Japanese influences can be traced throughout his literary oeuvre. He frequently alludes to Noh theatre in <i>The Cantos</i> , when he expresses his own ideas and beliefs.

Table 1.3 An overview of the dynamics of Pound’s Japanese influences

The overall data shows that Pound constructed an image of Japan as an Antithesis to the West in relation with his Thesis of Western societal and cultural degeneration, and that he approached the Antithesis not as something intrinsically new, but rather as a confirmation of his own thoughts. When Pound studied Japanese poetics, he acquired a vast array of literary and poetical terminology that he applied to his own production, and this constitutes the Synthesis of the process of influence. As to why Pound became influenced by Japanese poetics, the answer likely lies in his perception of it as a “very old, very quiet civilization” (*How I began*), and as stated earlier, it represented to him a distant Other wherein he could project his literary-self, contrary to contemporary war-torn Europe. This thesis thus concludes that Japan represented to Pound, a living contemporary source of Otherness. Before becoming acquainted with Japanese poetics, he had explored the Otherness of Medieval Europe as a source of poetical and even political inspiration. However, the vernacular bards of the European Middle Ages had been dead for centuries, while Japan was on the other hand a living example of a “very quiet civilization”, which he continuously saw not only as an approximation to his own thought, but also a confirmation thereof.

Does the author make an ontological and epistemological distinction between Japan and Europe?	Pound’s construction of Japan as an Antithesis to the West prerequisites this.
Does the author seek to restructure Japan in their writings?	Japan is restructured to the degree that he transforms Japanese poetics into an approximation and confirmation of his own thought.
Does the author forcibly juxtapose Japan and Europe?	Pound forces a juxtaposition by claiming that the philosophical and aesthetic traditions of Japan are ontologically and fundamentally different from Western traditions.
Is Japan exoticized in the author’s writings?	Pound’s ontological and epistemological distinction between Japan and the West indirectly entails a type of exoticization.

If so, does the exoticization stem from an avidity of Japanese culture or cultural chauvinism?	Pound felt a great avidity for Japanese culture, to the extent that he not only claimed it to be equal with Western culture but in some cases even superior (<i>Ezra Pound to His Parents</i> , 384). Even so, he occasionally reveals a chauvinistic attitude against Japan.
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Table 1.4 An overview of the orientalist traits of Pound's Japanese influences.

Table 1.4 is an overview of how the five examined traits of Orientalism manifest themselves in Pound's Japanese influences. His belief in a "[j]apanese sort of knowing" and frequent emphasis that there is no equivalent to the Noh in any Western tradition is an explicit epistemological and ontological differentiation between the West and Japan, and since he approaches Japan as an approximation to his own thought, he restructures the nation in his writings to the extent that it coincides with his own beliefs. He exoticized Japan to the extent that he ontologically separated it from the West via a process of Othering and believed that Japan, as a symbol of the Other, was appealing. If he had not found any exotic allure in Japan, he would likely not have used the nation as a source for literary and even political self-validation. Although Pound's avidity for Japanese culture was so great that he occasionally claimed it to be superior to the West, he nevertheless resorted to the use of orientalist tropes. The association between the European child and Japanese adult in *Vorticism*, can be interpreted as an implicit infantilization of the Japanese and an implicit delegitimization of their autonomy. However, it would be fallacious to claim that Pound was consistently chauvinistic against Japanese culture. Since no other evidence that Pound continued to implicitly infantilize the Japanese after this essay, has been found. Thus, it can be said to represent an isolated case of cultural chauvinism.

4.2- An elaboration on W.B. Yeats's Japanese influences

W.B. Yeats, who was Pound's senior by 20 years, became acquainted with Japan through the arts at an early stage of his life (John de Gruchy, 189). His father, John Butler Yeats, was an active painter during the second half of the 1800s and was a part of an artistic circle that stood at the centre of Japonisme. One of W.B. Yeats's father's friends were Professor Frederick York Powell, a historian and noted connoisseur of Japanese art (de Gruchy, 190). In 1888, at the age of 23, Yeats writes in his journals of a "pleasant week" spent at Powell's house where he enjoyed a "cherished gathering of Japanese pictures, many hundreds" (Elton, 414). A fascination with Japanese art emerged in his mind in conjunction with a belief that would characterize his whole life: the renunciation of rationalism and embracement of mysticism (Richard Ellman, 97). Yeats writes in his autobiography that he had, since boyhood, believed that "only ancient things and the stuff of dreams were beautiful" (*Autobiographies*, 82), and he narrates his long-felt repulsion for the emergence of scientific rationalism and literary realism. The true source of beauty, in Yeats's view, can only be found in myths, legends, and esoteric symbolism (*Autobiographies*, *ibid*).

He believed that the European drama needed a renewal to distance itself from what he perceived as the detrimental effects of literary realism and naturalism. In his essay: *The theatre* (1903) Yeats outlines the necessities of an "Irish literary theatre" (*Essays and introductions*, 166), which would produce plays that are "for the most part remote, spiritual, and ideal" (*Essays and introductions*, *ibid*). The goal of Yeats's proposed form is singularly aristocratic as he states that it is aimed at "the right people" to aid them in the escape from "the stupefying memory of the theatre of commerce" (*Essays and Introductions*, *ibid*). This thesis argues that *The land of Heart's desire* (1894)

is a manifestation of Yeats's rejection of rationalism and a fitting example of his symbolic plays. The story follows the Bruin family and their encounter with an ephemeral fairy child. It culminates in the fairy child's dance and ecstatic exhortation to the Bruin family's newly married daughter Marie (Yeats, 28). The preternatural child's plea is accompanied by a vivid dance. This thesis concludes that the similitude between the climax of *The land of the Heart's desire* and the choreographed climax of Noh theatre is astonishing. No evidence of Yeats having knowledge of the Noh when he wrote the play has been found; he wrote it as an attempt to address the "problems" of theatrical and literary realism. In other words, this thesis argues that Yeats derived a symbolic dramatic form from his own aesthetic and literary convictions that presaged his, so to speak, imitation of the Noh theatre 20 years later. In addition, this thesis also argues that Yeats's penchant for occultism and the supernatural in conjunction with his anticipation of the form laid the foundation for his later fascination with the Noh.

During the winters together with Pound in Stone Cottage, Yeats also participated in the study of the Fenollosa manuscripts (de Gruchy 1), and his conclusions about the Noh represent a belief that Japan provided an Antithesis to the literary realism and naturalism of the West. The Noh was the necessary key for Yeats to elucidate his own ideas of the literary theatre which he already had begun to develop. He later explicitly mentions the Noh as the "help" through which he invented a form of drama "distinguished, indirect, and symbolic" (*Essays and Introductions*, 221). This thesis argues that the invented drama alluded to by Yeats does not represent something fundamentally new but rather a standardization of his previously held ideas. The "distinguished, indirect, and symbolic" drama referred to by Yeats are his "dance plays". This thesis means that Yeats's dance plays do not represent a fundamental turning point in the author's production, but rather a concretization of Yeats's constitutional predilection for the mystical and symbolic via Japanese sources. Hence the "help" from Noh-theatre. This thesis further means that this marks the definitive beginning of Japan as an Antithesis to the West in his literary worldview. A noteworthy aspect about Yeats's relationship with Japan is that he found not only confirmation of his personal ideas about theatre in the Antithesis, but he also found confirmation of his perception of "old Ireland's" *volksgeist* in Japanese culture. Yeats found in Noh the closest approximation to the ancient myths of Ireland, and he even states that "the men who created these conventions were more like ourselves than were the Greeks and Romans, more like us even than Shakespeare or Corneille" (*Introduction to Certain Noble Plays of Japan*). This statement is significant because it shows Yeats's way of Nearing Japan by equating it with "old Ireland".

Previous researchers have claimed that the Noh played an insignificant part in Yeats's production (Suhei Bushrui, John Styan., Derek Mahon). However, this thesis challenges such a claim because the evidence indicating that Yeats elevated Japan as an Antithesis to the West and saw in Noh theatre a framework to conceptualize the Irish experience is simply overwhelming. A majority, if not all of Yeats's drama post-1916 (the year when *Noble plays of Japan* was published) contain symbolic, thematic, or structural elements derived from Noh. Even Yeats's final works, written shortly before his death, such as *The King of the Great Clock Tower* are modelled after the Noh. One of his many plays, written after he encountered Noh theatre, is *The Dreaming of the Bones* which is a unique play because it does not simply incorporate elements of Noh, it also closely follows the traditional narratological conventions of the form. In the play, Yeats intertwines the past with the present by linking together the spirits of two lovers, whose "passionate sin" caused the English subjugation of Ireland in the 12th century, with an errant nationalist on the run from British authorities after the Easter uprising in 1916. The interlinking between spirits of the past with the present is a common trope in Noh theatre (Ewick). The thesis argues that the frequent presence of ghostly beings

must have strongly appealed to Yeats considering that he had nurtured a belief in the spirits of the dead and their presence among us ever since boyhood (Adrian Paterson)

4.2.1- A new perspective on Yeats's aborted journey to Japan

In the late 1910's, at the dawn of the Irish civil war, Yeats's excitement for Japanese culture was so great so that he did not only plan to travel to Japan, but he also planned to move there and work at the Keio university as a professor (Shotaro Oshima, 21), and it was with joy that he accepted the offer of a lectureship at the university, yet the plan never came into fruition. The author is aware of the two often cited reasons for Yeats not going to Japan which were: pecuniary problems and the birth of his first child (William Snell, 73). However, the first reason can be contested. It is true that financial problems often troubled him and his family (Anthony Jordan, 119). However, Keio university provided Yeats with a stipend that would cover half of the travel expenses (Edward Marx, 75). Therefore, this thesis conjectures that financial difficulties were not the main hinder of the journey. The refusal of Yeats's wife, recuperating from childbirth, to move to the other side of the world, probably exerted a greater influence on his final decision. However, this thesis argues there exists another reason that is connected with his personally constructed view of the nation.

In early 1919, when moving to Japan still seemed feasible, Yeats wrote in a letter to his publisher, A.H Bullen, where he described his yearning for Japan and how he dreamed to live in a "forgotten city, where the streets are full of grass, except for a little track in the centre made by pilgrims to some Buddhist shrine and where there is no sound but that of some temple bell" (Frank Tuohy, 171-172). With this letter in mind, this thesis contends that such an orientalist and idealized view of "old Japan" was an important factor for the plan not materializing. At the time of writing this letter, there is little evidence that Yeats had done research on contemporary Japan. He had virtually exclusively nurtured his mythologized conception of ancient aristocratic Japan and its perceived spiritual similitude with ancient Ireland, and since in the late 1910's, Tokyo was not a quaint little hamlet, but a vast metropolis, far larger and more industrialized than Dublin, it would not harmonize with his idealized orientalist view of the nation.

During the summer of 1919, Yeats began to make some inquiries into the contemporary state of Japan, and in the winter, after attaining the information, he came to the decision not to go. In a letter to his friend John Quinn written late 1919, Yeats wrote that "I think Japan has faded. My own work has grown more engrossing and Europe less unendurable" (*The Letters*, 234). The implications of this letter are significant. What has "faded" is not his interest in Noh theatre, but the certitude of his mythologized perception of Japan. In other words, Yeats implicitly admits that he prioritizes his own artistic construct of Japan over the hard facts of reality. Europe had become "less unendurable" to Yeats because he concluded that his illusory mythological image of Japan as an aesthetic Other intertwined with the spirit of Ireland was preferable over becoming acquainted with a modernized, Westernized Japan that had little to do with his image of the nation.

Thesis	Yeats believed that the theatrical conventions of the West based on scientific rationalism led to cultural impoverishment (Charles Glicksberg, 29). To resolve the problem, he begins to develop a “literary theatre”.
Antithesis	Yeats, after encountering the Noh via Pound’s mediation, formulates the opinion that Japanese theatre represents a spiritual, aristocratic form Antithetical to the conventions of the West. He projects not only his personal literary beliefs into the Antithesis, but his ideas about the <i>volksgeist</i> of Ireland as well.
Synthesis	Noh validated Yeats’s “literary theatre” and provided him with an abundance of terminology and concepts to concretize his “dance plays”, which was an aristocratic form that expanded upon his “literary theatre”.

Table 1.5 An overview of the dynamics of Yeats’s Japanese influences

Table 1.5 provides an overview of why Yeats became influenced by Japanese theatre understood via the modified Tessera. Yeats’s yearning for the spiritual and esoteric, alternatives to the cold contemporary rationalism of the West, led to his development of a symbolic “literary theatre” that anticipates his contact with the Noh. The data shows that Yeats was receptive to influence from Japanese theatre, consecrated in his mind as Antithetical to the realist drama of the West, because it provided self-validation of his own literary forms. Via the Noh, he could further develop, concretize, and elaborate his “literary theatre”, thus producing a Synthesis of influence, which, however, did not signify intrinsic novelty, only ostensible novelty through new terminology and a validation of his own methods.

Does the author make an ontological and epistemological distinction between Japan and Europe?	Yeats paradoxically makes an ontological and epistemological distinction between Japan and Europe while at the same time purporting the existence of a common racial memory between Ireland and Japan (<i>Essays and introductions</i> , 232., Shotaro Oshima, 82).
Does the author seek to restructure Japan in their writings?	Japan is restructured by Yeats in the sense that the Noh are made to coincide with his own literary symbolism and to coincide with his view of “old Ireland”.
Does the author forcibly juxtapose Japan and Europe?	Not forcible but the ontological distinction made by the poet necessitates a juxtaposition.
Is Japan exoticized in the author’s writings?	He does so paradoxically. He both exoticizes Japan and domesticizes it by associating it with Ireland.
If so, does the exoticization stem from an avidity of Japanese culture or cultural chauvinism?	The former. Although Yeats exoticizes Japan, no data can be found that he was culturally chauvinistic against the nation.

Table 1.6 An overview of the orientalist traits in Yeat’s Japanese influences

The greatest orientalist implication of Yeats’s Japanese influences is his restructuring of Japan to coincide with “old Ireland”. Yeats implicitly ascribes the similitude between Japan and Ireland to a common racial memory (*Essays and introductions*, 232., Shotaro Oshima, 82) of the two peoples and through this, he in a way can be said to delegitimize Japanese selfhood. This kind of association between ancient Ireland and Japan occurs frequently in his production. In his epic poem *The*

Wanderings of Oisín (1889) he narrates the trials and tribulations of Oisín, a hero from Irish mythology, a demigod traditionally revered as the greatest poet in the history of Ireland (Peter Beresford, 189). The story of the poem takes place at the inception of Christianity in Ireland. The protagonist, in a conversation with St. Patric, recalls his days of heroic valour “that are like coloured Asian birds/At evening in their rainless lands” (Oxford world classics, 187). Yeats’s reference to “Asian birds” most certainly alludes to the cranes of Hokusai. This is corroborated by the fact that Yeats describes Hokusai’s “Japanese picture of cranes flying through a blue sky” as a case of artistic perfection (*Uncollected prose*, 324). Yeats would continue to substantiate his idea racial kinship between Japan and Ireland by regularly conflating Ancient Irish literature and art with East-Asia and Japan. Another example of this is Yeats description of the Ancient Irish ballad *Song of Amergin* as “Asiatic” poetry (Yeats, 11). Yeats also once remarked that: “[w]hen we turn toward the East, we are turning not less to the ancient West and North” (Yeats, *ibid*). “Ancient West and North” in this instance refer to the geographical proximities in Ireland most commonly associated with Irish antiquity. In the north, for example, lies Ulster, which was a traditional centre for Irish royalty (I Am Northern Ireland, “History of Ulster”). The west of Ireland has mythological associations, including with the Tuatha Dé Danann, deities from Irish mythology (Ali Isaac)

His theory of racial kinship between Ireland and Japan shows that he approached Japan not as an independent culture, but as a type of extension of Ireland. The orientalist implications of Yeats’s relationship with Japan and how it explains receptiveness of Japanese influences (as far as this thesis has discovered) is an underexplored aspect of Yeats’s literary production. The Irish poet makes a paradoxical ontological distinction between Japan and the West. Japan, due to its ontological difference, is consecrated by Yeats as the Antithesis to the West and its aristocratic theatre reveals all that the Western world is lacking. However, he simultaneously sees an ontological similitude between Japan and old Ireland. This thesis argues that Japan, as of then a never conquered island nation, represented in Yeats’s mind the lost potentiality of what Ireland could have become if it had remained uncolonized by the English. Japan is thus restructured to such an extent in his literary worldview that he virtually transforms the nation into an East-Asian Ireland. In the end, Yeats’s relationship with Japan can be described as a paradox, it simultaneously denotes the Other and the Near, it is a liminal image of poetical and literary potentiality that validates his symbolic, spiritual form of theatre. A complex oxymoronic process of exoticization and domestication of Japan led to a constructed image of the nation wholly removed from the modern state of affairs. Unlike Pound, who was engaged in modern Japanese politics (he even aspired to be a mediator of peace between the United States and Japan during WWII (David Moody, 105), Yeats practically never showed any interest in contemporary Japanese affairs, thus prioritizing his own idealized mental construct of the nation over reality.

