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Translational Moments: Citizenship in Meiji Japan

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree Doctor of  
Philosophy in Political Science

by

John Gavin Branstetter

2017

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## ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Translational Moments: Citizenship in Meiji Japan

by

John Gavin Branstetter

Doctor of Philosophy in Political Science

University of California, Los Angeles, 2017

Professor Anthony R. Pagden, Chair

I argue that translational thinking is a vital mode of political thinking which harbors a basic democratic potential. I theorize translations as metaphorical relations which do not referentially link terms. Rather, I contend that translation creates an indeterminate relationship which allows words and images to appear where they are not supposed to. In this way, translation verifies the contingency of social order and reaffirms the axiom of equality. I argue that translation is therefore a political practice which creates moments of radical democratic potential.

I demonstrate this by examining four historical episodes, or what I call “translational moments,” in the intense period of cultural and political change that followed Japan’s mid-19<sup>th</sup> century Meiji Restoration. Focusing on the translation of the word “citizen,” I examine how translation broke down or reinforced Tokugawa worldviews and assess the historical consequences of these disruptions. Moments one and two concretize my theoretical claims by

focusing on the intertextual translation of the words “citizen” and *citoyen* from English and French into Japanese for the first time. I examine Fukuzawa Yukichi’s translation language for “citizen” in *Conditions in the West*, and Nakae Chōmin’s translation of *citoyen* in Rousseau’s *Social Contract*.

Moments three and four demonstrate the expansiveness of translation as a poetic activity by examining the translation of the language of citizenship into actual social practice. I first look at the spread of rhetoric in the debating associations of the Freedom and Popular Rights Movement to understand the ways in which they transformed standards of valid public speech. Finally, I explore the appearance of women in the public sphere through Kishida Toshiko’s speeches and the growth of women’s employment in silk and cotton mills. I show how the Confucian discourse of the family constrained the democratic potential of their appearances in public.

The dissertation of John Gavin Branstetter is approved.

Joshua Foa Dienstag

William Marotti

Davide Panagia

Anthony R. Pagden, Committee Chair

University of California, Los Angeles

2017

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## NOTES ON TRANSLATION and GLOSSARY OF JAPANESE TERMS

For the sake of consistency, I have listed many terms using only their *onyomi*, or Sinitic reading, rather than their *kunyomi*, or Japanese reading. Japanese *kanji* can for the most part be read in at least two ways which are quite different from one another. Because switching between readings may make it more difficult for non-Japanese speakers to follow my analyses of *kanji* compounds broken into their constituent parts, I have tried to consistently use the *onyomi* throughout.

Unattributed translations are my own, both in the glossary and in the text. In cases where I have directly cited *kanbun*, I have supplied the necessary grammar in *hiragana*. Japanese names are given in the Japanese order, with the family name first and the given name second. For example, Fukuzawa Yukichi’s family name is Fukuzawa, his given name is Yukichi. The only exceptions are for authors with Japanese names but who publish regularly in English using the English order of given and family names. For example, Mikiso Hane publishes his name in

this way (as opposed to the Japanese order of Hane Mikiso). Traditionally, Confucian scholars are referred to by their pen names. For example, Nakae Chōmin was born Nakae Tokuma, but took the name Chōmin in the late 1880s. I refer to him as “Chōmin,” rather than “Nakae” throughout.

\*\*\*\*\*

*Bakufu* 幕府 – The government of the Tokugawa shogunate.

*Bakumatsu* 幕末 – Literally, “the end of the shogunate.” It refers to the period between Perry’s arrival in 1853 and the Restoration in 1868.

*Bunmei* 文明 – “Civilization.”

*Bunmei kaika* 文明開化 – “Civilization and Enlightenment” was the guiding slogan of efforts towards cultural and political modernization in the 1870s.

*Bunmeiron no gairyaku* 文明論之概略 - *An Outline of a Theory of Civilization*. Fukuzawa Yukichi’s book, published in 1875.

*Daimyo* 大名 – Literally, “big name.” The daimyo were the lords of the feudal domains.

*Danson jōhi* 男尊女卑 – “Respect men, despise women.” The doctrine that characterized Tokugawa-era attitudes towards women.

*Enzetsu* 演説 – Public speech or public speaking.

*Enzetsuka* 演説家 – A public speaker, particularly one who spoke on the circuit of speech and debate meetings in the early 1880s.

*Enzetsukai* 演説会 – A public speech association or a public speech meeting.

*Enzetsukan* 演説館 – A hall for public speaking or debating. Fukuzawa Yukichi’s Mita

Enzetsukan was completed in 1875.

*Gakumon no susume* 学問のすすめ – “An Encouragement of Learning.” Fukuzawa’s book,

published in serial form between 1872 and 1876.

*Hakoiri musume* 箱入り娘 – “Daughters [Kept] in Boxes.” The Title of Kishida Toshiko’s 1883

speech.

*Han* 藩 – The Tokugawa-era feudal domain.

*Hei* 平 – “Flat,” “level,” or “equal.” Used in conjunction with other kanji to express sameness or

equality.

*Heimin* 平民 – “Ordinary citizens.” After the abolition of classes in 1872, all people were no

longer classed as farmers, merchants, or artisans, but as *heimin*.

*Hito* 人 – “Person.” Used in conjunction with other kanji to express individuality.

*Hitori* 一人 – “A single person.” Used in some instances to translate “citizen”

*Itsukaichi* 五日市 – The name of a village on the Western side of the Mushashino plain near

Tokyo. The subject of Irokawa Daikichi’s study in *The Culture of the Meiji Period*. The

place where Chiba Takusaburō wrote his draft constitution.

*Jin* 仁 – Confucian “humaneness,” “benevolence,” “compassion,” or “sympathy.” Translated in

a variety of different ways, it is one of the primary virtues in Confucian ethics. The same

character appears as *ren* or *jen* in the Chinese reading.

*Jiyū* 自由 – “Freedom.” The standard translation word for “liberty.” Created by Fukuzawa

Yukichi to translate various European liberal texts.

*Jiyū minken undō* 自由民権運動 – “Freedom and Popular Rights Movement.” The period from

1874 to 1885 characterized by the growth of speech and debate societies, the formation of Japan’s first political parties, and several large peasant rebellions against the Meiji government.

*Jiyūtō* 自由党 – The Liberal Party. One of Japan’s first political parties, founded by Itagaki

Taisuke in the 1870s and influential in during the so-called “Freedom and Popular Rights Movement.”

*Kaika* 開花 – “Enlightenment.” It has connotations of opening to the rest of the world. The word

to describe the 18<sup>th</sup> century European phenomenon is *keimo* 啓蒙, which has different connotations.

*Kanbun* 漢文 – Literally, “Chinese writing.” *Kanbun* is a style of written Japanese that uses only

Chinese characters, sometimes with notation for re-arranging the characters from Chinese word-order to classical Japanese. The *hiragana* and *katakana* syllabic scripts do not appear. *Kanbun* was a *lingua franca* across much of East Asia until well into the 19<sup>th</sup> century. It is the language of Confucian scholarship in particular. It was generally readable only to an educated intellectual elite.

*Kanji* 漢字 – “Chinese characters.” Japanese writing is generally composed of three elements.

*Kanji* are the ideographic characters borrowed or adapted from Chinese script. Their phonetic component cannot be determined from any characteristic of the character alone.

*Hiragana* and *katakana* are syllabaries used to code grammatical information or to transliterate foreign words.

*Kazoku Kokka* 家族国家 – “Family state.” The belief that the Emperor was the father of the nation and all subjects were his children. Grounded in Confucian ethical philosophy about the family.

*Keiō gijuku* 慶應義塾 – The private school founded by Fukuzawa Yukichi to teach “Western learning.” Still located in the Mita ward of Tokyo, the school is now the prestigious Keiō University.

*Kō* 工 – The class of artisans under the Tokugawa social hierarchy.

*Kojin* 個人 – “Private” or “individual.”

*Kokuseki* 国籍 – “Nationality” in the modern sense of one’s country of origin. The country in which one holds a passport.

*Kokutai* – “National body,” “National essence.” The concept of the state’s fundamental constitution and its uniqueness. Developed by Aizawa Seishisai in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, it asserted that the Emperor was the center, structuring principle of Japan’s national uniqueness.

*Koseki* 戸籍 – “Household registration.” The system used by the Tokugawa government and the Meiji state to record family membership, births, deaths, marriages, and other information.

*Kuni* 国 – “Country,” “territory,” or “region.”

*Min* 民 – “People,” “the people.” Those who are not powerful. Those who are ruled.

*Minken* 民権 – “Popular rights,” “civil rights.” The rights of personal liberty in society excluding the right to vote or stand for office. The opposite of *seiken*, or “political rights.”

*Minkenka* 民権家 – Activists agitating for civil rights and the creation of a parliament as part of the “Freedom and Popular Rights Movement.” Prominent examples are Ueki Emori, Numa Morikazu, and Itagaki Taisuke.

*Minyaku* 民役 – “Social Contract.” This generic term is used refer to the theory of Locke, Rousseau, or the American founders.

*Minyaku yakkai* 民役訳解 – “An Interpretation of the Social Contract.” Nakae Chōmin’s 1882 “translation” of Rousseau’s *The Social Contract*.

*Nō* 農 – The class of farmers under the Tokugawa feudal hierarchy.

*Ōmeisha* 嚶鳴社 – Numa Morikazu’s society for debate and discussion. The forerunner of the Jiyūtō, or Liberal Party.

*Sansuijin keirin mondō* – *A Discourse by Three Drunkards on Government*. Nakae Chōmin’s 1888 text in the form of a Confucian dialogue.

*Seiken* 政權 – “Political rights.” The right to vote, stand for office, or otherwise participate in government affairs.

*Seiyō jijō* 西洋事情 – *Conditions in the West*. Fukuzawa Yukichi’s bestselling description of society and government in America and Europe. Published in 3 volumes between 1866 and 1870.

*Shakai* – “Society.” The word that developed to describe the sphere of activity between equal citizens outside of government.

*Shi* 士 – The samurai class under the Tokugawa hierarchy.

*Shi* 市 – “Market” or “city.” The place where people meet and interact.

*Shin* 臣 – “Subject.” A person ruled by a king or emperor.

*Shinmin* 臣民 – “Subjects.” The body of subjects. The opposite of a citizenry.

*Shinōkōshō* 士農工商 – The Tokugawa system of four classes. Samurai were at the top, followed by farmers, artisans, and then merchants at the bottom.

*Shō* 商- The class of merchants under the Tokugawa hierarchy.

*Shōmin* 商民 – The people who live as merchants. Fukuzawa Yukichi’s idiosyncratic translation for “citizen.”

*Shū* 衆 – The many, mass, or general population.

*Shūjin* 衆人 – Nakae Chōmin’s translation word for *citoyen*.

*Tōron* 討論 – “Debate” or “discussion.”

*Undō* 運動 – “Movement.” Used to refer to social movements as well. The Freedom and Popular Rights Movement was figured as such in the 1920s.

*Yakkai* – “Interpretation” or “translation.” Nakae Chōmin’s *Minyaku Yakkai* is neither an explanatory analysis of Rousseau’s text, nor is it a translation. It is an interpretation aimed at understanding.

*Yo* 世 – The social world. The place where people circulate and interact. Distinct from the natural world.

*Yojin* 世人 – People who inhabit the social world. Those who interact in society.

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## VITA

John Branstetter received bachelor's degrees in Russian language and political science from Michigan State University in 2004. He then studied in the politics department at the University of Edinburgh, where he earned a Master's of Science by Research for a thesis proposal analyzing changes in the Russian language and the consolidation of presidential legitimacy after the fall of the USSR. During a break from academic work, John taught English as a foreign language in Gifu, Japan, where he began studying Japanese. He returned to academia as a PhD student at Washington State University, studying political theory and political communication. He received a fellowship from the Political Science Department at WSU to spend the 2010-2011 academic year as a visiting scholar at the Institut d'études politiques de Bordeaux, where he studied French and pursued research on political theory in international relations. After moving to join UCLA's Ph.D. program in 2011, John received several fellowships from the Terasaki Center for Japanese Studies to pursue his work. In 2014, he spent the year at the Inter-University Center for Japanese Language Study in Yokohama, Japan, where he studied *kanbun* and modern Japanese. He is will be a lecturer in political science at UCLA for the 2017-2018 academic year.

## Introduction| Translational Moments

Everything is in everything.<sup>1</sup>

-*Jacques Rancière*

The poetic labor of translation is at the heart of all learning.<sup>2</sup>

-*Jacques Rancière*

### Sakura Sōgorō and the Politics of Appearance

Some of the most fundamental transformations of language occur in the moments when two people who cannot naturally communicate with one another resolve to do just that. In so doing, they establish a new relationship of equality between themselves as well as a novel staging of the mutually-incomprehensible words they use. This relationship-building, both political and linguistic, is precisely the kind of transformation we usually call translation. In what follows I ask how these transformations of language through translation are related to moments of political transformation. Let me begin by describing one particular translational moment to better illustrate what is at stake.

In the spring of 1653, the villagers of the Sakura domain in what is now Eastern Japan faced famine after a poor harvest.<sup>3</sup> The tax policy of the rigidly hierarchical Tokugawa shogunate demanded a set quantity of rice each year from each parcel of land regardless of any external conditions that might affect productivity. A bad crop had no influence on the amount of tax due, and more importantly, it did nothing to mitigate the punishments meted out the villages

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<sup>1</sup> Rancière, *The Ignorant Schoolmaster*.

<sup>2</sup> Rancière, *The Emancipated Spectator*, 10.

<sup>3</sup> The Sakura domain was located in modern Chiba prefecture near Narita.

for failing to deliver. In the event of a weak harvest, the already small surplus available to the farmers to sustain themselves shrank. That particular year, the crop failure turned what was even with the most bountiful harvests a meager return into a deficit, and as a result some 400 hamlets in the northern Kanto plain were at risk of starvation.

There was little that the villagers could do. Land rights were controlled by the domain. Confucian ideas about the proper order of society meant that peasants were forbidden to leave their village or give up farming to pursue other means of livelihood. Fleeing the domain was punishable by death. Appeals for lighter taxation, or for at least some consideration of the poor harvest, needed to be translated up from village headmen to the lower-ranking samurai who administered tax collection throughout the domain. These samurai, however, had no direct power to grant relief, and any appeal would have to be translated upwards again to the *daimyo*, or feudal lord of Sakura. The *daimyo*, beholden to the shogun, had no incentive to acquiesce.<sup>4</sup> For the samurai who saw themselves as the defenders of order in the domain, the villages and the people who inhabited them were little more than mute extensions of the land itself. The only means by which the voice of the farmers would be recognized as something other than incoherent grumbling is if their superiors spoke for them by translating the sounds of their suffering into the legitimate speech of the samurai class.

This was challenged by the actions of a man called Kiuchi Sōgorō.<sup>5</sup> He was a village headman who upset the domain hierarchy and disturbed the prevailing view of the world which

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<sup>4</sup> See Nagahara Keiji's essay "The Medieval Peasant" in the *Cambridge History of Japan, Volume 3*, for more on the complicated rice tax system of the Tokugawa period. For more on the violence used to ensure compliance, see especially pages 319-320.

<sup>5</sup> Sōgorō's story has been told countless times in countless forms. What I present here is not strictly based on any particular historical account, but is representative of most versions. I am concerned only with illustrating my theoretical claim rather than make a historical point about

denied the peasants the right to partake in domain affairs. He volunteered to leave the village and present the shogun himself, face to face, with a petition for tax relief. Whether he thought of it in these terms or not, Sōgorō's action was a rejection of hierarchy and an affirmation of a horizontal distribution of capacities. It refused the translation of life in the village into the idiom of the shogunate in which there was no way of describing peasants as speaking, feeling beings. His sudden appearance before the shogun was a translational, and therefore political, moment.

What Sōgorō was most certainly aware of was that his actions would be punishable by death. For a peasant to refuse the translation of his voice, to appear outside his station, or speak illegitimately to superiors was understood as an impossible and unforgivable violation of the harmonious natural order of cosmos. Undaunted, Sōgorō journeyed to Edo where he succeeded in confronting the shogun Ietsuna with his petition. The shogun was at first shocked speechless by the inexplicable appearance of a peasant speaking reasonably before him. He was moved by Sōgorō's plea, and acted to save the villages from starvation. Nonetheless, the shogun was bound by both law and tradition to see the act as a grave crime, and Sōgorō was executed in September 1653 as an example to any other who would dare to step out of place.

The story of Sōgorō the peasant martyr has been told and retold in countless textual, visual, and musical forms over the last 350 years. Why? Sōgorō's appeal to the shogun was a metaphor for something more profound. It was an utterance by someone who, in the structure of Tokugawa society, had no right to utter anything. It was an utterance by someone who was presumed to be incapable of speaking in a sensible way at all. Although his appeal is said to have

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the factual existence of Sakura Sōgorō. In fact, the multiplicity of ways in which Sōgorō's story has been translated is part of what makes it interesting and relevant to what follows. See Walthall, "Narratives of Peasant Uprisings in Japan" (577) for a full discussion of the different ways Sōgorō's story has been told.

been successful, those who have subsequently invoked Sōgorō's image have not done so because he symbolizes victory. On one level, his story carries a seemingly timeless appeal originating in our sympathy with the needless suffering of the villagers. We are deeply moved by Sōgorō's courage and sacrifice. On another, perhaps more important level, Sōgorō is a metaphor for the demand to be heard by those who are not recognized as capable of speech.<sup>6</sup> He is a refusal to remain uncared for and the rejection of a life lived in the shadows. For the participants in the rebellions of the freedom and popular rights movement of the 1880s or the radical students of the 1960s who battled the police on the streets of Tokyo, what was at stake in drawing on Sōgorō's example was the disruption of a worldview in which they were denied legitimate speech. Like Sōgorō, these later rebels refused the translation of their voices into the settled categories of social life.

From this perspective, we might contend that politics is not the everyday reproduction of social order, but rather that politics happens as we act in ways that break up the naturalness of our everyday relationships. My argument is that translation and metaphor make these kinds of moment possible. The main theoretical intervention I wish to make is to show that translation entails a certain radical democratic potential. This potential resides in the notion that thinking or acting translationally is to think or act without relying on predetermined subjects or fixed categories. By reconfirming a fundamental equality in the interruption of established ways of thinking and doing, translational thinking makes space for new values and practices. It does not, however, decide their material consequences. To translate is not simply to introduce something foreign into a pre-existing, coherently bounded milieu. Rather, I theorize it as the creation of an

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<sup>6</sup> Anne Walthall discusses the uses of Sogoro in later protests in "Japanese Gimin: Peasant Martyrs in Popular Memory."

opportunity for the world to transform in ways not previously expected or determined in advance.

To verify the fundamentally democratic potentiality at the heart of translational thinking, I turn to what was perhaps one of history's most feverish periods of linguistic and cultural translation. Japanese history in particular has been punctuated by episodes of cultural and political transformation mediated by the translation of new kinds of texts and alternative practices of interpretation. Probably the most intense, and certainly the most consequential for global politics in the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries, was the period from the arrival of Commodore Perry's "black ships" in 1853 to the implementation of the Meiji Constitution in 1891. Although the so-called "closed country" period (1633-1853) is largely a Eurocentric myth, Perry's arrival certainly did initiate a frenzy of activity geared towards understanding and interpreting the worlds of Europe and America. Rightly or wrongly, the countries of the West demanded to be recognized as national neighbors and trading partners. Part of the work of the work of the panoply of Meiji translation activities was understanding this demand. These attempts at interpretation, not the ideas or demands of the West themselves, made other fundamental changes in everyday politics and culture possible.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> I am not asserting that it was the integration of Western ideas introduced to Japan which made Japan modern. Rather, my point is simply that the process of interaction occasioned by a renewed attentiveness to something not fully comprehensible created new opportunities for understanding the structure of people's relations to one another. This interaction of cultural elements and bodies in space takes place prior to the formation of national subjectivities, geographical designations, or the other elements of subjectivity which characterize Hegelian histories or Modernization theory. On a more concrete level, it is also easy to forget that the Meiji period was defined by an influx of non-Western words, and ideas. Economic and cultural links with India, Southeast Asia, and beyond were products of the Meiji experience, and these created similar opportunities for cultural transformation. Many English-language commenters downplay this dimension of the restoration. See Stefan Taknaka's *Japan's Orient* for an interesting discussion of the Meiji image of "the East" and its role in imperial ideology.

In fact, the *bakumatsu* and early Meiji periods are remarkable for the rapidity with which the decentralized *hōkensei* (封建制), or what we generally call the “feudal” system of domains dominated by the Tokugawa shogunate, was replaced with a centralized, modern, capitalist nation-state.<sup>8</sup> It was during these years that a subject called “Japan” took shape, became a member of a mutually-recognized international community, and began to participate in global capitalist exchange. Moreover, it was here that the material and ideological foundations of its 20<sup>th</sup> century imperial project were laid. At stake in understanding the politics of Meiji translation, therefore, is an answer to the question of how new language can change the relationships between people, facilitate or hinder state-building, contribute to the accumulation of capital, or cultivate of a sense of national belonging.

Many of the best-known writers of the period, such as Fukuzawa Yukichi and Nakae Chōmin, suggest that it was the adoption of the spirit of “civilization,” a concept translated by Fukuzawa and others from the works of the Scottish Enlightenment, that was central to the success of the Meiji project. In other words, they held that it was the construction of new kinds of “civilized” political subjects, both individual and collective, that animated the transformation of institutions and practices. This so-called spirit of civilization did not take shape because translations of European ideas added the concept of “civilization” to the existing political lexicon. Rather, translations of this and other concepts disrupted the intelligibility of that lexicon

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<sup>8</sup> “Feudal” is actually a complicated translation word that I am not fully comfortable with. The Marxist distinction between “feudalism” and “capitalism,” or other teleological accounts of history which separate the “feudal” era from modernity were obviously not part of discussions of systems of rule in China or Japan until the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Classically, the distinction between “centralized” and “decentralized” rule was what the phrases *hōken* and *gunkoku* (群國) spoke to.



itself, complicating old ways of thinking and legitimizing new ways of being that were neither “civilization” nor something completely unlike it.

Therefore, I turn to history to help theorize the role that translations might play in making new kinds of political subjectivity possible.<sup>9</sup> I start from the premise that that subjects do not pre-exist their basic sensibility.<sup>10</sup> That is, we should not assume that the Cartesian *cogito* is universal, that human beings are “rational animals,” or that they have an underlying nature that they can be alienated from. From a collective point of view, we should also not fall into the trap of thinking of “the people” as a timeless subject of belonging, that the nation is an organic and natural community, or that the state is the inevitable outcome of human cultural development. Some particular vision of the world makes it possible to understand one’s self or one’s association with others in these ways. Changes in that vision of the world make it possible to experience being and belonging differently. I ask how translations shook people from their settled ways of understanding themselves, their country, and their phenomenal worlds.

In order to address these issues, I focus on the role that translations of the languages and practices of citizenship played in breaking down and replacing the Tokugawa world. Becoming a citizen is to become a subject, both politically and psychologically. In Rancière’s words, “Political subjectivity...refers to an enunciative and demonstrative capacity to reconfigure the relation between the visible and the sayable, the relation between words and bodies.”<sup>11</sup> I argue

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<sup>9</sup> I do not see a rigid disciplinary boundary between history and political theory in this regard. Insofar as histories always create their objects of analysis, they are in effect already theoretical. Insofar as political theory wishes to have some grasp on the real world, it is already historical.

<sup>10</sup> Although Althusser, Derrida, Foucault and others provide ways of understanding this claim, although I find Jacques Rancière’s explicit linkage of aesthetics and politics to be most helpful. I will discuss the reasons for preference in more detail below.

<sup>11</sup> Rancière and Panagia, “Dissenting Words.”

that the translation of the words “citizen” and “citizenship” were a central site for the emergence of new relations between words and bodies.

I take citizenship as my object because it informs fundamental distinctions between the public and the private, the individual and the social, and the psychological and the economic. Etienne Balibar has considered the intersecting political and philosophical meanings of *citoyen* (citizen) and *sujet* (subject) to suggest that citizenship and subjecthood are fundamentally inseparable but indeterminate.<sup>12</sup> Being a political citizen implies being subject to the rules one creates with others. Likewise, more philosophically speaking, the questioning of unified psychological subjecthood reveals the collective making and remaking of social worlds which constrain our perceptions and behaviors. In short, he encourages us to think of citizens not as politically or psychologically sovereign. They are constantly constituted and re-constituted in the in-between of sovereignty and subjecthood.

Moreover, as we will see, many other ideas and practices deeply implicated in the political and social changes of the early Meiji period, were inseparable from ways of talking about citizenship. For example, the “civilization” Fukuzawa found so compelling, the language of “freedom and popular rights” that shaped the eponymous movement of the 1870s and 80s, and the discourse of “women’s rights” that began to appear in the 1880s were all ways of refiguring the relationship between individuals and the state. In other words, I focus on citizenship because its translation and practice very visibly disrupted knowledge about the self and one’s obligations to others at the very same time. It created space for new kinds of self-understanding and new forms collective belonging to emerge alongside one another.

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<sup>12</sup> Balibar, “Citizen Subject;” see also *Citizenship*.

In this sense, it is not only the translation *of* citizenship as a word, but the practices of translation *as* citizenship that were important in the transformations of the early Meiji period. Citizenship, in broadest outline, is a statement about who counts as a member of the community. As we will see, the Meiji period was filled with examples of people who transformed ideas about who belonged and who did not simply by appearing in new places. In other words, their uninvited presence in places they were not allowed to be doing things they were not supposed to be capable of doing might be read as the translation of one way transforming the relations between subjects into another. To the extent that we take both words and actions to be to be capable of altering the distribution of people and things in the world, we need not regard them as rigidly separate things.

My engagement with Meiji translations and enactments of citizenship takes place in five parts. The overture aims to accomplish two main things. First, I situate my approach to translational thinking in contrast to the politics of comparison at work in comparative political theory and comparative literature. What I ultimately aim to do is to problematize the *com-* of comparison with the *trans-* of translation. That is, rather than create a static relationship between two pre-existing phenomena, I focus on the interactive process between mutually-incomprehensible things creates space for something new. I argue that translations are metaphorical relations that allow new positions to appear not by combining elements from pre-existing things, but by creating an interaction between similar incommensurables. The miscount created by this metaphorical relation is the origin of a fundamental indeterminacy in intralingual, interlingual, and intersemiotic modes of translation. This indeterminacy means that words and images are always appearing where they are not supposed to be, saying things they are supposedly incapable of saying, to people to whom they are not supposed to speak.

I then move on to the concrete empirical analysis of translation in the early Meiji period. The link between translation and politics can only be fully appreciated when considering its manifestation in a particular historical moment with established rules of literary production, reading, and symbolic interpretation. In this sense, the scenes that follow should not necessarily be read as links in a causal argument, but semi-independent episodes, or what I call “translational moments,” in which different aspects of the Tokugawa-era worldview were transformed within particular discursive contexts. Moments one and two focus on the translation of citizenship by examining the intertextual translation of the words “citizen” and *citoyen* from English and French into Japanese for the first time. Moments three and four examine citizenship as a translational practice, and demonstrate the expansiveness of translation as a poetic and political activity.

Why have I chosen to focus on these moments to the exclusion of others? First, in moments one and two, I have chosen what are probably the two texts most directly engaged with English and French concepts of citizenship, namely Fukuzawa Yukichi’s *Seiyō jijō* and Nakae Chōmin’s *Minyaku yakkai*. Fukuzawa’s text, called *Conditions in the West* in English, is an amalgamation of translations of various English-language sources, often not attributed to their original authors. The bulk of the second volume of the work is a translation of carefully selected parts of John Hill Burton’s *Political Economy*, to which Fukuzawa has added his own thoughts. This curation, I will show, both challenges existing regimes of perception while simultaneously shoring up others. The same is true for Chōmin’s *Minyaku yakkai*, or *An Interpretation of the Social Contract*. Chōmin’s text is an abridged translation of Jean Jacques Rousseau’s *Du Contrat Social*. Chōmin’s engagement with citizenship in Rousseau’s text is a translation not only of Rousseau’s words, but a transformation of both republican politics and Edo-period Confucian

moral norms. Translation and politics are both always dirty, complicated, and confusing businesses which often produce contradictory results. These texts are both highly representative of translation's democratic potentiality and its linguistic and political complexity.