4.3- An elaboration on Gary Snyder’s Japanese influences

The American poet Gary Snyder was part of a rambunctious group of post-WWII American poets and authors who have come to be known as “the Beat generation”. Jack Kerouac, also a part of the generation coined the term in 1948 during a conversation with his friend and fellow author John Clellon Holmes. Kerouac unwittingly coined the term that came to define not only a generation of American literati, but a significant part of the cultural milieu of post-WWII U.S as well. Despite the renown of the beatniks, there exists no formal definition of their literary aesthetic. Amiri Baraka, himself a Beatnik coarsely defined the beat generation as “a whole bunch of people...who came to the conclusion that society sucked” (Jordan Bates). Their belief that post-

WWII American society “sucked” occasioned them to search for alternatives, be it spiritual, literary or cultural.

Amongst these searchers, we have Snyder who is not only a poet, but an ardent environmentalist as well. His way of combining poetical production with environmental activism has earned him the praise as “the poet laureate of Deep Ecology” (Petr Kopecky). He was only 10 years old when he began to develop an interest in alternative perspectives on nature, and he has stated that it was the Salish people, a native American tribe in the Pacific Northwest region that first sparked his interest for other, less conventional perspectives of nature and humankind’s relationship with it (Al Aronowitz). He gradually developed a strong conviction that people in the West, particularly Americans, have severed their connections with nature, and in one of his many interviews, he programmatically declares his desire to combat people’s alienation from nature due to the “cancerous and explosive growth of Western Nations during the last one hundred and fifty years” (Maria Popova). Regarding the modern American’s relationship with nature, Snyder once remarked that “[i]t seems Americans would live by a Chamber of Commerce Creationism that declares itself satisfied with a divinely presented shopping mall” (*Essential Prose*, 336). He eventually concluded that the lost bond with nature can only be restored if people realize their constitutional kinship with it (*Essential Prose*, 457). In Snyder’s belief, the borders between man and nature are a Western illusory social construct that must, for the sake of the planet, be erased (*Essential Prose*, 460), and this opinion is made manifest in much of his poetry. For example, *We Make Our Vows Together with All Beings* delineates the erasure of these borders and the unification of man and animal. It narrates a spiritual symbiosis between the (most likely) autobiographical narrator and a doe he encounters during a lunch break while working in the woods. In the end of the poem, the sylvan silence is violently broken by the roaring engine of a military plane, the comparable reaction of man and animal illustrates their spiritual unification:

She lifts her head, listens,
Waits till the sound has gone by.
So do I (*Collected poems*, 536)

and in the concluding lines of *Ripples on the surface*, Snyder almost programmatically declares his philosophy of deep ecology:

The little house in the wild,
The wild in the house.
Both forgotten.
No nature
Both together, one big, empty house (*Collected poems*, 586)

The “one big, empty house” of the final line refers to the global ecosystem which, according to Snyderian philosophy, is equally home to man and animal. “Nature”, according to his philosophy, does not exist to the extent that the concept presupposes the fundamental distinction between man and animal, a distinction that he believes to be only imaginary (*Essential prose*, 457).

Snyder’s predilection for Japanese poetics is quite well known. When he received the Grand Prize of the Masaoka Shiki International Haiku Awards, he explicitly stated that Ezra Pound, Noh dramas, and haiku have strongly shaped his own poetry (*Back on the Fire*, 59). Between 1956-1969,

Snyder frequently sojourned in Japan to immerse himself in Zen Buddhism, Japanese poetics, and Japanese culture. He was, during a few years, even married to a Japanese woman (Bob Bumstead). Snyder, in his search for an alternative perception of nature, constructed an image of Japan as an Antithesis to the West's estrangement from the natural world, and the Synthesis of his Japanese influence is the incorporation of Japanese terminology that he uses to narrate and legitimize his own ecological philosophy and modes of perception. The 4th poem in the chapter titled *Logging* from *Myths & Texts* provides evidence of Snyder's image of Japan as natural harmony antithetical to the West:

Pines, under pines,
 Seami [sic] Motokiyo
 The Doer stamps his foot.
 A thousand board-feet
 Bucked, skidded, loaded-
 (Takasago, Ise) float in a mill pond;
 A thousand years dancing
 Flies in the kerf. (*Collected poems*, 51).

Snyder subverts Pound's reading of the pines of *Takasago* and reshapes them into a symbol of harmony and cohesion with the natural world instead of a legitimization of fascist politics. Zeami Motokiyo (1363-1443), alluded to in the first line, is a pivotal figure in the history of Noh theatre, since he contributed significantly to the formulation of the aesthetic and theoretical framework of it (Richard Jones), and many Noh plays, including *Takasago* are attributed to him (Royall Tyler). "The doer" or *shite* is the main actor of a Noh play "who is responsible for fulfilling the roles of the chorus"⁴. The *Shite* frequently initiates a change in a Noh play by a movement, including stamping which Katsunori Yamazato calls a "characteristic Noh movement" (144). In Snyder's poem, "The doer" or *shite*, stamping his foot does not commence a *kaimai*, a dance of divinities that mark the end of *Takasago*. The stamping instead sends the pines to the sawmill, which here represents what Snyder sees as the destructive powers of the Occident and how they subjugate and destroy his perceived ecological harmony of Japan. This thesis argues that this passage is indicative of Snyder's approach to Japan. The subversion of *Takasago* juxtaposes an oriental harmony between man and nature with an occidental destruction of nature. The passage shows that the America which Snyder chastised as contented with a "divinely presented shopping mall" (*Essential prose*, 336) does not even spare the sacred pines of *Takasago*. This thesis contends that this allusion to *Takasago* illustrates Snyder's binary worldview, and that the oriental/Japanese symbol represents ecological harmony, while its treatment represents occidental ecological disharmony. In short, this thesis finds that this passage, in other words, provides evidence of how Snyder approached Japan as an ecological Antithesis to the West. This view can be further evinced in the first stanza of the poem *Kyoto born in spring song*:

⁴ For more information see "Shite-kata": <https://www.the-noh.com/en/world/shite.html>

Beautiful little children

Found in melons,
in bamboo,
in a “strangely glowing warbler egg”.

A perfect baby girl (*Collected poems*, 232)

This stanza contains allusions to three different Japanese folktales that all share a common theme. The second line refers to the tale of *Urikohime* (“Melon princess”), the third refers to *Taketorimonogatari* (“The tale of a bamboo cutter”), and the fourth refers to *Uguisuhime* (“Warbler princess”). The common trait of these three tales is that they all describe the birth of a semi-divine girl *ex natura*. In *Urikohime*, the heroine is born out of a melon; in *Taketorimonogatari*, a girl is born out of a bamboo tree; and in *Uguisuhime*, the “warbler princess” is born out of a warbler egg. The excerpt further indicates that Snyder saw in Japan proof of a perfect symbiosis with nature that was lacking in the West. The poet however reveals little interest in the aspects of these folktales that do not coincide with his idea of unification between man and animal. Ecological harmony is not a particularly important element in the folk tales Snyder alludes to. In *Taketorimonogatari*, for example, the problems of love, desire, and tradition play a much more significant role in the narrative. This stanza reveals both why Japan became an Antithesis for Snyder and the subsequent Synthesis of influence. The three figures from traditional Japanese folktales are perceived by him as representing a perfection antithetical to the Western world’s relationship with nature. The Synthesis of influence is subsequently, his way of using the folkloristic motifs to further elaborate on his own philosophy of ecology thus legitimizing it.

A similar selective approach to Japanese literature is found in a passage from *Earth Household*, a collection of prose poems and journal entries. In one entry, Snyder writes that: “sparrows entertained me singing and dancing, I’ve never had such a good time as today-Japanese lesson” (*Essential prose*, 32), which is, most likely, an allusion to the Japanese folktale *The Tongue cut sparrow*. The tale has been translated many times into English, and its first translation dates back to 1871 by A.B. Mitford (257-259). The story narrates a compassionate elderly man who nurses a sparrow back to health after its tongue had been cut out by his cruel wife who was vexed by its singing. In the end, it is revealed that it was a most special sparrow, a type of ephemeral being, who invites the tender-hearted old man to his home and treats him with a lavish feast, song and dance (Seki Keigo, 115-118). The didactic purpose of the ending illustrates to the reader that compassion is always rewarded more than cruelty. However, the didactic elements and the wife’s cruel treatment of a small bird are not included in Snyder’s interpretation of the tale because they do not coincide with his own perception of Japan. This thesis posits that he does this to restructure the tale into a source of symbolic terminology to illustrate his own philosophy of nature. Note also that Snyder describes the folktale as a “Japanese lesson”, which implies that he perceived didactic elements in it. However, the didactic elements of the tale are restructured so that they validate his own ecological philosophies. The “Japanese lesson” provided by the story becomes instead a lesson of Snyderian thought. According to Keigo, *The tongue cut sparrow* as a folktale can be categorized as an Aarne-Thompson type 480 story (151). This category can also be called: “[t]he Kind and the Unkind girls” (Keigo, *ibid*), and it denotes the type of folktales that delineate the victory of friendship and kindness over greed and avarice. In other words, Snyder appears uninterested in the actual didactic elements of the tale and instead created his own via the projection of his literary selfhood.

The textual evidence indicates that Snyder's perception of Japan as an Antithesis to the West focuses solely on premodern Japan. In the poem *Mother Earth: Her Whales* the poet chastises modern Japan for its whaling practices. He even calls Japan a "once-great Buddhist nation" (*Collected poems*, 321), which intimates that the poet believed that "great Buddhist" Japan of premodernity treated animals in a way corresponding to his own view on animal welfare. Snyder seems to neglect that whaling was a thriving industry in premodern Japan as well⁵. The perceived perfection between humankind and nature in premodern Japan alluded to by the poet in *Kyoto Born in Spring Song* appears also in his prose writings. In *Good, Wild, Sacred*, Snyder claims that game management in premodern Japan was done with the sacrosanctity of nature in mind (*Essential prose*, 289). Thus, corroborating that Snyder projects his own views of environmentalism on to his constructed image of Japan as an Antithesis to the West.

Thesis	Snyder believed that the American people had lost its connection with nature. From boyhood, he searched for alternative perspectives on nature and formulated the idea that the illusory borders between man and animal must be erased.
Antithesis	Snyder constructed an image of Japan based on his own ecological philosophy. His ideas, projected into the Antithesis, become validated.
Synthesis	The poet's ecological philosophy, after validation via the Antithesis is expressed with new terminology which corroborate it.

Table 1.7 An overview of the dynamics of Snyder's Japanese influences

Table 1.7 reveals the dynamics of influence in Snyder's literary oeuvre as understood via the modified Tessler, and this thesis contends that Snyder became influenced by Japanese literature and poetics because he wished to find an alternative perspective to humankind's relationship with nature. Snyder projects his own ecological beliefs into the Antithesis, in turn validating them. The Synthesis of Snyder's Japanese influences is the new modus of expression of his own ecological philosophy. This thesis contends that the afterword to the anthology *Cold Mountain*, illustrates this Synthesis and why he was allured by Japanese poetics. Snyder writes explicitly that he approached the modernist "steer towards the Japanese" to find a new method of expressing his own experiences (*Collected poems*, 40). In other words, Snyder became influenced by Japanese literature because he wished to find new modes of expression to concretize his own ideas of ecology.

Does the author make an ontological and epistemological distinction between Japan and Europe/America?	Japan as an Antithesis to the West's dysfunctional relationship with nature entails a fundamental distinction.
Does the author seek to restructure Japan in their writings?	Japan is restructured in Snyder's writings to coincide with his own environmentalist world view.
Does the author forcibly juxtapose Japan and Europe/America?	His juxtaposition between Japan and the West is quite subtle and cannot be described as forcible.
Is Japan exoticized in the author's writings?	Yes, to the extent that it signifies a mindset of ecological harmony.
If so, does the exoticization stem from an avidity for Japanese culture or cultural chauvinism?	No proof of a chauvinist attitude against Japan has been found in Snyder's writings.

⁵ See: "Chronology of Whaling": <https://www.whaling.jp/english/history.html>

Table 1.8 An overview of the orientalist traits in Snyder's Japanese influences

Table 1.8 outlines the orientalist implications of Snyder's Japanese influences. The greatest orientalist implication is that Snyder reshaped and restructured Japan into an Antithesis to the West at the expense of aspects in Japanese literature that do not coincide with his own worldview. In other words, he has approached Japanese literature selectively to construct his image of traditional Japan as proof of a perfect symbiosis between humanity and nature. Unlike Pound however, there is no evidence that Snyder resorted to explicitly orientalist tropes. After an extensive search in Snyder's prose and poetical writings, this thesis can decisively say that Snyder has never explicitly shown a culturally chauvinist attitude against Japan.

4.4- An elaboration on Jack Kerouac's Japanese influences

Jack Kerouac who is described as one of the most significant writers of the Beat generation (Jennifer Berube), was of a rebellious nature (Maeda Mirza, 2). He believed that post-WWII American society and the emergence of an affluent middle class threatened, true poetical expression and that many of his countrymen were trapped in a prison of materialism. This is apparent in the following passage from *The Dharma Bums* where he laments the Americans who live in "[r]ows of well-to-do houses with lawns and television sets in each living room with everybody looking at the same thing, at the same time" (*The Dharma Bums*, 39). His poetical and prosodical spontaneity stemmed from his interest in the "speed...tension and ecstatic tomfoolery" of the idiosyncratic American vernacular speech (*American Writers Museum*). Previous researchers have claimed that Kerouac first came into deeper contact with Japanese literature after he wrote *On the road* which was written during an intense three-week burst of inspiration in 1951. He did indeed begin to write his own haiku and even haiku-influenced prose after *On the road* in conjunction with becoming acquainted with Snyder. However, this thesis argues that latent Japanese influences are made manifest already in *On the Road*, which is partially autobiographical and narrates the author's odyssey across continental United States.

Kerouac gradually came to the opinion that "the road" is the greatest antidote against the constraining cultural climate of the American middle class, and during his actual journey that took place between 1948-1949, he made extensive notes but remained indecisive as to how he would contextualize his journey in writing (Douglas Brinkley). In the end, he formulated his journey in *On the Road*, as a type of pantheistic, soul-searching quest for the rawest poetical essence of the human experience. This thesis argues that there exists noteworthy similitude in *On the Road* with how R.H Blyth describes Basho's *Narrow Road to the Interior*. Blyth whose works, Kerouac had read, describes the famous Japanese poet in *Haiku* in the following way: "Basho felt that life was not deep enough, not continuous enough, and he wanted to give every action, every moment the value it potentially had. He wanted the little life we lead to be at the same time the greater life" (328). Blyth also describes how Basho found deep spiritual inspiration during his wanderings. He writes: "Prepared to die by the roadside, he sets out on his journey. Why did he not stop at home, if not in comfort, at least out of the wind and rain? For several reasons. Without contact with things, with cold and hunger, real poetry is impossible" (330). This thesis contends that Blyth's description of Basho must have appealed to Kerouac who during the late 1940's and early 1950's attempted to formulate his own philosophy of the spiritual significance of "the road". Previous researchers seem to separate Kerouac's production into distinct "periods" whereof *On the Road* constitutes its own period. Weinreich means that the Japanese influences in Kerouac's production are first apparent in

The Dharma Bums (15). This thesis argues, however that the way Kerouac communicated his experiences in *On the Road* was likely inspired by Basho. In other words, Basho's poetical travelogues provided the sufficient terminology and framework of expression for Kerouac to convey his ideas about a nomadic lifestyle. Compare the aforementioned quote from Blyth about Basho with the following from *On the Road*: "nothing behind me, everything ahead of me, as is ever so on the road" (183). Here Sal Paradise (Kerouac's literary persona) narrates a *wanderlust* that echoes Blyth's description of Basho's journeys. Much like how Blyth described Basho as a searcher for "real poetry" on his journeys, Sal Paradise also expresses the belief that the journey without termination leads to poetical and spiritual enlightenment. Which this thesis believes can be inferred in the following quote "there was nowhere to go but everywhere, so just keep rolling on under the stars" (*On the Road*, 29).

In addition, the Japanologist Chamberlain's description of Basho as an errant poet, a Buddhist wanderer who wished to "commune with mountains, rivers, forests and waterfalls" (281) must also have appealed to Kerouac as well and shaped the contextualization of his journey in *On the Road*. Sal Paradise, the ever-restless wanderer, expresses a similar desire to communicate with the elements around him. Kerouac frequently links the sights around Sal Paradise with spiritual and philosophic musings. One such example is the protagonist's musing that "the air was soft, the stars so fine, the promise of every cobbled valley so great that I thought I was in a dream" (45). In short, this thesis argues that Kerouac became acquainted with Basho via Chamberlain's and Blyth's descriptions of the Japanese poet. While there is evidence that Kerouac had read Byth (*The Dharma Bums*, 16), there exists no concrete evidence that Kerouac ever read Chamberlain, the wide dissemination of Chamberlain's texts in the Anglo-American literary scene is, however circumstantial evidence that Kerouac may have come into contact with Chamberlain's description of Basho before writing *On the Road*.

Kerouac's definitive introduction to Japanese poetics is traditionally ascribed to Snyder (Weinreich, 9). Their relatively brief friendship during the summer of 1955 (shortly before Snyder went to Japan for the first time) is extensively narrated in Kerouac's roman à clef *The Dharma Bums* wherein his avidity for haiku is noticeable. This thesis contends that Kerouac makes his quest for a framework of expression explicit in his philosophic autobiography *Some of the Dharma* which he began to write in 1953 and concluded in conjunction with the composition of *The Dharma Bums*. In *Some of the Dharma*, Kerouac makes the reflection "Soon I'll find the right words, they'll be very simple". This thesis contends that Kerouac must have found the "right words" in Japanese poetics because from 1955 onward, he began to compose English language haiku poems almost on a daily basis. According to an essay by Tim Murphy in the British haiku journal *Presence*, Kerouac wrote 1000 haiku poems between 1955 and 1966. The implication (if one estimates roughly) is that Kerouac wrote one haiku poem every fourth day for more than a decade.

This thesis argues that Kerouac, although an antiracist, implicitly infantilizes Japanese poets in *The Dharma Bums*. The narrator of the novel describes how he, together with "Japhy Ryder" (i.e. Gary Snyder. Note the allusion to the ethnic slur "jap") came to understand "the perfect gems of haikus [sic] the Oriental poets had written, never getting drunk in the mountains or anything but just going along as fresh as children writing down what they saw without literary devices or fanciness of expression" (55). The phrase "fresh as children" equates the Occidental child with the Japanese adult in a similar fashion to Pound in *Vorticisim*. It is worthy to note that this quote reveals a misunderstanding of Japanese haiku. Kerouac's claim that haiku do not contain literary devices, or "fanciness of expression" is an oversimplification, since haiku is a varied genre of poetry with many

different schools. Some schools are formalistic and utilize a multitude of literary devices and “fanciness of expression” (Susan Napier, 86). Kerouac’s characterization of Japanese poets as children is a restructuring that this thesis traces to his personal search after a child-like simplistic method of poetical communication. Rather than acknowledging that there exist poetical traditions in Japan that utilize “fanciness of expression” and literary devices, he rather projects his own literary selfhood into Japanese poetics so that it coincides with his own convictions about poetic simplicity and spontaneity.

The author further contends that Kerouac formed the notion that Japanese poetics functioned as an Antithesis to the constrained form of expression in contemporary America. Furthermore, that he projected his own poetical selfhood into his image of Japanese poetics as an Antithesis. This is evinced by Ginsberg’s claim that Kerouac had a constitutional predilection for haiku because the form encapsulated his belief in poetical spontaneity. Ginsberg even makes the claim that Kerouac both thinks and speaks in haiku, hence his interest in the form (*The Essential Ginsberg*, 294). In an interview with *Paris Review* Kerouac states that he personally interpreted haiku as “a sentence that’s short and sweet with a sudden jump of thought” (117) and after the summer with Snyder in 1955, he began to apply his perception of haiku to the technical aspects of his prose. This change of prose style was noted by Ginsberg in a review in *The Village voice* where he describes *The Dharma Bums* as a “book of a thousand haikus [sic]” (Regina Weinreich, 14).

Kerouac reshaped the Japanese haiku into the American “pop”, a term he coined as early as 1956; he expressed his belief that “American speech is bursting to pop” (Terebess Asia Online), hence the name of the form. Kerouac’s haiku or “pops” do not indicate a completely new direction in his authorship; it is rather a concretization of a belief in poetical spontaneity which Ginsberg claimed was a constitutional trait of Kerouac. For example:

“Early morning yellow flowers
-thinking about
The drunkards of Mexico” (*Book of Haikus*, 31)

Here, Kerouac uses the haiku or “pop” as a poetical framework to communicate his musings about “The drunkards of Mexico” similar to those he conveyed through prose in *On the Road*. He uses the haiku/pops to convey his belief in the poetical essence that may be found in everyday, prosaic matters. He reshaped the haiku to provide him with a framework to compose compact, poetic utterances akin to his “first thought, best thought” philosophy. Something as prosaic as a fly dead in a medicine cabinet were rendered into poetry by Kerouac:

“In my medicine cabinet
the winter fly
Has died of old age”. (*Book of Haikus*, 26)

Kerouac’s *wanderlust* and nomadic philosophy from *On the Road* makes itself manifest in his “pops”. He reconstructs the haiku into a medium to convey the everyday beauty around him in the United States. This thesis argues that although he communicated his appreciation for this beauty in his earlier novels, such as *On the Road*, the haiku provided Kerouac with a shorter, much more efficient framework than prose. For example:

2 traveling salesmen
 Passing each other
 On a Western Road (*Book of Haikus*, 23)

The windmills of
 Oklahoma look
 In every direction. (*Book of Haikus*, *ibid*)

In back of the supermarket,
 In the parking lot weeds,
 Purple flowers. (*Book of Haikus*, 28)

The third quoted poem is the most apparent reappearance of Kerouac’s ideas. In *The Dharma Bums*, Kerouac juxtaposes the flower as a symbol of an almost ephemeral beauty compared to the harsh desert landscape around it. “The little flowers grew everywhere around the rocks, and no one had asked them to grow...” (190). In the third poem, Kerouac makes a similar juxtaposition, although here he does not contrast the flower with a natural desert but rather with a, so to speak, anthropogenic desert.

Subsequently this thesis argues that Kerouac’s approach to the haiku reflects his desire to convey the vivacious “popping” of idiosyncratic American expression which he, before approaching Japanese poetics, attempted to convey via prose. His conviction of haiku’s applicability to the free, expansive, “popping” American speech can be illustrated by his discography. In 1959, he produced his own album of jazz music (a quintessentially American form according to Kerouac) together with the saxophonists Zoot Sims and Al Cohn⁶. *Blues & Haikus* is a combination of Kerouac’s “pops” accompanied by an appropriate melody of the saxophones. This thesis challenges the claims of Ann Charter and Gerald Nicosia that haiku was merely something that Kerouac amused himself with during his free time (Iadonisi, 1). Kerouac’s combination of the haiku-form with Jazz music is a restructuring made by him to align Japanese poetics with what he considered to be an artform indicative of the idiosyncratic American register. In short, this thesis argues that Kerouac explored haiku as the framework for a liberated poetical expression. Considering that he wrote haiku on a virtual daily basis, this exploration process lasted throughout a large part of his life.

Thesis	Kerouac believed that the cultural milieu of post-WWII America constrained both spiritual and poetical expression.
Antithesis	Kerouac saw in haiku a confirmation of his own thought and speech. He saw in Japanese poetics a free, expansive, and spontaneous form of poetical expression that did not exist in America.
Synthesis	Kerouac, after the Antithesis confirmed his poetical spontaneity, begins to use new terminology to concretize his own philosophy of poetical expression

Table 1.9 An overview of the dynamics of Kerouac’s Japanese influences

⁶ See “Jack Kerouac: Blues and Haikus” <https://poeticjusticemagazine.com/2022/12/08/jack-kerouac-blues-and-haikus/>

Table 1.9 is an overview of Kerouac’s Japanese influences analysed with the modified Tessler. This thesis proposes that Kerouac became receptive of Japanese poetical influence because he projected his own ideals of poetical spontaneity into it. His so called “first thought- best thought” philosophy and his “bop prosody” subsequently became confirmed and concretized through a Japanese Other. Ginsberg’s statements show that Kerouac began to write haiku because he saw in the genre a reflection of his own poetical register and even way of thinking. The subsequent Synthesis of the Japanese influences is Kerouac’s way of using haiku to communicate his own philosophy about poetical spontaneity which he believed to coincide with the impulsive nature of the American register. This thesis contends that neither Kerouac’s possible allusions to Basho in *On the Road* nor his usage of haiku reflect an intrinsic novelty. They rather represent the results of a concretization of pre-existing ideas made possible by new terminology and frameworks of expression from the Antithesis.

Does the author make an ontological and epistemological distinction between Japan and Europe/America?	Yes, to the extent that Japanese poetics are seen as ontologically different from Western modes of poetical expression.
Does the author seek to restructure Japan in their writings?	Kerouac restructures Japan to the extent that he makes Japanese poetics correspond with his own thoughts and speech.
Does the author forcibly juxtapose Japan and Europe/America?	Yes. This is most apparent in <i>The Dharma Bums</i> and in some of his “pops”.
Is Japan exoticized in the author’s writings?	Yes. Particularly in <i>The Dharma Bums</i> and his “pops”.
If so, does the exoticization stem from an avidity of Japanese culture or cultural chauvinism?	Except the one instance of infantilization, Kerouac never displays a chauvinist attitude against Japan.

Table 2.0 An overview of the orientalist traits in Kerouac’s Japanese influences

Table 2.0 outlines the orientalist aspects of Kerouac’s Japanese influences, and this thesis contends that the greatest orientalist implication is that Kerouac implicitly denied Japanese poetics independence as a poetical system, since he rather saw it as a concretization of his personal philosophy of poetical spontaneity. Kerouac’s interpretation of haiku as a genre without “literary devices” or “fanciness of expression” is biased as it restructures the form to coincide with his own philosophy of poetical spontaneity. The juxtaposition between Japan and the West is occasionally forced by Kerouac. One example of such forcible juxtaposition is the aforementioned instance of implicit infantilization of Japanese people, and another example can be found in one of his “pops”:

Pink petals on

Gnarly Japanese twigs

In rain (*Book of Haikus*, 83)

Describing the uniqueness of a twig as “Japanese” implicitly presupposes a fundamental, ontological difference between Japanese trees and American trees which the author terms a forced juxtaposition. No consistent pattern of cultural chauvinism against Japan has however been found in his works.

4.5- On Nabokov's hidden connection with Japan

4.5.1- Regarding Nabokov's strong opinions about literary influence and translations

When the Japanese literary magazine *Umi* asked Nabokov the following questions: “What do Japan and the Japanese mean for you? Have you read any Japanese literary work(s)? If so, which work(s)? What do you think of it (them)?”, he replied with the following curt and brusque answer: “I do not know the Japanese language and do not trust translations” (Akikusa, 1), which is interpreted by Akikusa as a denial of him being influenced by Japanese literature (1). This thesis, however, contends that this interpretation fails to consider Nabokov's complex relationship with the question of influence, translations, and that Nabokov was an obdurate man whose worldview, which, to phrase it with his own term, consisted of “strong opinions”⁷: and that translations and the question of literary influence were two of many topics he had “strong opinions” about. It is also necessary to consider that although, Nabokov strongly mistrusted translations, he has never denied reading them. When asked by the Italian journalist and writer Constanzo Constantini “which Italian writers do you like most” Nabokov replied that “I know only three languages, Russian, English and French, and hardly ever read translations” (*Think, Write, Speak*, 444), this echoes his answer regarding Japanese literature. Such vague answers regarding whether he had read works in translation can be explained by, that he felt a great distrust in translations and believed that he had not the right to express an opinion about works which he had not read in the source language (TWS, *ibid*). This thesis thus argues that this opens up the possibility of Nabokov having read Japanese literature in translation, and it also explains the dubious answer to the literary magazine *Umi* which Akikusa analysed in his short essay.

This thesis also argues that Nabokov was vexed by the question of literary influence, and that it needs to be considered in this instance. Although his reply to *Umi* does not signify a denial of having read Japanese works in translation, one can infer that Nabokov would have denied any influence from Japanese literature since he was a staunch individualist and felt great fear over the thought of being absorbed into a collective group. This individualism was so extreme that he even felt angst over clubs and non-curricular activities during his years as a student at Cambridge, because he believed that joining a group presupposed the renunciation of one's own individuality (*Strong Opinions*, 64). Moreover, he explicitly denied all influences from clubs, groups, creeds, and schools (TWS, 379), and the author contends that this extreme individualism likely shaped his view of literary influence. Nabokov likely saw the admission of influence as a taciturn rejection of his own individuality, and the fact that he explicitly denied all influence, even from Western authors whom he read and deeply admired, shows that he would have likely denied all questions about Japanese influence.

He took great pride in his purported literary solitude, jeering at critics who wished to identify influences in his works (TWS, 444), this thesis has found his aversion to literary influence to be consistent, once he even called the concept a “joke” (TWS, 522). Equally consistent is Nabokov's praise of the “solitude of the artist” (TWS, 522). However, an answer written by Nabokov in a questionnaire regarding Proustian influences in world literature, shows that he had given the subject deeper thought; here instead of scoffing at the idea, Nabokov provides a cogent answer about the complexity and fluidity of literary influence (TWS, 141). This shows that Nabokov had given the subject serious thought and did not initially dispel it as pure humbug.

⁷ The anthology of interviews with Nabokov first published in 1973 was titled *Strong Opinions*.

Such an artistic solitude as described by Nabokov is however simply not possible. Although he claimed himself to be “immune to any literary influence” (Strong Opinions, 71), literary research has shown that such claims are not feasible. Julia Kristeva, who first defined the concept of intertextuality, refuted the existence of any independent literary text (Elaine Martin, 148). She contends that “every text builds itself as a mosaic of quotations; every text is the absorption and transformation of another” (66). Bloom also reached similar conclusions about intertextuality, albeit from a somewhat different perspective; with a Freudian perspective, he delineates a type of Oedipal struggle for literary autonomy. Although “strong” writers may strive for literary autonomy, it is something that they will never achieve according to Bloom’s perspective on intertextuality (Vincent Leitch, 1649). This thesis agrees with the claims of Kristeva and Bloom, that it is impossible for a text to exist autonomously outside of such a mosaic, despite Nabokov’s claim to the contrary. In consequence, Nabokov’s philosophy of literary individualism and his denial of any literary influence in his own work does not disprove his hidden connection with Japan.

4.5.2-Biographical evidence corroborating a connection to Japan

This thesis has found that various biographical details from Nabokov’s life, when added together, paint a relatively coherent picture of a latent connection with Japan. Although Nabokov stated that “I object to being looked for in my books” (TWS, 388) it is exactly what this thesis has done. He belonged to one of the most prolific noble houses of pre-revolutionary Russia, and his grandfather Dmitry Nabokov was a chief justice in the court of Tsar Alexander II while his father Vladimir Dmitrievich Nabokov was a prominent statesman who strove for a liberalization of Russia in the interest of avoiding a revolution (Dana Dragunoiu, 240). Nabokov's family, in short, lived and operated in the absolute upper echelons of Imperial Russian society, as is exemplified by the fact that one of the many prominent friends of the family was general Aleksey Kuropatkin who held supreme command of the Russian forces in the Far East and is generally held responsible for Russia’s disastrous defeat in the Russo-Japanese war (*Speak, Memory*, 21). This thesis argues that Japan’s victory must have given rise to much tumult and ire in the house of Nabokov, which is evinced by one of his recollections from a family holiday in the Croatian town of Opatija shortly after the conclusion of the war (SM, 20). Nabokov, then a young boy, sat with his father at a waterside café when the latter, an otherwise tranquil man, suddenly became flustered and stormed off with his son when he had noticed two Japanese officers at an adjacent table (SM, 20). This simple anecdote is noteworthy because it illustrates how early Nabokov’s connection with Japan began and how his outlook on the nation was shaped by his upbringing

The plausibility of the young Nabokov’s contact with Japanese culture is increased when one considers the general attention that was paid to Japan in the cultural landscape of Imperial Russia during the first years of the 20th century (Ugo Persi, 148). After the Russo-Japanese war many young poets in Russia began to make frequent use of the asyndeton and reveal traits indicative of inspiration from Japanese poetics (Persi, *ibid*). This is particularly true for the Russian symbolist poets whose frequent usage of asyndeton and emphasis on the word-symbol created a concise image that possibly derived from haiku (Persi, *ibid*). This thesis contends that the young Nabokov, considering his admiration of the symbolists (Interview with TV-13) most certainly came into contact with this style of Russian poetry, subtly influenced by Japanese poetics.