Moreover, both texts were very widely disseminated. Fukuzawa's text in particular was one of the best-selling books of the entire Meiji period. For many people, both common and elite, it served as an introduction to life in Europe and America. It was instrumental in disrupting Tokugawa practices of knowledge production. Chōmin's translation was remarkable for its wide readership, but also for its near ubiquity in the hands of the participants of the so-called "Freedom and Popular Rights Movement" of the late 1870s and early 1880s. The movement was an eruption of hostility toward the government, an intensification of demands for a constitution and a parliament, and a widespread rethinking of the relationship between rulers and ruled. The relationship between Chōmin's text and these incipient political moments merits careful consideration.

Both authors' texts are also remarkable for their breaks with longstanding aesthetic practices of translation and conventions of reading. They both demonstrated new understandings of what translation is, what translators can (or should) do, and how readers can (or should) read.<sup>13</sup> *Seiyō jijō* is recognized as one of the first texts of the *genbun itchi* movement, or the movement for the unification of spoken and written Japanese. Prior to the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, written Japanese was often presented in *kanbun* format. *Kanbun* literally means "Chinese writing," and consists of Chinese characters, or *kanji*, arranged according to the norms of classical Chinese grammar. Scholars then added notations indicating the correct Japanese word

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<sup>13</sup> James Martel describes a similar phenomenon in the practices of reading suggested by Thomas Hobbes. See *Subverting the Leviathan*.

order, and readers rearranged the words and supplied the necessary classical Japanese grammar in their heads. Spoken Japanese often read the *kanji* differently, used different grammatical patterns, and was widely variable in terms of vocabulary and pronunciation across the various domains. Dialects of domains in the Northeast were all but incomprehensible to those who lived in the Southwest of Honshu, the main island. The independence of *kanbun* from spoken language made it a *lingua franca* for the elite not only in the different domains of the Japanese archipelago, but across the broader Sinosphere.<sup>14</sup> Fukuzawa rejected this distinction between speech and writing and wrote in the idiom of central Tokyo, creating a different experience of reading. Nakae Chōmin, on the other hand, made precisely the opposite move. Rather than translating Rousseau's *Social Contract* into popular language, Chōmin translated it *kanbun*. In so doing, he radically changed not only the audience to which the text was directed, but offered a fundamentally different aesthetic experience.

Moments three and four concern instances of people taking part in citizenship by appearing in places they did not belong or as people that were not recognized as legitimate speakers. In a sense, we can say their practices of citizenship actually translated existing political relationships in new ways. In moment three, I examine the sudden and unexpected proliferation of speech and debating societies in both urban and very rural settings. These societies were inspired in many ways by Fukuzawa Yukichi's own translation into action of the ideas about citizenship translated in *Seiyō jijō* and elsewhere. Fukuzawa and his writing did not, however, wholly determine the actions of the speech societies. What makes these societies so interesting from the standpoint of both translation and citizenship is that they were by and large

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<sup>14</sup> That is, Qing China, the Tokugawa domains, the Korean Peninsula, The Ryūkyū Kingdom, and Northern Vietnam.

autochthonous and independent. Moreover, they were created by people who were previously assumed to be incapable of such practices. The challenge that the rural societies presented to longstanding views of class, hierarchy, and legitimate speech broke Tokugawa-era worldviews and reassembled the pieces differently.

Moment four concerns the appearance of upper-middle- and lower-class women in public, essentially for the first time in Japanese history. In Japan, as elsewhere, the number of places women were not supposed to appear was large and the range of things they were supposed to be capable of saying was narrow. The translation of the emerging discourses of citizenship as they appeared in Fukuzawa and Chōmin's texts, as well as in the actions of the speech and debating societies, created new opportunities for women to speak and be heard on subjects they were believed to be incapable of addressing. The appearance of women appearing where they did not belong was a key instance of social disruption. However, it emerged in a complicated relationship with elements of existing political sensibilities and practices.<sup>15</sup> Chōmin's translation of citizenship depended on some of these sensibilities and, served to re-assimilate the appearance of women in public into the schema of "good wives, wise mothers."

In summary, this dissertation asks two fundamental questions which are simultaneously historical and theoretical. First, I inquire into the relationship between translation and politics. My argument is that translation creates metaphorical figurations of the world which transform our ways of taking part in society. Second, I ask what role translation played breaking down the decentralized Tokugawa system of rule and replacing it with a centralized state, capitalist economic relations, and the nation-form. The answer I offer is that through the

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<sup>15</sup> These existing sensibilities and practices are what Rancière calls "the police." See Rancière, *Dis-agreement*, 28.

translation of critical concepts like citizenship, old subjectivities were broken down and new ones -conducive to institutions like capitalism and nationalism- emerged in their place. These new institutions and subjectivities were not willfully created or masterfully designed. They appeared unsummoned, and although it was unpredictable in the moment, they seem highly consequential from our present vantage point.

Ultimately, this dissertation is aimed at an interdisciplinary audience of those who do not see rigid distinctions between history, politics, literature, and philosophy. One implication of what follows is that because politics depends on a particular set of conventions for making sense of the world, it must always be considered from a highly contextual and historical point of view. For the same reason, however, political events cannot be treated purely in terms of what we might like to believe are objective social conditions. There is an inherent indeterminacy in translational and political thinking that undermines many of the assumptions on which our disciplinary boundaries are constructed.

Finally, what I do not offer is a guide for political action or a critique of existing society. I also do not wish to assert that aesthetic practices can be effectively marshalled for attaining specific political ends. There is no comprehensive strategy for political mobilization here. Because politics erupts from the gaps between our conventional understandings of political actions and actors, we have little control over precisely when, where, or how it appears. Intentions are often the least consequential and least interesting aspects of both poetic and political activity. What I do provide is a confirmation of the principle that transformation is always possible, no matter where and no matter how total the domination of a given system might appear to be. Translation is suffused into our experiences of culture, and as such the



uncounted and unseen are always lurking, waiting to burst in on our always narrow and partial worldviews.

### **Translation, Politics, and the History of the Meiji State**

I am not the first to turn to Meiji Japan as a place for thinking about the relationship between language and politics. The deep connection between translation and the political transformations of the Meiji period is already widely acknowledged. In recent years, a number of scholars have addressed the role that the appearance of European texts and translated concepts in the late Tokugawa and early Meiji social world played in influencing political change. In English, the foremost of these is Douglas Howland, whose *Translating the West* is in many ways a point of departure for my own inquiry.<sup>16</sup> For native English-speakers long accustomed to a tradition of political liberalism, to hear that 19<sup>th</sup> century Japan had no translation words for things like “freedom,” “society,” or “rights” might be quite surprising. Nonetheless, Howland shows how the construction of a settled translation vocabulary for these concepts influenced debates about constitutionalism, the form parliament might take, and what the duties of imperial subjects were to be. Howland’s conceptual history brings together important discussions of the relationship between translation, law, and Japan’s integration into the international system of nation states. Despite its analysis of a wide range of concepts, it only scratches the surface of the vast number of new ideas and ways of thinking that emerged in this period. This is no fault of Howland’s, but is simply a consequence of the immensity of the early Meiji translation project.

Howland has suggested two avenues in particular for further research. First, he argues that concept of “the nation” needs to be more fully explored in terms of its translation history and

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<sup>16</sup> Howland has written a number of other very interesting and helpful essays on Meiji Translation. See especially Howland, “Translating Liberty in Nineteenth-Century Japan” and “The Predicament of Ideas in Culture: Translation and Historiography.”

its association words like *kokumin* (国民) or *minzoku* (民族) in Japanese. The histories of power, rights, and freedom that Howland provides need contextualization, particularly because Japanese nationalism was such a profound consequence of the political transformations of the Meiji period. In order to fully make sense of these kinds of collective subject, however, we must first come to terms with “the category of the citizen” which provides a way “to represent the individual constituent of the state.”<sup>17</sup> In other words, the figure of the nation, and the history of Japanese nationalism more generally, clearly developed in some relation to the ways in which individuals understood themselves as members of the state. While Howland provides some important clues for understanding how citizenship was ultimately configured in his discussions of freedom and rights, citizenship remains outside his scope. In what follows, I attempt to provide a history of the translational moments in which citizenship appeared, and move towards a consideration of the relationship between citizenship and the nation.

Howland is a self-identified participant in what Reinhardt Koselleck and Melvin Richter call *Begriffsgeschichte*, or the “history of concepts.”<sup>18</sup> The focus of their efforts has primarily been on tracing the many deployments and transformations of critical political and sociological ideas in Europe since the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Koselleck served as the editor to the monumental *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe* project, which is a historical lexicon of critical concepts in political and economic life in Germany. This approach charts a middle course between Quentin Skinner’s

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<sup>17</sup> Howland, *Translating the West*, 187.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 7; 184; Richter, “Begriffsgeschichte and the History of Ideas,” see also Richter, “Appreciating a Contemporary Classic: The *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe* and Future Scholarship” and Koselleck, *The Practice of Conceptual History* for more on this approach. Matsuda Kōichirō’s review essay of Howland’s *Translating the West* also suggests that Maruyama Masao, Ishida Takeshi, and Matsuzawa Hiroaki also practice a similar method. Matsuda, “Review: *Translating the West* by Douglas Howland,” 384.

more synchronic focus on the deployment of language in specific contexts and J.G.A Pocock's more diachronic understanding of political languages.<sup>19</sup> It privileges the concept over the synchronic analysis of specific political battles in which individual users deployed it and separates the concept somewhat from the broadest connections between global discursive networks.

Many Japanese-language studies of Meiji culture have taken a similar course. For example, Howland, and virtually every other author (myself included) in English or Japanese to write on Meiji translation words is deeply indebted to the work of Yanabu Akira.<sup>20</sup> Yanabu has written detailed histories of a number of concepts, including not only explicitly political ideas like “freedom” and so on, but also of other new concepts that transformed the experience of using the Japanese language itself. It was only during the early- to mid-Meiji period that it truly became possible to talk about a single “Japanese” language at all. The linguistic consolidation that coincided with political centralization incorporated not only political vocabulary but new sentence patterns and words with new grammatical functions. The pronouns “he” and “she,” for example, are rarely used in classical Japanese literature, despite being extraordinarily common today. Yanabu shows the origins of these terms in the translation of European romantic literature. Yanabu's approach is remarkable because he clearly connects obviously political lexical innovations (such as “freedom”) with ideas that we would not immediately recognize as such

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<sup>19</sup> This is not to suggest that Pocock, Skinner, and Koselleck's methods are necessarily opposed to one another. They simply ask different kinds of questions. See Pocock, *Politics, Language, Time*; Skinner, *Meaning and Understanding in the History of Ideas*.

<sup>20</sup> Yanabu, *Honyakugo seiritsu jijō*

(like the third person pronouns). In other words, he highlights the situatedness of political thinking in the broader experience of symbolic culture.<sup>21</sup>

Moreover, Yanabu's work makes it clear that the physical or aesthetic experiences of speaking and being spoken to in translation are critical. In other words, the translation of new concepts should not be seen as purely ideal, but rooted in material and especially bodily experience. For example, one of his best-known contributions to the theory of translation is what he calls "the cassette effect." In English, when someone says the word "cassette" we think of the small, now outdated, plastic box which contains a magnetic tape of recorded music. In terms of origins, however, the word "cassette" is a loan word from French. *Cassette* is the diminutive form of the noun *case*, meaning simply "box." When the word *kasetto* (カセット) entered the Japanese language (from English, not French), Japanese speakers did not have a clear sense of the term's meaning. Most people were initially unaware of the term's French origin, and few would have understood, upon hearing or reading the word for the first time, what its Japanese meaning was. Nonetheless, Yanabu notes that Japanese speakers at least have historically tended to experience the clearly foreign, initially incomprehensible word as something with a particular cachet. Modern spoken Japanese is riddled with loan words that many native Japanese speakers do not understand when they hear them, or may only loosely understand when they utter them.<sup>22</sup> Nonetheless, this practice is common because foreign words have a prestige value both for the speaker and for the listener.

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<sup>21</sup> Raymond Williams does something similar in charting the relationships between words and their transformations over time. See *Marxism and Literature* and *Keywords*. Barbara Cassin's *Dictionary of Untranslatables* is also relevant, though it focuses on the fundamental discontinuities of concepts across languages.

<sup>22</sup> The phenomenon of *waseieigo* (和製英語), or "English made in Japan" is fascinating. See Seargeant, *The Idea of English in Japan* (82-85) for more.

This cachet perhaps follows from the fact that hearing a such a word for the first time is ultimately a physical experience. It jolts us out of complacent listening and requires us to actively think about what we are hearing. It makes us aware of our emotional relation to the other speaker. It is a shock. In short, it elicits a change of aesthetic awareness. The “cassette effect” is precisely this aesthetic experience of hearing a translation word for the first time. Over time and through repeated usage, this visceral reaction diminishes and the neologism or loan word in question gain a stable meaning.<sup>23</sup> In Japanese, when new words become officially accepted as part of the language, they are said to have gained “citizenship” (*shimin*). Yanabu’s critical lesson, however, is that translation alters our experience of social reality in a broadly aesthetic or sensory way.

Howland does not foreground the aesthetic aspects of translation the way that Yanabu does, but he does connect that aesthetic experience to the experience of politics more broadly. In his view, “translation technique and political thought developed in parallel: the simplification of technique is related to a simplification of power relations in the Japanese state.”<sup>24</sup> In other words, Howland suggests that there is, or at least was in the Meiji context, a relationship between the standard practices of translation-making and the experiences of politics they imply. Politics and translation are part of the “perpetual circulation” of language, and attempts to “fix language in time in order to account fully for causes and effects are washed out by the fluidity of language.”<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> This occurs with metaphors as well. I explore this connection in the overture below. See Derrida, “White Mythology,” 15.

<sup>24</sup> Howland, *Translating the West*, 184.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 183.

It is not only causality that we should be suspect of in an aesthetics of translation. The extensive English and Japanese literatures on Meiji translation practices and translation words sometimes conceal the fact that “translation” itself is a problematic category in the Japanese context. “Translation,” as we usually think of it in the English-language sense, is essentially a Meiji concept. In English, the verb “to translate” is derived from the Latin verb *traducere*, or to “lead across.”<sup>26</sup> In Ancient Greek, as Jacques Derrida and Barbara Cassin have observed, there was no corresponding verb (although several could be used to describe the activities we now define as translation).<sup>27</sup> Translation as English speakers know it took shape in the course of the European tradition of biblical exegesis and became institutionalized after the European “discovery” of languages in the 17<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>28</sup> For many non-European cultures, translation in the narrow, European sense of “transferring from one language to another” simply did not exist.

In the case of Japan, the idea of Japanese and Chinese as separate languages foreign to one another, did not emerge in scholarly circles until the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Moreover, this difference was not widely accepted as a common-sense fact until the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century at the earliest.<sup>29</sup> Instead, language was an open field in which many styles of writing, speaking, and representation coexisted in different degrees of formality and without acknowledging the national boundaries we see today. The critical distinction for much of this period was “high” and “low” rather than “native” and “foreign.” “Translation proper” in Tokugawa Japan would be

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<sup>26</sup> Derrida, “Sending: On Representation”; Auvray-Assayas, et al., “To Translate,” 1141.

<sup>27</sup> Auvray-Assayas, et al., “To Translate,” 1140;

<sup>28</sup> Clements, *Cultural History of Translation in Early Modern Japan*.

<sup>29</sup> Maruyama Masao credits Ogyu Sorai of discovering the foreignness of Chinese. Maruyama, *Studies in the Intellectual History of Tokugawa Japan*; see also Judy Wakabayashi “Translation in the East Asian Cultural Sphere,” 22.

better described in Jakobson's terms as "intralingual" than "interlingual," as it was the rewriting of texts written in *kanbun* or other formal styles into mixed or *kana* forms that made up the bulk of textual rewriting. Even the phrase "intralingual" does not quite fit because it still implies the existence of a single language as a closed space distinct from others, which was itself a product of 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> cultural interactions. There was no Japanese state, no Japanese nation, and no Japanese language as we conceive of them today until the Meiji period. Therefore, there was no "translation" as we naively understand that term until around that time as well.<sup>30</sup>

Rebecca Clements lists a wide range of words which in the Tokugawa period all stood for what we would now call a form of "translation."<sup>31</sup> At the same time, though, virtually all of them include practices that would prevent them from being considered "good" translations within our contemporary norms and rules. I discuss the specific norms and rules of Meiji translation and their changes more directly in the translational moments that follow.

Translation in 21<sup>st</sup> century English-language culture is understood primarily in terms of the interlingual rewriting of an original text into another language.<sup>32</sup> As a result, as Lawrence Venuti argues, contemporary English norms of translation value faithfulness to the source language text above all.<sup>33</sup> This demand reduces the visibility of the translator and makes the translation itself seem as if it were not originally written in a different language at all. In pre-Meiji practices of rewriting, it was often not translators who were invisible, but the authors of the

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<sup>30</sup> See Sakai, *Translation and Subjectivity*, 16.

<sup>31</sup> Clements, *A Cultural History of Translation in Early Modern Japan*.

<sup>32</sup> We might also think of this kind of translation in relation to the global, largely English-language "world literature" that Aamir Mufti describes in *Forget English!*

<sup>33</sup> Venuti, *The Translator's Invisibility*, 2. See also Venuti, *The Scandals of Translation*.

original texts themselves. Rewriting could mean the reproduction of a text in a different register of formality, its reproduction with the inclusion of exegetical notes, the borrowing of a plot retold in new words, or numerous other possibilities.

What is interesting about the history of Meiji translation words and translation practices is that the broader consolidation of Japanese as a single, unified language and the consolidation of the state as a unified collective subject occurred simultaneously. This is surely no accident. Naoki Sakai has argued that in order for foreign languages to exist at all, there must first be an act of translation.<sup>34</sup> That is, there must be some recognition of a mutual incomprehension, and an attempt to overcome it, for the contours of language communities to appear. The boundaries between states and nations emerge in the same way. Translation, in Sakai's terms, is instrumental to the construction of both coherent language communities and coherent political communities. Settled practices of interlingual translation ultimately depend on the existence of both.

What these different perspectives on the history of Meiji language and translation all point to, therefore, is a connection with some recent developments in political theory. Especially in the last ten years or so, many have taken up the question of how regimes of aesthetic judgment and practices of political judgment mutually inform one another. Davide Panagia calls this the "poetics of political thinking," or the "...coincidence of aesthetic and moral conceptions of value." He argues that "...if we are to continue to imagine that political life, like a linguistic system, involves the formation of relations among entities, then it is of little surprise to find literary theorists, anthropologists, historians, cultural theorists and others...as intellectual contributors to ongoing debates about the nature of political arrangements."<sup>35</sup> In other words, the

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<sup>34</sup> Sakai, "Translation," 75.

<sup>35</sup> Panagia, *Poetics of Political Thinking*, 3.



question of representation can no longer be treated as either purely political problem or a purely artistic problem. The transformation or disruption of regimes of aesthetic perception also make it possible to experience politics differently.<sup>36</sup> My argument is precisely that translation is a kind of poetic thinking, and it is therefore a kind of political thinking.

Our norms of aesthetic experience are, in effect, rules or strategies for translating what we read into what we see and what we do. What counts as valid speech depends on what we take “speech” to mean. Our definitions of valid speech determine how we make sense of what the world confronts us with. By “sensible” and “aesthetic” I and many of the others interested in these questions simply mean the capacity to be affected by the world in terms of sight, touch, hearing, or any other sensory experience.<sup>37</sup> Sense is material in that it involves movement in our bodies, the arrangement of objects in space, and the spread of sounds through the air.<sup>38</sup> When we say that something “makes sense,” what we mean is that it is something can be physically experienced, not just that we understand it. It is visible to us and we can recognize what we are confronted with. Just as with textual translation, our capacities to see, hear, and feel are influenced by norms or standards of sensation which guide how we view images, how we evaluate sounds, and how we experience different touches or tastes. The translation of deed to word, deed to image, image to sound, or any other articulation of two different sensory experiences is mediated by these regimes of sense-making. I flesh out this broad understanding of translation more fully in the overture below.

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<sup>36</sup> Panagia, *Poetics of Political Thinking*, 13-17.

<sup>37</sup> Brian Massumi’s definition of “Affect Theory” is also important here. *Aisthesis* and to “affect and be affected” are intimately related. Massumi, *The Politics of Affect*, 48.

<sup>38</sup> Rancière, *Aisthesis*, x; *Dis-agreement*, 26.

Davide Panagia and Jacques Rancière's accounts of aesthetic experience also brings with them a radical conception of politics itself. In Rancière's view, politics occurs when the "distribution of the sensible" breaks down. In his words, the distribution of the sensible is what "...reveals who can have a share in what is common to the community based on what they do and on the time and space in which this activity is performed."<sup>39</sup> That is, politics is not the institutional back and forth that we usually associate with the term (what Rancière calls the "police," or "policy," and which I will refer to as "politics-as-usual" or "everyday politics" in what follows). Rather, politics occurs when what he calls "dissensus" takes place. Dissensus is what happens when our framework for dividing up and counting subjects in the world is disrupted by the appearance of something which has no place in that framework. It is not the re-division of the world by a sovereign subject or the re-ordering of classes in a hierarchy. According to Samuel Chambers, this view of politics does not "...derive politics from any essential features of the human subject..."<sup>40</sup> Rather, the Rancièreian view is that "...we must grasp politics as that irruptive force that brings about the subject."<sup>41</sup> One of Rancière's favorite examples of dissensus is the plebian rebellion on the Aventine hill in Ancient Rome.<sup>42</sup> The rebellion was an example of people who were not counted as equals demanding to be recognized as speaking beings. No one had believed that people of their class were capable of *logos*, or intelligible, reason-bearing speech. Their words were treated merely as "voice" in the same way

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<sup>39</sup> Rancière, *Politics and Aesthetics*, 12.

<sup>40</sup> Chambers, *Rancière's Lesson*, 17.

<sup>41</sup> Chambers, *The Lessons of Rancière*, 27.

<sup>42</sup> Deranty, *Jacques Rancière: Key Concepts*, 137.

that Aristotle described the vocalizations of dogs.<sup>43</sup> Their appearance in public, making a demand to be heard disrupted the commonplace understanding of roles and capacities in Roman society. This disruption, rather than the resolution of the uprising by compromise or military force, was the political moment. Before they were plebians, rebels, or any other kind of category, they simply appeared as something uncountable.

The idea that politics can be described in terms of the association of unlike things been influential in democratic theory more broadly. Bonnie Honig, for example, has inquired into the role of the figure of the foreigner in democratic life. She asks, “what problems the foreigner solves for us?”<sup>44</sup> Historically, one of those problems has been the very founding (or re-founding) of democracy itself. Plato and Rousseau are among the many who have insisted on the value of having a foreigner give laws to a democratic society at its origins. The reasons are many, but the element of novelty or unexpectedness that the foreigner brings is essential for joining people together in ways that they would never have been able to achieve on their own. The figure of the foreigner as something other, yet which comprehends the nature of joining unlike things is perhaps what allows it to play such a critical role. The foreigner understands the people in a way that the people can never understand themselves. The foreigner is radically separate, but capable of quite literally making a community of heterogeneous elements make sense. The foreign founder is in many ways a practitioner of translational politics. He or she transforms the disparate, conflicting elements of a heterogeneity of individuals into something that resembles them in their unfigured state, but which is also not the same tumultuous cacophony that existed before. The founder intervenes in between existing elements to rewrite the relation between them.

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<sup>43</sup> Aristotle, *Politics*, 1253a.

<sup>44</sup> Honig, *Democracy and the Foreigner*, 4.

As I have suggested, translations create moments of democratic equality precisely by interrupting the usual relation between people and things. In this sense, translational moments perform the same work as the foreign founder by disrupting old relations, creating space for new ones, and then disappearing into the distance as the force of novelty fades. It is not the conscious or willful transformation of the existing elements, but the addition of something surplus or uncountable into the mixture that creates the transformative effect. Drawing on Rousseau and Freud, Honig argues that "...the supplement of foreignness is undecidable: it both shores up ...and unsettles... the people or the law being founded."<sup>45</sup> Just as the foreign founder makes democracy possible by simultaneously destabilizing and refiguring the individuals which will compose it, translation creates moments of democratic equality by disrupting our standard regimes of sense-making with the addition of an uncountable supplement.<sup>46</sup>

Aletta Norval suggests something similar when she describes "aversive" democracy. In her view, Rancière and Stanley Cavell provide an aesthetic account of politics in which community does not exist *a priori*, but which is "disclosive."<sup>47</sup> That is, community takes shape only in speaking and being spoken for with others. In this sense, democracy risks becoming

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<sup>45</sup> Honig, *Democracy and the Foreigner*, 33.

<sup>46</sup> What Honig is most emphatically not saying is that foreigners must impose democracy from without for it to thrive. This is the kind of imperialist logic that J.S Mill describes in *On Liberty*, but is antithetical to the vision of democracy that Honig describes and which I suggest exists in translational practices. What Honig has in mind is the role that figurations of foreignness play in the cultural lives of democratic subjects, and this is the connection that I am interested in as well. What is important is not that something foreign arrives and creates democracy. Rather, it is the ways in which self and other are poetically situated in culture that enable different kinds of subjective experience.

<sup>47</sup> Norval, *Aversive Democracy*, 174.

“sclerotic” when its institutions and constituent identities cease to be challenged or criticized.<sup>48</sup>

This is not simply criticizing the institutions in the terms that constitute them, but challenging by speaking in new ways which constitute community itself differently. Restricting our conception of democracy to reasonable discourse in the public sphere circumscribes the potential challenges to it by defining what kinds of utterance are valid.

Instead, rather than seeking to reach agreement within the terms outlined in deliberative theory, democracy for Norval and Cavell emphasizes disagreements and “separateness of positions.”<sup>49</sup> Aversive democracy is a practice in which we seek difference and separateness precisely as a way of keeping our community of heterogeneous elements vital. No identity is ever final and fixed in this account, and as such, rather than debating the correct, mimetic application of names to people, we constantly re-found our community on the basis of new configurations of those heterogeneous elements in relation to one another. Our endeavors to resist conformity, the “aversive” part of aversive democracy, force our communities to evolve towards an ideal democracy “to come.”

Central to the practices of aversion Norval describes is the example.<sup>50</sup> Examples are not patterns to be followed, but images to be translated into something else. That is, in following an exemplary figure we can certainly be like someone else, but never actually be that person. Taking an example is a form of transformation which gives rise to something that defies our standard categories of naming and dividing. As we will see, translating words or actions follows a similar figurative process, and as such has similar poetic and political results.

The views of translation and politics suggested by these accounts can help us understand

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<sup>48</sup> Norval, *Aversive Democracy*, 175.

<sup>49</sup> Norval, *Aversive Democracy*, 175.

<sup>50</sup> Norval, *Aversive Democracy*, 191.

not only translation practices themselves, but more importantly, they suggest a way of understanding some of the means by which Tokugawa domain rule was transformed into Meiji capitalism. Katsuya Hirano has described the period leading up to the Meiji Restoration in terms of the relationship between cultural representation, economic practices, and social hierarchy. He does so by examining what he calls the “dialogic imagination” of late Tokugawa society. In other words, he looks at the “...interface between the distinct forms of popular [cultural] representation and the configuration of social order...as well as the moral and ideological discourses that were conducive to the reproduction of the [social] order.”<sup>51</sup> He has argued that it was representations of the human body in particular that were the central site of ideological struggle throughout the Tokugawa era and into early Meiji. While the shogunate emphasized the importance of austerity, sacrifice, and Confucian virtue, popular representations of the body celebrated sensuality, freedom, and luxury. These contesting images were reflective of and instrumental to the undoing of economic relations which supported the *hōkensei*.