Another instance of an early contact with aspects of Japanese culture that this thesis has found is described in Nabokov’s autobiography *Speak Memory*, where he relates a concrete memory from the Russo-Japanese war revealing an early awareness of Japanese art. He reminisces of war

paintings by Japanese artists depicting Russian locomotives “made singularly toylike by the Japanese pictorial style” (20). The author argues that Nabokov’s description of the Japanese pictorial style as “toy-like” is a part of a larger pattern of him associating Japan with the diminutive. This aspect of his relation to Japan has not been noticed before in previous research and later on it will be shown that this consistent association between Japan and littleness can likely be traced to Nabokov’s derogatory view of nation. The author has found that two distinct circumstances negatively affected Nabokov’s perception of Japan.

1: The Russian defeat in the Russo-Japanese war. As shown in this sub-chapter, the Nabokov family was personally acquainted with a leading Russian general that fought in the war against Japan, and Russia’s catastrophic loss was, in all likelihood, perceived as a personal tragedy for the Nabokov family. In fact, it was due to a nationalist reaction after the Russian army’s downfall that Nabokov’s father made his son learn Russian to strengthen his autochthonous identity (SM, 22). In addition, Nabokov was certainly aware that the destabilization after the loss against Japan indirectly led to the Russian revolution, and the author contends that this association between Japan and the Bolshevik revolution must have awoken ire in Nabokov as he lived almost his whole adult life nostalgically yearning for a pre-revolutionary Russia which would never return⁸.

2: Nazism/Fascism: Nabokov who was a fervent anti-nazi/fascist, later in life when being interviewed by a German newspaper stated that he would not travel to Germany because he feared that he might shake hands with a former government employee or soldier of the Third Reich (TWS, 414), this thesis argues that his feelings regarding Germany can partly be explained by the fact that his wife was Jewish. This subsequently makes it possible to infer that since the staunch anti-collectivist/authoritarian Nabokov never wished to set foot in Germany again due to what had happened during WW2, that the same can be applied to Japan, partly based on them being part of the axis-alliance and partly based on the outcome of the Russo-Japanese war.

In a caustic letter, he likened Nazi Germany with a hyena and detested the thought that “domestication” could turn the hyena into “a soft purring tortoiseshell cat” (Boyd, 90). In the same letter, Nabokov writes the most explicitly derogatory passage about Japan that the this thesis has been able to find: “I am sorry of course for music *gemütlichkeit*- but not very much, not more in fact than I am for the lacquered what-nots and cherry-trees in bloom (trashy but sweet) which *gemütlich* little Japan has contributed” (Boyd, *ibid*) The significance of this letter for his view of Japan has previously not been analysed. Boyd, as a biographer, only mentions this letter in passing without analysing Nabokov’s views of Japan nor its relevance for his connection with Japanese literature. This thesis argues that the letter is not only a characterization of the Japanese war effort, but also of Japanese culture. His tone is deprecating and singularly orientalist. He objectifies Japan and renders the country into two symbols, lacquered arts and cherry trees, both described by the Russian author as “trashy”. What is most noteworthy is his description of Japan as “little”. Since from a pure geographical point of view, it makes little sense that he would associate Japan with littleness. As far as the author has discovered Nabokov never characterized Switzerland, the nation where he spent his last fifteen years, as little even though the landmass of Switzerland corresponds only to approximately one tenth of Japan’s. Describing a nation or a people as “little” is a taciturn delegitimization of the Other. This type of racist rhetoric is not uncommon. It is, for example, an ordinary antisemitic trope to characterize Jews as being diminutive (Jeri Johnson, 205). Although it

⁸ Virtually the entirety of *Speak Memory* delineates this nostalgia. It is also commonplace in his fictional writings such as *A bad day* and *Mademoiselle O*.

should be noted that Nabokov was decisively *not* antisemitic. The importance of his philosemitism is discussed in a later chapter narrating his latent connection with Ezra Pound.

4.5.3- *The original of Laura and Lolita; Beardsley and Nabokov's poetics of eroticism*

Akikusa's examination of Nabokov's hidden connection with Japan while establishing a good foundation of research, is relatively superficial, since he does not mention other aspects present in Nabokov's literary oeuvre, such as the influences from Japanese art and Japanese influenced painters. Gerard de Vries & Barton Johnson writes that "Nabokov's passion for butterflies and its impact on his writing are well known. Much less familiar is his deep love of the visual arts and their ubiquitous influence on his *verbal art*" (11). De Vries & Johnson show that Nabokov's literary style was significantly shaped by various artists. One of many painters who exerted an influence on Nabokov's writing was Aubrey Beardsley, the Japanese influenced Art Nouveau artist discussed in chapter 3.1.

Biographical evidence shows that Nabokov came into contact with Beardsley's art at a young age. This thesis has found in *Speak Memory*, that Nabokov nostalgically reflects upon the Russian art magazine Мир искусства (*Mir Iskusstva- The world of art*) (213). The emergence of this magazine in 1898 coincided with that of the Art Nouveau movement in the West and "[t]he first issue of *Mir Iskusstva* contained a number of Beardsley's drawings together with an accompanying article by the critic MacColl, who belonged to the same circles as Beardsley" (de Vries & Johnson, 63). Based on Nabokov's great admiration for the journal and claims that he read it rapturously during his youth (SM, 213), he must in all likelihood have encountered Beardsley's paintings in it. Other biographical evidence substantiating the Beardsley connection is the biography of the Russian ballet impresario Sergey Diaghilev whom Nabokov wrote a positive review of in 1940 (*The New Republic*, 699-700). The biography in question examines Beardsley's art in great detail, and one year later, Nabokov reviewed a biography of Charles Conder, a British painter who was one of Beardsley's closest friends (*The New York Sun*).

Irina Marchesini shows in her study that the Japanese influenced Beardsleyan aesthetic influenced Nabokov's final novel *The Original of Laura*. The plot of novel is difficult to summarize due to its fragmentary and unfinished state (Nabokov passed away before he could complete it), and the only unequivocal narratological trait of the text is that the story centres around two protagonists: Dr Phillip Wild and his wife Flora (Marchesini, 2). The latter is a licentious woman whose attractive looks are apostrophized by Nabokov to the extent that she becomes a seraphic, almost crystalline symbol of beauty. Her physical characteristics are described by a frequent usage of the asyndeton. For example: "...her frail, docile frame when turned over by hand revealed new marvels - the mobile omoplates of a child being tubbed, the incurvation of a ballerina's spine, narrow nates of an ambiguous irresistible charm" (*Laura*, 16). The absence of verbs and predicates in Nabokov's descriptions of Flora echoes the rhetoric of Japanese influenced Russian symbolist poets of the early 20th century, and his asyndeton creates a linguistic two dimensionality. Which is, according to Ugo Persi the most obvious common denominator between Art Nouveau and Japanese art (150-151). The linguistic two-dimensionality in *The original of Laura* is likely derived from the compositional aspects of Japanese art and the Beardsleyan aesthetic. The recurring asyndeton can be interpreted to show that Nabokov applied the two-dimensionality of the Beardsleyan Art Nouveau style to craft an idiosyncratic grammatic register.

The aesthetic influences in *The Original of Laura* are not only apparent in the grammatical structure of the story. The narratological purpose of Flora is another indication of Nabokov's

derived solutions from artistic sources. The aesthetic of her physique is carefully deliberated, even her name is of significance, it emphasizes the frequent juxtaposition between her and flowers. Flora does not function in the narrative as a human, but rather as a symbol of aesthetics and eroticism, and her role in the novel is reminiscent of the female body's function in Art Nouveau and Beardsley's art; who, much like Nabokov, objectified the female body and transformed it into a purely aesthetic and decorative symbol (Persi, 151). According to Ugo Persi, the reshaping of the human figure into flowers is commonplace in Art Nouveau (153). Beardsley's way of placing women's human function in the background in favour of the purely decorative aspect and Nabokov's treatment of Flora are thus quite similar. In addition, Beardsley regarded women as "vessels of ideality" and eroticism as the "original form of harmony" (Persi, 154). Nabokov's Flora as a figure of erotic idealism is strongly reminiscent of this assessment of the female body, and the narrative of the novel also contains a recurring dichotomous dialogue between chromatic oppositions which echoes Beardsley's idiosyncratically black and white compositions. This thesis contends that this dialogue is made manifest by various allusions to contrasting black and white colours. One such example is the reference to "the white of her legs under the black gown" (*Laura*, 46-47). Another is a contrast made between Laura's "slippers of black velvet" juxtaposed with the whiteness of "her bare insteps" (*Laura*, 18-19). This thesis contends that this frequent recurrence of chromatic oppositions corroborates the Beardsleyan aesthetics mentioned by Marchesini.

The Original of Laura does not only indicate a connection with Beardsley; this thesis has found explicit allusions to Japan throughout the text as well. In fact, a Japanese girl appears in the story. "[A] sweet Japanese girl who took Russian and French because her stepfather was half-French and half-Russian, taught Flora to paint her left hand up to the radial artery (one of the tenderest areas of her beauty) with miniscule information, in so called, "fairy script" regarding names, dates, and ideas" (*Laura*, 43). Note that the girl's stepfather was half-French and half-Russian, the possible significance of this has not been addressed by previous researchers. This thesis argues that by giving the girl a Russian stepfather, Nabokov implicitly depicts the (so to speak) conquering of a Japanese woman by a Russian man; the fact that the stepfather is half-French could possibly symbolize a possible aristocratic background. Nabokov, as a Russian aristocrat, was well aware that French was traditionally the preferred language of the Russian aristocracy. This thesis argues that this half-French and half-Russian stepfather implicitly symbolizes the conquering of the Japanese female by a Russian male aristocrat. The analysis below will show how this plays into a larger pattern of Nabokov's poetics of eroticism and fascination with the Japanese female body. In addition, this thesis argues that this brief allusion to a "sweet Japanese girl" is of interest because it contains Nabokov's most explicit allusion to the Japanese writing system. Nabokov specifically mentioning the "miniscule information" can be interpreted to show his awareness of the efficiency of Kanji. Kanji, or Chinese characters, are an integral part of the Japanese writing system. Kanji, being both ideograms and logograms allow for a compact and efficient conveying of information (Bethany Birch). Nabokov reveals his awareness of this efficiency as he specifically emphasizes the "miniscule information" of the "fairy script". In addition, denoting the Japanese writing as a "fairy script" is an explicit exoticization which implicitly dehumanizes the nation by relegating its writing from the real to the mythical. In addition, the female body is further objectified in the novel when Nabokov describes the "little Japanese girl" (one of many associations between Japan and littleness) as a contortionist who would "twist her limbs into a pretzel when entertaining Flora's Lesbian friends" (44). As this thesis will

show below, Nabokov frequently objectified the Japanese body and associated it with corporeal feats.

Flora's husband is of also of interest for two reasons. One reason is his name. Due to the Beardsleyan influence in the novel and that Flora's name shows Nabokov's onomastic deliberations, the male protagonist's name can be seen as an allusion to another seminal figure of art nouveau: Oscar Wilde. But the significance of Flora's husband lies not only in the name. His goal of self-annihilation hides an implicit allusion to Japanese literature. Dr Philip Wild gradually commits suicide via a process of "self-obliteration" (*The Original of Laura* 66). His perception of death as something "orgasmic" providing him with "masturbatory joy" (*Laura*, 56) and his increasing yearning for it is most likely a caricature of the Japanese author Yukio Mishima. Mishima was a sexual masochist and had a lifelong fascination with ritualistic suicide. That Nabokov alludes to Mishima in *The Original of Laura* is a possibility addressed by Wang. This thesis argues, however, that this possibility can be strongly corroborated when one considers a passage where Yukio Mishima is explicitly mentioned in the novel, which relevance to Nabokov's hidden connection with Japan remains unexplored by Wang. The "sweet Japanese girl" who taught Laura bodily writing had written a "little cluster of interlocked names on the ball of Flora's thumb" (*Laura*, 97). The names consist solely of French authors, with the exception of a reference to the Italian author Giorgi Morandi and Mishima. "Maluraux, Mauriac, Maurois, Michaux, Michima, Montherland, and Morand" (44). The peculiar spelling of Mishima's name is possibly an allusion to its spelling with a French pronunciation. This thesis argues that this is significant not just because Nabokov mentions Mishima, but also because he indirectly provides the reader with a critique on the writer. Nabokov writes that the list of writers consists solely of "stunning mediocrities as writers go (the first in the list being the worst); what amazes one is that they were supposed to "represent an era" and that such representants could get away with the most execrable writing, provided they represent the times" (44). This passage shows that Nabokov had most likely read Mishima, which in turn substantiates the possibility of Wild being a caricature of him. Despite not trusting translations, he is able to assess Mishima to the extent that he deems him a better author than Malraux, Mauriac, and Maurois. But in the end, he is strictly negative against Mishima including him in the category of writers who have produced "most execrable writings" (44).

This thesis infers that Nabokov's taciturn assessment of Mishima coupled with the satiric caricature of the author indicates a closer acquaintance with Japanese literature than he himself ever admitted. Wang, although she mentions the possibility of Nabokov parodying Mishima, does not relate it to his hidden connection with Japan. This thesis argues that Nabokov's implicit assessment of Mishima as a writer reveals a deeper interest with Japanese literature than Nabokov himself acknowledges. In addition, this thesis also argues that Nabokov's assessment of Mishima as a producer of "most execrable writing" contradicts his ostensibly firm stance of the impossibility of assessing works in translation. As the analysis below will show, Nabokov's negative perception of Mishima is likely not coincidental. This thesis argues that it reflects an overarching trend of negativity against Japan. As chapters below will show, Nabokov's condescending and negative view of Japan is made manifest in several of his novels.

Nabokov's connection with the Beardsleyan aesthetic also appears in his most (in)famous novel as well, *Lolita*. Beardsley's influence on *Lolita* is so strong that de Vries & Johnson dedicates an entire chapter in *Vladimir Nabokov and the Art of Painting* to explore the connection (59-67). Out of all the artists mentioned in *Lolita*, Beardsley is the most frequent (de Vries & Johnson, 62). One of the girls in Dolly's class is named *Aubrey* McFate (*Lolita*, 21). Two girl schools appearing

in the novel are named “Beardsley school for girls” and “Beardsley college for women” (*Lolita*, 77). In addition, in the later parts of the novel when the paedophilic protagonist and child exploiter Humbert Humbert drives around aimlessly in the United States together with the kidnapped Dolores Haze, he uses various aliases in the hotels where they spend the night. One such alias is *Aubrey Beardsley* (*Lolita*, 251), which is definitive proof of Nabokov’s familiarity with the artist. However, Beardsley’s presence in *Lolita* is not restricted to mere allusions. Nabokov’s way of referring to Beardsley shows that he was fully aware of the artist’s sexual obsession, described by de Vries & Johnson as “morbid” (64). De Vries & Johnson speculate that perhaps Beardsley himself may have functioned as a type of framework for Nabokov when developing the lascivious Humbert.