Phrased differently, we might say that Hirano shows how representations of the body were the cornerstone of certain Tokugawa-era deployments of power. I would like to extend this analysis by attempting to translate this view of ideology into an account of the Early Meiji distribution of the sensible. For Hirano, ideology is the system of ideas and practices which reproduce the everyday institutions of society.<sup>52</sup> This process of reproduction can seem resistant to transformation, however. Alternatively, viewing politics in terms of practices of aesthetic sense-making also allows us to consistently interpret the function of signs and actions in the

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<sup>51</sup> Hirano, *The Politics of Dialogic Imagination*, 3.

<sup>52</sup> Michael Freeden defines ideology in similar terms. *Ideologies and Political Theory: A Conceptual Approach*, 3.

world. These aesthetic practices facilitate interpretation in different ways, however, and they enable different possibilities for politics.

For the shogunate and the samurai class, the body was translated into an element of a broader metaphysical-natural harmony that gave the state its authority, legitimized the domination of the samurai, and denied the lower classes the capacity of legitimate speech. The policing of representations of the body was precisely the policing of the distinction between the *phone* of the agricultural and merchant classes and the *logos* of the samurai. We can say that the Bakhtinian distinction between high and low forms of culture remained intact during the late Tokugawa period to the extent that the samurai world did not count lower-class representations of the body in song, image, and action as speech. According to Hirano, a major factor in the breakdown of samurai modes of representation was changing economic circumstances.<sup>53</sup> The failures of the rice economy forced many lower-ranking samurai into economic and political relationships with merchants. The rise of the money economy meant that merchants in particular could begin to appear in spaces formerly open only to samurai. Merchants adopted certain affectations of samurai practice and translated their wealth into outward signs of opulence. The appearance of the low in the high and the high in the low facilitated by economic change contributed to the emergence of new kinds of culture. How was a samurai supposed to make sense of a merchant to whom he was deeply indebted? How did a merchant who purchased samurai status count in the standard distribution of the sensible? As these novel translations lead to increasingly indecorous or apparently wrong arrangements, Tokugawa society became increasingly unstable.

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<sup>53</sup> Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, 21.

Hirano draws our attention to the curious fact that although the growth of the Meiji state resolved some of these contradictions, it that also continued to manufacture them by maintain a vigorous regulation of bodies on the basis of longstanding norms. I would like to build on Hirano's work by attempting to show in what follows that because our practices of sense-making are rarely - if ever- broken entirely at once, the continued or transformed operation of certain old ways of interpreting the world is to be expected. The politics of translation suggests even when contexts change, the old and new interact in such a way that creates space for something else.

Indeed, this process of mixing and repurposing is something that other recent historians of late Tokugawa and early Meiji transformations, such as Harry Harootunian, Wendy Matsumura, and Gavin Walker have all considered in their analyses of “formal subsumption” in the appearance of Japanese capitalism. According to Harootunian, the importance of “... Marx's conceptualization of formal subsumption as the principal logic of capitalist development was its capacious aptitude for appropriating what it found near at hand, thus designating a division between what was outside of it, what was seen as “different,” and what was inside, and incorporating and combining it with the capitalist production process as if it naturally belonged there, literally metabolizing it in such a way that it was retrojected back and seen as an ‘always-already’ presupposition of capital's claim to a natural history.”<sup>54</sup> Matsumura has shown how the persistence of older forms of economic production in Okinawa were a necessary expedient for the development of Meiji capitalism. Gavin Walker's study of Uno Kōzō's work suggests that often the persistence of old practices in modernizing economies is paradoxically part of capitalism's advance. In the early Meiji period, therefore, we might expect the persistence of old

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<sup>54</sup> Harootunian, *Marx After Marx*, 14; Matsumura, *The Limits of Okinawa*. Walker, *The Sublime Perversion of Capital*.



modes of representation to continue as they are repurposed to new ends.

As we will see, translations of citizenship and translations-as-citizenship not only broke down old ways of representing nature, government, and the individual, but simultaneously set things in motion which allowed new ones to emerge. In the Tokugawa Confucian worldview, political subjectivity was coterminous with one's physical body. One's body was to exist in the correct place, perform the correct activities, and maintain itself in a particular manner appropriate to both its social and geographical locations. Citizenship, however, entailed a fundamentally different disposition of bodies in space which occasioned new frames for interpreting the significance of those bodies in those places.

Historians of Japan have until now not made much of languages of citizenship prior to 1945. According to Simon Avenell's study of postwar civil society, citizenship was "a relatively unimportant concept" until after the defeat.<sup>55</sup> While much has been written about citizen movements in the 1960s and 70s especially, comparatively little in English or Japanese has dealt with the question in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Indeed, as Marnie Anderson observes, "there is no historiography of citizenship in modern Japanese history."<sup>56</sup>

According to Eiko Ikegami, in the early Meiji period, "the Japanese variant [of citizenship] was a product of borrowing from Western models, improvisation and deliberate invention within the strict constraints of a historical context."<sup>57</sup> Ikegami charts the evolution of different aspects of a discourse of citizenship constrained by Tokugawa practices, the exigencies of politics within the Meiji state, and the expectations of people freed from their formerly rigid

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<sup>55</sup> Avenell, *Making Japanese Citizens*, 11.

<sup>56</sup> Anderson, *A Place in Public*, 13.

<sup>57</sup> Ikegami, "Citizenship and National Identity in Early Meiji Japan," 187.

social roles. In her view, citizenship practices in the late Meiji and Taisho periods was the outcome of a negotiation between public demands for freedom and state policies geared towards modernization.

Ikegami's focus is on the relationship between citizenship and nationalism, which Howland suggested was of central importance for subsequent events. She argues for the emergence of a "Japanese variant" of citizenship which was the product of a "borrowing." This way of phrasing the question seems to assume the stability of definitions of both "Japan" and "the West." "Borrowing" implies that what is borrowed has a fixed essence that can be seized upon. I extend Ikegami's work by asking how the categories she deals with took shape in the first place. In other words, by reframing the question in terms of how citizens emerged in between the appearance of something called "Japan" and something known as "The West," I hope to make it possible to talk about Meiji citizenship in greater depth.

A number of other recent authors writing in English have dealt with citizenship in chapters of works focusing on other problems, many of which I engage more fully below.<sup>58</sup> Several works in Japanese have also dealt indirectly with the issue, for example Fukuyoshi Masao's *Fukuzawa Yukichi to tagen teki 'shimin shakai' ron*, Satō Yoshimaru's *Meiji nashonarizumu no kenkyū*, and Matsumoto Sannosuke's *Meiji shisō ni okeru dentō to kindai*.<sup>59</sup> They are, however, unknown to many English speakers. These works draw helpful connections

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<sup>58</sup> The connection between citizenship and women's rights has been a particularly rich vein of inquiry. I of course examine this more fully in the fourth translational moment. Specifically, Tessa Morris-Suzuki and Marnie Anderson are two who have considered it in historical terms. Mara Patessio considers it very briefly as well. Gavin Walker deals with it in theoretical terms. Morris-Suzuki, *Re-Inventing Japan*, Chapter 9; Anderson, *A Place in Public: Women's Rights in Meiji Japan*; Patessio, *Women and Public Life in Meiji Japan*; Ikegami, "Citizenship and National Identity in Early Meiji Japan."

<sup>59</sup> Makihara Norio's *Kyakubun to Kokumin no Aida* also considers the question.

between the history of Japanese nationalism and early debates about the nature of civil society and political community, but their focus is primarily on the question of the nation rather than the citizen.

Most histories of the texts and events I consider in this dissertation, however, have been subsumed under the broad label of what English-language historians call the “Freedom and Popular Rights Movement” (or the *Jiyūminken undō* 自由民権運動 in Japanese). The “movement” is the most common way of figuring the actions of the individuals and associations who in various ways agitated for a parliament and constitution prior to 1890. Like many other historical objects, the “movement” was not necessarily an objective reality lived by the participants, but the product of a later narrativization of disparate events by scholarly interpreters.

Many authors, in both English and Japanese scholarship, take the movement to begin in 1874 with the drafting of Itagaki Taisuke’s “White Paper on the Establishment of a Popular Assembly” and end with the suppression of the Chichibu uprising in 1884.<sup>60</sup> As many have observed, however, the “movement” was a very complex, heterogeneous collection of events, protests, rebellions, texts, and cultural practices that do not fit neatly into the contemporary English-language category of “social movement” without leaving some remainder.

Scholars have risen to the challenge of configuring the period between 1860 and 1890 in a variety of ways that foreground different continuities. Some acknowledge that the “movement” had separate intellectual currents in which the politics of the government, the culture of rural

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<sup>60</sup> Matsuzawa, *Jiyūminken undo: demokurashi no yume to zassetsu*, i. Roger Bowen also uses this frame. Bowen, *Rebellion and Democracy in Meiji Japan*. Essentially every other recent author cited in this introduction make the same move. For particularly clear examples, see Matsunaga, *Fukuzawa Yukichi to Nakae Chōmin*; Matsumoto, *Meiji seishin no kōzō* and *Meiji shisō ni okeru dento to kindai*.

dwellers, and the intelligentsia of the urban centers sometimes intersected but often parted. Others unpack and describe the movement temporally. For example, Bowen describes the movement as being comprised of three principle phases. The first, beginning in the mid-1870s was an elite, educated discourse drawing heavily on the ideas popularized by the likes of Fukuzawa Yukichi and the *Meiokusha*. The second phase, from roughly 1878-1881, was characterized by its concentration in the middle stratum of low-ranking former samurai, merchants, and wealthy landowners (*gōnō* 豪農). This phase was characterized by the explosion of political discussion circles, speech clubs, and study groups organized by schoolteachers and wealthy famers outside of the main urban centers. Irokawa Daikichi describes the activities of more than 200 of these circles in the Kanto region alone.<sup>61</sup> The third phase, from 1882-1884, was nothing short of full-scale, armed rebellion by tens of thousands of the poorest and most exploited. In the so-called Fukushima (1882) and Chichibu (1884) incidents, masses of people marched, fought, and bled for the overthrow of the Meiji state itself. Although the government at the time claimed that these disturbances were the work of a handful of criminal agitators, the participants came from a wide range of backgrounds and demonstrated a sophisticated understanding of the contradictions of Meiji culture and politics.

Others have successfully translated these events into a limited number of ideal-typical categories. Matsumoto Sannosuke divides the period in terms of what he considers to be separate, characteristic bodies of political thought. The first phase was characterized by the elitist liberalism of Fukuzawa Yukichi and the *Meiokusha* immediately following the restoration. The second phase he identifies began in 1881 following the government's promise to establish a parliament within 10 years. He argues that this promise triggered Nakae Chōmin and Ueki

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<sup>61</sup> Irokawa, *The Culture of the Meiji Period*.

Emori's efforts to develop so-called *minken*, or “popular rights” thought. Following the implementation of the Meiji constitution, *kokumin* thought, or “nationalistic” theory became predominant.<sup>62</sup>

As useful and illuminating as these ways of understanding early Meiji history have been, I would like to approach the problem differently in order to make both the politics of translation and the impact of politics as translation more apparent. Describing the movement in terms of its temporal dynamics or characterizations of its ideological ebbs and flows are useful for understanding the causal links between events.<sup>63</sup> Because my concerns are somewhat different, however, I would like to suspend the usual framing of this period as a “movement” and instead proceed on the assumption that its elements were fundamentally heterogeneous. What the politics of translation shows is precisely the ways in which heterogeneous elements appeared together in new constellations to enable new ways of experiencing community. This requires a fundamental agnosticism with respect to subjects and their predicates. While the development of the political parties, the spread of popular associations, and the outbreak of the rebellions of the 1880s were certainly related developments, the *ex post facto* grouping of these phenomena into a single movement shifts focus from the different functions performed by qualitatively different actions. I am indebted to these and other historians of the freedom and popular rights movement for their painstaking recovery of the events of those tumultuous years. However, I also worry that precisely by configuring those heterogeneous subjects and events to elements into a single movement, we perhaps inadvertently affirm the narrative in which elite members of an emergent

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<sup>62</sup> Matsumoto credits the late Meiji *kokumin* thinker Kuga Katsunan with this schema. *Meiji seishin no kōzō*, 79.

<sup>63</sup> For example, Matsumoto frequently talks about the *seikaku* (性格), meaning “character” or “personality” of different periods or an individual author's thought. *Ibid.*, 58; 65.

intelligentsia initiated new ways of thinking about politics based on their experiences abroad. That is, the narrative of the movement sometimes seems to draw a line from these points of contact with Europe and America downwards through the middle-level rural elite, and finally to their expression in the violence of the lowest strata.

The approach I would like to take begins from the premise that ideas do not flow downhill from a pure, theoretically refined source into muddier pools below. Rather, the polyvocal creation of meaning quite often moves in all directions at once. To this extent, I am concerned that focusing on the “movement” as a whole might inadvertently suggest that those furthest from the sources of European knowledge lacked an active role in shaping their collective world.<sup>64</sup> To this extent, I want to chart a path which avoids both a Eurocentric account of the transmission of concepts and a historical narrative which validates only the thought and actions of the elite.

It is also important for my purposes to point out that the idea of a “movement” was not available to the people of the Meiji period. Indeed, prior to the events of the 1870s and early 1880s, we can say that there was no coherent political subject to move (such as “the people” or “the nation”), no commonly agreed upon condition to move out of (barbarism, semi-civilization, poverty, oppression, and military weakness were just a few possibilities), and more possible proposed destinations than one could ever count (including everything from “expelling the barbarian” to parliamentary democracy based on a universal franchise). Interestingly, the *jiyūminken undō* was only labeled as such in the 1920s in Yoshino Sakuzo’s monumental *Meiji*

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<sup>64</sup> See Rancière’s discussion of worker-poets in *Proletarian Nights* or Kristin Ross’ study of the afterlives of the Paris Commune for examples of works that give workers agency in historical transformations. Rancière, Jacques, *Proletarian Nights*; Ross, *Communal Luxury*.

*bunka zenshū* (The Collected Works of Meiji Culture).<sup>65</sup> Although the phrase *minkenka* (“popular rights activist” 民権家) was in circulation and used by activists themselves of the 1870s and ‘80s themselves, their views on what *minken* (popular or civil rights) consisted of and what true *jiyū* (freedom) was were quite heterogeneous and not necessarily linked in their discourse. The word *minkenka* described the activities of a person in their capacity as an organizer or an itinerant speechmaker (*enzetsuka* 演説家). As a sign, *minkenka* was less significant in terms of what was propounded than it was about the ways in which one practiced politics.

This also means that it might be helpful to suspend our assumptions about how the participants in these events understood words like “Freedom” (*jiyū*) and “popular rights” (*minken*). As Howland, Yanabu, and others have shown, these ideas took root as a result of a process of translation and cultural mediation. Fukuzawa Yukichi wrote two essays devoted specifically to this problem in the late 1870s precisely because the flood of new characters arriving in translated works and in the press had unleashed a rampant confusion about what “rights,” civil and political, could mean.<sup>66</sup> Indeed, figures usually identified as key to the movement, such as Ueki Emori or Itagaki Taisuke, never used the words *jiyū minken* in

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<sup>65</sup> Swale, *The Meiji Restoration*, 5.

In fact, Yoshino doesn’t even clearly affix the label “movement” to the idea of *jiyū minken*. The first record of the full phrase *jiyū minken undo* in a book title in the National Diet Library’s database isn’t until 1935. Baba Tatsui did use the word “movement” in “The Political Condition in Japan,” but that work was written in English during his period of exile in Philadelphia in 1888. See Tomasi, *Rhetoric in Modern Japan*, 57.

<sup>66</sup> Fukuzawa, *Tsūzoku minkenron*, 573; See also Fukuzawa, *Tsūzoku kokkenron*.

combination. They generally distinguished between freedom and rights for the purpose of explaining their interpretations of those phrases' meaning.<sup>67</sup>

One of the most useful approaches for understanding the popular rights movement has been to consider the practices of speechmaking and public discourse in terms of the Habermasian "public sphere."<sup>68</sup> For example, Kyu Hyun Kim's recent analysis of the spread of newspaper readership and its relationship with participation in the many speaking and debating societies in the 1870s and 1880s is a point of departure for my own study.<sup>69</sup> Mara Patessio and Marnie Anderson similarly describe the development of women's education, speechmaking, and associational life as aspects of a fundamental reordering of the highly gendered Meiji civil society.<sup>70</sup> Both focus on the creation and integration of publics through the spread of certain forms of media, with a special emphasis on the importance of the press. Kim and Patessio both frame the construction of a modern public sphere in terms of Benedict Anderson's framework of "imagined communities." This helps them clarify the relationship between nationalism and social changes be driven by print capitalism.<sup>71</sup>

As a way of complementing these accounts, I would like to begin by agreeing with Jacques Rancière's suggestion that the model of a public sphere and the practices of communicative action "...presuppose partners that are already pre-constituted as such and

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<sup>67</sup> Ueki's essay "Minken jiyūron" (a Theory of Rights and Freedom) is sometimes assumed to be the source of the idea of *jiyū minken*, but as is clear even just from his title, it is not the same configuration as that used by Yoshino and other later writers. Ueki, "Minken jiyūron."

<sup>68</sup> Habermas, *Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*.

<sup>69</sup> Kim, *The Age of Visions and Arguments*.

<sup>70</sup> Patessio, *Women and Public Life in Meiji Japan*; Anderson, *A Place in Public*, 13-14.

<sup>71</sup> Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 6.



discursive forms that entail a speech community, the constraint of which is always explicable. Now, the specificity of political dissensus is that its partners are no more constituted than is the object or stage of discussion itself. Those who make visible the fact that they belong to a shared world that others do not see -or cannot take advantage of- is the implicit logic of any pragmatics of communication.”<sup>72</sup> With this in mind, I attempt to draw attention to the notion that early Meiji discourse was not only characterized by a lack of opportunities to speak in public, but more fundamentally by the fact that the standards of what counted as an intelligible public utterance prevented certain people’s words from being acknowledged and validated.

As we will see, the earliest women to appear in public speaking associations drew audiences who were uninterested in the content of what they had to say, but were rather attracted by the spectacle of seeing a woman speak. They were, so to speak, incapable of hearing the message because no matter what was said. It was only with the emergence of new, shared standards for what counted as valid speech that made it possible for former peasants’ and women’s utterances to be recognized. I hope that what follows will shed light on the question of how the public sphere itself was constituted, and how the rules and norms which coordinated people’s participation in it took shape. In this sense, what I offer is a sort of prologue to the histories that Kim, Patessio, and Anderson provide.

In short, I would like to turn readings of the “movement” that assume it was a coherent project aimed at the realization of concrete goals based on stable conceptions of “freedom” or “rights” on their head. This is not because such approaches are wrong or unproductive, but simply in the interest of seeing the movement -which has been written about very extensively- from a fresh perspective. I ask how the pursuit of different objectives in different contexts

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<sup>72</sup> Rancière, *Dissensus*, 38.

produced conceptions of “freedom” or “rights” along the way. I will attempt to do so by looking not at the reason contained in the theoretical writings of those usually assumed to have led the movement, but by examining the aesthetic sensibilities which related heterogeneous men and women to one another in new ways. Ultimately, the metaphor of citizenship was instrumental in this process insofar as it was precisely the idea of becoming a citizen that informed practices of speechmaking, debating, and writing. These practices and the aesthetic concerns they exhibited contributed to the meanings of “the people,” “rights,” and “politics” which emerged and dissolved over time.

### **Outline of the Dissertation**

The title of this dissertation, *Translational Moments*, is a play on the titles of two other recent works from which I have drawn inspiration. The first is Jacques Rancière’s *Moments Politiques*, or “Political Moments.” According to Rancière:

“To speak of a political moment is, first of all, to assert that the political cannot be identified with the uninterrupted course of government actions and struggles for power. The political truly exists when the management of its goals leads to the question of what exactly it is—in and of itself—and directly to questions about the type of community it concerns, and who is included in this community and on what basis. The political comes into play when it involves the imagination of the community.”

In what follows, Rancière’s rethinking of the meaning of politics itself guides my examination of the events of the Meiji period. Unlike more empirical histories of Meiji politics which focus on policies of the state or the struggles between the various members of the oligarchy for influence, Rancière’s vision of political moments encourages us to look for the aesthetic, cultural, and artistic moments which changed how it was possible to imagine living together at all.

Similarly, Jason Frank's *Constituent Moments* examines the periodic emergence and dispersion of "the people" as a subject in American political history. What Frank shows is that moments of imagination go hand in hand with the actual appearance of people acting together in new ways, or their collective authorization of new forms of community. In other words, Frank enjoins us not to attempt to define "the people," but to explore the different situations in which it emerges as a political experience. "The people" emerges only when it is invoked, but because it contains what he calls a "constitutive surplus," no invocation fully closes the possibilities for what can emerge under that name.<sup>73</sup>

I begin with an overture that may seem somewhat independent from the four translational moments that follow, and that independence is intentional. The overture sets a theoretical mood for what follows by making clear my assumptions on the nature of representation, translation, and politics itself clear. Most importantly, it provides what I take to be my major theoretical intervention: a critical analysis of the politics of translation. For political theorists with an interest in comparative political theory or aesthetics and politics, or for those with an interest in translation studies, it would be best to begin here.

Scholars with a more empirical interest in the history of Meiji translation language, intellectual history, or particular figures like Fukuzawa, Chōmin, or Kishida might profitably begin with the first translational moment, or any of the others, for that matter. Although I have organized the moments in a loosely chronological order, and taken note of a few points which build on issues raised previously, the moments themselves are episodic rather than parts of an overarching narrative. Strictly speaking, there is no beginning, middle, or end to the moments that follow. Moreover, there is no teleological conclusion to the series of moments. Each

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<sup>73</sup> Jason Frank, *Constituent Moments*, 3.

translational moment has its own independence and uniqueness which is not necessarily causally linked to those that preceded it.

In the overture, I explore the idea that translation and metaphor are the same kind of poetic operation. They each enable the emergence of previously unimaginable third terms which “are like” and yet “are not” either of the two terms that inspire them.<sup>74</sup> This creation of something fundamentally new and previously unimaginable often defies our usual ways of interpreting the world. I argue that translation-metaphor always carries within it the possibility for these radical democratic moments because it always creates something new in the indeterminate relation of two irreducible others. It does not guarantee democratic outcomes or ensure a progressive march towards liberation. What it does guarantee is the disruption of existing ways of viewing the world so that something new –whatever that might be– may take its place. It is precisely for this reason that the translational moments that I describe were important in making the political and cultural transformations of early Meiji possible.

The first translational moment I examine occurs in and around Fukuzawa Yukichi’s work of the 1860s and 1870s, particularly *Seiyō jijō* and his famous *Gakumon no susume*. Fukuzawa was the first to systematically translate the word “citizen,” and the first to coin an altogether new word to describe it. In creating a neologism, Fukuzawa created a break between old forms of community and the new form his language described. The Confucian cosmology that underpinned much of Tokugawa political thought denied many of the central distinctions between public and private, collective and individual, or moral and political that modern polities recognize. Fukuzawa’s word for “citizen,” *shimin* (市民) is a metaphor for a community which

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<sup>74</sup> See Ricoeur, *The Rule of Metaphor*. I will explain the significance of the metaphor’s similtan being like but not being in the overture.

distinguishes between civil citizenship and political citizenship, emphasizes the importance self-interest, and insists on the primacy of legal community over moral relationships. Fukuzawa's translation-metaphor encouraged people to pursue their own individual benefit, and in so doing contribute to the improvement of the state in an indirect way that excluded them from the exercise of political rights. This image of citizenship cleared the discursive space for a subjectivity conducive to industrialization and the continuation of the Meiji state's oligarchic politics.

The second translational moment I describe took place nearly 15 years later. Nakae Chōmin's 1882 rewriting of Rousseau's *Du Contrat Social* (*Minyaku yakkai*) translates the French word *citoyen* several ways. Of the various renderings he offers, the most frequently-used translation word is the very old and well-established term *shūjin* (衆人). My claim is that this particular word is a metaphor for a community based moral belonging rather than individual distinctiveness. I argue that this translation-metaphor creates an image in which Rousseau's republican citizenship meets the Confucian virtue of *jin* (仁), or what is often translated as "sympathy" or "humaneness." By disrupting Confucian perceptions of authority, Chōmin's language made it possible to draw different lines of inclusion and exclusion from the utilitarian, legalistic rationalism that dominated perceptions of community in the 1870s.

I then turn to two moments where translation-metaphors invited new groups of people to appear where they previously had not been visible. In both of these cases, it was not so much the translation of the word "citizenship" that mattered, but rather translation as citizenship. It was the reinterpretation of who could take part in public by simply taking part that articulated new possibilities for what a citizen could be.

The third translational moment deals with the spread of the practices of speech, debate, and rhetoric in the 1870s and early 1880s. The rapid growth of speaking and debating associations reconfigured the physical spaces in which people came together, rewrote the rituals for exchanging information and ideas, and connected the practices of debate and dialogue with the institutionalization of politics. These physical spaces themselves created new ways of experiencing inclusion and exclusion, and these arrangements of space allowed the people situated in them to emerge as new subjects. I argue that the practices of the debating societies constituted people as individuals, and propagated a model of knowledge production that made any individual utterance intelligible and publically valid. This new way of practicing knowledge production implied an inclusive, universal conception of citizenship institutionalized in parliamentary government.

Of course, what appeared in the Meiji constitution was not universal citizenship, nor was the parliament that opened in 1890 the powerful deliberative organ that many had dreamed it might be.<sup>75</sup> The final translational moment I examine attempts to make sense of this outcome by grappling with some of the countervailing practices and material realities which constrained the inclusiveness implied by the practices of the associations.

I argue that the practices of citizenship embodied in women's appearance in the speech and debating societies, in conjunction with the changing economic roles of women in the household, advanced their civil rights in many important ways. Nonetheless, those same economic changes also formally subsumed the Confucian discourse of the family to place limits on those civil rights, and to deny women political rights altogether. I explore these constraints in the public

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<sup>75</sup> The Meiji Constitution was consciously modeled on the 1850 Prussian Constitution which gave the monarchy extensive powers and tied political rights to the payment of taxes. The parliament was both weak and aristocratic.

speeches of Kishida Toshiko and in the rapid growth of women's employment in silk and cotton mills. Women's appearance in these spaces rewrote ideas about who could take part in citizenship, but their appearance was also constrained by longstanding views of Confucian filial duty.

In conclusion, what I provide is not a cohesive statement about what it meant to be a citizen in early Meiji. Part of my point is precisely that what it means to be a citizen is never fully condensed, and there are always excesses of meaning which have implications in the rest of the culture. Instead, I consider the contested meanings that took shape after the translational moments of the 1860s, '70s, and '80s. The appearance of the figure of the citizen stopped people from making sense of the changes taking place in society in the usual ways, and led them to interpret or reinterpret the boundaries of political inclusion and exclusion differently

## Overture| The Political Moment of Translational Political Theory

The activity of thinking is primarily an activity of translation, and... anyone is capable of making a translation. Underpinning this capacity for translation is the efficacy of equality, that is to say, the efficacy of humanity.<sup>76</sup>

-*Jacques Rancière*

We will begin by remarking that we all naturally find it agreeable to get hold of new ideas easily: words express ideas, and therefore those words are the most agreeable that enable us to get hold of new ideas. Now strange words simply puzzle us; ordinary words convey only what we know already; it is from metaphor that we can best get hold of something fresh.<sup>77</sup>

-*Aristotle*

## Introduction

In recent years, many academic fields have become more conscious of how fundamental questions concerning translation are to the cultural and political questions they consider. Emily Apter has even suggested that there is a “translational turn” underway in the humanities.<sup>78</sup> Despite the simultaneous emergence of translation studies as a semi-independent field of inquiry and the growth of what is now widely called “comparative political theory,” the politics of translation have not been fully theorized. In what follows, I aim to provide a first step in that direction.