More noteworthy is an illustration by Beardsley titled *The Coiffing* which accompanied a short poem written by the artist titled *The Ballad of a Barber* (65). Common denominators between the illustration and the plot of *Lolita* can be seen. An adult man stands behind an elegantly dressed seated young girl. The discomfort in the man’s face can be interpreted as repressed sexual desire aimed at the girl whose body language intimates her virginal cluelessness of the situation. The dynamic between the two subjects in the illustration (Fig 1.9) bears resemblance to the relationship between Humbert and Dolores Haze when the former lived as a tenant in the latter’s house and struggled to suppress his own sexual desires aimed at the young girl. This interpretation of Beardsley’s illustration becomes corroborated by the contents of the short poem to which it is a frontispiece. The story of *The Ballad and the Barber* is best summarized by de Vries & Johnson who write that “this ballad tells us about a barber so ravished by the beauty of a girl of thirteen that he destroys her” (66). The thinly veiled sexual tension between the two subjects in Fig 1.9 is strongly reminiscent of the narrative in Nabokov’s *Lolita*, and due to the frequent textual references to Beardsley in *Lolita* and biographical evidence proving that Nabokov had been fascinated with Beardsley’s *ukiyo-e* inspired paintings since boyhood, this thesis conjectures that the dynamic between the subjects in Fig 1.9 may have influenced how Nabokov conceived the sexual dynamic between predator and victim in *Lolita*.



Fig 1.9 *The Coiffing*

4.5.4- The presence of the Japanese in *Ada or Ardor*; Japan and the erotic

This thesis posits that Nabokov’s novel *Ada or Ardor*, contains several references to Japanese culture and art which intimate that Nabokov associated Japan with the erotic, and that the reason for doing this is that he wished to implicitly deny the Japanese their autonomy. Identifying and then relating Japanese allusions in *Ada or Ardor* to Nabokov’s hidden connection with Japan has not been done by Akikusa, nor by any other previous researcher. This thesis has found several passages in *Ada or Ardor* which corroborate a connection between Nabokov and Japan. As a novel, *Ada or Ardor* is somewhat difficult to succinctly summarize. The complex novel takes place in an idiosyncratic parallel universe. The American critic Alfred Appel described the book as “a great work of art, a necessary book, radiant and rapturous”.

A red thread throughout the complex novel is the reoccurring erotic liaison between Van Veen and his cousin Adelaida Veen (known in the novel as Ada), and a lewd *point de repère* for Van is Ada’s neck. One of many erotic episodes between Van and Ada narrates that “[t]heir open

mouths met in tender fury, and then he pounced upon her new, young, divine, Japanese neck which he had been coveting like a veritable Jupiter Florins throughout the evening” (520). Earlier on in the novel when the narrator explains Van’s erotic interest it is stated that “her neck had been, and remained, his most delicate, most poignant delight, especially when she let her hair flow freely, and the warm, white adorable skin showed in chance separations of glossy black strands” (216). The author argues that the repeated emphasis on the beauty of Ada’s “Japanese neck” is likely an allusion to the paintings of the Japanese artist Kitagawa Utamaro (1754-1806) who frequently



Fig 2.0 Utamaro’s *ukiyo-e*

eroticized women and sensuously depicted the nape of their neck (Queensland Art Gallery of Modern Art). Note the resemblance between Fig 2.0 and the description of Ada’s neck with “white adorable skin showed in chance separation of glossy black strands” (209). Although the girl depicted by Utamaro does not have freely flowing hair, the fact that Ada’s often described neck is denoted as “Japanese” shows that *ukiyo-e* (possibly Utamaro’s works) must have exerted some influence on Nabokov’s conception of the heroine in the novel.

Nabokov’s association between Japan and the erotic appears in other parts of the novel as well. In one instance, the narrator ponders “Uncle Dan’s Oriental Erotica prints”, which he describes as “artistically second-rate and inept calisthenically” (134). Describing the “oriental print” as “artistically second rate” is an explicitly derogatory remark about Japanese art, and this thesis finds that for Nabokov, who claimed that he felt a strong aversion to pornographic writing (TWS, 321), it is an extraordinarily graphic paragraph which follows. In it the narrator describes, with great detail, the group

sexual intercourse that the “oriental print” depicts. The print is not specified as Japanese, but based on its title, “Geisha with 13 lovers”, it is possible to infer that Nabokov envisions the “oriental print” as an *ukiyo-e* of some sort. What is most peculiar about the paragraph, however, is that Nabokov only mentions its Japanese origin indirectly. He describes the print as “oriental”, but the geisha is strangely called “a Mongolian woman” (134). Here this thesis argues that Nabokov contradicts the coherency of his parallel universe. As the Asian continent in *Ada or Ardor* is ruled by a wide Russian empire called “Grand Tartary”, Mongolia does not exist as an independent national entity. The question then arises: why does Nabokov call the geisha a “Mongolian woman”? A definitive answer cannot be given. One might think that Nabokov in fact refers to the term “mongoloid”, an antiquated term from racial biology used to denote various Asian peoples including the Japanese (Templeton, 346). However, Nabokov was a meticulous writer and editor (Boyd, 187., Boyd, 374), this thesis therefore finds it unlikely that he would conflate *Mongoloid*, a term of racial biology with *Mongolian*, a nationality. But perhaps some clue to the ordeal may be found in his own Mongolian heritage.

The house of Nabokov can be traced back to the 14th century and its progenitor was the Mongolian/Tartarian prince Nabok Murza who immigrated to Muscovy, converted to Orthodox Christianity and began to serve the Tsar (Boyd, 16). This thesis therefore argues that Nabokov, who as an erudite Russian, was well aware of his homeland’s Tartaric and Mongolian past and included this Mongolian geisha as a sort of subtle clue of him envisioning a subjugated Japan, which is

corroborated by the fact that the Mongo-tartaric heritage of Russia is emphasised throughout the novel. With this and Nabokov's personal heritage in mind, the possibility arises that one can substitute "Mongolian" for "Russian". The Russian/Mongolian geisha would thus become a symbol of a conquered Japan, subjugated to the extent that the geisha (a synecdochical symbol for traditional Japan) is no longer Japanese but Mongolian/Russian. The likelihood of this is increased when one considers that she is sexually exploited by more than a dozen men simultaneously.

Sex is subsequently used as a symbol of submission, and this thesis contends that in the mind of Nabokov, the sexually exploited geisha likely symbolizes a conquered Japan. This illustrates Nabokov's poetics of eroticism made manifest in his treatment of the Japanese female body. Besides the natural orientalist implication of this unequivocal eroticization of the Japanese woman, there are other indicators in the paragraph revealing Nabokov's condescending and thinly veiled racist perception of Japan. The "Mongolian" woman is described as having an "inane oval face surmounted by a hideous hair-do" (134), the racist/deprecating tone is apparent.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the author believes that the "sweet Japanese girl" in *The Original of Laura* is associated with calisthenic proficiency by Nabokov, and this association between limberness and Japan can also be detected in *Ada or Ardor*. The men in the sex act depicted on the Japanese print graphically described by Nabokov are all likened with gymnasts and when Nabokov describes: "Oriental erotica prints" as "calisthenically inept" (134), this association between sex and gymnastics is emphasized. In a later part of the novel, its protagonist Van Veen has a flirtatious liaison with Ada and his cousin Lucette. Ada, in the form of a sexual innuendo, suggests to Van that he should "go through those Oriental gymnastics" with Lucette (214). Van's teacher of the "Oriental gymnastics" is caricaturized via his name, "King Wing" (*ibid*). This thesis interprets "Wing" as a modified form of "wang" (a colloquialism denoting the male genitals), in turn emphasizing the association between Japan, gymnastics, and sex. This association (which appears in two of Nabokov's novels), is interpreted in this thesis as implicitly denying the Japanese woman a right to sexual autonomy and renders her sexual activity into licentious entertainment for the Western male gaze. The implication of this connection is that Nabokov in his mind is able to "subjugate" the nation which not only destroyed and humiliated the Russia of his childhood in the Russo-Japanese war but also allied with Nazi-Germany during WW2; he is thus through his novels able to enact a sort of power fantasy where he dictates the rules.

There are also other allusions to Japan at various places throughout *Ada or Ardor*. The licentious Van is described as "emphatically not Japanese" (194) due to his refusal to enter a shared bath, which reveals Nabokov's awareness of Japanese bathing culture and *onsen*. In addition to eroticization, Nabokov also subtly deprecates Japanese people throughout the novel by continuing to associate them with littleness and even hierarchical subservience. Daniel Veen, the father of Van Veen who lusted after Ada's Japanese neck, once had a Japanese valet (115). Furthermore, Van Veen, once being late for class describes that he was "overtaken in a wild scurry" by the "small figure of a Japanese student" who also was late (514). Japanese art objects also make their appearance throughout the novel, such as in the drawing room of the heroine Ada's apartment which is furnished with a lamp whose lampshade is decorated with "a translucent lakescape with Japanese dragons" (213). In addition, the character Baron d'Onsky is characterized by Nabokov as a "spiritual samurai [who] had gone to Japan forever" (21).

It should be noted that the recurrence of these Japanese aspects in the novel stand out because the story takes place in a parallel universe which is vastly different from ours. For example, United States in the novel encompasses the entirety of the Americas and western Canada is a

Russian speaking province called “Estoty”. In addition, the British Empire still exists, but in a much larger scale encompassing virtually the entirety of the European and African continents. In his parallel universe, Russia is transformed into the empire of Tartary that includes practically the whole of Asia. In other words, the world of “Antiterra” (Nabokov’s name of the world in *Ada or Ardor*) is ruled by grand empires and super-nations; virtually no smaller independent national entities seem to exist. Yet despite these fundamental differences in Nabokov’s universe, Japan nevertheless exists, seemingly as an independent entity, and thus in a way contradicting the coherence of the universe. This contradiction of narratological coherence in *Ada or Ardour* reveals its author’s latent interest with Japan, and the way the Japanese elements manifest in the story evinces Nabokov’s negative view of the nation. This thesis sees a strong intimation of Nabokov’s cultural chauvinism against Japan in the description of Daniel Veen’s “Japanese valet”, since the specification that the valet is Japanese adds, absolutely nothing of relevance to the story. But by doing this, Nabokov implicitly relegates the Japanese to the lower parts of a hierarchical power structure, thus enacting the aforementioned power fantasy against the nation. Furthermore, the emphasis that Van Veen was overtaken by the “small figure of a Japanese student” not only shows a continued association between Japan and littleness, but it also deprives the Japanese student of all other aspects of personhood, the student is simply rendered into a miniscule body, all other traits are subtly obliterated by the author.

In addition, the description of Ada’s neck as “Japanese” provides further indication that Nabokov shaped his poetic of eroticism based on Japanese aesthetics. Nabokov’s association between sexuality and Japanese art is noteworthy, because it provides further evidence of his orientalist perception of the nation. Said writes that a common technique by the West to subjugate the Orient is via the sexualization of the oriental woman (167). As evinced by *The Original of Laura* and *Ada or Ardor* Nabokov frequently exploits the Japanese female body by turning it into an erotic symbol. Besides illustrating an orientalist relationship with Japan, the Japanese allusions in *Ada or Ardor*, coupled with the allusions in *The Original of Laura* paint a quite vivid picture. They show that Nabokov was far more acquainted with Japanese literature, art, and culture than he ever admitted.

4.5.5- Swimming Carps and Zembla; On the Japanese presence in *Pale fire*

Akikusa, although he briefly mentions the possible presence of Japanese lepidopterological motifs in *Pale fire* (38), leaves the Japanese allusions in *Pale Fire* and how they relate to Nabokov’s hidden connection with Japan almost fully unexplored. This thesis has found several references to Japan and Japanese art that Akikusa either missed or neglected.

Pale fire, a metatextual novel that is part prose, part verse, released in 1962 was, according to Bloom, “the surest demonstration of Nabokov’s genius” (*Genius: A Mosaic of One Hundred Exemplary Creative Minds*, 284). The novel is narrated as a poem consisting of 999 lines composed by the Byronic John Shade, a fictional poet who is murdered under mysterious circumstances. The narrative of the novel is also conveyed via a foreword, extensive commentary and index written by Shade’s neighbour and colleague Charles Kinbote. It is a complex narrative that is partially conveyed via Shade’s poem and partially via Kinbote’s supplementations to the text. Kinbote, in his footnotes, frequently narrates his recollections of the eccentric murdered poet, and he remembers Shade as a vivacious man despite his bad health. Shade’s cardiovascular problems eventually cause a heart attack; but he recuperates extraordinarily quickly. Kinbote recollects the discomfort he felt when he saw Shade, against his doctor’s orders, wielding “rude garden tools” or “squirming up the

college hall stairs as a Japanese fish up a cataract” (231). The latter image is noteworthy because it further demonstrates Nabokov’s latent fascination with Japanese art. In addition, it is a peculiar association because the image of a Japanese fish swimming up a cataract is not particularly commonplace in *ukiyo-e* art. This thesis surmises that Nabokov must have come in personal contact with Japanese paintings depicting a fish swimming up a cataract, hence his usage of the highly specific image in *Pale fire*.

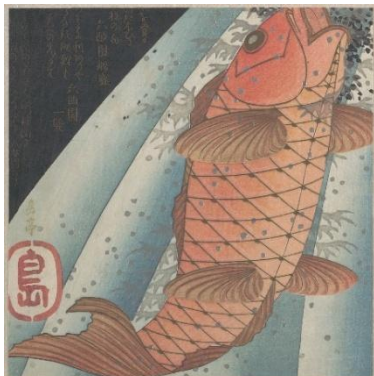


Fig 2.1 *ukiyo-e* by
Yashima Gakutei

and that Nabokov was a frequent walker, it is possible to infer that the artistic Russian aristocrat likely enjoyed sauntering down 5th Avenue to the Metropolitan Museum. During one of these



Fig 2.2 *ukiyo-e* by
Kurokawa Michita

Although it is impossible to definitively conclude exactly what piece of Japanese art Nabokov had in mind when he wrote the simile, this thesis has found circumstantial evidence which makes Fig 2.1 and Fig 2.2, two likely candidates, since both of the pictures were acquired by The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York during the 1920’s⁹. This means that when Nabokov moved to the U.S and sojourned in Manhattan during his first year in the nation, 1940-1941, both of the pieces were on display at the museum. As Johnson & De Vries show, Nabokov had an almost monomaniacal fascination with art. This thesis argues that if one considers that Nabokov’s place of residence at 1326 Madison Avenue was only approximately one kilometre away from the Metropolitan Museum

hypothetical visits to the Metropolitan, Nabokov likely saw not one but *two* images of a “Japanese fish” swimming up a cataract. If he saw Fig 2.1 and Fig 2.2 during his first year in the United States (which is plausible), the author believes that they must have left a lasting impression on him considering that he uses them to convey a literary image almost twenty years later. Unlike other instances when he alludes to Japanese art, no condescending tone appears here. He neither deprecates nor chastises Japanese art as “trashy”, “hideous”, or “inane” which he has done in previous instances. In other words, the image of the fish struggling against the cataract must have appealed to Nabokov to such an extent that he could put aside his sour perception of Japan and (to use a Flaubertian expression) appreciate art for the sake of art.

One of the three stories that Kinbote relates in the commentary to Shade’s poem concerns the “distant northern land of Zembla” (76). He vividly describes the Kingdom of Zembla, its monarchy, its inhabitants and culture, and he narrates how the monarchy of Zembla was overthrown in the “Zemblan revolution” and that the king, “Charles the Beloved” was exiled (97). Towards the end of the novel, Kinbote practically claims that he is the exiled king, something which he previously denies (248). The episode when he denied his kingship is worthy of mentioning, because it further corroborates Nabokov’s orientalist attitudes. Kinbote describes that he was often accosted and asked if somebody ever had told him how similar he looked to “that unfortunate monarch” (245). He states that “I would counter with something on the lines of “all Chinese look alike” and

⁹ See: <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/54332>
<https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/54158>

change the subject (251). Although the line does not pertain to Japan, it is indicative of Nabokov's perception of Asian people in general. Nabokov's way of contextualizing Kinbote's counter to the claim of similitude with the Zemblan monarch intimates that he (Nabokov) possibly regarded the orientalist caricature of a homogenous Chinese physiognomy as, to some extent, legitimate.

Different critics have interpreted Zembla in different ways. It is a peculiar addition to a story that is already structurally and narratologically complex. This thesis interprets Zembla as a mythological construct of liminality, a type of symbolic mirror that reflects not only pre-revolutionary Russia but also aestheticism of an almost ethereal nature. Nabokov implies multiple times throughout *Pale Fire*, that Zembla is an amalgamation of reflections. Once Kinbote even states that "...in fact, the name Zembla is a corruption not of the Russian *Zemlya*, but of Semblerland, a land of reflections, of "resemblers" (252). In other words, Zembla reflects the intangible and ephemeral, and is mostly treated as an independent entity and seldom associated with other nations. However, near the end of the novel, Kinbote recalls that at a "picnic for international children" a "Zemblan moppet cried to her Japanese friend: *Ufgut, ufgut, velkum ut Semblerland!* (Adieu, adieu, till we meet in Zembla!)" (263). Nabokov was a careful and calculated writer, in fact, he took great pride in writing like a "distinguished author" (*Strong Opinions*, 6). Therefore, this thesis argues that the association between Zembla and Japan is not coincidental. By implicitly equating them, Nabokov in a way delegitimizes Japan by relegating it to a state of the unreal. This becomes more apparent when one takes into consideration that the "Zemblan moppet" wishes to meet with her Japanese friend *in Zembla*. This subtly transposes Japan to the unreal and subverts its ontological presence in reality. In addition, this episode is part of a larger pattern of infantilization. Seen independently, the inclusion of a Japanese child in a text of course does not entail something of the sort. But, considering Nabokov's frequent condescending remarks such as "little gemütlich Japan", the Japanese child can be read as another instance of Nabokov's association between Japan and a submissive littleness.

4.5.6- Two pre-WW2 examples of Nabokov's negative perception of Japan

One can reason that if Nabokov had an acrid view of Japan before WWII and his association between the nation and Nazism/Fascism, then it should be made manifest in novels written before the outbreak of the war. This thesis has therefore looked for evidence in *Laughter in the Dark* indicating that Nabokov nurtured a negative view of Japan before WWII. This novel's significance for Nabokov's hidden connection with Japan has not been explored by previous researchers. It is one of Nabokov's Russian language novels published in 1933 when he lived in Germany, written under the pseudonym "Sirin", and takes place in the morally sordid milieu of Weimar era Germany and narrates the trials and tribulations of silent film stars, artists, and aspiring authors; the heroine of the book is Margot Peters a young 17-year-old aspiring actress and model.

Early in the novel, Margot gets into financial difficulties: "[s]he had very little money left. In her distress she went to a dance hall as abandoned damsels do in films" (40). There, the young Margot is accosted by two "Japanese gentlemen" (26) who make her drink enough alcohol to acquiesce to prostitution. In addition to the sexual exploitation, they also swindle her. "Next morning she demanded two hundred marks. The Japanese gentlemen gave her three fifty in small change and hustled her out. She resolved to be more wary in the future" (40). Margot becomes so traumatized by the incident so that later in the novel, when she ponders about her lover Axel Rex, she begins to cry when imagining the possibility that she could have escaped the Japanese (87).

This shows that Nabokov's eroticization of the Japanese was initially inverted. Here they do not represent the subjugated feminine element in the sexual power dynamic, but rather the subjugating phallic masculine element. The sexual dynamic between Margot and the "Japanese gentlemen" is in this thesis thought to indicate that the former is made into a type of synecdoche representing Oriental exploitation of a Western nation, specifically Russia. This reading can be corroborated by two circumstances: 1: Absolutely nothing is added to the story by specifying the nationality of the sexual predators. 2: It is extraordinarily unrealistic that a young girl would be accosted by Japanese men in Weimar era Berlin. Although there was relatively strong technological cooperation between Japan and Germany during the interwar period (Kudo Akira, 31), the Japanese diaspora residing in Germany was minimal (Kudo, *ibid*). In 1941, despite the influx of Japanese immigrants due to the Axis alliance, only 300 hundred Japanese are estimated to have lived in Berlin, and in the early 1930's, when the novel takes place, only a few hundred Japanese resided in the entirety of Germany. What is noteworthy is that only 20% of the Japanese population in Germany at the time resided in Berlin, a majority of them lived in Dusseldorf and not in the capital (Kudo, *ibid*).

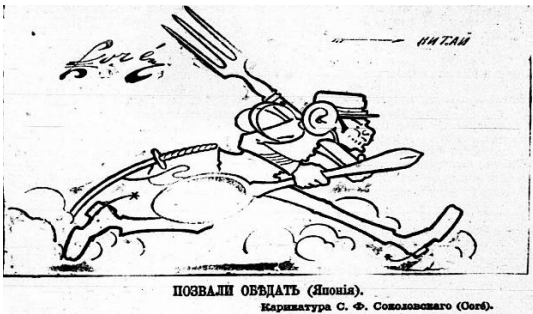


Fig 2.3 "Called to dinner", a Russian propaganda caricature from 1900 depicting the Japanese soldier as an avaricious, verminous creature.

Since biographical circumstances indicate that Nabokov came into contact with anti-Russian Japanese propaganda, this thesis posits that it can be surmised that he likely came into contact with anti-Japanese Russian propaganda as well.

In addition to the "Japanese gentlemen", Nabokov also alludes to an opium smoking Japanese artist. Here it is pertinent to reiterate that virtually no Japanese resided in Germany during the interwar era, and that a majority of those who did, were not living in the capital. Nevertheless, Albinus (the protagonist) ponders that "he might say he had tried, in jest, smoking opium at the rooms of that Japanese artist..." (56). The perception of East-Asian people as opium smoking addicts is a common orientalist cliché (Chris Murray, 314), and here Nabokov not only characterizes the Japanese man as an opium smoker, but he also patronizes the vice and depicts it as a joking matter when an Oriental engages in it. For Albinus (which literally means "white" in Latin), the very thought that he would deign to smoke opium with an Oriental is so remote so that the claim that he had done so would merely be "in jest". *Laughter in the dark* shows that Nabokov had a complex orientalist view of Japan. He simultaneously manages to deprecate the Japanese man as an opium smoker and sneers at the thought that a White man would partake in the vice with an Oriental.

The sexual dynamics between Margot and the "Japanese gentlemen" shows that Nabokov initially depicted Japan as the subjugating instead of the subjugated element in a sexual power dynamic. This thesis posits that his repeated specification that Margot was sexually exploited by

Not only are the Japanese men sexual predators, but they are greedy as well. As evinced in *Speak Memory*, the Russo-Japanese war affected the Nabokov family personally and General Kuropatkin, remembered as responsible for the astounding losses against the Japanese (Peter Pozefsky, 73), was a close friend to the family. Fig 2.3 is just one of many examples of Russian

state propaganda from the time of the Russo-Japanese war depicting the Japanese as avaricious, covetous, and subhuman; its source is an article written in the state-owned newspaper *Novoe vremia* denouncing Japan as an imperialist nation exploiting the weaknesses of its neighbours (Zachary Hoffman,

106-107). Since biographical circumstances indicate that Nabokov came into contact with anti-Russian Japanese propaganda, this thesis posits that it can be surmised that he likely came into contact with anti-Japanese Russian propaganda as well.

“Japanese gentlemen” is not for the sake of literary realism, but rather symbolism. In her interaction with the two Japanese men, Margot ceases to be an individual character and turns into a type of racial synecdoche for Russian whiteness. Consider the fact that Margot’s surname is Peters, which can be seen as an association with Tsar Peter I, the founder of the modern Russian imperial state. Margot not only falling victim to sexual assault but swindling as well can be seen as a symbolic depiction of imperial Russia not only falling victim to military defeat, but (possibly in the mind of Nabokov) to financial deception as well. The Russian propaganda during the war frequently depicted Japanese soldiers as dwarfish greedy creatures who posed a threat to Russia due to funding from the West, and this recurring depiction coupled with Tsar Nicholas II calling them “short-tailed monkeys” (Hoffman, 107-108), in all likelihood, stimulated the idea of Japanese cupidity amongst the upper echelons of the imperial Russian government, including the Nabokov family, which was deeply engaged in all state affairs (Boyd, 54-55).

Another political element of the novel can be seen in the name of Margot’s lover, “Axel Rex”, which can be read as *Alexander Rex* or “King Alexander” in Latin. This thesis contends that “King Alexander” likely refers to Tsar Alexander II, under whom Nabokov’s grandfather served as minister of justice (Boyd, 19). Tsar Alexander II was a reactionary and conservative political strongman. Unlike Tsar Nikolai II, under whose rule Russia suffered the catastrophic losses against Japan, Alexander II promoted a successful militaristic foreign policy (W.E Mosse). In turn, the symbolic value of Margot ruminating upon that “Alex Rex” could have saved her from the Japanese deepens. What Nabokov perhaps indirectly says is that Russia could have been saved from the outcome of the Russo-Japanese war if the Tsar would have acted more like Alexander II. This thesis considers that the significance of the name “Axel Rex” gives the novel a deep political undertone, which is contrary to Nabokov’s claimed belief that political tendencies are always detrimental to a novel (Rivka Maizlish).

Another of Nabokov’s novels which has not been examined with the Japanese connection in mind before is *Look at the Harlequins!* which despite being his last novel published (in 1974), also contains textual evidence of his perception of Japan during his adolescence in Russia. It is a peculiar novel because it is actually a thinly veiled autobiography. The main character Vadim Vadimovich N. is a Russian émigré born into affluence in pre-revolutionary Russia and forced into exile due to the revolution. The similitude with Nabokov’s own life is obvious. When the protagonist, V.V.N (the initials are identical to Nabokov’s) narrates his childhood he remembers that “In my set, in my world, in the opulent Russia of my boyhood we stood so far above any concept of “class” that we only laughed or yawned when reading about “Japanese barons” (24). In other words, Nabokov narrates that he and his aristocratic friends scoffed at the very idea of Japanese nobility. This small passage in Nabokov’s final novel further elucidates that his negative, condescending attitude against Japan predates WWII.

4.5.7-The Japanese lantern, authoritarianism; an inquiry into his radical individualism

Despite claiming that a novel should not be political, lest it becomes “topical trash” (Rivka Maizlish), Nabokov wrote explicitly political novels to inform his readers about the dangers of authoritarian society (*Strong Opinions*, 156). *Invitation to a Beheading* (1936), one of Nabokov’s last novels written in Russian, follows the fate of a man by the name of Cincinnatus who is sentenced to death due to “gnostical turpitude” (144). *Bend Sinister* (1947) written in the wake of WWII tells the story of Adam Krug, a philosopher in the fictitious city of Padukgrad run by an authoritarian government which has criminalized individual differences. Both of these novels

explore the plight of the intellectually independent individual against a totalitarian collectivist rule, and neither of them have been analysed with their allusions to Japan in mind before nor have possible allusion to Japan in the novels been acknowledged by previous researchers. In both of them, Nabokov makes a specific, quite out of place allusion to Japanese lanterns. In *Invitation to a Beheading*, a bureaucratic official of the authoritarian system, only denoted as a supply director, has a lavish feast in his garden initially only illuminated by Japanese lanterns (157). Nabokov incorporates the Japanese lantern in *Bend Sinister* as well, where the protagonist Krug, an ardent individualist, is detained by the despotic government and put in prison. After chastising the prison director, whom Krug calls a “filthy toad”, Krug takes a bronze cowbell from under his mattress and shakes it furiously. Thereupon “[m]asked guards with Japanese lanterns and lances invaded the cell and reverently helped him to his feet” (208).

This thesis contends that Nabokov’s usage of the Japanese lantern has an underlying symbolic meaning. Representatives of the authoritarian systems, delineated in both novels, are depicted with them because the author fundamentally connects Japan with authoritarianism. The Japanese lantern in *Bend Sinister* is more indicative of this negative perception of Japan, since not only do the masked guards light their way with a “Japanese lantern” (167), but they are also called into the cell by a cowbell. Although they are not technically Japanese, they are implicitly linked to Japan due to their usage of this lantern. In consequence, them being called into the room via a cowbell can be seen as a taciturn way of equating Japanese people with cattle to the extent that they were, in Nabokov’s mind, followers of an authoritarian system. This thesis argues that the interplay between Japanese people and the cowbell shows that Nabokov implicitly treats the former as a synecdoche for authoritarian bovinity. The argument may sound unconvincing, but if one considers the fact that Nabokov implements the cowbell in the scene at the expense of coherence, its symbolic value becomes more apparent. There is little to no logic in a cowbell lying underneath the mattress in a prison cell. In addition, the detained Krug could have called the guards into the room by other means. It is as if Nabokov forcibly adds the cowbell to the story to create an implicit association between Japan and bovine collectivism. These two examples show that although Nabokov associated Japan with authoritarianism before WWII, the war stimulated this negative perception. In the allusion from *Bend sinister*, not only do the upholders of an authoritarian system utilize a “Japanese lantern”, they also “invade” the cell. This specific verb usage can be interpreted as showing Nabokov’s subtle way of interlinking Japan with geopolitical aggression and is textual evidence that Nabokov’s view of Japan was greatly soured by the war. This can be coupled with an interview, made shortly after the war, where Nabokov jeers at Japan as a barbaric nation that sought after the total destruction of America “down to the last peanut and the last pinup” (TWS, 414).

Here it is relevant to keep in mind that Nabokov nurtured an extreme notion of individualism. The Japanese allusions in *Invitation to a Beheading* and *Bend Sinister* (particularly in the latter) show an implicit dichotomy between the Orient and the Occident. The oppressed protagonists, representing freedom of thought, expression, and total individuality are contrasted with an authoritarian, illogical, system that is subtly orientally coded via the associations with Japan. The specification of *Japanese* lanterns in the two novels that most explicitly concern the plight of the individual against collectivism is not coincidental, but an indication of Nabokov’s dichotomous approach to Japan. In *Bend Sinister*, the carriers of the Japanese lantern lack individuality to such an extent that they are more bovine than human. By associating collectivism with the Orient and Japan, he indirectly associates individualism with the Occident. Japan is thus in Nabokov’s mind an antithesis to the liberal freedom of the West.

4.5.8- Limberness and erotic littleness; Nabokov's fascination with the Japanese body

This chapter explores Nabokov's consistent fascination with the Japanese body and traces its presence in several of his works unexplored by previous researchers. One of these works is *Mary* which, in fact is Nabokov's very first novel, written in Russian when he still resided amongst fellow émigrés in Berlin, and in it he makes an unexpected allusion to Japanese acrobats. Lev Glebovich Ganin, the protagonist of the novel, had "[l]ately become dull and gloomy. Only a short while ago he could walk on his hands, quite as well as a Japanese acrobat..." (11). This allusion is unexpected because it is wholly unrelated to the actual story. However, this reveals Nabokov's view of the Japanese body as an object of interest that spans from his very first novel up until his last (*The Original of Laura*), and this thesis traces this interest to a large circus performance in Berlin in 1924 when two of the largest Japanese circus troupes (Ryogoku and Hamamura) performed together¹⁰. There is no explicit evidence that Nabokov visited the performance, however he lived in Berlin at the time so it is possible that he visited it in person, or he might have heard of it from an acquaintance. This thesis has also found that another allusion to Japanese acrobatics is made in his second novel *King, Queen, Knave* (1928). In it, Nabokov describes a circus and that "four Japanese flew hither and thither on rhythmically creaking trapezes and while pausing in between stunts tossed to each other a bright handkerchief with which they fastidiously wiped their hands" (84). This description likely echoes the routine of the Ryogoku and Hamamura troupe as the trapeze is quite common in traditional Japanese circus art (Maruki Gallery). In turn further corroborating that he was present at the joint performance or at the very least had heard of it.

Textual evidence as delineated in previous chapters, shows that Nabokov's interest with the Japanese body developed into an erotic fascination. He perceived the Japanese female body as an object of interest for what is termed in this thesis, his poetics of eroticism. *Laughter in the Dark* (1933) places the Japanese in the dominant role of a symbolic sexual power dynamic, while this thesis has found that it is reversed in *The Enchanter*. This work was the last literary text Nabokov wrote in the Russian language, and he described it as "the first throb" of *Lolita* (*Lolita*, 353). The protagonist and the adolescent girl who is his object of desire are both unnamed. Early on in the short novel, the paedophilic protagonist sits on a park bench and notices his object of infatuation walking towards him with "little Japanese steps" (15). According to Dmitry Nabokov (Vladimir Nabokov's son), this sentence refers to the "short, mincing steps" of the geisha (*The Enchanter*, 81). This interpretation seems accurate, because as the graphic description in *Ada or Ardor* shows, Vladimir Nabokov saw geisha as objects of eroticism. This thesis argues that the passage in *The Enchanter* is important because it marks a shift in Nabokov's poetics of eroticism. Japan is no longer depicted as the sexual predators (*Laughter in the dark*), but rather as sexual prey, thus reversing the power dynamics. It is noteworthy that Nabokov had geisha in mind when envisioning the adolescent girl in *The Enchanter* because she is the precursor to Dolores Haze, the victim of Humbert's sexual desire in *Lolita*. This, in turn, indirectly strengthens the connection between Japan and the conception of *Lolita*.