Translation has long been a central issue for political theory, even if it has not always been explicitly recognized as such. Richard Tuck, to take only one example, touches on the problem in his discussion of Aristotle’s appropriation by the Humanists in the 15<sup>th</sup> century. He describes Leonardo Bruni’s translation of Aristotle’s *Politics* and *Nicomachean Ethics*. In Tuck’s

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<sup>76</sup> Rancière, “Politics, Identification, and Subjectivization,” 58.

<sup>77</sup> Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, Book III, section 10.

<sup>78</sup> Apter, *Against World Literature*, 71.



view, "...Bruni's translation made Aristotle a participant in a conversation whose general form was determined by the Roman moralists, and very quickly Aristotle's arguments about (for example) the superiority of intellectual to practical virtue were assimilated into the Senecan or (partially) Ciceronian arguments for the superiority of philosophical *otium*.... But the attempt to translate Aristotle into Ciceronian Latin had another implication. On the one hand, it made Aristotle a participant in a Roman conversation, but on the other it changed the nature of the conversation, for it introduced into it a philosophy of knowledge or science which had been quite alien to it."<sup>79</sup>

For Tuck, it is not simply the ambiguity of translation that is problematic, but precisely the fact that translation is a mode of transformation. Rather than simply setting up a comparative or mimetic relationship between Bruni's work and Aristotle's original, Tuck recognizes that it is the interaction between elements which do not naturally belong together that produces something new. This new Aristotle, both like and yet not the Greek original, intervened in people's understanding of the world in new ways due to the aesthetic sensibility that emerged from it. Bruni probably did not intend to initiate a "scientific" discourse, but the transformations inherent in translation made it possible for such a discourse to emerge.

Although this kind of emergence-through-translation has been little acknowledged in political theory circles, that is not to say that translation has been totally ignored. In the last 30 years or so, studies building on the basic insights of post-colonial studies have shown the relationship between power and knowledge produced by translation to be critical to many historical and contemporary systems of transcultural domination. Likewise, theories of translation and gender in related fields like comparative literature have problematized not only

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<sup>79</sup> Tuck, *Philosophy and Government 1572-1651*, 13-14.

the usual norms and practices of translation in Europe and America, but even the metaphors that we use to describe translation itself.<sup>80</sup> While many have noted translation's disruptive potential, or its capacity to produce hybridized cultural and linguistic identities, many considerations of the politics of translation focus primarily on its role in establishing or furthering relations of domination.<sup>81</sup>

I would like to reorient the discussion of the relationship between politics and translation from the questions of knowledge that critical theories have helped us recognize to the more general problem of aesthetics that work like Tuck's hints at but does not openly engage. I hope that doing so will make a new dimension of translational politics visible, and help us re-think the politics of comparison more broadly. One might say that the essence of my project is to use the *trans-* of translation to problematize the *com-* of comparison. By this I mean that the fundamental political question is not how we determine whether things are the same or different, but rather how we re-make the world by passing in-between those distinctions. Aesthetic thinking informs how everyday political practices are understood and evaluated in terms of their objectives and moral content. It informs the rules for making a coherent political argument just as much as it does the standards of judgment behind taking a particular political action. The poetics of translational thinking I provide in what follows therefore offers expansive view of both

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<sup>80</sup> Simon, *Gender in Translation*; Guldin, *Translation as Metaphor*.

<sup>81</sup> For example, Eric Chayfitz writes: "...translation was, and still is, the central act of European colonization and imperialism in the Americas." *The Poetics of Imperialism*, 104. See also Hirano, "The Politics of Colonial Translation"; Niranjana, *Siting Translation*, 2. See Bassnett and Trivedi's edited volume for a number of essays which consider this relationship. Bassnett and Trivedi, *Post-Colonial Translation*. Bhaba and Spivak both discuss the potential of translation to dislocate or hybridize. See Bhaba, *The Location of Culture*; Spivak, "The Politics of Translation."

“translation” and “politics” which might break down some of the interpretive divisions commonly imposed on political thinking and thinking in translation.<sup>82</sup>

I would like to pursue the notion that translation is primarily a disruptive, rather than a constitutive, activity. In other words, I begin from the assumption that translation does not necessarily produce or transmit knowledge. Indeed, it quite often cuts against it and destabilizes the rules of sense-making which allow knowledge to count as such. Thanks to post-colonial critique, we have seen how the transmission of knowledge and the legitimation of communities which produce it are connected to systems of domination. Although translation is certainly implicated in these systems, because it can never be purely mimetic, it disrupts them as well. The *trans-* of translation generally implies an overdetermination of meaning or a surplus in the count of representation which resists balancing. Translated words, images, or sounds all carry with them remainders of sense that are not easily discarded when moving in between languages or media. The disruptions that translation causes are sensory in that they affect us on the intellectual, emotional, and physical levels of experience simultaneously. They can cause new sensory experiences and allow things to appear where nothing had been visible before. These new appearances draw us to the limits of, and sometimes even beyond, our categories of sense.

In Jacques Rancière’s terms, this kind of appearing is precisely what disrupts settled “distributions of the sensible,” or the regimes of sense-making which partition the world into visible and invisible, sensible and non-sense. A breakdown in a given distribution of the sensible results in the possibility of “politics,” or a state of radical equality prior to the remaking of rules which make a scene intelligible. In this sense, translation always, even when it is ostensibly used

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<sup>82</sup> This is an extension of Davide Panagia’s “poetics of political thinking.” See *Poetics of Political Thinking*, 2.

for purposes of domination, carries with it at least a grain of radical democratic potential. There is no guarantee that politics in this sense results in more equality, liberation, or a better world. It does not necessarily offer a judgment on what came before or what will come after. What it does guarantee is simply that the world will be different one way or another after a particular regime of sense-making is disrupted and reconfigured. In this sense, even when translation is ostensibly deployed for purposes of domination, it also verifies the contingency and fragility of our social conventions and hierarchical distributions of belonging.

First, in order to see translation's political potential clearly, and to understand the consequences of the Meiji translations I examine below, I wish to distinguish it as an aesthetic activity from mimetic or representational practices of comparison. Many accounts of the politics of comparison think of comparative activity as the establishing of a relation between two pre-constituted and self-contained phenomena.<sup>83</sup> The *com-* of comparison implies a being-with or the superposition of two given, pre-formed things. These things are assumed in advance to share some common ground despite greater or lesser degrees of difference. It operates on assumptions about how to argue, what the value of knowledge is, and how a text can induce people to act differently.

I would like to argue in favor of a view of translation which rests on a metaphorical relation driven by the coexistence and co-presence of similarity and difference. This is the key to understanding how translational thinking offers different political possibilities. The translation exists as an unexpected third term which, in Paul Ricoeur's words, both "is like" and "is not"

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<sup>83</sup> As do many histories. See my remarks in the introduction on the juxtaposition of "Japan" and "The West."

both or either of the original terms of association.<sup>84</sup> Rather than seeing translation and metaphor as unrelated figurative operations, I argue that we should consider them as aspects of a single practice, which I will simply call translation-metaphor.

Because translation-metaphor is a poetic operation that takes place on many levels of sensory experience simultaneously, “translation” might be understood as more than a purely literary or interlinguistic phenomenon. Translation moves across and stitches together different kinds of utterance in different kinds of context. If we understand aesthetic experience broadly, we can see how multidimensional and complex the activity of translation is. This complexity and multidimensionality suggests that there is a fundamental indeterminacy to comparison, and that there are limits on both authorial intention and readerly awareness. Often, those who would use translation as a conduit for knowledge perhaps do not fully recognize how what counts as knowledge itself might be disrupted by the act of transference and the transformation that transference implies.

Second, I will elaborate on the idea that translation-metaphor makes something new sensible for the first time. I argue that translation-metaphor is a type of *poesis* which, in Derek Whitehead’s words, is a “leading to presence” of something that was previously insensible. This revealing of something new is indeterminate, as no author can unilaterally will what the reader will sense, and no reader can fully catalogue the depths of his or her own aesthetic experience. This indeterminacy means that the effects of translation-metaphor are unpredictable. The introduction of something previously insensible has unpredictable consequences, and means that translation-metaphor always has the capacity to destabilize the categories by which we experience the world.

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<sup>84</sup> Ricoeur, *The Rule of Metaphor*, 6.

Third, I will defend my central political claim, which is that translation always contains within it a radical democratic potential. Because translation always implies the inscience of something unexpected, it also implies the transgression of our usual means of comprehending represented things. In other words, the indeterminate, uncounted other that translation makes possible defies the existing “distribution of the sensible,” returning us to a state in which the new and the old confront each other in a moment of non-equivalence. Because the appearance of something previously insensible demands a new way of counting, even translations made by those wishing to perpetuate domination, despite their intentions, invite the possibility of its undoing.

Finally, it is important to show that translation is also inseparable from mechanisms of accommodation or subsumption which incorporate the new into existing interpretations of the world. There is no such thing as a “pure” politics, just as there is no such thing as pure, referential symbolic representation. The subsumption of the new into the extant implies a hedge against most radical social change because most existing ways of thinking and acting remain intact. Translations carry with them the potential for the radical democratic experience of pre-representational equality, but this potential is often mitigated or annulled by the capacity of discursive systems to adapt to the appearance of the new. Indeed, because translation-metaphor operates primarily on the level of discourse, translations often disrupt certain aspects of the distribution of sensible while reaffirming or re-inscribing others. In the translational moments that follow, we will see this play of novelty and accommodation.

### **Translational Political Theory**

What is at stake in studying the translational moments that follow is to gain a sense of translational thinking’s essentially political nature. By “politics,” I mean the advenience of

something which does not yet “index something in the world,” and the disruption this advenience causes to existing systems of indexing.<sup>85</sup> This is quite different from the view of politics which dominates most academic discourse on intercultural interaction. Politics, from the comparative perspective, is about persuasion, the affirmative willing of new subjects into being, the intentional hailing of them in particular ways, or to attempts to extend existing subjectivities to those previously excluded from them.<sup>86</sup> This view of politics “...requires a form of conceptual realignment that harmonizes the relationship of words and things so as to generate accurate representations of the world.”<sup>87</sup> It operates on the assumption that there is a relationship between critical thinking and emancipation, or in other words, the idea that we must “change people’s minds so that they will interpret the world differently.”<sup>88</sup>

What I wish to argue is that the politics of the translational moments that I examine below arises not from comparisons they make, their attempts to persuade, or the adequacy of their mimetic representations of “citizens,” “subjects,” “Japan,” and “the West,” but their clearing of space for new subjectless appearances. Although one might be tempted to argue that people like Fukuzawa Yukichi and Nakae Chōmin were what we might call comparative political theorists *avant la lettre*, I would like to treat them differently.<sup>89</sup> That is because I take

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<sup>85</sup> Panagia, *Ten Theses for an Aesthetics of Politics*, 2.

<sup>86</sup> Althusser’s account of subject formation in the essay on “Ideological State Apparatuses” is of this sort.

<sup>87</sup> Panagia, *Rancière’s Sentiments*, 55.

<sup>88</sup> Panagia, *Rancière’s sentiments*, 54-55.

<sup>89</sup> Jenco’s study of Chinese thinkers of “Western learning” in *Changing Referents*. Euben’s consideration of Western and Middle-Eastern travel literatures is similar in *Journeys to the Other Shore*.

the politics of the translational moment to work on different assumptions than the politics at the heart of comparison. It was not Fukuzawa or Chōmin's ability to accurately represent another culture, nor was it their capacity to appropriate knowledge from other contexts that made them politically consequential authors in my view. Rather, it was the aesthetic experience their translations produced which was disruptive to the established practices of sense-making.<sup>90</sup>

That is, what I would like to suggest is that the translations of Fukuzawa Yukichi or Nakae Chōmin did not necessarily persuade people to become citizens. On the contrary, citizens simply appeared. Fukuzawa and Chōmin's translations came to take part in the world in new ways, and people took part in these translations of their own accord. The mimetic ascription of names recreates, sometimes violently, existing forms of community. Translational politics appears in the space in between names and communities. The problem is not primarily one of overcoming cultural difference or recognizing incommensurability, but in transforming the manner of dividing those who are and are not allowed to take part in a community whose shape is undefined. In order to see how radical what occurred in the Meiji period was, therefore, I would like to begin by distinguishing between a mimetic politics of comparison and a dissensual poetics of translation.<sup>91</sup> Phrased differently, I would like to argue in favor of a translational political theory rather than a comparative political theory.

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<sup>90</sup> That said, these authors did produce didactic work which might fit into the category of comparative political theory as we recognize it today. My point is simply that those works (notably Fukuzawa's *Gakumon no susume* and *Bunmeiron no gairyaku*) were not transformative in the same way that translations like *Seiyō jijō* or *Minyaku yakkai* were.

<sup>91</sup> Davide Panagia argues that "...An aesthetics of politics proposes that our handling of the advenience of an appearance projects our handling of one another. Another term we might use to indicate our handling of one another is practices of governance." *Ten Theses for an Aesthetic Politics*, 23.



With the collapse of the Soviet Union, the growth of interest in globalization, in the 1990s, and especially after the tragic events of September 11, 2001, the need to adequately represent what we perceive as different cultures, either in terms of a “dialogue” with our own or as unique and incommensurate others, has seemed to many to be increasingly acute.<sup>92</sup> It is no coincidence that the emergence of translation studies as a field, the growth of the post-colonial theory movement, the development of comparative political theory, and renewed calls for a world literature all occurred (or at least significantly gathered pace) during this timeframe.<sup>93</sup> The fundamental debate underlying these different avenues of inquiry is the question of whether cultures are fundamentally comparable or incomparable. That is, it rests on an assumption about whether there is on some level a universal sameness to all human societies or that societies are particular, historically-bounded phenomena. At issue is the question of whether knowledge can be generalized across perceived boundaries of cultural otherness. From this perspective, universalist or cosmopolitan accounts of intercultural interaction posit the overcoming of divisions, that is, the substituting of sameness for difference, as its central problem. Particularist accounts, on the other hand, affirm the recognition and acceptance of difference as their central objective.<sup>94</sup> Linguistically, both of these ways of talking about heterogeneity in the world are grounded in the *com-* of comparison.

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<sup>92</sup> Dialogue is a common metaphor. See Fred Dallmayr *Beyond Dialogue* for an example.

<sup>93</sup> Casanova, *The World Republic of Letters*; Moretti, *Signs Taken for Wonders*; Damrosch, *What is World Literature?*; For more on the history of debates about “world literature,” see Apter’s introduction to *Against World Literature*.

<sup>94</sup> The origins of recent debates on comparison probably begin with the debates surrounding Charles Taylor and Alasdair MacIntyre’s communitarianism in the 1970s and ‘80s. They argued that there is a fundamental incomparability between cultures arising from their unique historical circumstances. These differences demand recognition, but they cannot fundamentally be overcome. The alternatives – Rawlsian moral universalism or a cosmopolitanism like that of

Rancière argues that the overcoming of divisions is an inadequate paradigm for conceiving of politics because divisions or lines of separation are already assumed to exist. That is, the project of comparing makes judgments about whether things are the same or are not the same without asking how the categories on which one passes judgment came into being or leaving space for new categories to emerge in-between. Comparison itself does not create or transform categories, and to that extent, practices of comparison provide no path to a democratic politics of solidarity between things that do not belong together.<sup>95</sup> Translation defies judgments about belonging by putting things in relation whether they belong together or not. Critically, translation does not compare two things and then turn one of them into the other. Rather, it allows a new, third thing to appear. Translation creates solidarity by not making a judgment about sameness or difference. Instead, it operates by transforming the categories of sameness and difference into something which is both like and not like either of the original terms. In so doing, translation creates something which advenes in between the original categories of sense-making.

Recently, a number of scholars in comparative literature and political theory have attempted to rethink cultural comparison not by affirming either universalism or particularism, but by attempting to construct visions of community which affirm both uniqueness and difference at the same time. There are good reasons for doing so. For example, R. Radhakrishnan has argued that universalist or cosmopolitan approaches which hold that the search for common ground is always legitimate and fruitful contain assumptions about normality and deviance which

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Martha Nussbaum (see *For Love of Country*) are similar in that tboth often ended up taking the form of either-or judgments about the possibility of cultural sameness or difference. See MacIntyre, *Against the Self-Images of the Age*.

<sup>95</sup> Panagia, *Rancière's Sentiments*, 175-6.

can be mapped onto hierarchies of power. He writes that: “Any act of comparison is predicated on an unavoidable deracination and a yoking together that one hopes will not be violent.”<sup>96</sup> This violence is very often not merely symbolic as many studies of colonialism have clearly demonstrated.<sup>97</sup>

Natalie Melas offers one way out of this problem. She charts a path which rejects the binary terms of particularism and universalism, and describes a post-colonial approach to literary comparison which emphasizes an “...incommensurability in which there is ground for comparison but no basis for equivalence.”<sup>98</sup> Thinking of “grounds” for comparison as a spatial metaphor rather than as a particular conceptual frame, her approach allows different texts to confront each other as equal but not interchangeable. This facilitates the critique of colonial thinking by refusing to entirely deracinate. Comparison, therefore, must always occur in a space in which both the incommensurable and the common can coexist.

Similarly, Marcel Detienne’s *Comparing the Incomparable* holds that comparison is always possible, but never purely deracinating. In his view, any time, place, or action can be put into dialogue with any other starting from within our existing representations of the world. Making these kinds of comparison, he argues, is very productive, even when the grounds of comparison are not immediately apparent. Detienne argues in favor of a multidisciplinary approach to comparison, bringing together historians, anthropologists, sociologists without

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<sup>96</sup> Radhakrishnan, “Why Compare,” 456.

<sup>97</sup> Hirano’s discussion of this kind of practice in colonial Hokkaido is particularly clear. Hirano, “The Politics of Colonial Translation.” See also Dingwaney and Meier, *Between Languages and Cultures*. There was even a special issue of the journal *The Translator* which considers only the problem of translation and violence. Inghilleri and Harding, *Translation and Violent Conflict*. Volume 16, no. 2. 2010.

<sup>98</sup> Melas, *All the Difference in the World*, xiii.

making exclusionary distinctions.<sup>99</sup> Such an approach is helpful, he suggests, because it enables comparisons which seem to have no grounds initially to reveal new grounds that no one had previously thought to look for from within their individual disciplinary silos.

Both of these approaches speak in terms of comparison, but they also raise the question of translation. That is, what Melas and Detienne call for is a way of bringing together things that we do not usually consider as having a common ground. They attempt to create a space within which things that do not belong together can stand in solidarity. Animating their work, therefore, is an affirmation of the potentiality of equality to appear where it is not expected. Equality is not necessarily sameness. It is, however, the assumption that must be verified in the bringing together of heterogeneous things. Although neither Melas nor Detienne explicitly theorize this assumption in terms of translation, doing so foregrounds the simultaneity of similarity and difference that they insist is critical for avoiding the deracinating and violent comparison that Radhakrishnan describes.

In recent years, comparative political theory has also tried to overcome debates about particularism and universalism. For example, Leigh Jenco has offered a radical plan for going beyond universalism or particularism in her exploration of the conditions in which knowledge might become valid in different cultural contexts. That is, she asks how it is possible to overcome cultural difference to share practices of knowledge production. In her analysis of the thought of modernization theorists in China between 1860 and 1920, she draws attention to the emergence of what Yan Fu and Liang Qichao called *qun*, or new “communities of learning.” For

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<sup>99</sup> Detienne’s view is similar to Franco Moretti’s conception of “world literature” as a collaborative enterprise linking people across disciplines. Moretti also sees the social sciences both a model and a partner for the study of world literature. See also Melas, *All the Difference in the World*, 34.

Yan and Liang, these new *qun* were the means by which China could produce “Western” knowledge domestically rather than relying on translation or sending students abroad. In a sense, the idea of producing the knowledge of other cultures in places where it does not belong is indeed dependent on the assumption of a radical equality. Melas and Detienne both similarly suggest that remaking communities of learning from among those who have long been regarded as not belonging together is essential to moving beyond judgments about whether our existing categories apply or not.

One might also argue, however, that comparative political theory is hamstrung by its commitment to the assertion that something called political theory exists in all geographical and historical contexts. In so doing, it becomes difficult to let the ideas of people in heterogeneous times and places appear in new contexts in their own terms, or to create opportunities for something new to emerge in between political theory and that which it is placed in relation to. Affirming the existence of something called comparative political theory insists that its objects be seen in terms of political theory. In other words, by beginning from a comparative standpoint, it first must make a judgment about whether its object counts or does not, and by doing so affirms the idea that not all thought is equal. What I would like to suggest, therefore, is that a translational political theory might offer opportunities that a comparative political theory does not.

A translational, rather than comparative, political theory is important because it transcends our ongoing disciplinary debates. What is more fundamentally at stake are the possibilities for seeing and appreciating the politics of language more generally. For example, according to Jenco’s narrative, the Chinese modernizers sought knowledge in the world because

they recognized a poor fit between their ways of describing the world and the world itself.<sup>100</sup> That is, they believed in the greater adequacy of Western representations of the world. This approach to the problem reveals a number of fascinating insights about how these thinkers understood their relationship to Europe and America. Indeed, Jenco argues that the value of the type of comparative political theory that the Chinese modernizers undertook is instructive for us today insofar as there is failure of our representations to adequately describe the world. This was also not an approach alien to the thinkers of the early Meiji period. Fukuzawa himself recommended in 1885's *Datsu A-ron* ("An Argument for Leaving Asia") that Japan actually leave Asia altogether to participate in the civilization of Europe because Japan's referents were no longer those of its neighbors.<sup>101</sup> Fukuzawa argued that Japan had succeeded in attaining "civilization," which we might understand as the correct relation of words and things.

The translations that I describe below, however, did not create new forms of community by persuading readers to create them, or argue that Tokugawa referents did not adequately represent the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Rather, regardless of what the intentions of the authors in question were, these translations silently established a relation between things that had not belonged together in the past through which something unplanned and unpredictable emerged. They did not correct or repair Tokugawa representations of reality, but in fact disrupted them so that something else could occupy the space between the heterogeneous elements of existing culture.

Jenco, like Fukuzawa in *Datsu A-ron*, encourages scholars to publish in other languages, engage with other scholars abroad, travel, and to create new archives with material from all over

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<sup>100</sup> Jenco, *Changing Referents*, 26.

<sup>101</sup> Fukuzawa, "Datsu a-ron." Again, Fukuzawa's polemical newspaper writing, as well as *Gakumon no susume* and *Bunmeiron no gairyaku* contain explicit appeals to make specific kinds of community.

the world.<sup>102</sup> She insists that knowledge producers moving beyond translation to engage with new texts in their original languages and contexts is critical to this project.<sup>103</sup> In her view, this is because translation is a mediation which always inadequately represents the reality of knowledge in other contexts. Translations are inferior copies of their originals. To properly understand the relation between words and things, she enjoins us to work in other languages.

This seems to be grounded in a mimetic understanding of translation, which suggests another danger latent in comparative approaches to political theory. The purpose of seeking knowledge abroad for Jenco, the Chinese modernizers, and Fukuzawa in his later writing, is of course emancipation. Indeed, that Liang Qichao or the later Fukuzawa operated on this assumption is part of what makes their experiences intelligible to modern readers.<sup>104</sup> The call to re-make knowledge communities risks appearing as a type of ideology critique insofar as it affirms the proposition that we simply have not maximized the emancipatory potential of knowledge because our representations of the world are inadequate.

Reading the translational Fukuzawa (*Seiyō jijō* in particular), Chōmin, Kishida Toshiko, or the other anonymous figures that appear in the translational moments that follow primarily as critics of Tokugawa or Meiji ideology risks circumscribing our view of the politics of Meiji translation. The changes of the Meiji period came about not because people were rationally persuaded of the representational adequacy of European practices and names, but because

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<sup>102</sup> Ibid., 228.

<sup>103</sup> *Changing Referents*, 231. It is worth pointing out that the problem of the monolingual scholarly community is one particular to the English-speaking world, or perhaps even to America alone. For scholars working in Asia or Europe, speaking multiple languages and working internationally is standard.

<sup>104</sup> Fukuzawa's *Gakumon no susume* is still a best-seller in modern translation.

alternative ways of being that defied mimetic representation appeared in-between the usual ways of doing that made up people's daily lives.

Jacques Rancière's critique of political art helps us to see the difference between mimetic comparison and aesthetic translations which might disrupt the distribution of the sensible. According to Rancière, self-consciously political art insists on its "... capacity to resist forms of economic, political, and ideological domination."<sup>105</sup> This includes projects which attempt to show "...the biases contained in mainstream representations of subaltern identities...."<sup>106</sup> Comparative political theory in particular is premised on the idea that there is poor representation of non-European thought in the American academic discipline of political theory. According to Rancière, art which is didactic in its message, as comparative political theory sometimes appears to be in this respect, invokes the very categories that it criticizes, verifying not their contingency or an underlying equality, but the rightness of using them to make judgements between what counts and what does not.

The art which we can eventually look back upon and identify as having initiated a political moment involves the appearance something that cannot be assimilated by those categories.<sup>107</sup> It is also generally something that cannot be designed or planned to have revolutionary effects in advance. It defies total representation, inviting new conceptions of how someone or something can take part in the world. According to Rancière, "Artworks can produce effects of dissensus precisely because they neither give lessons nor have any destination...."

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<sup>105</sup> Rancière, "The Paradoxes of Political Art," 142.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid., 143.

<sup>107</sup> This appearance need not be caused by human intervention. See Rancière, *Aisthesis*, 2. Even people cause it, it exceeds whatever intention was behind their action.



Correspondingly, if there is a politics of aesthetics, it lies in the practices and modes of visibility of art that re-configure the fabric of sensory experience. However, no direct cause-effect relationship is determinable between the intention realized in an art performance and a capacity for political subjectivation.”<sup>108</sup>

Comparative theories may inadvertently remain mimetic insofar as they consciously represent ideal practices for the future or the count the mistakes of past modes of representation. Despite the many important insights that Jenco’s work reveals, it remains tied to the idea that the name “political theory” is in poor fit with the world so long as it does not include non-European others. On the other hand, “The efficacy of art resides not in the model (or counter-model) of behavior that it provides, but first and foremost in partitions of space and time that it produces to define ways of being together or separate....”<sup>109</sup> Mimetic theories of comparison do not often disturb the distribution of space and time because they continue to speak in the language and stylistic conventions of their place of origin. Even if work taking this approach includes new historical figures or texts from previously excluded geographic areas, it generally represents them using well-established patterns of discourse and assumptions about the inherent value of knowledge.<sup>110</sup>

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<sup>108</sup> Ibid., 148-149.

<sup>109</sup> Rancière, “The Paradoxes of Political Art,” 144.

<sup>110</sup> Rancière calls this a “pedagogical” mode of representation. Politics from this perspective is predicated on the notion that if the reader reads an author’s text, he or she will be induced to see the world in the terms laid out by the author. It attempts to persuade the reader to accept the terms of sensibility that both the author and the reader already assumed as valid at the beginning. Because this kind of work is written terms that the target readers already recognize, it rarely disrupts the reader’s standard categories of sense-making. See “The Paradoxes of Political Art.”

A translational political theory need not compare objects against accepted categories. It simply brings together things that would not ordinarily appear in proximity to one another without intending to carry a political message. As we will see, although the early Fukuzawa (that is, prior to *Gakumon no susume* and *Bunmeiron no gairyaku*), Chōmin, Kishida, and the speech societies probably had some political objective in mind when choosing to translate, the politics of their actions extended far beyond that intention.<sup>111</sup> These translations of citizenship and translations as citizenship were remarkable not because of what they taught, but because they appeared where they did not belong speaking words which were neither their own nor those of someone else.

### **Translation-Metaphor and Mimesis**

Susan Stanford Friedman suggests that translation might be an effective way to challenge the deracination inherent in strict comparison. She writes: “Comparative methodology...performs a kind of translation of one thing into another through the act of comparison. Translation -from the purely linguistic to the broadly cultural- incorporates a comparative logic of in/commensurability: the languages or cultures undergoing translation are both similar and different. The gap between original and translation is increasingly the subject of analysis, one that brings into visibility what the languages or cultures share and don't share. Moreover, the comparison doubles back to highlight aspects of each that might have gone undetected without the attempt at translation.”<sup>112</sup> The *trans-* of translation forces us to re-think comparison and its politics.

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<sup>111</sup> The Fukuzawa of *Gakumon no Susume* and *Bunmeiron no Gairyaku* is among the most didactic writers one can think of. There is a stark difference between his style in the early translations and his later instructional writing.

<sup>112</sup> Stanford Friedman, 758. See also Sakai, *Translation and Subjectivity*.

The “gap between original and translation” is precisely where comparison has political potential, though this potential has largely gone unrecognized because mimetic conceptions of representation tend to dominate translational thinking in Europe and America. Although translation studies brings together everything from hermeneutic philosophy to the practical training of translators and interpreters, the common problem that generally structures it is how (or whether) one phenomenon can be adequately represented, that is, literally re-presented, as something else. The European tradition of translation and interpretation has struggled with endless debates over “word-for-word” or “sense-for-sense” renderings, “adequate” or “equivalent” representations, or the existence of a “pure language” lurking behind the divisions of Babel.<sup>113</sup> The focus of many of these debates has been restricted to the problems of interlinguistic translation. It has, therefore, played a role in ensuring that the sense experience of translating and being affected by translations has also either been ignored or too narrowly conceived. This means that important aspects of the politics of translation have remained largely invisible as well.

In order to make these other dimensions more apparent, I argue that translation is a mode of metaphor-making. In recent years, several authors have turned to the question of the relationship between translation and metaphor.<sup>114</sup> We are well accustomed to thinking of translation in terms of metaphors such as the “transference” or “carrying over” that its etymology in both Latin and Greek suggests. However, less consideration has been given to the status of translation practices as modes of metaphor making, and vice-versa, metaphor as a mode of

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<sup>113</sup> Munday, *Introducing Translation Studies*; Benjamin, “Task of the Translator, 257.

<sup>114</sup> See St. Andre, *Thinking through Translation with Metaphors*; Guldin, *Translation as Metaphor*.

translation. In other words, we might consider translation a different kind of comparison because it does not decide on the sameness or difference of two things. Rather it creates a metaphorical relation between them that is simultaneously same and different, and not reducible to either of the original terms. It gives rise to an original third term in-between and separate from the others.

As our theories of metaphor have changed over the centuries, so have our theories of translation, perhaps reflecting a sense of this deeper connection. According to Rainer Guldin, theories of metaphor developed from the Aristotelian focus on the level of the word to 20<sup>th</sup> century theories of metaphor which foreground their integration into broader systems of discourse.<sup>115</sup> Theories of translation have followed a similar trajectory since the times of Cicero or Jerome, with a growing awareness of the fact that the adequate replacement of one lexical unit with another is only possible if consideration is given to the broader context of discursive practices.<sup>116</sup> Certain contemporary theories of metaphor and some general theories of translation discount the distinction between lexis and discourse, which supports the idea that they are both indeterminate modes of relationship-building rather than finite practices of substitution.

It is not simply that there is a parallel between the respective theories of metaphor and translation, however. They are ultimately the same kind of poetic activity.<sup>117</sup> Guldin argues that although Aristotle originally distinguished metaphors from “strange” or foreign speech, he

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<sup>115</sup> *Translation as Metaphor*, n.p.

<sup>116</sup> Obviously postcolonial and gender theories of translation make this connection. See Spivak, “The Politics of Translation”; Niranjana, *Siting Translation*; Simon, *Gender in Translation*, Bassnett and Lefevre, *Constructing Cultures*; Bassnet and Trivadi, *Post-Colonial Translation*; Munday, *Introducing Translation Studies*, 197-198.

<sup>117</sup> Guldin writes that “According to Eric Cheyfitz in *The Poetics of Imperialism*, the notions of translation and metaphor are etymologically and ideologically inseparable Guldin, *Translation as Metaphor*, n.p..

eventually concluded that they are of the same species. Guldin argues that for Aristotle, “...metaphor and translation are not only intimately linked to each other because of their structural analogy... There is another more decisive similarity between that which is known and that which is unknown, the familiar and the unfamiliar. Metaphor is an alien element within everyday language, the same way a foreign language is alien to domestic speech.” In other words, according to this interpretation translation might be considered as a kind of metaphor.

Aristotle’s definition of metaphor, used in both *Rhetoric* and *Poetics*, remains extremely well known. “Metaphor consists in giving the thing a name that belongs to something else...” he writes. This giving takes place “...either from genus to species, or from species to genus, or from species to species, or on grounds of analogy.”<sup>118</sup> Translations can take all of these forms, but what Roman Jakobson calls “translation proper,” or interlinguistic translation or interpretation, might perhaps best be considered in terms of the relationship of similarity between species or the analogical relation of fundamentally different things.<sup>119</sup> That is, translation, like metaphor, can operate on relations of sameness or through productive differences. Translations are figurative in the sense that a word used to represent another is no longer “ordinary” speech in Aristotle’s terms.

Paul Ricoeur has written that “...the ‘place’ of metaphor, its most intimate and ultimate abode, is neither the name, nor the sentence, nor even discourse, but the copula of the verb *to be*. The metaphorical ‘is’ at once signifies both ‘is not’ and ‘is like.’”<sup>120</sup> The ultimate abode of translations, therefore, is also in the “to be” that links a given X with a given Y. When we say

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<sup>118</sup> Ricoeur, *The Rule of Metaphor*, 13.

<sup>119</sup> Jakobson “On Linguistic Aspects of Translation.”

<sup>120</sup> Ricoeur, *The Rule of Metaphor*, 6.

that a book written in one language *is* the translation of another, it takes enters the state of being both “not” and “like” either the source text or the target. The translation is neither a hybrid nor a chimera. It is its own, separate phenomenon. Aristotle’s metaphor “...provides a cipher for the unknown...” or “...can name a nameless thing” by being both like and unlike the unknown or unnamed.<sup>121</sup> Thinking of translation as metaphor allows us to see the co-presence of likeness and difference, which is the source of a fundamental indeterminacy at the heart of translation which confounds all attempts at mimesis.

This indeterminacy is what Emily Apter points to when she defines “the untranslatable.” It is not that translations cannot or do not happen. It is quite obvious to anyone and everyone that they do.<sup>122</sup> Rather, she writes that “...the untranslatable is...what keeps on (not) translating. ...It is a sign of the way in which, from one language to another, neither the words nor the conceptual networks can simply be superimposed.”<sup>123</sup> Translation is therefore never final. It always presents itself as a problem as much as a solution. For this reason, languages and nations should not be considered closed, discrete spaces. Rather, symbolic exchange defies fixity in political boundaries. Translation fundamentally problematizes ideas like “East” and “West,” “Japanese” and “Foreign,” and so on.

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<sup>121</sup> O’Rourke, “Aristotle and the Metaphysics of Metaphor,” 18.

<sup>122</sup> Bassnett, *Translation Studies*, i. Detienne suggests that we might say the same thing about comparison. Regardless of whether we philosophically hold things to be commensurable or not, we all go about comparing things anyway. Human beings always have, and probably always will.

<sup>123</sup> Apter, “Introduction,” xvii. Apter writes in *Against World Literature* that “Words that assign new meanings to old terms, neologisms, names for ideas that are continually re-translated or mistranslated, translations that are obviously incommensurate (as in the use of *esprit* for “mind” or *Geist*), these are among the most salient symptoms of the genuine Untranslatable” (79). The translational moments I describe below, all centered on translations of “citizen,” are of this nature.

Despite Apter's critique, we are still too often tempted to think of translation purely as the saying of one thing in two languages, and that foreign language learning is simply the adding new "X is Y" relationships to our mental libraries of linkages between concepts and signs. If we follow the algorithmic assumptions about translation that govern translation software and which inform many everyday understandings of translation practice, we may believe that if we were to translate an utterance from English to French, from French to Japanese, and then from Japanese back to English, our circularly translated text and the original would be the same with no surpluses or deficits of meaning.<sup>124</sup> In other words, we think what we call "tree" in English is the thing we call *l'arbre* in French and *ki* in Japanese. This assumption is mistaken, and mistake draws attention to one aspect of translation's transformative potential.

Debates about translational adequacy often treat the written and the spoken as not fundamentally distinct. That is, we also might assume that saying "tree" is not any different from writing "tree" insofar as written signs are literal representations of verbal signs, and therefore there is no disjuncture in their communicative potential. By treating writing and speaking as related, but aesthetically different experiences, we can see another layer of indeterminacy.

The conventions of speaking and hearing constitute one pattern for making interpretations. The conventions of writing and reading demand another because the aesthetic experiences of producing and receiving auditory and visual signs are different. Rather than the lips, tongue, and ears which we use in speaking and hearing, we use the eyes to read and our hands and arms to write. This is further complicated by the fact that verbal signs are

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<sup>124</sup> Google Translate is the most obvious example of this kind of thinking. Even though no one familiar with translation studies today argues in favor of a purely mimetic equation of one sign with another, this view is still reinforced by the ways in which foreign languages are taught in schools, by the ubiquity of interlingual dictionaries, and by anxieties over the accuracy of literary translation.

contemporaneous with the signs that our bodies intentionally or unintentionally produce in speaking. Body language, gestures, or even the clothes we wear while we are speaking all alter the experience of hearing. Thus, the aesthetic activities of signification and interpretation are both conventional and simultaneously operate on numerous levels of experience, most of which we are at best dimly conscious of.

Moreover, because of the inherent, simultaneous plurality of aesthetic experience involved in all representation and interpretation, we can say that the world can just as easily be drawn, sung, composed in music, or acted on a stage as it can be written or talked about. The number of ways of translating one thing into another, whether using signs we have grown up with or those we have acquired after the fact, far exceeds the narrow confines of what we think of as literariness. That is, a painting, a dance, or a song are all instances of the metaphorical nature of translation, insofar as they also take the form of an “is” which both “is like” and “is not.” In this sense, Apter’s principle that “nothing is translatable” and “everything is translatable” rings true.<sup>125</sup>

The line separating these domains is serpentine, not straight. That is to say, they are “unlocatable” as discrete forms, or are each different dimensions of a single “fusion” of creative practice.<sup>126</sup> For example, the Japanese verbal sign *ki* becomes the written sign 木. Historically speaking, the

character 木 is nothing more than a simplified picture of a tree. The distinction between the



**Image 1:** Portrait of Loie Fuller by Frederick Glasier. The character *bun* 文 depicts a figure with arms outstretched and flowing sleeves below.

<sup>125</sup> Apter, *The Translation Zone*, 8. Derrida says something similar: “How can one dare say that nothing is translatable and, by the same token, that nothing is untranslatable?” “What is a Relevant Translation,” 179.

<sup>126</sup> Ranciere, *Aisthesis*, 105;107.



representation of trees in writing and the representation of trees in images is therefore fluid.<sup>127</sup>

The same is true with words that are sung rather than spoken (we might think of the phenomenon of tonality in Chinese or Vietnamese) or acted out instead of drawn (as in sign languages or the game of charades). Similarly, the Chinese character for “culture”, “music,” or “literature,” 文 (*bun*), was originally a picture of a person dancing across a stage. Because translational or metaphorical representations are transitive, dances can be images, songs can be speeches, and words can be pictures. Translation should not, therefore, be misunderstood as a narrowly literary or verbal phenomenon. Like a serpentine dance, translation also “...consists in the assemblage of bodily forms supported by everything that technique can invent.”<sup>128</sup>

Moreover, Voloshinov insists that signs are always material, not ideal.<sup>129</sup> That is to say, material things represent other material things, and words are not independent of physical reality. There is no eidetic realm where concepts live separate from their material relations with other things. When we speak, for example, we agitate the air in certain ways which vibrates the eardrums of others. These vibrations are words.<sup>130</sup> The physical representation of one material object with another is language. In this way, the word, whether spoken or written, has no privilege over any other form of representation.

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<sup>127</sup> Moreover, Japanese makes no distinction between the singular and the plural. “Trees” and “tree” could both be translated as *ki*.

<sup>128</sup> Ranciere, *Aisthesis*, 108.

<sup>129</sup> Voloshinov, *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language*, 10. Ranciere also mentions the importance of materiality in Loie Fuller’s performance, *Aisthesis*, 108.

<sup>130</sup> Samantha Frost, a leading new materialist thinker, provides a similar account of Thomas Hobbes’ philosophies of language and sensation in *Lessons of a Materialist Thinker*.

Also critical to these material regimes of sense-making is the experience that we perhaps most naturally associate with the term aesthetics; emotion. It is surely unnecessary to argue that sights, sounds, or smells can cause us to feel happy, sad, or nostalgic. The question is how and why a sight, sound, or smell becomes associated with a particular emotion. Perhaps the even more important question for the possibility of politics is how these experiences become disassociated or reassigned. That is, the disposition of certain emotions in relation to certain experiences is part of our standard regime of sense-making. Translations that we fail to process according to our usual emotional coding, or sensations that defy description by our usual array of words or images are political in that they invite us to experience the world differently in emotional terms precisely because emotions are tied to sensation.

The recognition of the inherent fluidity between all modes of signification and interpretation runs counter to what Davide Panagia calls “narratocracy,” or the privileging of textual, linear narratives or arguments above other forms of signification.<sup>131</sup> Narratocratic representation is fundamentally mimetic insofar as it assumes the transparency of verbal or textual forms, ignoring the multiple layers of aesthetic experience inherent in all symbolic communication. As I have suggested, speaking, writing, hearing, and listening all entail different bodily experiences of sensation. These sensations are layered on top of any conventional meaning established between signs. This multidimensionality is part of the source of the simultaneous “is like” and “is not” relation created in metaphor.

Translation-metaphor, especially when it is understood aesthetically, is fundamental to breaking with narratocracy. As Naoki Sakai has argued, “...translation operates by exceeding the narrow meaning of language. A novel is translated into a film, just as a political idea can be

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<sup>131</sup> Panagia, *The Political Life of Sensation*, 12.

translated in action. A human being's creative capacity can be translated into capital, their desires translated into dreams, their aspirations translated into seats in parliament. Translation passes through and circulates in the intervals of different instances of meaning, threading together discontinuous contexts."<sup>132</sup> Not only is translation a phenomenon which integrates different contexts through different media, but it almost never operates in a terminal fashion. Every translation has an independence and originality that allows it to initiate new translations of itself through one or more of its various dimensions of aesthetic impact. For example, in the case of Sakura Sōgorō, the physical experiences of starvation and degradation were translated into not only the text that Sōgorō delivered to the shogun, but were transformed into his impossible appearance in the space he was unable to appear in. His appearance was then retranslated into orally transmitted stories, legends, or songs. These themselves became paintings, woodblock prints, and Kabuki plays.<sup>133</sup> These various metaphors for Sōgorō's act were then translated into the actions of rebels during the "Freedom and Popular Rights Movement" of the mid-1880s, the 1960 protests against the American security treaty, and the events of May 1968.

From this perspective, the intentional transmission of meaning need not be considered the most important or interesting aspect of translational thinking. Why someone translated something or what they intended to do by translating something a certain way ceases to have much meaning, particularly in historical perspective. On an individual level, we might understand meaning as "significance" or "intention." In this sense, when we talk about the meaning of a sign, we are talking about the thing that one intends to refer to with that particular choice of sign. This is the same sense in which Saussure explains the break between signs and

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<sup>132</sup> Sakai, "Translation and the Schematism of Bordering," n.p.

<sup>133</sup> See Ogyū Sorai's discussion of Sōgorō in, *Ogyū Sorai's Masterworks*, 101.

what they signify. He writes that "...the whole language system can be envisaged as sound differences combined with differences between ideas." That is, the sound differences (or differences in image, movement, etc....) are related by a particular act of representation on the part of the representer.<sup>134</sup> Nonetheless, while representers certainly do undertake acts of representation, it is impossible for them to be fully aware of the range of significations because of the inherent indeterminacy of aesthetic experience. Asking what a given author intended by his or her deployment of a sign will always yield an incomplete answer. We might also understand meaning in terms of what sense a reader, hearer, or listener takes from a given utterance. For many of the same reasons as the author's intention is unclear, the reader's own impression of what they read is as well. Readers are rarely consciously aware of all of the aesthetic dimensions on which words or experiences affect them.

Ultimately, as I.A. Richards suggests, meaning arises from context.<sup>135</sup> By context, we might think of what Raymond Williams has called a "cluster," or Walter Benjamin referred to as a "constellation" of signs which all mutually invoke one another.<sup>136</sup> For example, as when someone conjures the word "citizen," they trigger not a simple relation between one thing and another which represents it, but between a thing and a number of other things it is like or which it is associated with. We can think of the huge number of sentences that we could write that take the form of the metaphor "A citizen is X." Fukuzawa Yukichi suggests at least two for example;

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<sup>134</sup> Charles Taylor makes a similar argument about meaning and intention in "Philosophy and the Human Sciences."

<sup>135</sup> Guldin, *Translation as Metaphor*; Richards, "The Philosophy of Rhetoric."

<sup>136</sup> See Williams, *Keywords*, 22. Benjamin, *On the Origins of German Tragic Drama*, 34-35; *The Arcades Project*, 462; 475.

“a citizen is a guest” and “a citizen is a master.”<sup>137</sup> This kind of meaning is fundamentally social and historical. What it meant to be a “guest” and what it meant to be a “master” in a given context therefore inform what it means to be a citizen in that time and place. What it means to be a “guest” or a “master” each separately rely on a multitude of connections between other terms that cut across time and the arbitrary boundaries drawn between national languages. These connected words and their own associations therefore also have an indirect bearing on “citizen.”

The multiple significations that inhere in every single thing are therefore essentially infinite. There can never be a full and accurate cataloging of meaning in the world, whether on the level of the individual who deploys a sign or especially on the social or historical levels. This is true first because all representations are ephemeral. Spoken words dissipate in the air. Written words are effaced by time. Those acts of representation that have come and gone leave traces in the collective memory of all subsequent representations, but their original material reality has long since evaporated. Each use of a sign is an example of how that sign might be used again. It provides a new instance of how that sign might be applied to the circumstances of the world.

Voloshinov perhaps provides the clearest demonstration of this principle. He argues that every time someone utters the words “what time is it?” it means something slightly different. It is characterized by the particular instant of its utterance, and it informs subsequent utterances as an example of how those words might be used to configure a moment in the future. In other words, we translate past experiences into current ones and use them as guides for future action. We, of course, are most often not aware of these chains of translation. We tend to think each use of a word is the same as the last. The question “what time is it?” yesterday means the same as “what

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<sup>137</sup> Fukuzawa, *An Encouragement of Learning*, 51.

time is it?” today.<sup>138</sup> The same is true when we say that “What time is it?” and *Quelle heure est-il?* are a constant and transparent pair. Ultimately, though, every use adds something new to its possible range of deployments because of its situation in material reality.

Taking note of the indeterminacy of translation practices and experiences is critical for understanding its politically transformative potential. This indeterminacy is not to say that people do not have agency in making translations and acting politically. As we will see, they most certainly do. What it shows, however, is that people do not have full control over the outcomes of their actions, and that they have a limited ability to predict the impact that their actions will have. This lack of control and foresight is precisely what makes it possible for the new and unexpected to take shape.

### **Translation and *Poesis***

I have insisted on the relationship between translation and metaphor because it draws attention to the indeterminacy and aesthetic complexity of participating in symbolic exchange. Language, or really any symbolic representation, lacks a fixed foundation. Standard assumptions about translated texts and the referentiality of language obscure not only the complexity of cultural systems on the discursive level, but foreclose what I will show to be the political potential that exists in this complexity. This political potential, as we will see below, rests not simply on the possibility of misunderstanding, but on the power of translation-metaphor to introduce something fundamentally new to our shared experience of the world.<sup>139</sup> Aristotle held that a good metaphor was one which has the “...power of surprising the hearer; because the

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<sup>138</sup> Voloshinov, *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language*, 100.

<sup>139</sup> Rancière is clear that disagreement does not arise from indeterminacy alone. This is important in making agency possible. *Dis-agreement*, x.

hearer expected something different...” and that the hearer’s “...acquisition of the new idea [contained in the metaphor] impresses him all the more.”<sup>140</sup> According to Rancière, it is in this sense that writers, and of course translators as well, “...find themselves engaged, whether they like it or not, in the tasks of constructing a common world.”<sup>141</sup>

Even if the field of signs and their interrelations is complex and indeterminate, conventional practices of representation allow it to appear more or less stable over time.<sup>142</sup> Although communicating meaning is necessarily imperfect, it does at least generally succeed because the conventions which assign symbolic referents themselves have a degree of functional stability. Here, we might again take note of Voloshinov’s insistence on the materiality of these associations. It is in the stable relationships between individuals and groups that meanings gain their constancy. The consistency of economic relationships, the existence of the same material objects, and the reproduction of everyday habits is a hedge against the indeterminacy of language. In other words, social and economic order are inseparable from the order of cultural meaning. Translation-metaphor has a unique capacity to disrupt these systems because it by definition operates outside of standard, rehearsed patterns of reference and introduces objects which are not any of the material objects accepted as natural in a given context.

As we have seen, translation-metaphor operates on the simultaneous “is like” and “is not” relation that is inherent in the copula “to be” linking two things. Historically speaking, theories

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<sup>140</sup> Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, bk. III, pt. 11.

<sup>141</sup> Rancière, *The Politics of Literature*, 5.

<sup>142</sup> This is similar to the way that Michael Freeden defines “ideologies,” or “...those systems of political thinking, loose or rigid, deliberate or unintended, through which individuals and groups construct an understanding of the political world they, or those who preoccupy their thoughts, inhabit, and then act on that understanding.” *Ideologies and Political Theory*, 3.

of metaphor which emphasize the relation of likeness have been called “substitution” approaches. For example, Quintilian dismissed metaphor as mere ornament because it simply involved the use of one term in the place of another with the same meaning. Those which emphasize difference are what have been called “interaction” theories. Interaction theories stress the incommensurability of the two terms of comparison which necessitates the creation of something else that captures some aspect of the relation to make it comprehensible.<sup>143</sup>

In practice, metaphor is neither pure substitution nor pure interaction. However, the interactive aspects of metaphor are what I wish to focus on with respect to translation in particular. For example, when confronted with the English word “tree” on its own, we grasp its meaning through the conventions of association we have been habituated into. When we hear the word *ki*, on the other hand (assuming we speak no Japanese), we have no reference for that sign to anything within our standard repertoire of associations. If we establish a relation between “tree” and *ki* based on the metaphorical copula (in the form of the proposition “‘tree’ is *ki* in Japanese”), we are not actually invoking the same “tree” in the translational-metaphorical proposition that we are in the not obviously metaphorical English word. In other words, when posited as a translation through the copula, “tree” and the relations it is enmeshed in are transformed. For lack of a more elegant sign, we might simply call this transformed sign “tree’.” Tree’ is different from “tree” because it is both like and yet not the Japanese word *ki*. It is also both like, and yet not the original English word. “Tree” on its own has no natural or obvious relation to Japanese, French, Spanish, or any other linguistic sign. Tree’ therefore is both like and not like *ki*, whereas “tree” is neither like nor not like it. Tree’ is a different sign which associates elements of the substances of both “tree” and *ki* but is not reducible to either.

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<sup>143</sup> Black, “More About Metaphor,” 11.



We could say that 'tree' is a good translation-metaphor in Aristotle's sense. It surprises the hearer "because the hearer expected something different." When confronted with a word that does not make sense, we do not expect to see "speech" or *logos* in it. That is, hearing a word in a language we do not understand causes us to doubt its intelligibility to anyone as anything other than "voice" or *phone*. To the non-Japanese speaker, hearing *ki* is the same as a dog barking or a cat meowing. It is sound, nothing more. Hence, the ancient Greek characterization of "barbarians" as those non-Helenees who only possessed meaningless voice, famously represented onomatopoeically as "bar bar bar."<sup>144</sup> When we make the translation-metaphor "tree is *ki*," we are surprised because *ki* suddenly appears rational and meaningful, and that it appears as something we thought we already fully understood. It is distinct from the sounds animals make. Again, as Aristotle suggested, a good metaphor is pleasing to the hearer because the "... acquisition of the new idea [contained in the metaphor] impresses him all the more." The translation-metaphor introduces a new way of being insofar as 'tree' both is like and is not *ki*, whereas "tree" alone does not.

Translation-metaphors, therefore, are transformed signs which did not necessarily previously exist in either system of references which the two societies contained in the comparison are predominantly habituated into. In this sense, translation is fundamentally poetic. According to Derek Whitehead, "Poiesis is not to be grasped in its features as a practical or voluntary activity... but rather in its being an 'unveiling,' *aletheia*, a making known which produces or leads things into presence. The related idea of *technē* (of 'an art' or 'trade') for the Greeks meant 'to cause to appear,' and poiesis, 'to produce into presence.'"<sup>145</sup> This "producing

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<sup>144</sup> Pagden, *Worlds at War*, 42.

<sup>145</sup> Whitehead, "Poiesis and Art-Making."

into presence” is not so far removed from the *meta-phorein*, or “carrying over” of the metaphor of translation itself. Translation-metaphor “produces into presence” what was previously absent.

“Producing into presence” is another way of saying that the translation-metaphors make something differently sensible. The interaction of “tree” and *ki* in the translation-metaphor ‘tree’ make *ki* appear even without its explicit appearance. As we all know from experience, books in translation do not usually contain the source language text as well. An English translation of Aristotle’s *Poetics*, for example, would be primarily composed of words that appear to be pure English. Although the translator might include some Greek terms in the introduction, or add footnotes which discuss specific Greek words, for all intents and purposes we only encounter familiar signs. We know, however, that these words are not purely familiar, and that they therefore contain an excess of meaning and an indeterminacy which challenges our conventional ways of interpreting the world.

Even in cases where a translation is not announced as such, the joining of a series of words that have been placed in metaphorical relation to others carry traces of this association which affect the experience of reading them. The original words leave traces in the translation through the combinations which they form, the metaphors on which they rely, and the concerns which they raise. Because translation-metaphor operates at the discursive level rather than the lexical, even unlabeled translations contain innovations which may lead something into presence.<sup>146</sup>

Every metaphor depends on a particular set of cultural associations for the “like” component of the relation to function. Those associations are broadly conventional, and are reinforced not only by repeated daily conversational use, but may be taught in schools, deployed

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<sup>146</sup> Kuhn, “Metaphor in Science.”

in legal codes, or supported by other sorts of institutionalization in a given historical and geographic context. Translation-metaphors which even subtly defy this kind of discursive situatedness reconfigure how they can be experienced. There is no such thing as a purely domesticized translation, even if it masquerades itself as an untranslated original. Because every translation necessarily contains elements originating in other systems of discourse, it necessarily transforms.

Jacques Derrida perhaps puts the point best when he argues for the “relevance” of translation. Derrida plays with the indeterminacy of the words *relever* in French, “relevant” in English, and *aufheben* in German.<sup>147</sup> In French, the word *relever* has several distinct meanings. It can mean “to pick up,” “to raise,” “to notice,” “to relieve,” or “to spice up.” Perhaps most provocatively, it can mean “a count,” or “a reckoning.” In Derrida’s view, a good translation is “relevant” in that it takes account of a source utterance’s polyvalence and incorporates many of its elements into a target language utterance. It “lifts” elements of the substance of the source and “spices up” the target by incorporating them. Derrida famously translated Hegel’s *Aufheben* into French with the word *relevé* because it captured something of the German term’s sense of both lifting and suppressing, or simultaneously overcoming and transforming.<sup>148</sup> In other words, it creates something new which is both like and not like the two things which it “is.” “Relevant” translation overcomes the originals through the mismatch between what is counted in the source, what is counted in the target, and what can be counted in the translation. From the translation of a single word to an entire *oeuvre*, the translation is a new way of dividing what is sensible in the

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<sup>147</sup> “What is a ‘Relevant’ Translation,” 14.