Nabokov's interest with the geisha is not only proven by allusions in *The Enchanter* and *Ada or Ardor*. His interest in the traditional geisha hairstyle is also alluded to in his novel *Transparent things*. Hugh Person, the protagonist, encounters Julia, the stepdaughter of a famous author denoted R. The protagonist has vaguely erotic dreams about the adolescent girl and ruminates upon the similitude between dreams and the waking world. He asks himself the question

¹⁰ See: "Hamamura Family" <https://ninjin.co.uk/hamamura-family-1913/>

“[w]ill the next dream still stick to her Japanese-doll hairdo?” (45). This thesis reads this allusion to a “Japanese-doll hairdo” as a reference to the hairstyle of geisha, and finds that the phrasing of this allusion reveals three things:

- 1: It further corroborates Nabokov’s connection with Japan
- 2: It is additional evidence of Nabokov’s dislike of the traditional hairstyle of geisha
- 3: It objectifies geisha by equating them with dolls.

4.5.9- On Nabokov’s connection with Pound

Ezra Pound was, for all intents and purposes, the polar opposite to Nabokov. He was an antisemite with a strong predilection for fascist collectivism, while Nabokov came from a family that took pride in their history of defending Jews from the Tsarist pogroms, in other words he inherited a form of philosemitism. In addition, as has already been narrated, Nabokov was a headstrong individualist, and the few times he mentions Pound, he denounces him as a “venerable fraud” (*Strong opinions*, 136) or “definitely second rate” (*Strong opinions*, 43). Pound’s literary oeuvre has also been described by Nabokov as being “pretentious nonsense” (*Strong Opinions*, 102), and he was one of the few authors in the U.S who abstained from signing the petition calling for Pound’s release from St Elizabeths (Shalom Goldman). Yet, he nevertheless admitted that he had read the works of Pound (*Strong opinions*, 43).

This thesis, however, contends that Nabokov’s claim that he saw language as a visual phenomenon and that he thought of himself not as an author but as a painter in words (TWS, 434) shows a subtle connection with Imagism. His recurring interest in the condensed verbal image echoes Pound’s philosophy of Imagism, and when Nabokov describes his passion for the verbal image, his phraseology echoes Pound’s. This thesis argues that Nabokov even indirectly alludes to the Poundian theory of superposition, when he in an essay titled *The creative writer* speculates about the possibility of a text that transcends linearity. He ponders about a book that “could be read in the same way as a painting is taken in by the eye” (202). His reasoning about a text whose conveyed information can be understood by the reader in a single moment, is further interpreted in this thesis to display similarity with Pound’s philosophy about Chinese logographs. This latent fascination with Chinese logographs or *Kanji* is further evinced by the aforementioned part in *The Original of Laura* concerning the information condensed “fairy script” taught to Laura by a young Japanese woman. A possible source for this interest is Pound’s & Fenollosa’s essay *The Chinese Written Character as a Medium for Poetry*.

In addition to Nabokov’s fascination with the condensed poetical image and Chinese characters, a recurring trait in his literary oeuvre is a fascination with time. He considered himself to be “chronophobic” (SM, 14) and several of his works reveal an alternate approach to conventional linearity. In the autobiographical *Speak, Memory*, Nabokov narrates his childhood memories in an asynchronous manner because he, simply put, did not believe in ordinary linearity (15). Moreover, in the highly complex *Ada or Ardor*, Nabokov experiments with what he calls “the texture of time” (TWS, 436), and this asynchronous perspective of time appears in other novels as well, such as *Lolita* and *Pnin*. His unique perception of time includes the idea that the past is something living that infuses itself in the present (Peter Birkenhead); a novel connection which this thesis has found is that this recurring idea of the past’s interaction with the present also echoes Pound’s idea of the “vortex” which he claimed interacts with and charges the present. Nabokov phrases himself in a noteworthy manner when he elaborates on his personal disbelief in time. He states that he “folds his

magic carpet” in order to *superimpose* one “part of the pattern upon another” (SM, 124). His description of his philosophy of time as a superimposition of the past upon the present is also reminiscent of Pound’s writings as it is the exact same term Pound uses to describe not only Vorticism but Imagism as well (*Vorticism*, 6).

In addition, Nabokov expressed the belief that time is negated in the creative moment (Christian Hunt, 228). He reasoned that linear time ceased to exist for the artist in the heat of inspiration because in such a moment, time means nothing to them. This implicitly echoes Pound’s philosophy of the artist as someone who is liberated from ordinary spatial and temporal conventions when they capture the essence of a moment (*Vorticism*, 10). In short, the data examined in this thesis does not only significantly corroborate that Nabokov had a hidden connection with Japan, but also that he was influenced by preceding generations of literary modernists. Despite claiming that Pound was a “fraudster” and modernism a “refuge for mediocrity” (TWS, 508), Nabokov’s philosophy of time and the verbal image appear partially derived from Poundian sources.

4.5.10- Final reflections on Nabokov’s hidden connection with Japan

This thesis has traced Nabokov’s hidden connection with Japan throughout his bibliography. Biographical circumstances have also been analysed in order to further elucidate and corroborate the existence of this connection. Despite claiming that he was an apolitical author (Rivka Maizlish), this thesis has shown that Nabokov’s connection with Japan has a distinct political and even racial undertone. Based on the found data, this thesis conjectures that Nabokov likely saw Japan as a *prima causa* for the destabilization of Imperial Russia, the Russia of his childhood. The losses of the Russo-Japanese war, the spread of Bolshevism and the subsequent revolution rendered Nabokov an unwilling émigré throughout his life. However, Nabokov’s negative view on Japan cannot only be explained via the Russo-Japanese war. During WWII, Japan posed an existential threat to the United States, his host-nation which he came to love and deeply admire. WWII likely stimulated Nabokov’s perception of Japan as a threatening Other. This thesis shows that Nabokov’s hidden connection with Japan goes far deeper than Akikusa, Wang and Marchesini have acknowledged. This latent connection reveals a deeper fascination with and knowledge of Japan and Japanese literature than Nabokov himself ever admitted.

Nabokov’s hidden connection with Japan has not been explored via the modified Tessera because the dialectical approach of the thesis presupposes that the influenced author *reacts* against their own culture and society. In addition, the dialectical pattern of the modified Tessera entails that Japan represents a positive Antithesis. This thesis argues that for Nabokov, Japan is a most negative Antithesis to the west. His hidden connection with Japan can however partially be understood as a process of literary self-validation. But, unlike the previous modernists examined in this thesis, Nabokov approaches Japan not to confirm a reaction against the West, but rather to validate his positive stance for the West (specifically American liberal individualism).

1: Does the author make an ontological and epistemological distinction between Japan and Europe/America?	Nabokov’s makes this distinction in the sense that he associates Japan with littleness and eroticism.
2: Does the author seek to restructure Japan in their writings?	Yes, in the regard that he objectifies and belittles the nation.
3: Does the author forcibly juxtapose Japan and Europe/America?	The juxtaposition between Japan and the West is forced in the sense that Nabokov frequently emphasises the littleness and eroticism of Japan in order to belittle the nation.

4: Is Japan exoticized in the author's writings?	As is evident in <i>The Original of Laura</i> and <i>Ada or Ardor</i> , Nabokov likely saw Japan as a source for exotic erotica and reveals a fascination with the Japanese butterfly mythos.
5: If so, does the exoticization stem from an avidity for Japanese culture or cultural chauvinism?	Primarily from cultural chauvinism, but a latent interest for Japanese culture cannot be denied. It is possibly a paradoxical mixture of both.

Table 2.1 An overview of the orientalist traits in Nabokov's Japanese influences

Table 2.1 shows how the five traits of Orientalism, investigated in this thesis, are made manifest in Nabokov's oeuvre. Trait 5 is paradoxical in the sense that Nabokov must have felt a fascination with Japan besides his cultural chauvinism and deprecating attitude. If Nabokov's connection with Japan would have solely consisted of cultural chauvinism, then he would decisively not have incorporated aspects of Japanese culture, literature, and aesthetics into his own production, he would rather have remained wholly quiet on the subject. To illustrate the point, consider Nabokov's relationship with the Beat generation. He never makes any allusion to Beat authors and poets such as Snyder, Kerouac, Ginsberg, or William Burroughs, despite them being his contemporaries. When asked about the Beat generation by a journalist, Nabokov did not deign the journalist with a reply, he rather launched into "an outburst in the passionate Russian manner" about his hatred for labels and movements (TWS, 221-222). In other words, this thesis argues that if Nabokov's thoughts about Japan would have solely consisted of cultural chauvinism and detestation, it would not have appeared as a latent red thread throughout his writings.

The ontological distinction that Nabokov makes between Japan and the West is deeply sexual in nature. The young Japanese woman in *The Original of Laura* and *Ada's* "Japanese neck" in *Ada or Ardor* illustrate that Nabokov implicitly presupposes that the Japanese female body is inherently different from the Western female body and of a more erotic nature; this eroticization of it is also a type of exoticization. The recurrent exploitation and objectification of the Japanese female body evinces that he was fascinated by it as a source of exotic erotica. This thesis argues that this fascination is the basis of Nabokov's poetics of eroticism regarding Japan. Besides such sexualization he condescends Japan by frequently associating the nation with littleness. This recurrence of Japanese smallness (besides the eroticization) is the most apparent forcible juxtaposition between Japan and the West that Nabokov reveals. This thesis contends that it would be illogical to deem that Nabokov's exoticization of and fascination with Japan stems solely from unadulterated cultural chauvinism. The recurrence of Japan as a latent element, oftentimes forced into his narratives, reveals that Nabokov had an interest in the nation, its culture and literature. If he had not been interested in Japan, then he would have refrained from incorporating it as an element in his stories. The absence of the Beat generation in his writings illustrate that he was reticent about things which he felt an unmixed detestation for.

5- Conclusion

5.1- Answer to the first research question

The first research question investigated in this thesis is: Why does a tradition of Japanese influences in Western literary modernism exist and what are the Orientalist implications thereof? The author concludes that the recurrence of Japanese influences in W.L.M can be understood as a repeated process of literary self-confirmation. This process has been investigated via a modified form of Tessera and the following pattern can be determined:

Thesis	The author identifies a problem in the culture/literature of the West that they try to resolve. Their attempted solutions are, however, indefinite.
Antithesis	The author, in search for alternatives to the ordinary conventions of the West, approaches Japanese literature and poetics. Japan is gradually shaped into an Antithesis of the West wherein the author projects their literary selfhood.
Synthesis	The Synthesis of influence is that the author begins to use terminology retrieved from the Antithesis to concretize and further develop their own modes of literary experience.

Table 2.2 The dialectical pattern of Japanese influences in W.L.M

Table 2.2 is an outline of how the Hegelian dynamics of the Japanese influence tradition in W.L.M operates. This thesis shows that the existence of Japanese influences in W.L.M can be traced back to the modernist author's quests for alternatives to ordinary Western literary/artistic conventions. Thus, the Otherness of Japan became fertile ground for terminology and concepts that the modernist author could incorporate into their own production to further concretize their own modes of literary experience. The nature of Japan as an Antithesis, naturally varies due to each author's unique projection of their own literary selfhood. By projecting themselves into the Antithesis, the Western modernist authors validate their own ideas and literary systems. Compare, for example, Pound and Kerouac. The former validated his ideas of Imagism, Vorticism and politico-poetical fascism via Japan as an Antithesis and the latter validated his ideas of poetical spontaneity and fully free poetical expression.

The author concludes that the occurrence of Japanese influences in W.L.M can be traced to an oxymoronic process of Othering and Nearing. Japan is Othered to the extent that the influenced author sees it as an Antithesis to the West. However, Japan is also Neared as the modernist author projects his own literary selfhood into the image of Japan and restructures its literature and poetics to correspond with his own ideas and literary aspirations. The examined authors' literary ideas were not derived from the Antithesis; they were only concretized by the terminology retrieved therefrom. It can thus be concluded that literary modernists approached Japanese literature not as a source of novelty, but as a parallel to their own preexisting ideas, and that the Synthesis of influence does not entail intrinsic novelty, only ostensible due to the usage of new terminology retrieved from the Antithesis.

Does the author make an ontological and epistemological distinction between Japan and Europe?
Does the author seek to restructure Japan in their writings?
Does the author forcibly juxtapose Japan and Europe?
Is Japan exoticized in the author's writings?
If so, does the exoticization stem from an avidity of Japanese culture or cultural chauvinism?
Table 1.1 Five traits of Orientalism looked for in this thesis

As for the orientalist implications of the Japanese influences, this thesis has examined the

five traits outlined in Table 1.1. The construction of an image of Japan and the restructuring thereof to coincide with one's own literary selfhood prerequisites the existence of trait 1 and 2. However, the juxtaposition between the West and Japan does not, necessarily, have to be forcible. All of the examined authors exoticize Japan in various ways. Despite an occasional chauvinist attitude, all of the examined authors reveal a consistent avidity for Japan to the extent that their constructed image

of the nation provides literary self-validation. As regards culturally chauvinist behaviour against Japan, it does not seem to be prevalent in W.L.M (naturally excluding Nabokov). Although Pound and Kerouac implicitly infantilized Japan, this is not indicative of a larger pattern as this thesis has not been able to find evidence proving them to be anything other than one-time occurrences.

In summary: There exists a Japanese influence tradition in W.L.M because Japan has been a recurrent source for literary and poetical self-validation through an oxymoronic process of Othering and Nearing. This process is fundamentally orientalist as it signifies an epistemological and ontological distinction between the West and Japan. In addition, this process of literary self-confirmation also entails the restructuring of Japan to correspond with the author's literary selfhood; the restructuring of the Orient is a fundamentally orientalist mode of approach as described by Said (3).

5.2- Answer to the second research question

The second question investigated in this thesis is: Does there exist a hidden connection between Vladimir Nabokov and Japanese literature as contended by Akikusa; how does it manifest itself in his works of literature and can it be related with the larger trends of Japanese influences in W.L.M?

The second research question can be partially answered with just one word: yes. This thesis has shown that the hidden connection between Nabokov and Japan exists and latently permeates his oeuvre. Nabokov's interest with Japan is so strong so that he occasionally forces Japanese elements into his stories (e.g. *Ada or Ardor*, *Laughter in the Dark*, and *Bend Sinister*) at the expense of narratological coherence. This thesis concludes that this forcible incorporation shows that the Russian author occupied his thoughts with Japan more than he himself ever acknowledged. This is also corroborated by Nabokov's implicit literary criticism against Mishima, which contradicts his own conviction that one cannot criticize works read in translation. Furthermore, this thesis also concludes that Nabokov's thinly veiled racism against Japan can be traced back to his childhood, specifically to the Russian defeat in the Russo-Japanese war. The caustic letter quoted (albeit not analysed) by Boyd shows that Imperial Japan's part in the Axis powers further soured Nabokov's perception of Japan.

This thesis further contends that Mabilat's contention that the Oriental other was an "arena of sexual possibilities" is relevant for understanding Nabokov's Japanese connection. Although there are some Orientalist tendencies in the earlier modernists' relationship with Japan, Nabokov's stand out as he explicitly and frequently sexualizes and exploits the Japanese female body. His rhetoric also emphasizes a frequent association between Japan and the diminutive. This thesis has also found that the sexual power dynamics present in Nabokov's writings between the Occident and the Orient changes after WWII. Before the war, Japan as an Oriental Other represents a conquering, phallic element (The "Japanese gentlemen" in *Laughter in the Dark*), after the war Japan becomes the conquered, submissive element (e.g., The geisha in *Ada or Ardor* or the "sweet Japanese girl" in *The Original of Laura*). This thesis attributes this shift in the sexual power dynamics to the outcome of WWII and concludes that Nabokov most likely felt some form of schadenfreude over Japan's defeat in the war and conveys this via the incorporation of sexually submissive and subservient Japanese figures throughout his post-WWII novels.