<sup>148</sup> *Aufheben* is usually translated into English as “to sublimate.” Although Derrida used this word to translate Hegelian philosophy, that does not mean that I am endorsing a Hegelian view of reason. Translations are decidedly non-teleological as we will see below.

world that is neither equivalent to the totality of the source language nor reducible to the assemblage of the words in the target language.

When we consider translation-metaphor in the expansive sense of words becoming images, images becoming sounds, and sounds becoming movements, the necessity of discursive innovation is all the more apparent. An image which becomes both like and not like other phenomena that it is placed in relation to is not usually thought of in terms of translation according to our commonsense framework. Nonetheless, this interactive association generates new possibilities of experience in the same way that “tree” becoming tree’ does. As we will see below, the participants in the speech and debate societies who made their own actions the translation-metaphor for the texts of others became something more than they would have been without their association.

The degrees of indeterminacy, complexity, and novelty particular to a given translational-metaphorical relation is not determined by the intention of the translator or the readers’ willful interpretation. As much as translators might seek to fix the meaningful relationship between terms referentially, the discursive nature of translation-metaphor means that such a move is impossible. “Producing into presence” is quite different from defining, or determining. It is simply the making visible of something which is then aesthetically experienced by those to whom it appears. An artist can intend a viewer to feel a certain emotion or see a certain color, but the artist has no actual control over whether such a thing occurs. Even something as ostensibly objective as color is experienced differently by others. Not only because of physical differences in the eye or brain, but because the discursive patterns we are acculturated into link different colors with different sets of ideas. Red does not evoke “passion” or “love” in all cultures, and it does not even appear as “red” to people with certain vision challenges. In Japanese and many

other languages around the world, “green” and “blue” can be signaled using the same word depending on discursive context. English does not have a single word for “light blue” although Japanese (and many other languages) do. Poetic activity can create something different, but it cannot determine what happens after difference enters the world.

### **Translation and Democratic Potentiality**

The introduction of something new with no guarantees about the consequences of its appearance is the essence of politics.<sup>149</sup> Just like language, politics lacks any foundational ground. In fact, we might say that politics occurs precisely when that lack of foundation is exposed. As such, this view subsumes the usual definitions of politics-as-usual into a more radical understanding of the nature of our living together as beings which translate experiences.<sup>150</sup> The politics of translation-metaphor is not unlike Jacques Rancière’s conception of politics as “dissensus.” In Rancière’s words:

“Before the logos that deals with the useful and the harmful, there is the logos that orders and bestows the right to order... Politics only occurs when these mechanisms are stopped in their tracks by the effect of a presupposition that is totally foreign to them yet without which none of them could ultimately function: the presupposition of the equality of anyone and everyone, or the paradoxical effectiveness of the sheer contingency of any order.”<sup>151</sup>

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<sup>149</sup> There is certainly a point of similarity between Hannah Arendt’s definition of politics and Rancière’s. I am not relying on Arendt’s thoughts on natality here, however. Unlike Arendt, Rancière denies that there is ever a pure moment of politics. See Arendt, *The Human Condition* and then Chambers’s *Rancière’s Lesson* for more on their points of intersection.

<sup>150</sup> “Usual” definitions include things like Lasswell’s concern with “who gets what, when, and how,” the Greek understanding of statecraft as soulcraft, or Rawlsian “justice as fairness.”

<sup>151</sup> Rancière, *Dis-agreement*, 16-17.

Society operates according to conventions or rules that inevitably produce and reproduce types of inequality. In even the most egalitarian and orderly societies, some rule while others obey. Even in societies of citizens who take turns ruling and being ruled, people have varying degrees of autonomy enshrined in the conventions that delimit valid and invalid kinds of speech and action. Citizens are given a particular status denied to those who are non-citizens simply by virtue of being recognized as such. These conventional distinctions between “citizen” and “non-citizen” rest on the denial of the basic principle of equality.

This principle of equality, however, finds validation every time something incomprehensible interrupts frameworks by which we make sense of the world. If citizens and non-citizens are distinguished in a binary way, the appearance of people who are both like and yet are not either of these designations challenges that schema as a whole. The appearance of this third term disrupts the meanings of both “citizen” and “non-citizen,” but also verifies the equality of every human being inside and outside of the standard categories which previously maintained social order. The presence of the third term in the place where it is not counted also exposes and verifies the indeterminacy and complexity of our representations of the world, and the potential equality of everything once those lines are effaced. The verification of symbolic indeterminacy is coterminous with the verification of human equality.

Politics begins before there are subjects who can demand something or whose souls can be crafted. In fact, it begins and ends precisely in the space in between and around representations. Mimetic politics denies the existence of either an in-betweenness or an excess of meaning. Translation-metaphor constitutes the self and world by re-dividing it. This division of the world is what Rancière calls “the partition [or distribution] of the sensible.” He writes:

“The partition of the sensible is the dividing-up of the world (*de monde*) and of people (*du monde*), the *nemein* upon which the *nomoi* of community are founded. This partition should be understood in the double sense of the word: on the one hand, as that which separates and excludes; on the other, as that which allows participation. A partition of the sensible refers to the manner in which a relation between a shared common (*un commun partagé*) and the distribution of exclusive parts is determined by sensory experience...[it] presupposes a distribution of what is visible and what not, of what can be heard and what not.”<sup>152</sup>

At its core, politics is the disruption of this distribution of the sensible. It is the moment in which what is visible, hearable, or sayable is shown to have no objective finality. It is the interruption of the standard conventions which make certain statements or actions valid or invalid. The making of translation-metaphors has a critical role to play in in this process.

On the opposite side of events or appearances that disrupt the sensible are practices and institutions which maintain or re-inscribe them. These are what Rancière refers to as “police.”<sup>153</sup> The successful application of standing interpretive frames and the deployment of conventional representations is precisely what occurs in “politics” as we usually understand it. Voting, deliberative bodies, legal regimes, and business as usual are in this sense the opposite of politics because they perpetuate existing ways of dividing and hierarchizing the world. They deny the

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<sup>152</sup> Rancière, *Ten Theses on Politics*, 44.

<sup>153</sup> According to Rancière, “The essence of the police lies in a partition of the sensible that is characterized by the absence of void and of supplement: society here is made up of groups tied to specific modes of doing, to places in which these occupations are exercised and to modes of being corresponding to these occupations and these places. In this matching of functions, places, and ways of being, there is no place for any void. It is the exclusion of what “is not” that constitutes the police-principle at the core of statist practices.” *Dissensus*, 36.

contingency of social order by presenting themselves as natural and always-already present institutions.<sup>154</sup> In their extraordinary complexity, these techniques of representation are highly capable of adapting to changing circumstances and the incipience of the new. The point of the law, one might argue, is precisely to decide on cases in which something ambivalent appears. Although the world is ultimately unpredictable, our overdetermined systems of representation are able to account for the vast majority of changes that are introduced. Any disruptions to sense-making are generally small because the existing rules of interpretation prove adequate to accommodate them.

On one level, this understanding of police invokes our usual understanding of the repressive mechanism which maintains public order. On another, we should note that the word “police” is also etymologically related to the English words “polish” and “polite.” For example, we might say that “police” is a mode of politeness or propriety. Mimetic techniques of comparison aim to “polish” away the ambiguity between concepts without breaking the concepts themselves. “Policing” buffs out the scratches to make the existing order appear smooth, continuous, and natural. In other words, comparison might be read as fundamentally conservative and resistant to radical change insofar as it seeks to avert the appearance of voids between concepts. “Police” is also related to the Greek word *polis*, or the city is responsible for the cultivation of its citizens towards a certain ideal. Everyday politics, for example the proceedings of congress, aim to produce policies that bring society closer to its underlying ideal. They polish what we have rather than undermining its basic suppositions. Disrupting these

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<sup>154</sup> This is critical particularly for the institutions of capitalism. See Walker, *The Sublime Perversion of Capital*.



suppositions is politics in Rancière's vocabulary, and he argues that generally, it occurs very rarely.<sup>155</sup> In his view, social order is generally very effective at polishing away blemishes.

We might say that the case of Perry's arrival in Japan is an archetypally "political" event from this perspective. The shogunate was of course well aware of the activities of the British, French, and Americans in the Pacific long before Perry arrived in 1853. They maintained vigorous trade with China, and the Dutch, who were permitted to trade at Nagasaki during the entire "closed country" period (1632-1854) brought a steady flow of information about social and intellectual developments in Europe. Nonetheless, Tokugawa society was able to account for the actions foreign countries under its existing ideological framework. Confucianism provided one successful way of understanding the relationship between the "barbarians," China, and the domains of the Japanese islands. It gave a place to events abroad and maintained rules for the representation of those events within the Tokugawa world. Fundamental to these rules and the policing of news about the world beyond was the physical invisibility of the people themselves. The foreigners were "polite" insofar as they traded only at Dejima and did not take any other part in Tokugawa life.

It was only with the appearance of American gunships, bearing messages in English, carried by men with pale skin and red hair, that the conventional Confucian representation of Europeans as barbarians broke down. The appearance of these people where they were not supposed to be, travelling in vessels that were impossibly large, and looking unlike any person that most people in Tokugawa Japan had ever seen before in the flesh caused a panic. There was a moment where the mimetic representation of what was before them failed, initiating what was an important political moment. It was a return to a state of equality where people could not easily

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<sup>155</sup> Rancière, *Dis-agreement*, 17.

be categorized according to high and low, same or different. They simply were there, together, in a new and ambiguous position.

Nothing is produced in political moments such as this except for radical possibility. We might say that the political moment is primarily destructive. The instant that mimetic representation successfully resumes and new, adequate frameworks for interpreting the world appear, policing can be said to have begun again. The verification of equality entailed in the breakdown of representation makes it possible to create new representations which expand or limit in new ways the realm of what is sensible. That which was unseen or uncounted, and which broke the police order simply by its appearance may be given a place in a new distribution of the sensible. Or it may not. Politics does not carry any guarantee about outcomes. History does not necessarily tend towards greater liberation or equality.

This unpredictability means that politics is only ever potential, never final. It is inevitably radically democratic in that in the moment our conventions of sense-making are broken, the principle of equality is once again confirmed. Confirming this principle of equality, however, means that the inherent indeterminacy of social convention more generally is also confirmed. Because of this indeterminacy, the occurrence of politics is also the confirmation of the principle that politics will necessarily occur again. In other words, we can count on the essential equality which lurks under the conventional inequalities of our everyday lives making itself felt again.

### **The Indeterminacy of The Political Moment**

Because translation-metaphor always transforms the world in some way, it often intervenes in-between our ways of interpreting the world. The translated word, sound, or image might be considered no different from the black ships appearing on the horizon. The appearance of new signs in the interstices of our language is no different from new bodies appearing

suddenly in places where they do not belong. This was the case with Sōgorō's appearance. If we were watching a production of Romeo and Juliet, for example, we would be shocked and confused by the sudden appearance of a third figure unexpectedly joining Romeo and Juliet in the middle of the balcony scene. We are similarly surprised and confused by the appearance of language that is like that which we are accustomed to but also plainly not the same. While we would surely gasp with surprise if an audience member leapt to stand between Romeo and the balcony, we feel the same sense of surprise when the "bar bar bar" of incomprehensible speech takes *logos* for its own.

The reason that Aristotle considered a good metaphor to capable of surprising the hearer was precisely because it contains something new and unexpected. The mismatch between the like and the is not in translation-metaphor presents us with something we were formerly incapable of sensing. The appearance of this remainder where it does not belong requires us to suspend our schemata of interpretation, if only for an instant. It requires us to pause in an essentially political moment of equality between the terms we are accustomed to and this new element we are confronted with.

Moreover, because of the radical overdetermination of systems of representation the breaking and replacement of one schema implies the reconfiguration or adaptation many others. For example, the appearance of the black ships meant simultaneously rethinking the Confucian cosmological order, perceptions of geographical distance, conventions of dress, manners of speaking, and many more. The richness of representation and the multidimensionality of aesthetic experience meant that everything, from the metaphysical significance of Perry's existence down to mundane things like the shape of the buttons on his coat either defied or reconfirmed existing conventions of aesthetic interpretation. In a very real sense, Perry's buttons

were political in the same way that the letters from President Millard Fillmore that he carried with him were.

If translation has this political potential, and given that we are translating and metaphorizing all the time (especially in an increasingly globalized world), why does the world seem so consistent? Aside from the fact that this consistency is to some degree illusory, the fact remains that translation-metaphor is never “pure” politics. In fact, there is no such thing as a pure politics at all.<sup>156</sup> Because translation-metaphor creates something that both is like and is not, it contains within it the means by which it might be subsumed into what already exists. Despite the novelty it creates, it also relies on a fundamental similarity to things in the world as they are. In other words, although translation-metaphor transforms the world in some degree, it also reaffirms other aspects of it because it is always situated in a broader discursive context. A text may introduce a new translation that fundamentally defies our existing categories of sense, while simultaneously reaffirming others by referencing standard tropes and conventions of explication. In other words, the potential for politics and the force of police often appear next to one another in the same utterance.

The consequences of a given translation-metaphor on the broader distribution of the sensible in a particular time and place depend on the ways in which conventions are both broken and reaffirmed. Some translation-metaphors might break more than they re-inscribe. Others may do the opposite. The modes of policing and the openings for politics are limited by the regime of aesthetic sensibility that governs translation practices. For example, the prevailing rules for what counts as a “good” translation in a particular time or place determines what aspects of a foreign text a translator might attempt to emphasize and those he or she might not be sensitive to at all.

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<sup>156</sup> Chambers, *Lessons of Rancière*, 27.

Readers accustomed to thinking that translations are more or less transparent will treat the text differently from those who assume translations to be inherently problematic. In other words, the historical conventions of translating and interpreting translations shape the possibilities for politics to appear within a given utterance. They determine where schemata of interpretation are likely to fail and where policing is likely to succeed. Changing the conventions and practices prevalent in a given time and place therefore also means making new things visible.

This is not to say that an understanding of a particular culture's translation practices provides a blueprint for bringing about politics there. Because of the overdetermined nature political potential and policing, we can only see their outcomes in retrospect. For example, Louis Althusser was fond of Lenin's explanation of the reasons why the Russian revolution broke out before revolutions in Germany or England as many orthodox Marxists had expected. Lenin claimed that Russia was "the weakest link in the chain of imperialist states" because it "had accumulated the largest sum of historical contradictions possible." Whereas most theoreticians saw history as progressing from its "good side," that is, in the places where contradictions were distilled into their "purest form," Lenin recognized that it is often where things are least expected, or where theory is least capable of offering coherent explanations, that change occurs.<sup>157</sup> It is because structures are constituted by an almost infinite array of ideas and material practices that it is exceedingly difficult, if not impossible, to predict outcomes. We know that the Russian revolution embodied the maximum number of contradictions only because it happened.

We could say that the Russian Revolution translated the anger and resentment of millions of the Tsar's subjects into the assault on the Winter Palace in St. Petersburg. If we restrict ourselves to purely textual or verbal moments we can still only assess the role of translation-

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<sup>157</sup> Althusser, *For Marx*, 98.

metaphor in making a political moment only when we see its effects in retrospect. By their very nature, political moments are precisely those that we cannot sense coming. The introduction of something new is necessarily surprising precisely because that which is new did not previously exist. As Yanabu Akira has described, translation-metaphors often hit us physically because we lack the conventional intellectual or emotional protocols for digesting them.<sup>158</sup> Only after we have recovered from this shock can we begin to make sense of what has happened.

### **Conclusion**

The view of translation-metaphor that I have described responds at least partially to the relative lack of attention given to problems of translation in political theory generally. Although some recent work in comparative political theory has attempted to understand and process the practices of translating and comparing in East Asia and elsewhere, few have focused on the political potential of changing conventions of translation or of translation itself. Recent developments in the politics of aesthetics help us to think about translation as a fundamentally non-referential poetic activity, which runs counter to most thinking in the traditions of the Western European languages.

Viewing translation broadly and attending to its relationship with metaphor brings its transformational capacity into the foreground. Rather than simply reproducing or depicting objective phenomenon out in the world, it creates new ways of viewing the world by creating something that both “is like” and “is not” those things which already exist. The tension inherent in being simultaneously like and yet not defies our capacity to make sense, thereby destabilizing the prevailing distribution of the sensible we inhabit.

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<sup>158</sup> Yanabu, *Honyaku seiritsu jijō*.

The critique of narratocracy grounded in the multidimensionality of aesthetic experience also implies a critique of narratocratic politics. Deliberative theories, liberal ideas about consensus-building or interest group negotiation, and econometric models of politics all depend on a view of language in which words have determinate meaning and can be exchanged by rational and self-aware actors. Narratocratic political judgment means making distinctions between valid and invalid ways of being. Translational politics, on the other hand, makes no judgment.

Doing away with the narratocratic view of language means also having to radically rethink the nature of politics. My point is that the translational mode of political action is special in terms of the opportunity it affords to reconfigure our ways of understanding the world. As we will see below, translational moments have already played an important role in the ebb and flow of history. The reconfigurations that the translational moments make possible emerge in many different ways, from many different directions, at times we do not expect.

The translational moments I describe below are a demonstration of the principle that equality can make itself felt when things that do not belong together are brought into relation. They are examples of when something fundamentally new appears which disrupts our assumptions about what is intelligible and unintelligible. The politics of translation begins with appearance of new subjects where none are supposed to be, but does not guarantee any particular outcomes when these subjects take the stage. What I have described here therefore does not offer a lesson in political activism or resistance. Politics happens when we least expect it, with consequences we cannot anticipate.

卷二

フアソコレハ市民會同ノ義ニテ元ト羅馬ノ時  
 代ヨリ始リ其後漸ク歐羅巴ノ諸邦ニ流行セリ即  
 チ市民ノ業ヲ營ムモノ同心協力シテ法ヲ設ケ專  
 ラ之ニ依頼シテ生ヲ安スル所以ナリ故ニ猛惡兇  
 暴ノ武士等一個ノ市人ニ向テ之ヲ凌壓スルハ容  
 易ナリト雖モ斯ク一般ノ法ヲ以テ相合衆セルカ  
 故ニ敢テ害ヲ加ルコト能ハサリシト云フ  
 市都會同ノ商民等ハ此殊典ノ便利ナルヲ知リ種  
 タニ工夫ヲ運ラシテ之ヲ盛ニセンコトヲ欲シ其市  
 都ノ繁昌スルニ從ヒ各政府ヲ建テ城ヲ築キ兵ヲ

**Image 2:** *Seiyō jijō's shimin*. John Burton Hill's words in this section are: "Among the useful institutions which custom has created among many nations, is the rise of bodies of men with distinct privileges and functions, making a species of separate government, as it were, within the chief government, and so, by preventing it from being too strong, serving as a protection to the people. In the dark ages of history, this was in a fact measure a feature of the ecclesiastical power: we see it also in the privileges of cities and towns. Municipalities, as they were called, grew up under the Romans, and spread over all Europe: in these, the people who traded and followed other peaceful pursuits congregated. The ferocious nobles, who could have oppressed them singly, dared not meddle with them when thus united. ...Finding how very valuable these privileges were, the burgesses or citizens used every means to increase them."



## Fukuzawa Yukichi and the Individualistic Citizen

Translations question the representational identity and unity of languages, disclosing the arbitrariness of the relationship between words, things and ideas: translational transactions show that words are finally only metaphors for things. The scandal of metaphor resides in its destabilizing effect within a single language and points to the fact that no language is at peace with itself. The scandal of translation has to do with the undeniable existence of a plurality of languages that cannot ultimately be reduced to a single universal one.<sup>159</sup>

-Rainer Guldin

New kinds of relationships, but also new ways of seeing existing relationships, appear in language in a variety of ways: the invention of new terms...; in the adaptation and alteration (indeed at times reversal) of older terms ...; in extension...or transfer. But also, as these examples should remind us, such changes are not always either simple or final. Earlier and later senses coexist, or become actual alternatives in which problems of contemporary belief and affiliation are contested.<sup>160</sup>

-Raymond Williams

## Introduction

The modern Japanese translation word for “citizen,” *shimin* (市民), appeared as such for the first time in 1868, the same year as the Meiji Restoration. This translational moment played a central role in breaking down longstanding ways of viewing the relationships between individual people and their experiences of community. The rigid class hierarchy of the Tokugawa period gave way to a society composed of *heimin* (平民), or “equal people.” The critical importance of the new language of citizenship was its status as a metaphor for a particular kind of individual life, a way of aestheticizing or making felt a new image of a life well lived. Although a wide range of translations for the word “citizen” were and are today still deployed to capture different

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<sup>159</sup> Rainer Guldin, *Translation as Metaphor*, n.p.

<sup>160</sup> Williams, Raymond. *Keywords*, xxxiii.

nuances in the English usage, Fukuzawa Yukichi was the first to establish a consistent relation between a Japanese word *shimin* and the English word “citizen.” Fukuzawa’s texts of the late 1860s deployed what was in essence a neologism, the meaning of which would necessarily have been unclear Fukuzawa’s readers. For this reason, the histories of the individual *kanji* which compose the word *shimin*, the connections drawn between it and other concepts active in related discourses, and the specific contexts in which it appears all conspired to let emerge an image of what a *shimin* is and what a *shimin* does.

Fukuzawa’s early texts disrupted the rules for whose speech was intelligible by writing in a manner that unified the formerly high and formerly low classes in Tokugawa society. His language broke the standard Confucian class hierarchy of samurai (*shi* 士) at the top, followed by farmers (*nō* 農), artisans (*kō* 工), and allegedly “unproductive” merchants (*shō* 商) at the bottom, all of which had different customs of reading and writing which kept them separate. As we saw in the case of Sakura Sōgorō, the only group whose speech counted as legitimate in Tokugawa society was that of the samurai. Fukuzawa’s text counted those formerly denied speech by metaphorizing them as *shimin*.

Fukuzawa’s language might be ultimately be interpreted as describing what Tetsuo Najita calls a “liberal-materialist” individual whose civic duty is fulfilled in the development one’s intellectual faculties to contribute to a sphere of society bound by laws but distinct from government.<sup>161</sup> That is, Fukuzawa’s translations made it possible to experience *shimin* as a metaphor for a practice of self-cultivation which in turn would serve the state through the improvement of its constituent parts. The figuration of property rights and individual liberty secured by legal bonds implied in the language of citizenship meant that community could be

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<sup>161</sup> Najita, *Japan: The Intellectual Foundations of Modern Japanese Politics*, 86.

experienced primarily as a juridical, as opposed to a moral, relation.<sup>162</sup> This legitimized a politics in which one could practice citizenship, that is, act as a metaphorical *shimin*, without actually having any direct influence on government at all. It separated civil rights, or what was called in the debates of the 1870s and 1880s *minken* (民権), from political rights, or *seiken* (政權). This vision was radically democratic in that it rested on the assumption that all people could contribute to the development of a collective life. However, the primacy of civil rights over political rights configured in Fukuzawa's metaphor established that it was unnecessary -even undesirable- for the vast majority of people to actually have a hand in government.

To understand how Fukuzawa's translation-metaphor paints this picture, I look into the ways in which the word "citizen" is figured in his first bestselling work, *Seiyō jijō* (西洋事情), or "Conditions in the West" (1866-1870). I argue that *Seiyō jijō* a qualitatively different kind of text from Fukuzawa's more famous *Gakumon no susume* (1874) and *Bunmeiron no gairyaku* (1875). It represents what I call the "translational Fukuzawa" as opposed to the "didactic Fukuzawa" of the later texts. Crucially, *Seiyō jijō* contains the first deployment of Fukuzawa's translation for "citizen," along with a variety of other translation-metaphors that cut through the old categories of social status in new ways, and cordon off a space for the citizen as a subject. I first explore the question of how readers might have experienced reading Fukuzawa's text. I then turn to Fukuzawa's specific engagement with the word "citizen," with emphasis on the translation-metaphor *shimin*. I then consider some other ways citizens appeared in his didactic

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<sup>162</sup> That is not to say that it was exclusively juridical, of course. The moral and the juridical are always in dialogue. Fukuzawa's formulation places greater emphasis on law than, as we will see, Nakae Chōmin does in his Confucian account of citizenship.

writing of the 1870s in order to understand the new lines of separation Fukuzawa's text draws through Meiji society.<sup>163</sup>

I conclude that though he did not intend it, Fukuzawa's translation-metaphor was historically consequential for two reasons. First, it explicitly links citizenship with the idea of "civilization," or *bunmei* (文明). In so doing, it enshrined the values of rational argument, individualism, and social progress as criteria for political judgment. Second, it establishes a fundamental distinction between civil rights and political rights such that the citizen can be born entirely separately from any active engagement in everyday politics. It drew a line between those who count and those who do not which was insensible in Tokugawa terms, yet still inegalitarian in other ways. Broadly speaking, Fukuzawa's term functions not as new piece of vocabulary necessary for representing European forms of government, but as a metaphor for a particular kind of belonging which requires new standards of aesthetic judgment to make it sensible.

### **Japanese Readers and Conditions in the West**

Fukuzawa was among the very first of those under the Tokugawa regime to travel beyond the confines of the Japanese archipelago. He journeyed to America in 1859 and 1867, as well as to Europe in 1862, as an interpreter with official shogunate missions. Over the course of these three voyages, Fukuzawa observed a mixture of republics, monarchies, and empires in his tours of United States, Great Britain, France, the Netherlands, and Russia. Although he had received language training prior to his departure, the voyages helped him deepen his knowledge of English, Western manners, and what he would eventually call "civilized" forms of government through firsthand experience.

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<sup>163</sup> Fukuzawa, *Seiyō jijō; Bunmeiron no gairyaku*. I use Dilworth's translation of *Gakumon no susume* and Dillworth and Hurst's translation of *Bunmeiron no gairyaku* when quoting Fukuzawa's texts in English. I will indicate where I make departures from Dilworth.

The major account what he saw on his travels to appeared in the first volume of a work entitled *Seiyō jijō* (西洋事情), or *Conditions in the West*. Although Fukuzawa certainly saw himself in his later years as a great educator, *Conditions in the West* defies a straightforwardly pedagogical interpretation. In fact, we can say that *Seiyō jijō* is fundamentally different from all of his subsequent writing insofar as the text does not specify a central lesson, encompasses a wide variety of subjects, and presents certain texts as straightforward translations. It might be more correct to say that the text provides the materials necessary for learning about the West rather than an explanation of it, and in this sense represents a radically different vision of equality. Whereas *Gakumon no susume* speaks down to ignorant readers, *Seiyō jijō* treats them as equal partners in discovery.

To put it differently, *Conditions in the West* is an expression of Fukuzawa's own attempts to learn about the previously unintelligible aspects of the worlds he encountered abroad. The text's content is made up of other texts, and Fukuzawa's own thinking about those texts. It is a summary of the process by which he perceptually integrated his impression of the European and American everyday with what he knew in as a samurai in Kyūshū. By presenting the reader primarily with the texts from which he drew his own conclusions rather than with the conclusions themselves (which he would present in the 1870s in *An Encouragement of Learning* and *An Outline of a Theory of Civilization*), he in some ways brought the West to his readers. In so doing, the text allowed its readers to experience a similar challenge to the bounds of the sensible to the one that Fukuzawa had experienced in travelling. In this sense, it lays out the tools for learning rather than the knowledge itself.

It became an immediate best-seller, and occasioned the publication of a second “outside” volume (*gaihen* 外篇) in 1868, as well as a third volume in 1870. *Seiyō jijō*, as its name suggests,

is a concrete description of the political, cultural, financial, military, and social institutions of America, England, France and other European countries. Because it was practical and considered not only military and governmental matters (as many of the texts the shogunate had translated previously did), but also other, more mundane aspects of culture more generally, it was of great interest to both relatively common and elite readers alike. It drew an unprecedentedly large and diverse readership, and exerted a profound influence over the ways in which people of all classes perceived America and the European colonial nations in the *bakumatsu* and early Meiji periods.

The text of *Seiyō jijō* is itself rather remarkable in terms of its content and structure. It is neither a translation, nor a work of original reportage. It is not a digest of Western books, nor is it an episodic travelogue. Although it is often described as an account of Fukuzawa's journey, or as his description of the concrete conditions of culture and society in the West, the text is neither entirely Fukuzawa's nor is it always clearly attributed to those who Fukuzawa drew from. Fukuzawa relied heavily on a variety of texts in addition to his own observations in composing *Seiyō jijō*, including Blackstone's *Commentaries*, The American Declaration of Independence (translated and included in the first volume), and Francis Wayland's *Political Economy* and *Elements of Moral Science*.<sup>164</sup> Ultimately, it is a bricolage of translations, original factual descriptions, and evaluative interjections. As such, the experience of reading it was unlike many other texts available to Japanese readers at the time.

The point that Fukuzawa insisted upon was that his text be accessible to anyone. There is a well-known anecdote which claims that as he wrote, Fukuzawa frequently read his sentences to his maid to be sure that even those with little formal education could understand them. If she

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<sup>164</sup> Wayland, *Elements of Political Economy*; Wayland, *Elements of Moral Science*; Blackstone, *Blackstone's Commentaries on the Laws of England*.

found his writing opaque, he would go back and clarify it until his language was accessible to all, regardless of their level of education or their class background. Moreover, in Fukuzawa's translations, neither the author nor the translator of the text was figured as particularly important. In the mid-1860s, Fukuzawa was not yet a man of high standing or widespread fame. The ambiguity that appears between Fukuzawa's voice, and those of Blackstone, Wayland, and the others who take part in *Seiyō jijō* suggests that anyone could have written the words in question. These qualities of Fukuzawa's text -that it can be read by anyone and could have been written by anyone- expresses a particular democratic potential which broke down old distinctions between speech and writing, high styles and low styles, and other kinds of language transmission that constrained what was sensible. In this sense, Fukuzawa's egalitarian mode of writing shared something important with developments in European literature. According to Jacques Rancière, "literature" entailed "...a different community of sense and of the perceptible, a different way of linking a power to perceptibly affect and a power to signify.... A different community of sense and of the perceptible..." and "...a different relationship between words and beings..." This "...also means a different common world and a different people."<sup>165</sup> One aspect of *Seiyō jijō*'s reconfiguration of the sensible was the fact that it was a vernacular text, written by a low-ranking samurai for readers both high and low, in and out of positions of power.

Regardless of what genre we attempt to assign the text to, it contains the first sustained consideration of the English words "citizen" and "citizenship." The relationship between the egalitarian mode of writing and reading suggested by *Seiyō jijō*, and the appearance of the egalitarian figure of the citizen for the first time is not a coincidence. The first volume of 1866 is in large measure drawn from Francis Wayland's *Elements of Moral Science*, published in 1839,

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<sup>165</sup> Rancière, *The Politics of Literature*, 14.

but revised and updated well into the 1860s. Fukuzawa opens *Seiyō jijō* with a by drawing heavily on a chapter of Wayland's text, entitled on "The Duties of Citizens."<sup>166</sup> Rather than explaining the duties of citizens directly, however, Fukuzawa tackles a different problem. Before it is possible for him explain the duties of citizenship, he first has to provide resources for understanding what a citizen is to readers who would never have seen or heard of such a figure before. In order to do that, he first has to provide a context to readers who were also unfamiliar with European forms of government. As a result, he jumps ahead to section 1 of Wayland's chapter, where he describes Montesquieu's distinctions between monarchy, aristocracy, and the republic as ways of relating people to one another. Having articulated an understanding of how "civilized" governments are organized, and provided a description of what it is that they do, Fukuzawa is in a better position to describe the relationships between the government and the governed that he observed in Europe.

Published in 1868, the second volume is a reasonably faithful translation of parts of John Hill Burton's *Chambers' Political Economy*.<sup>167</sup> The material that Fukuzawa excluded largely dealt with the "economy" side of "political economy." For example, Fukuzawa translated the chapters on "Introductory Social Organization," the "Division of Mankind into Nations," "Laws and National Institutions," and "The Education of the People." He excluded Burton's consideration of topics like "Commercial Convulsions" and "Accumulation and Expenditure,"

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<sup>166</sup> Interestingly, Fukuzawa does not translate the word "citizen" directly in the title here (He calls it simply *seiji*, or politics). Because more fundamental ideas about the types of government come first, he defers the translation of "citizen" until later in the text. The chapter "Duties of Citizens" is chapter III of class third of division one of part two of *Elements of Moral Science*. The structure of Wayland's text is rather complicated.

<sup>167</sup> Fukuzawa was a frequent visitor to W&R Chambers' London bookshop during his stay in 1862. It was here he encountered many texts primarily designed for instructional purposes, a number of which he brought back to Japan and used at his own school, the famous *Keiō gijuku*.



perhaps because the money economy was not fully developed at all levels of society under the Tokugawa.<sup>168</sup> With the creation of a “civilized” government which harmonized the relationships between individuals in society and state institutions, the field of political economy would eventually become more interesting and relevant. The first priority, however, was simply providing a description of the social relations that made those political-economic institutions possible, and bringing to light the kinds of value propositions which made them functional.

To that end, the first use of the neologism *shimin* occurs near the beginning of the second volume of *Seiyō jijō*. The particular passage in which that occurs is part of a section entitled “National Laws and Popular Customs” (*kokuhō oyobi fūzoku* 国法及び風俗) in which Fukuzawa describes the evolution of European legal systems from the time of Solon to the present.<sup>169</sup> He emphasizes the historical nature of laws and the ways in which they have changed in relation to local cultural practices in different parts of Europe. He deploys the word *shimin* in his discussion of the emergence of a broad awareness of the difference between the government and the people as the underlying constituent power.<sup>170</sup>

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<sup>168</sup> This is not to say that there were not commercial convulsions or people interested in accumulation and expenditure in Tokugawa society, however. See Tetsuo Najita’s *Visions of Virtue in Tokugawa Japan* for a detailed study of commercial consciousness in the 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. Samurai and merchants had complicated financial dealings based on monetary exchange and governed by market principles. The shogunate was integrated into global networks of trade throughout the so-called “closed country” period. My point is simply that many of Fukuzawa’s readers would probably not have had the education or experience to make those chapters of Hill Burton’s text immediately useful.

<sup>169</sup> *Seiyō jijō*, 148.

<sup>170</sup> In the same section, he also uses words like *kokumin* (国民) and *kunijū no jinmin* (国中の人民) in a context which also might in English might be rendered as “citizen.” Fukuzawa, *Seiyō jijō*, 144. See also Foucault’s analysis of the transition between sovereignty, disciplinarity, and security in the beginning of *Security, Territory, Population*. The regulation of individuals conceived of in terms of their membership in a population by non-state forces is a hallmark of

According to Fukuzawa, citizens' meetings (*shimin kaidō* 市民会同), both within and outside of the formal establishment of republican municipalities (*myunishiparichii* ミュニシパリチー), have historically constituted alternative forces to predatory monarchies or rapacious empires.<sup>171</sup> He presents the argument that state power should not be overbearing, and that modern Europe is society is characterized by the diffusion of power into multiple centers which checks this tendency. One of these centers, he suggests, is the power of people configured as citizens, which he translates as *shimin*. For his Japanese readers, the contrast between this system the Tokugawa hierarchy would have been readily apparent. One need only call to mind Sōgorō's predicament to understand the imbalance of power.

Nonetheless, the positive meaning of the word *shimin* would have been opaque for Japanese readers were it removed from this context. While the text explicitly positions *shimin* as a power or a force, and makes the connection between the role of the individual *shimin* and the practices of public deliberation, Fukuzawa does not systematically define what citizens are and what they do. The examples that Hill Burton deploys, and which Fukuzawa reproduces, indirectly articulate what both *shimin* and "municipalities" might be. First, Fukuzawa draws a line straight from citizenship in ancient Rome to the practices of citizens in modern day London. Thus, a link appears between the practices of citizenship and European commercial and military

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modernity in Europe, and the exercise of power on individuals' ethos accompanies this change. Foucault, *History of Sexuality*. Vol. 1.  
Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population*.

<sup>171</sup> Of course, the word *myunichiparichii* would have been insensible to his readers. It is a transliteration of an English word, which would have struck most as meaningless. He cites the examples of ancient Rome, the Italian peninsula (namely Venice and Genoa), the cities of the Hanseatic league (Hamburg, Lübeck), and even contemporary London. Fukuzawa, *Seiyō jijō*, 148. Again, see Foucault on this point. Living beyond just living is characteristic of modernity's objectives for governmental regulation. Foucault, *The Birth of Biopolitics*.

power. Although many of his readers would not have known much, if anything, about Ancient Rome, they would certainly have recognized England as the preeminent country in Europe (and therefore the world), and appreciated the threat it posed to the Japanese islands. It would also certainly not be lost on them that the shogunate did not have a system of counterbalanced sources of power in the way that England did. This recognition invites the reader to connect the lack of citizenship with the shogunate's relative weakness. It creates an analogical relationship between the Tokugawa figure of the people, or *tami* (民), and European citizens, or *shimin*.

Ultimately, *Seiyō jijō*'s translations suggest that the European state form was strong precisely because it encouraged conflict between parts of the whole. The text's concern is not simply with having a system of checks and balances within the government to limit its power. Rather, it emphasizes both through the translation word itself and the contextual explanation that what is at stake in citizenship is a confrontation, and ultimately a productive tension, between civil or social power and state power. For his readers in the late 1860s, this would have been obvious as the complete opposite tactic to that taken by the Tokugawa state. The neo-Confucian cosmology that justified the rigid hierarchy of samurai, farmers, artisans, and merchants was always predicated on two factors. First, it depended on the overwhelming power of the shogunate to maintain order between the domains. Second, and perhaps more importantly, was the assumption that hierarchy was the only way to ensure harmony between all parts of the state. That is, while the Tokugawa state sought overwhelming centralized power and complete, frictionless harmony as its central objectives, "civilized" European states instead diffused the power of the center and encouraged a productive disharmony.<sup>172</sup>

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<sup>172</sup> In Fukuzawa's view, the flow of money lubricated this productive friction. See Matsunaga, *Fukuzawa Yukichi to Nakae Chōmin*, location 999.

Fukuzawa's text seems to approvingly describe the distinction of society from the state, and insists that the fact that the two have the power to challenge one another is a key aspect of "civilization." Modern countries like England, it seems, have benefitted from this division insofar as social pressure acts to check the authority of government, and government can prevent the worst abuses of those in high social positions. This dialectic between state and society depends on the development of a citizen-consciousness, however. That is, it entails being aware of one's duties and rights both in society and in relation to the state. To this extent, Fukuzawa distinguishes between civil rights and duties and political rights and duties. As we will see, this is important not only for normative claims about how the state should be structured, but for later thinkers and speakers who acted in contemporaneity with these theorizations.

### **Fukuzawa's Neologism and the Metaphor of the City**

If these are the broad circumstances in which Fukuzawa's readers might have first encountered the word *shimin*, what can we say about the text's configuration of the word itself? First, we should note *shimin* is primarily a way of articulating citizenship in a philosophical sense. Even today, Japanese legal texts often rely on words replacing the "city" (*shi* 市) with "country" (*koku* 国), "prefecture" (*ken* 県), or some other administrative unit when making important distinctions.<sup>173</sup> However, what is important in Fukuzawa's language and in the usages of the word *shimin* today is that it articulates the political community as a civil space in which individuals appear. Rather than just demarcating the people living in a particular geographical or administrative area, Fukuzawa's neologism redraws the geography of political appearance and thereby affirms a new role for the people who inhabit it.

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<sup>173</sup> Ikegami, Eiko. "Citizenship and National Identity in Early Meiji Japan," 190.

To see how this is the case, the place to start is by asking what the characters that Fukuzawa used to compose the word *shimin* (*shi* 市 and *min* 民) mean independent of one another.<sup>174</sup> Etymologically speaking, the primary meaning of the character *shi* 市 is “market,” or “the place where prices are publically decided.”<sup>175</sup> In its old *kinbun* (金文) form, however, it is composed of the elements meaning “stop” (止) and “flat” (平), describing the market as an open, flat space where people stop to engage in commerce.<sup>176</sup> The same character *hei* (平), or “flat,” was also used in the word *heimin* (平民), which meant “ordinary citizens” after the abolition of the formal class hierarchy in 1872. *Heimin*, and *shi* (市) both imply a horizontal distribution of people in a community, rather than a hierarchical one. In the multiple levels of sense inherent in the combination of characters, both a sense of equality and the idea of the market appear.<sup>177</sup>

The character *min* (民) is an abstract depiction of an awl or a tool for making holes. Its original meaning was precisely this. However, it was borrowed to mean “a person from afar” or

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<sup>174</sup> Fukuzawa was likely not the first to combine the characters 市 and 民, but previous uses would have been idiosyncratic and certainly unrelated to the meaning Fukuzawa gave to them. We can say that Fukuzawa’s use of these characters in combination is essentially neologistic.

<sup>175</sup> I have relied mainly on two major dictionaries for Japanese etymological information. Kamata and Yasuda, *Shinkangorin*; Iwanami, *Kōjien*. 6th Edition.

<sup>176</sup> *Kinbun*, or “seal script,” is a very old style of writing Chinese characters. The oldest examples of Chinese writing were carved into turtle shells or bones. *Kinbun* characters are the second oldest consolidated style (they were formalized in 221 BC), and were used on official seals made of bronze.

<sup>177</sup> Marx addresses this point in Chapter 1 of *Capital*. The emergence of the commodity form is critical for the generation and development of bourgeois ideas of egalitarianism. Insofar as capital demands constant movement, the status of the bearers of money loses importance.

an escapee from the village (*kyōri kara toboshita hito* 郷里から逃亡した人).<sup>178</sup> Ultimately, it evolved to mean “a person without position,” and eventually simply a “people” in general.<sup>179</sup> This historical conception of the people as separated from their villages, or as people without rank in the feudal hierarchy is also of relevance for the way the term appears in *Seiyō jijō*. As the Meiji polity developed, where feudal divisions were replaced with an abstract equality, and people were free (indeed, encouraged) to move about the country to find employment in industry, the history of *min* resonated with the process of primitive accumulation taking place as former peasants were displaced from land and former samurai driven into either labor or industry after the loss of their stipends.

What I wish to draw attention to, however, is the manner in which Fukuzawa’s combination of the characters *shi* and *min* preserves a critical metaphor embedded in the English word “citizen.”<sup>180</sup> “Citizen,” *citoyen*, and the other Romance language equivalents are all related to the Latin word *civis*. A Roman *civis* was the individual citizen, who acts as a member of a body, or a *civitas*. The *civitas* is the abstract “city,” or community of citizens. This abstract city exists in distinction to the *urbs*, or physical manifestations of people living together, such as dwellings, roads, etc. The modern English word “city” of course also derives from *civitas*. Fukuzawa’s use of the character *shi* (市) therefore echoes the English etymology as well. *Shimin* is the metaphor of a metaphor.

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<sup>178</sup> Under the Tokugawa system, non-samurai were not permitted free travel. Leaving the village was a very fundamental social dislocation.

<sup>179</sup> Yamada, Katsumi, *Kanji no gogen ni tsuite*.

<sup>180</sup> Fukuyoshi, *Fukuzawa Yukichi to tagen teki 'shimin shakai' ron*.

Insofar as “citizen” is related to *civis*, and is tied to the language of the *civitas*, it is also inseparable from the history of the word “civilization.” Raymond Williams writes that “...The notion of civilizing, as bringing men within a social organization, ...rested on *civis* and *civitas*, and its aim was expressed in the adjective ‘civil’ as orderly, educated, or polite. It was positively extended... in the concept of ‘civil society.’”<sup>181</sup> Insofar as Fukuzawa’s word carries across the metaphor of the city from “citizen” into *shimin*, it also incorporates same connection between “civilization” and “citizen” that existed in the English etymology. In Fukuzawa’s terms, this meant citizenship, the status of being a *shimin*, was tied to *bunmei* (文明), or “civilization.”

The characters composing *bunmei* are not directly tied to the city, but they are concerned with the culture which makes a community function. In Confucian thought, *bun* (文), or *wen* in Chinese, can be translated as “culture,” “literature,” or “music.” Indeed, the character is itself a pictogram of a dancer with arms and legs extended.<sup>182</sup> For Confucius, the essential distinction between barbarism and humanity is the possession of *wen*. According to the myth, the primary vehicle by which the ancient Sage Kings subjugated the various nomadic tribes and brought them to live in cities was through the development of *wen*. Thus, although the phrase *bunmei* predated Fukuzawa’s creation of the word *shimin*, their relationship mirrors the one that Williams describes between “civilization” and “civis.” In Fukuzawa’s terms, the city is the site of civilization and the citizen is to be both the subject and the bearer of it.

### **Words for Equality and Words for Duty**

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<sup>181</sup> Williams, *Marxism and Literature*, 14.

<sup>182</sup> See image 1 in the overture for a depiction of this.

Although *shimin* is now the standard translation word for “citizen” in the political-philosophical sense in Japanese, it was not so immediately after its creation. Hill Burton uses the word “citizen” a total of 17 times in *Chambers’ Political Economy*. Fukuzawa’s *Seiyō jijō gaihen* translation of *Political Economy* deals with 12 of these instances with different words for citizen. Table 1 indicates the number of appearances that each word makes in Fukuzawa’s text. *Shimin* occurs once, whereas *jinminshū* (人民集) and *shūjin* (衆人) each appear twice.

Insofar as new translation words lack a stable meaning, their content is often left to be filled in by interlocutors who must make inferences from context. Context in this case means both the semantic content of the surrounding sentence or paragraph, but also the historical, discursive context in which the conversation is taking

**Table 1:** Translation Words for “citizen” in *Seiyō jijō*

place. Yanabu Akira remarks on the way that translation words or neologisms of this sort strike the reader as particularly alien. The foreignness of the language triggers two responses. First, the alienness of the word acts on the reader independently of the word’s meaning.<sup>183</sup> That is, encountering a strange word grabs

Translation Word	Number of appearances
<i>Jinminshu</i> 人民集	2
<i>Shūjin</i> 衆人	2
<i>Heijin</i> 平人	1
<i>Kunijū no hito</i> 国中の人	1
<i>Yojin</i> 世人	1
<i>Shomin nado</i> 商民等	1
<i>Shimin</i> 市民	1
Omission	1

the reader’s attention, alters the reader’s perception of the author, and demands that the reader attempt to understand the new concept even though the criteria for its acceptance are absent.

Although Fukuzawa did not offer an explicitly stated definition of *shimin*, his language created boundaries which enclosed a conceptual terrain that his readers could navigate. That terrain was populated with existing words which could help guide the reader’s own personal gathering together of the neologism’s content. Fukuzawa’s readers would not have known that *shimin*, nor

<sup>183</sup> Yanabu, *Honyakugo seiritsu jijō*.



the cognate translation words representing citizen were, in fact, translation words at all. Nonetheless, Fukuzawa's translation configured a set of ideas that hang together and present a map of the territory that "citizen" might cover. This figuration was not a pure product of Fukuzawa's intentions, however. Whatever objectives Fukuzawa had were subsumed in the broader discursive architecture of the language he used. Although readers might not have known that they were being exposed to translation words, they nonetheless found themselves immersed in a web of meanings spread between the English word "citizen" and a field of existing Japanese terms.

The English word "citizen" is related to six translation-metaphors in Fukuzawa's vernacular Japanese of the 1860s. These six metaphors all activate secondary meanings either through the amalgamation of new *kanji* or through the sentence contexts into which Fukuzawa places them. Beyond *shimin*, the five remaining figurations of "citizen" can be divided into two categories. The first category comprises three of the remaining five main translations. The words *shūjin*, *heijin*, and *yōjin* figure "citizen" as a metaphor for commonness, equality, or inherent sociality. *Shū* (衆) means simply "many" or a "large quantity." However, *shū* can be understood independently of any other character as *morobito* (諸人), or "common person." *Moro*, or *moromoro* can extend so far as to mean "all." In pre-Meiji texts, *shū* was used to refer to lower ranking samurai or monks tasked with odd jobs and errands. In combination with *jin*, however, *shūjin* conveys a sense of many (or even all) individuals who are more or less the same. The distinction between *hito* and *min* (民) is one of the particular (i.e. individual) to the general. That is, *shūjin* points towards an average person, whereas any reference to *min* refers to a people or the people in the abstract.

This sense is similar, but slightly distinct from that of the word *heijin* (or *heinin*). The character *hei* (平), as I have mentioned, means “flat” or “equal.” The sense of equality, or at least of a horizontal arrangement of social relationships, is in radical contradistinction to the mimetic *shinōkōshō* (士農工商) assignment of social duties that characterized Tokugawa rule. This hierarchy extended downward from the samurai class (*shi* 士) at the top to the merchant (*shō* 商), at the bottom. All people fit -from within the official Confucian ideology at least- without remainder or disjuncture into one of the categories.<sup>184</sup> Tokugawa discourses of economy held that agriculture was the key to sustaining the people and maintaining the structure of the feudal hierarchy. Keeping peasants on the land was therefore part of the proper arrangement of things. As such, *nōmin* (農民), the farmers or people engaged in agriculture, were widely treated in ideal terms as the second strata of feudal society because they produced the nourishment that sustained all the classes. *Kō*, or artisans, were regarded as a rank below. Although their labor was necessary, it was not directly oriented towards feeding the people. Furthermore, it contributed to the development of luxury, which was antithetical to Tokugawa Confucian ideas about frugality. Finally, the *shōmin* were regarded as the lowest class because they performed no productive labor. They profited from the movement of money, and as the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries progressed, were increasingly the primary consumers of luxury goods.<sup>185</sup>

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<sup>184</sup> Many have explored ways in which these categories broke down, were transgressed, subverted, or reconfigur'd during the Tokugawa era. While in practical terms the categories were much more fluid than official ideology would make it seem, the ideology was backed by legal mechanisms such as the *koseki*, or household registration system, that constrained these transgressions. Hirano's *Politics of the Dialogic Imagination* illustrates this well. See Tetsuo Najita and Victor Koschmann's *Conflict in Modern Japanese Politics* as well.

<sup>185</sup> Tetsuo Najita gives a much fuller analysis of the morality of the rising merchant class. He examines its inflection in Confucian thought in Najita, *Visions of Virtue in Tokugawa Japan*.

These ideas were very much those of the ruling class. However, the language of *heijin* or *heinin* cuts across these distinctions. Rather than a vertical arrangement with samurai at the top, *hei* invokes a flattening or an equalizing. Although in Tokugawa language *heimin* meant simply “people without rank,” the 1872 abolition of feudal class status (which was already crumbling under the cultural and political changes of the late Tokugawa and *bakumatsu* periods) was marked by the use of the word *heimin*. *Hei*, in this context, was chosen as the new description of people under the Emperor explicitly to emphasize its status as an antithesis to *shinōkōshō* hierarchy.<sup>186</sup> Prior to the 1872 reform, and even prior to the restoration itself, Fukuzawa was a strong advocate of the equalization of classes. He himself had renounced his samurai status in order to leave his domain obligations behind and pursue his studies, a fundamentally political act similar to that of Sōgorō. Indeed, the abandonment of his domain was a violation of feudal practice that could have seen him severely punished.<sup>187</sup>

The final translation word that Fukuzawa deploys that falls into the group of phrases which emphasize equality is *yojin*. *Yo* (世) is often understood in modern Japanese as “world,” but it has a wide variety of meanings and a long history. *Yo* can mean a period of time, the structure of past, present, and future, an individual lifetime, a physical space or territory (a cognate of *koku* 国), a government, or an abstract space of social intercourse among others. What connects these various aspects of the world is the fact that it is necessarily a shared experience.

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<sup>186</sup> The 1872 reform did not completely do away with hierarchy, however. The imperial family was separate from “the people,” and a noble class was created. The other classes were grouped into *heimin*.

<sup>187</sup> Fukuzawa discusses this at length in his autobiography. *The Autobiography of Fukuzawa Yukichi*.

That is, both time and social space are reflections of our lives with others. To be a person in the world means to have relationships with others.

Fukuzawa deploys the word *yojin* to translate the word “citizen” in the following passage of Burton’s text:

“It appears equally reasonable to expect of every individual in society an observance of its leading moral rules and legal provisions. If it is better to live in a civilised than in a barbarous community, we are not entitled to the benefit unless we contribute our part to what makes a civilised state — namely morality and law; we must help to support these conditions. Should we act otherwise, we are stealing from society one of its greatest benefits. It is exactly the same kind of delinquency as to have idly upon the public. As society is thus greatly injured, and might, if the evil were carried far, be entirely destroyed, it is entitled to punish misdemeanours and crimes with a view to their prevention... Its title to do all this has been acknowledged in every community since the world began, and to support it in this title is the duty of every citizen in every free state.”<sup>188</sup>

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<sup>188</sup> Burton, *Chambers’ Political Economy*, 5. Fukuzawa’s words are: 人々内に自ら<sup>かえりみ</sup>顧て、我一身も猶<sup>なお</sup>他人の如く、心力を勞して世に存することを得るものと思うべし。然るに今懶惰無為にして世を渡らんとするは、即ち他人をして一倍の勞を為さ締め<sup>ひそか</sup>窃にその功を盗むにあらずや。故に人として義氣廉節を知らば、懶惰を以て自ら安んずべからず。或は又人の言に自から勞役せんと欲すれどもその機会を得ずと云うものあり。然れどもその実を論ずればこれ亦遁<sup>とんじ</sup>辞なり、許すべからず。凡そ人間の<sup>まじわり</sup>交に兄弟朋友に非ざるの外は、人のために周旋してその活計を得せしむる者なし。加<sup>しかのみならず</sup>之、人の活計は臨機黄変、<sup>あらかじ</sup>預め期すべからず。<sup>みず</sup>躬からその職業を求て、始めて安心の地位を得べきなり。故に人間交際の道を全せんには、懶惰を制して之を止めざるべからず。或は之を罰するも亦仁の術と云うべし。

Burton suggests that the conditions of civilization are the reign of morality and law within a free state. The duty of the citizen in this free state is to “support these conditions” as far as possible. In a negative sense, this means not violating the law or avoiding immoral things. In a positive sense, “supporting” morality and the law implies an active and assertive effort to uphold morality and legality in the community. Critical to Burton’s position is “the check resting in public opinion” in addition to law. That is, the duty of the citizen to maintain civilization is one that is both social and intersubjective as well as legal. Whether this means that one should lead in the community by example, or whether it required in Burton’s mind some further kind of public engagement is unclear. What is clear, however, is that the citizen must act in a world in which he or she is not alone.

Fukuzawa uses the phrase *shokubun* (職分) to metaphorize the English word “duty.” *Shoku* invokes the sense of a post, an office, or the responsibility to do a particular kind of work. *Bun*, in this case, means “part,” “lot,” or “share” of something. Duty in this way is represented doing the share appropriate to one’s station, or fully taking up one’s part in society. The role that one has as a citizen implies a set of distributed responsibilities that one must fulfill as the bearer of that office. Fukuzawa’s translation suggests that abstract reason (rather than tradition or cosmic harmony) should be the primary standard on which judgments should be made.

While the first group of translation words establishes the relationship between equality, sociality, and citizenship, the second group of translation words articulates the duties associated with the office of the citizen. Just as the word “citizen” in English is closely related to the idea of “office” or *officium*, Fukuzawa reconstructs this relationship in terms of the Confucian “name.”<sup>189</sup> The two words in this group each express the obligations that roles carry with them.

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<sup>189</sup> Cicero, of course, most clearly links office and citizenship in *De Officiis*.