This thesis has further examined instances where Japan appears as an eroticized, infantilized and antagonistic element throughout Nabokov's production. In addition, this thesis shows that Nabokov's hidden connection with Japan is far greater than what previous researchers

acknowledge. Akin to the previous literary modernists analysed in this thesis, Nabokov's Japanese influences are a type of self-validation to the extent that he approaches Japan in his literary production to validate his own negative and orientalist perception of the nation. In this regard, this thesis concludes that Nabokov can be logically placed in the larger timeline of Japanese influences as literary self-validation in W.L.M. The possible connection between Pound and Nabokov which this thesis makes further justifies Nabokov's placement at the end of this timeline.

However, Nabokov differs from his predecessors to the extent that he does not react *against* the West, he rather reacts towards Japan as an Antithesis that has posed (in his mind) an existential threat against the Western world. Therefore, this thesis concludes that while Nabokov's Japanese influences are idiosyncratic when compared to previous modernist authors examined in this thesis, they still bear some resemblance as they constitute a type of self-validation, albeit in a reversed sense.

6- Final reflections

6.1- The theory of influence as a mirror

Much ink has been spilled to define and concretize what literary influence actually is, and this thesis posits that the reason for why literary influences have eluded previous researchers is because they have attempted to ascribe them a fixed ontology. By fixed ontology, this thesis refers to the perception that literary influences are dictated merely by the contents of the influence source. Based on the findings of this thesis, the author theorizes that the nature of literary influences is more dependent on the author rather than the source of the influences themselves. They are, in other words, a relative phenomenon situated in constant flux dictated by the literary aims of the influenced author. Subsequently, the author proposes a theory that literary influences can be understood as a type of mirror and that an influenced author sees themselves in their source of influence (via self-projection) more than the actual source. The author speculates that this pattern of literary self-confirmation is ubiquitous, and that literary influence is always author-dependent rather than source-dependent. The influenced author sees what they wish to see in the source they approach for inspiration, hence the comparison with the mirror. The results of this thesis suggest that literary influence only provide superficial and not intrinsic novelty. The newness provided by a literary influence is the novel terminology used to further describe and concretize the preexisting thoughts of the author. This thesis further conjectures that this could be a beneficial approach for the study of influences in world literature. If one refrains to see literary influence as a system with a fixed ontology and approaches them as a fluid and relative literary psychological phenomenon dependent on the author, then perhaps it is possible to develop some sort of methodology for further research into the process of literary influence.

6.2- Reflections on Orientalism in the Japanese influences in W.L.M

The author interprets the history of Japanese influences in W.L.M as a history of literary self-validation, and this restructuring of the Orient to coincide with an Occidental image of it is undeniably orientalist. Japan as an Antithesis presupposes a fundamental distinction between the Orient and the West, which also is indicative of Orientalism. However, the question arises, is this dynamic between Thesis and Antithesis indicative of Orientalism or is it simply the nature of literary influence? Because if literary influences constitute a fluid phenomenon of self-confirmation, then this relationship between Thesis and Antithesis is bound to be the same even if the latter is

based on an Occidental source. For example, is it possible that the English Victorian poet John Keats approached Ancient Greece as an Antithesis to Napoleonic Europe and projected his own ideals of individuality and transcendentalism into it? If so, the subsequent Synthesis of Keats's influences from Ancient Greece represents not the emergence of novelty, but rather a confirmation of his own contemporary romantic philosophy expressed with antique terminology.

Thus, the orientalist aspects of the Japanese influences in W.L.M are perhaps merely the consequence of how literary influences function as a fluid, non-fixed phenomenon. The author of this thesis speculates that the projection of the self into the Antithesis is, in all likelihood, the result of the nature of literary influence and not necessarily indicative of a conscious power structure subjugating the Orient. The exoticization of Japan by the examined authors is, however, an undeniable fact. This thesis speculates that the modernist author (amongst those examined apart from Nabokov) who had the strongest orientalist view of Japan was Yeats. This thesis has examined Yeats's aborted journey to Japan from a new perspective and provides the theory that a possible reason for why the journey did not come into fruition was the poet's desire to retain his own constructed poetical image of the nation. Thus, the exoticization of Japan appears to be a natural consequence of perceiving the country and its culture as an Antithesis to the West. The exoticness of Japan appears as a relative phenomenon dependent on the author. Pound sees an epistemological exoticness in Japan that coincides with his own view of the condensed poetical image. Snyder, however, perceives an exotic, sacred bond between man and nature in Japan, a "perfection" that he does not see in the West, and Nabokov sees a threatening Other. The nature of the exoticization appears to change depending on what the influenced author wishes to find in Japan as an Antithesis to the West.

6.3- Concluding remarks

In the end, the author of this thesis believes that the two inter-dependent goals of the study have been achieved. It may sound like a bold and wide claim, but the author believes that the fluid nature of literary influence is indicative of the relativity of the human experience, and that the mirror theory can be applied to influences in world literature in general. The theory is not proposed as a rigid dictum, but rather as a suggestion of approach. It can naturally be modified, altered, and changed in future research. But the author is bold enough to speculate that future research will show that literary influence constitutes a fluid and relative phenomenon that relies on the nature of an author's literary selfhood.

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7.1 -Appendices

Does the author make an ontological and epistemological distinction between Japan and Europe?
Does the author seek to restructure Japan in their writings?
Does the author forcibly juxtapose Japan and Europe?
Is Japan exoticized in the author's writings?
If so, does the exoticization stem from an avidity of Japanese culture or cultural chauvinism?
Table 1.1 Five traits of Orientalism looked for in this thesis

Thesis: A cultural and or societal problem is identified in the Western world. The author attempts to resolve this problem.
Antithesis: Japan is elevated as an Antithesis to the author's Thesis. The author who posited the Thesis projects his own literary selfhood into the Antithesis.
Synthesis: The author constructs an image of Japan as an Antithesis to the West and restructures it to coincide with their own proposed solution to the Thesis. The author becomes empowered and finds his literary aspirations validated by the Antithesis, and the Synthesis is the usage of new terminology retrieved from the Antithesis's cultural productions.
Table 1.2 The three steps of the modified Tessera



Fig 1.1 *Symphony in White no 2*. Note the vase on the mantle and the fan in the woman's hand.



Fig 1.2 *The Balcony, Variations in flesh colour and Green*



Fig 1.4 Kiyonaga *Sukiyo*



Fig 1.5 Old Battersea Bridge

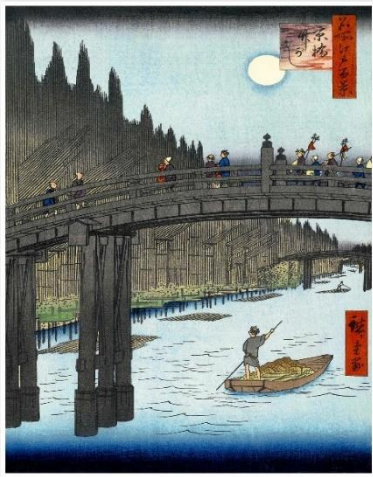


Fig 1.6 *ukiyo-e* by Hiroshige

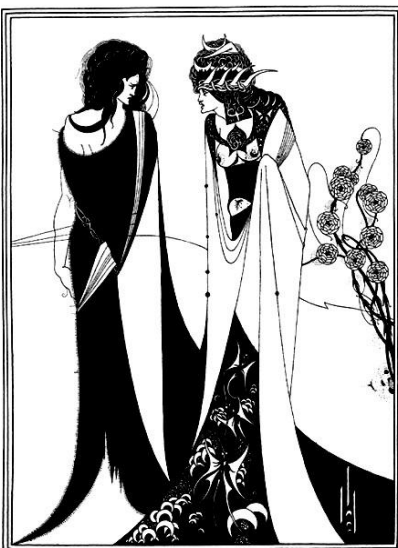


Fig 1.7 An example of Beardsley's monochromatic style



Fig 1.8 *ukiyo-e* by Kitagawa Utamaro

Thesis	Pound proposed the rejuvenation of not only Western poetry and literature, but society as well.
Antithesis	Pound saw in Japanese poetics a validation of his own thought.
Synthesis	The Synthesis of Pound's Japanese influences can be traced throughout his literary oeuvre. He frequently alludes to Noh theatre in <i>The Cantos</i> , when he expresses his own ideas and beliefs.

Table 1.3 An overview of the dynamics of Pound's Japanese influences

Does the author make an ontological and epistemological distinction between Japan and Europe?	Pound's construction of Japan as an Antithesis to the West prerequisites this.
Does the author seek to restructure Japan in their writings?	Japan is restructured to the degree that he transforms Japanese poetics into an approximation and confirmation of his own thought.
Does the author forcibly juxtapose Japan and Europe?	Pound forces a juxtaposition by claiming that the philosophical and aesthetic traditions of Japan are ontologically and fundamentally different from Western traditions.
Is Japan exoticized in the author's writings?	Pound's ontological and epistemological distinction between Japan and the West indirectly entails a type of exoticization.
If so, does the exoticization stem from an avidity of Japanese culture or cultural chauvinism?	Pound felt a great avidity for Japanese culture, to the extent that he not only claimed it to be equal with Western culture but in some cases even superior (<i>Ezra Pound to His Parents</i> , 384). Even so, he occasionally reveals a chauvinistic attitude against Japan.

Table 1.4 An overview of the orientalist traits of Pound's Japanese influences.

Thesis	Yeats believed that the theatrical conventions of the West based on scientific rationalism led to cultural impoverishment (Charles Glicksberg, 29). To resolve the problem, he begins to develop a “literary theatre”.
Antithesis	Yeats, after encountering the Noh via Pound’s mediation, formulates the opinion that Japanese theatre represents a spiritual, aristocratic form Antithetical to the conventions of the West. He projects not only his personal literary beliefs into the Antithesis, but his ideas about the <i>volksgeist</i> of Ireland as well.
Synthesis	Noh validated Yeats’s “literary theatre” and provided him with an abundance of terminology and concepts to concretize his “dance plays”, which was an aristocratic form that expanded upon his “literary theatre”.

Table 1.5 An overview of the dynamics of Yeats’s Japanese influences

Does the author make an ontological and epistemological distinction between Japan and Europe?	Yeats paradoxically makes an ontological and epistemological distinction between Japan and Europe while at the same time purporting the existence of a common racial memory between Ireland and Japan (<i>Essays and introductions</i> , 232., Shotaro Oshima, 82).
Does the author seek to restructure Japan in their writings?	Japan is restructured by Yeats in the sense that the Noh are made to coincide with his own literary symbolism and to coincide with his view of “old Ireland”.
Does the author forcibly juxtapose Japan and Europe?	Not forcible but the ontological distinction made by the poet necessitates a juxtaposition.
Is Japan exoticized in the author’s writings?	He does so paradoxically. He both exoticizes Japan and domesticizes it by associating it with Ireland.
If so, does the exoticization stem from an avidity of Japanese culture or cultural chauvinism?	The former. Although Yeats exoticizes Japan, no data can be found that he was culturally chauvinistic against the nation.

Table 1.6 An overview of the orientalist traits in Yeat’s Japanese influences

Thesis	Snyder believed that the American people had lost its connection with nature. From boyhood, he searched for alternative perspectives on nature and formulated the idea that the illusory borders between man and animal must be erased.
Antithesis	Snyder constructed an image of Japan based on his own ecological philosophy. His ideas, projected into the Antithesis, become validated
Synthesis	The poet’s ecological philosophy, after validation via the Antithesis is expressed with new terminology.

Table 1.7 An overview of the dynamics of Snyder’s Japanese influences

Does the author make an ontological and epistemological distinction between Japan and Europe/America?	Japan as an Antithesis to the West's dysfunctional relationship with nature entails a fundamental distinction.
Does the author seek to restructure Japan in their writings?	Japan is restructured in Snyder's writings to coincide with his own environmentalist world view.
Does the author forcibly juxtapose Japan and Europe/America?	His juxtaposition between Japan and the West is quite subtle and cannot be described as forcible.
Is Japan exoticized in the author's writings?	Yes, to the extent that it signifies a mindset of ecological harmony.
If so, does the exoticization stem from an avidity for Japanese culture or cultural chauvinism?	No proof of a chauvinist attitude against Japan has been found in Snyder's writings.

Table 1.8 An overview of the orientalist traits in Snyder's Japanese influences

Thesis	Kerouac believed that the cultural milieu of post WWII America constrained both spiritual and poetical expression.
Antithesis	Kerouac saw in haiku a confirmation of his own thought and speech. He saw in Japanese poetics a free, expansive, and spontaneous form of poetical expression that did not exist in America.
Synthesis	Kerouac, after the Antithesis confirmed his poetical spontaneity, begins to use new terminology to concretize his own philosophy of poetical expression

Table 1.9 An overview of the dynamics of Kerouac's Japanese influences

Does the author make an ontological and epistemological distinction between Japan and Europe/America?	Yes, to the extent that Japanese poetics are seen as ontologically different from Western modes of poetical expression.
Does the author seek to restructure Japan in their writings?	Kerouac restructures Japan to the extent that he makes Japanese poetics correspond with his own thoughts and speech.
Does the author forcibly juxtapose Japan and Europe/America?	Yes. This is most apparent in <i>The Dharma Bums</i> and in some of his "pops".
Is Japan exoticized in the author's writings?	Yes. Particularly in <i>The Dharma Bums</i> and his "pops".
If so, does the exoticization stem from an avidity of Japanese culture or cultural chauvinism?	Except the one instance of infantilization, Kerouac never displays a chauvinist attitude against Japan.

Table 2.0 An overview of the orientalist traits in Kerouac's Japanese influences



Fig 1.9 *The Coiffing*



Fig 2.0 Utamaro's *ukiyo-e*

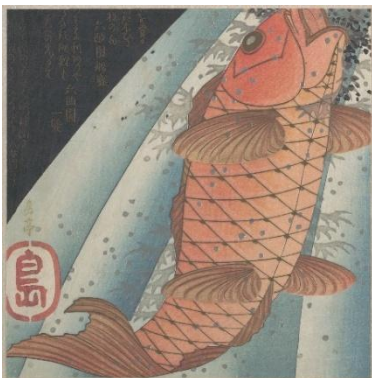


Fig 2.1 *ukiyo-e* by Yashima Gakutei



Fig 2.2 ukiyo-e by Kurokawa Michita

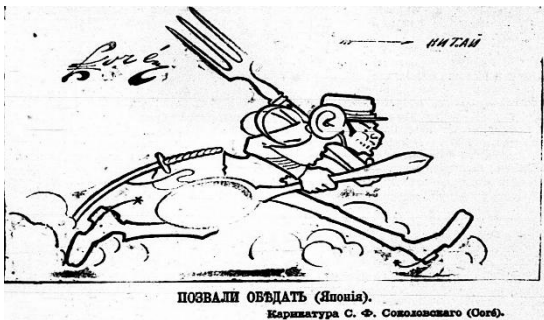


Fig 2.3 “Called to dinner”, a Russian propaganda caricature from 1900 depicting the Japanese soldier as an avaricious, verminous creature.

1: Does the author make an ontological and epistemological distinction between Japan and Europe/America?	Nabokov’s makes this distinction in the sense that he associates Japan with littleness and eroticism.
2: Does the author seek to restructure Japan in their writings?	Yes, in the regard that he objectifies and belittles the nation.
3: Does the author forcibly juxtapose Japan and Europe/America?	The juxtaposition between Japan and the West is forced in the sense that Nabokov frequently emphasises the littleness and eroticism of Japan in order to belittle the nation.
4: Is Japan exoticized in the author’s writings?	As is evident in <i>The Original of Laura</i> and <i>Ada or Ardor</i> , Nabokov likely saw Japan as a source for exotic erotica, and he also reveals a fascination with the Japanese butterfly mythos.
5: If so, does the exoticization stem from an avidity for Japanese culture or cultural chauvinism?	Primarily from cultural chauvinism, but a latent interest for Japanese culture cannot be denied. It is possibly a paradoxical mixture of both.

Table 2.1 An overview of the orientalist traits in Nabokov’s Japanese influences

Thesis	The author identifies a problem in the culture/literature of the West that they try to resolve. Their attempted solutions are, however, indefinite.
Antithesis	The author, in search for alternatives to the ordinary conventions of the West, approaches Japanese literature and poetics. Japan is gradually shaped into an Antithesis of the West wherein the author projects their literary selfhood.
Synthesis	The Synthesis of influence is that the author begins to use terminology retrieved from the Antithesis to concretize and further develop their own modes of literary experience.

Table 2.2 The dialectical pattern of Japanese influences in W.L.M