The first, *jinminshū* (人民集), appears in Fukuzawa's translation of the following sentence of Burton's;

“The idea of a perfect society supposes an assemblage of free citizens, each contributing his labours for the benefit of the whole, and receiving an appropriate remuneration, and each respecting those laws which have been ordained for the general benefit”<sup>190</sup>

Fukuzawa describes the “assemblage of free citizens” with *jinminshū*, and indicates their freedom with the words *jiyū* (自由) and *fuki* (不羈). The term “freedom” was extremely problematic for Japanese translators of the *bakumatsu* and early Meiji periods. Indeed, no word that meant “freedom” in the liberal political sense existed.<sup>191</sup> The word *jiyū* was constructed from the characters for “self” (*ji* 自) and *yū* (由), meaning “cause” or “depend.” Fukuzawa's concept of freedom is analyzed in depth elsewhere, but the pairing of *jiyū* with *fuki*, which means “independence,” suffices to draw focus to the independence of both individuals within the assemblage and the assemblages themselves.<sup>192</sup>

*Jinmin* (人民) brings out the relation the part to the whole, insofar as it locates the individual as a constituent part of the group which has this freedom and independence. *Jin* (人) means “individual person.” *Min*, as we have seen, is a people. Together, they suggest a people composed of individuals. Burton distinguishes these free groups of individuals from their

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<sup>190</sup> Burton, *Chambers' Political Economy*, 5.

<sup>191</sup> This of course did not mean that there was no freedom in Japan prior to the 1870s. It was conceived of differently than it was in Europe, however. See Howland, Yanabu, or Saitō (*Meiji no kotoba*) for fuller discussions.

<sup>192</sup> See Craig's *Civilization and Enlightenment* or Howland's *Translating the West* for good discussions of Fukuzawa and *jiyū*.

abstract co-presence in “society.” “Society” was another word that lacked a single phrase to represent it in Japanese in the late 1860s. Although the word *shakai* (社会) would eventually come to be the standard, Fukuzawa was the first to attempt to translate “society,” here with the phrase *ningenkōsai* (人間交際), or “human intercourse.” In the mixing of human beings in the world, certain assemblages of individuals can exercise independence as a group.<sup>193</sup>

This assemblage of individuals suggests a mixing of different types of human being. This heterogeneity is of particular importance to Burton, who suggests that it is precisely the division of people into groups capable of checking the power of other groups, which prevents the depredations that domination by any single group might occasion.<sup>194</sup> He points specifically to the creation of municipalities under the banner of a more comprehensive government, and singles out the special “privileges and functions” that certain individuals or groups of individuals held within the municipality as critical to this process. Hill Burton constructs a narrative of expanding municipal rights driven by the realization that self-government was a useful antidote to the predatory behavior of the local nobility. He writes: “Finding how very valuable [the privileges of self-government] were, the burgesses or citizens used every means to increase them.”<sup>195</sup> Fukuzawa refers to citizens as *shimin* in the preceding section, describing the activities of the municipality.

Fukuzawa’s text, however, does not describe “burgesses.” In fact, he introduces a third term, *shōmin nado* (商民等). As mentioned above, *shōmin* were the merchant class in the

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<sup>193</sup> The *kō* (交) of *ningenkōsai* is the character meaning “mix” or “stir,” particularly of heterogeneous elements that do not dissolve in one another.

<sup>194</sup> Burton, *Chambers’ Political Economy*, 31.

<sup>195</sup> *Ibid.*, 32.

Tokugawa period, and regarded as the lowest of the four Tokugawa classes because they were supposedly avaricious and socially unproductive. *Nado* means something like *et cetera*, and suggests that there are other particulars that fit into the same category that *shōmin* fits into here, though it is somewhat unclear. The reference to *shōmin*, however, suggest a connection with the city and with the market, insofar as those were the places where, obviously, merchants interacted. Fukuzawa's choice to metaphorize "burgesses and citizens" primarily through the example of merchants reflects Burton's emphasis on the importance of commerce to the municipalities earlier in the paragraph. However, it also posits an important role, or perhaps even duty, for the citizen to practice. Substituting "merchant" for "burgess" suggests that the primary office of one living in a self-governed body is economic, not necessarily political. Not only does Fukuzawa's language downplay the everyday political elements of the office of "citizen," but he also dodges any discussion of the role of the burgess in the municipality. That is, the roles of governor and governed, which Aristotle believed every good citizen must experience, are supplanted by economic agency as the primary feature of public life. In short, "merchant" also becomes a metaphor for "citizen."

This is not the only instance where Fukuzawa performs a sleight of hand with the word "citizen." Section 144 of *Chambers' Political Economy* discusses the importance of the distribution of legal justice for the well-governed state. The lack of properly administered criminal law is a danger matched by the one posed by a fundamentally uncivil and immoral population. A country populated by those who "...do not know right from wrong, and have no motive for preserving property, obeying the law, and being good citizens" is in great danger, according to Burton.<sup>196</sup> Whereas Burton creates a relation between being a good citizen and

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<sup>196</sup> Ibid., 46.



maintaining civilization<sup>197</sup>, Fukuzawa omits the word citizen from his translation of the text. He retains Burton's concern with groups of people who don't know right from wrong, or "can't distinguish bent and straight."<sup>198</sup> He also presents the view that that these groups of *muchi monmō* (無知文盲, "ignorant and illiterate") people take advantage of disorder or disturbances (*sōran* 騒乱) to gather and revolt. These unscrupulous people who are not afraid of the law bring both evil and cruelty.<sup>199</sup>

Although Fukuzawa does not use the word citizen, he does outline for his reader how the opposite of good citizenship might be understood. The good citizen, then, is one who is able to distinguish between "bent and straight" independently, and is neither ignorant nor illiterate. These conditions are primarily cultural. That is, not fearing the law is one dimension of the problem of disorder, but it follows from a moral degeneracy stemming from a lack of education. The failing is primarily in the individual insofar as the ignorant person for not having cultivated his or her capacities and knowledge sufficiently. By connecting moral degeneracy to ignorance and illiteracy, however, Fukuzawa is not simply domesticizing Burton's language.

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<sup>197</sup> As he does on page 5, mentioned above.

<sup>198</sup> "Straight" and "bent" are Mencius's and Xun Zi's metaphors for moral rightness and moral corruption. Xun Zi likens the evil human being to a warped board that must be bent straight through the constant application of physical pressure by a skilled practitioner. Xunzi, *Xunzi*.

<sup>199</sup> Fukuzawa's interpretation is: "法律のよく行わる政府に於いては国に罪人あれば之を捕まえ、夜盗、拐児、強盗の如きも、一と度び縲綑に就いてその罪状明白なるときは、之刑に処して国典を明らかにすべしと雖も、国に無知文盲の人民多きはその害挙げて云うべからず。この輩は是非を別たず曲直を弁せず、国法に従て私財を保つ所以のりを知らずして、一旦国に騒乱あれば忽ちその釁に乗じて雲集蜂起、法をも畏れず人をも憚らず惨酷兇悪いたらざるところなし。" *Bunmeiron no gairyaku*, 181.

The word for illiteracy that Fukuzawa uses is *monmō*. The first character of the compound, read as *mon* 文, is one that we have already encountered, in that case as *bun* in *bunmei* (文明), or civilization. As we saw, *bun*, *mon*, or *wen* in the Confucian tradition can be understood as “culture” more broadly. The second character, *mō* 盲 is composed of two elements, the top part 亡 meaning “death,” and the bottom 目 meaning “eye.” It is a metaphor for blindness. In this way, to the inability to read characters on the page is a metaphor for a certain kind of blindness to culture. By this means, Fukuzawa omits the word “citizen” but retains the idea of civilization, especially through the appearance of the *kanji* 文. Indeed, the problem facing the state might be rephrased as people who are “blind to civilization.” As we will see below, being ignorant and illiterate was precisely the cause of being “blind to civilization.” Fukuzawa’s second major bestseller after *Seiyō jijō*, called *An Encouragement of Learning* (*Gakumon no susume*) was focused closely on the intimate connection between education and civilization.<sup>200</sup>

As I have suggested, the terms beyond *shimin* largely fall into two categories; words emphasizing equality, and those which emphasize particular duties. The specific duties that Fukuzawa’s writing points to are certainly predicated on the assumption of legal equality, however they are also antithetical to an equal right to participate in either government or society. How, and why might this be the case? What might be consequences for the legitimation of the ideas of both civil society and participatory government? Fukuzawa’s subsequent writing,

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<sup>200</sup> As I mentioned in the overture, *Gakumon no susume* and *Bunmeiron no gairyaku* did not initiate translational moments on their own. They are didactic texts concerned with changing the referents of Tokugawa knowledge production in a manner similar to the figures that Leigh Jenco describes in late 19<sup>th</sup> century China. While I refer to *Gakumon no susume* and *Bunmeiron no gairyaku* to gain a clearer understanding of what took place in *Seiyō jijō*, I want to be clear that it was *Seiyō jijō*, not the later texts, that was fundamentally translational.

particularly *Gakumon no susume*, sheds light on how these various metaphors of citizenship might have been subsequently understood.

In modeling the *shimin* on the etymological relation between the *civis* and the *civitas*, Fukuzawa's language invokes the legalistic forms of Roman citizenship alongside the what he characterizes as the participatory and deliberative models of the Italian Republics. He also insists that citizenship has a tie to commerce, both through the *kanji shi* (市, city or market) but also explicitly through his discussions of trade in the Hanse. Thus, *shimin* is a metaphor for an individual who is legally constituted, law abiding, public-spirited in terms of his or her observance of civil rights, and perhaps most importantly, educated and commercially entrepreneurial.

Fukuzawa discusses the implications of these overlapping metaphors explicitly in Chapter 9 of *An Outline of a Theory of Civilization*. He argues that Japanese scholars in and beyond the Edo period had paid no attention to the imbalances in power in the Tokugawa system. "Simply..." he argues, "...because most of them have considered the relationship between the government and the people as the most important, most public, and most conspicuous, and have tended to concentrate on that problem alone."<sup>201</sup> The specific phrase he uses to describe "the relationship between the government and the people" is *seifu to jinmin to no aida no kōsai* (政府と人民との間の交際). *Kōsai* is, incidentally, the same word Fukuzawa

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<sup>201</sup> Fukuzawa writes: "権力偏重の一般に洽ねくして事々物々<sup>びさいちみつ</sup>微細緻密の極にまで通達する有様は斯くの如くしと雖も学者の特に之注意せざるは何ぞや。ただ政府と人民との間の交際の大にして公なるものにて著しくの耳目に触るがゆえにその議論もその目的とするもの多きのみ。" *Bunmeiron no gairyaku*, 176. The implication is that the relation between state and individual has been primarily moral, not juridical. The concern that the rulers had for the ruled was with their failure to live up to the name imposed on them as subjects.

used to translate the word “society” for the first time. It suggests “mixing” or even “friction” more than it does a static relationship. The problem it points to is one of harmony between the individuals composing the ruled population and the state in that it is *jinmin*, rather than *kokumin* that he uses. Fukuzawa suggests that the greatest difference between Western “civilization” and the state of Tokugawa “semi-civilization” is “the imbalance of power” (*kenryoku no henchō* 権力の偏重) between individuals legitimized by the Confucian linkage of morality, government, and cosmic order. One could interpret this imbalance of power as resulting from the lack of a social check on the authority of members of both the shogunate and the Meiji state, the existence of too many checks on individual autonomy, or some permutation of both. The feudal system certainly provided no checks on the authority above. It also legitimized the arbitrary exercise of authority on those below.

Indeed, the orthodox moral thought of the Edo period resolutely denied the principle of individuality. Human beings existed in a natural order, and the paramount category of identity that individual people were defined by was their “name,” or social role. Thus, the pre-Meiji social order of the four classes (*shinōkōshō* 士農工商) can be understood as an extension of practices of government, rather than a structure within a non-state field called “society.” The imbalance of authority that Fukuzawa observed resulted from the fact that the unity of cosmos, state, and society required certain members’ liberty to be essentially unlimited regardless of ability, with other members’ liberty being severely curtailed without regard to their individual capacities or characteristics.<sup>202</sup>

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<sup>202</sup> For example, the Samurai’s formal prerogative to execute commoners at any time for trivial offences (*sutekiri* 捨て切り), commoners being banned from riding horses, etc.

The translation language of *Seiyō jijō* works directly against both the central concepts and concrete practices that constituted and were constituted by this political cosmology. The language of citizenship, therefore, of is implicated in the articulation of individuality as a political principal. Beyond the word *shimin* itself, the predominance of words based on the character *jin* (人) rather than *min* (民) reflects a conception of politics beginning with individual action rather than the behavior classes or categories of people in terms of a “name.” Indeed, it was only in 1872 that people other than members of the imperial household or samurai were required to have family names to individuate themselves. In early Meiji, the name that began to matter most was not that of one’s status, but of one’s personhood. The language of citizenship contributed to constituting the individual not only ontologically but legally as well. The citizen, therefore, was first and foremost an individual with equal standing among his or her peers.

Furthermore, a legalized, equal, individuality implied new formal institutions. Fukuzawa’s language was important precisely because it facilitated new ways of characterizing the relations between individuals and the state. This must not be understood as an aspect of the rational legitimation of the Meiji state’s authority, or as a mode of persuasion attempting to convince people to support a particular policy, however. The Meiji state, contrary to appearances, was not simply decreed into being. Rather, Fukuzawa’s language was part of a new constellation of signs that implied new, individualistic practices in the sphere of an emergent, primarily civil, society. These practices in turn made it essential for the state to accommodate them through the creation of policies and institutions which could direct and contain them. As Foucault argues, modern government is largely a matter of directing the flow of people and wealth to maximize its reproduction. It is the reduction of friction in this system of flows that is

most conducive to the imperatives of a capitalist economic order.<sup>203</sup> The genesis of the institutions that accompanied these changes in language and perspective, was, of course, overdetermined. Nonetheless, these institutions were validated by the appearance of the citizen as metaphor for the non-viability of a continued imbalance of authority.

Conjuring the word “citizen” does not instantly make either individual citizens or a society in which it is possible to be a citizen. Fukuzawa was himself aware of this, and he confronted the problem of how citizens and the state are coproduced directly in his work of the 1870s. Beginning in 1872, *An Encouragement of Learning* (*Gakumon no Susume* 学問のすすめ), clarified the specific practices of the citizen that would make a “modern” institutional structure function.<sup>204</sup> Fukuzawa argued in favor of a strong individualism influenced by his readings of John Stuart Mill’s *On Liberty* and *Considerations on Representative Government*.<sup>205</sup> Although Fukuzawa and Mill both value independence, they also recognize a critical interdependence that creates the field in which the individual can develop. For Mill, the development of “well-being” was the central purpose of both individual action and the state. “Well-being,” consists not only of material satisfaction, but what Fukuzawa called “spiritual” growth. That is to say, if one does not cultivate one’s mind, expand one’s abilities, and pursue

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<sup>203</sup> Foucault, *Society Must Be Defended*.

<sup>204</sup> This was Fukuzawa’s third major bestseller, the first being *Seiyō jijō*. Fukuzawa’s second bestseller was 1869’s *Sekai kunizukushi* (世界國盡), which was another political and geographical account of various countries of the world. *Gakumon no susume* is his most famous work and is the most widely read today. It appeared in serialized form from 1872 to 1875 and was published as a complete volume in that year. Fukuzawa, "Sekai kunizukushi."

<sup>205</sup> Mill, "On Liberty."  
Mill, "The Collected Works of John Stuart Mill, Volume XIX - Essays on Politics and Society Part 2 (Considerations on Rep. Govt.)."

self-determined objectives, happiness is impossible.<sup>206</sup> In this way, “citizen” is also a metaphor for spiritual health.

This kind of well-being, in Mill’s interpretation, was also fundamental to the cultivation of a strong state and a vigorous society more generally. As Mill writes;

“The worth of a State, in the long run, is the worth of the individuals composing it; and a State which postpones the interests of *their* mental expansion and elevation, to a little more of administrative skill, or that semblance of it which practice gives, in the details of business; a State which dwarfs its men, in order that they may be more docile instruments in its hands even for beneficial purposes—will find that with small men no great thing can really be accomplished.”

That is to say, without cultivated individuals capable of using their abilities and talents to the utmost, the State could not possibly modernize or, as was so important for Mill, progress towards the “improvement of mankind.” Mill, ever the enthusiastic colonial administrator, was also not shy in suggesting that the dynamic societies of Europe who have cultivated this kind of individual vigor should take it to those benighted places in the world which have become “stagnant.”

There is an interesting resonance between Mill’s language of well-being through development and the Confucian moral imperative to self-cultivate. This resonance was surely not lost on Fukuzawa, and his translation language reflects that. The primary duty that the good citizen has is not to be a docile subject. Quite the contrary, in fact. Fukuzawa’s language suggests someone who acts in a common world of people (*yojin*), participates in collective

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<sup>206</sup> Mill, *The Collected Works of John Stuart Mill, Volume I - Autobiography and Literary Essays*.

deliberation or engages in commerce (*shimin*), and assembles with other independent beings while maintaining his or her uniqueness (*jinminshū*).

Mill, like Aristotle, suggests that we can only exercise and develop our virtues to the fullest when the world calls upon us to display them.<sup>207</sup> Fukuzawa ultimately explains the relationship of the individual to the state using a formula similar to Aristotle's idea that citizens in a constitutional regime should both rule and be ruled in turn.<sup>208</sup> He does so on the basis that individuals who do not act in the world stagnate, or in his words "weaken and sink into ignorance and illiteracy." On the other hand, a state of individuals who cultivate learning and "follow the winds of civilization" will ensure that the state's rule will be "humane and broad-minded."<sup>209</sup> This cultivation of learning, however, is an individual exercise. The state needs to provide the means by which individuals can learn, but they must do the learning independently if they are to develop.

Fukuzawa famously loathed the Japanese word for "education," *kyōiku* (教育). It is composed of the characters meaning "to tell" or "to teach" (教) and "to raise," "to take care of,"

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<sup>207</sup> Mill also expresses a similar sentiment; "it is...desirable that it should be done by [individuals], rather than by the government, as a means to their own mental education—a mode of strengthening their active faculties, exercising their judgment.... This is a principal... recommendation of ...free and popular...institutions; of the conduct of industrial and philanthropic enterprises by voluntary associations. These are not questions of liberty..., but they are questions of development." *On Liberty*, 109.

<sup>208</sup> See *Gakumon no susume* for Fukuzawa's metaphor of the "Master and the Guest." Chapter 7 deals discusses it at length. See part 2 of Book 6 of Aristotle's *Politics* for his formulation. Aristotle, "Politics."

<sup>209</sup> Fukuzawa writes: "仮りに人民の徳義今日よりも衰えてなお無学文盲に沈むことあらば、政府の法も今一段嚴重になるべく、もしまた、人民みな学問に志して、物事の理を知り、文明の風おもむくに赴くことあらば、政府の法もなおまた寛仁大度の場合に及ぶべし。法のから苛きと寛ゆるやかなるとは、ただ人民の徳不徳によりておのずから加減あるのみ。"



“breeding,” or “upbringing.” In Fukuzawa’s view, education should not be, as it was in the tradition of Chinese learning, a process by which a subservient student memorized texts and submitted to the discipline of a master. In other words, it was not a straightforwardly didactic process by which the teacher shaped the student. Rather, Fukuzawa favored the term *hatsuiku* (発育), where the first character means “to open,” “to develop,” “to spring up,” “to shoot,” “to dig up,” or “to advance.”<sup>210</sup> This formulation placed the emphasis on the individual’s self-directed learning and cultivation. *Seiyō jijō* can itself be understood in this way.

If the development of the state was dependent on the development of the individual (as it was for Mill), it was the duty of the citizen to cultivate one’s own talents. In this way, Fukuzawa creates space for being a “master” in mastering new knowledge and using it to the advantage of “society.” One then is free to act as a “guest” in the social framework managed by the state. Fukuzawa follows the line found in the Chambers’ texts, as well as in Mill, Samuel Smiles, and Buckle, in which mutual good is derived from individual good.<sup>211</sup>

This collective good takes many forms, but Fukuzawa is specific about two. Echoing the official language of the Meiji state, the effect of having a cultivated population will be to have a “rich country” and a “strong army” (*fukoku kyōhei* 富国強兵). He writes:

“The people of Japan are now energetically striving towards learning. Each individual must consider their own independence, and it follows that the country will achieve enough wealth and strength to not be worried by the Westerners. We have only to replace

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<sup>210</sup> For a discussion of Fukuzawa’s understanding of cultivation through education as *hatsuiku*, see Matsumaru, “The Reexamination of Fukuzawa Yukichi’s idea of ‘Hatsu-Iku’.”

<sup>211</sup> For Fukuzawa’s intellectual debts to the Scottish enlightenment, see Craig’s *Civilization and Enlightenment*.

unreason with reason. If we achieve individual independence, we will also achieve independence as a country.”

Well-being, therefore, entails economic wealth and military power sufficient to maintain national independence. It is dependent, however, on the cultivation of reason as the primary standard of political judgment, and the duty of the citizen is the cultivation of precisely this standard.

Insofar as Fukuzawa equates individual independence with national independence, the pursuit of wealth might be understood as a critical part of individual independence as well. The word “people” here is *nihonkokujin*, where the *jin* emphasizes the individual elements comprising the *nihonkoku*. The word *kokumin* (国民) does not appear, where the *min* connotes “the people” as a single, collective subject. In this formulation, the energetic “striving towards learning” is decidedly individual, and the strength and wealth of the country are dependent on this particular kind of individual cultivation.

Moreover, Fukuzawa consistently links this kind of cultivation with civilization, or *bunmei* (文明) in his later writing. As mentioned above, the individual who follows the “winds of civilization” is a citizen who contributes to the development of both him or herself and the state. This duty is individual but it is not completely isolating. For example, chapter 12 of *Gakumon no Susume* talks about the role of the citizen in the context of public speeches (*enzetsu* 演説). Fukuyoshi claims that part of what Fukuzawa sought to appropriate from the English word “citizen” when he retained the metaphor of the city were some of the specific the practices of self-government practiced in the *civitates* of Rome, Venice, or Lübeck. Specifically, Fukuyoshi points to the importance of public debate and group deliberation as part of this set of

practices.<sup>212</sup> Fukuzawa is often credited with coining the phrase *enzetsu*, or “public speech” to describe what he represents as a duty that “civilized” people must live up to.<sup>213</sup> However, this kind of public speaking is not necessarily directed towards politics. Fukuzawa emphasizes its civil dimension, rather than its political potential, as the cornerstone of performing citizenship.

In using the phrase, Fukuzawa was seeking to translate the English word “speech.”

Chapter 12 of *Gakumon no susume* is entitled *Enzetsu no hō wo susumu no setsu* (演説の法を進むの説), which Dilworth translates as “An Encouragement of Public Speaking.” Fukuzawa explains:

“*Enzetsu* is called “speech” in English.... This kind of thing has since ancient times never existed in Japan.... But it is very popular in the West. From the parliament of a government, the meetings of scholars, business companies [商人の会社], and gatherings of citizens [市民の寄合], down to ceremonial occasions and even trivial [細事] matters such as the opening of a shop [開業・開店等], there is a custom that....some person always makes a speech....”<sup>214</sup>

Combining the characters meaning “to perform,” and “to explain,” this word implied appearing before others to share knowledge, opinions, or theories. It was a necessary invention insofar as Edo period roles, certainly those of all commoners and most low-ranking samurai, would have carried no obligation to appear in public. The obligation was to do the opposite, in fact. Adopting a public posture to initiate debate about matters of public concern was antithetical to being a

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<sup>212</sup> Fukuyoshi, *Fukuzawa to tagen teki 'shimin shakai' ron*.

<sup>213</sup> Fukuzawa did not actually invent this phrase, though he certainly did repurpose it in very important ways. I will discuss *enzetsu* at great length in the third translational moment.

<sup>214</sup> Fukuzawa, *An Encouragement of Learning*, 88.

good *shi*, *nō*, *kō* or *shō*. The *enzetsu* was a Meiji practice attributed to the newly-available role of “citizen.”

### **The Middle Class and Political Rights**

Although the image of the citizen that Fukuzawa’s language summons follows the history of the romance language words derived from *civis* closely, a contradiction seems to lie at the heart of this image. While Fukuzawa’s language is relatively democratic insofar as it emphasizes legal equality and an equal capacity and an indirect duty to develop one’s capacities, in doing so it makes a strong distinction between political rights and civil rights. This distinction means that the two do not always imply one another in the practice of citizenship. Civilization, in Fukuzawa’s formulation, depends first and foremost on the extension of civil rights which create the liberty necessary to pursue learning and self-cultivation, whereas political rights are in many ways secondary. Indeed, Fukuzawa suggests that a lengthy experience of civil rights is necessary prior to becoming capable of exercising political rights. Fukuzawa’s discussion of citizenship therefore configures the new domain of everyday politics in a way that both includes and excludes the people.

What this image includes is an active, self-cultivated individual who contributes to the well-being of the state through their capacity for reason, individual talents, and general level of education. In this sense, the primary civil relationship is a legal one, both between individuals and the state and between individuals in society. What it excludes is the political citizen who has status as a member of a primarily moral community, or one who participates actively in collective decision-making.

Fukuzawa’s translation language in *Seiyō jijō*, as I have argued, can be divided into one group of words based on the character for person, *hito* (人), and another group based on the

character *min* (民), or “the people.” Both the words based on *min* are translation words which Fukuzawa links explicitly with economic life, *shimin* (using the character meaning “market” (市)), and the idiosyncratic *shōmin* (商民), which, as we saw, means “merchants.” That Fukuzawa’s language associates the people as a body primarily with economic pursuits, and the more individualizing ways of speaking point toward self-development, is suggestive in terms of what the basis of a “civilized” community should be. The people, figured as a group in terms of their economic activities, are not presented as a body with a sovereign will. They are the subjects of economic sovereignty, not political.

Furthermore, when Fukuzawa deploys the word *shimin* in his explanation of *enzetsu*, or public speaking, it is not separate from economic or entrepreneurial matters. Although he points out that speeches in parliament are an example of *enzetsu*, the same term is equally important in business affairs or the opening of a shop. *Shimin*, in this context, has an ambiguous position in between parliament and business. Fukuzawa’s words do not suggest that the citizen necessarily has a connection to parliamentary government outside of being obliged to obey the laws that such a body might produce. Although it does not seem to be explicitly identified purely with economics either, the emphasis falls mainly on the concrete locality of the city. If we then ask what constitutes the concrete affairs of the city, the answer suggested by the next sentences in Fukuzawa’s translation might be business and “trivial” affairs.

A point suggested in *Seiyō jijō*, and analyzed in more detail in *Gakumon no susume*, is that the independent citizens which make up the state should be, or always be attempting to become, “middle class.”<sup>215</sup> According to Fukuyoshi, the German word for “citizen,” *burgher*,

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<sup>215</sup> For more on the nuances of Fukuzawa’s understanding of “middle class,” see Isobe, “<Chūnin> no shosō: Fukuzawa Yukichi [middorukurasu] wo chūshin ni.”

carries these class connotations with it much more openly than the English “citizen.”<sup>216</sup>

Fukuyoshi’s interpretation suggests that we might read *shimin* as “bourgeois” more than “citizen,” and therefore understand “middle class” as primarily an economic condition.

Fukuzawa’s figuration of the citizen certainly has an aspect of economic class status. However, it is more complicated than this.

Although it is figured differently in other writing, in *Seiyō jijō*, the term “middle class” appears rendered phonetically in the *katakana* syllabary as *middoru kurasu* (ミッドルクラス).

That Fukuzawa does not adapt an existing word for this category suggests that it should be interpreted as a fundamentally new category of social belonging. Likewise, that the text does not contain an entirely new compound suggest that this is a European or American phenomenon that must be first and foremost be emulated rather than creatively adapted. In an 1874 speech at his *Keiō gijuku*, Fukuzawa explains the importance of the middle class as follows:

In Western history, not one form of business or industry was the creation of the government. Their foundations were always laid by the projects of scholars in the “middle class.” The steam engine was invented by Watt ... the railroad was designed by Stephenson. Adam Smith expounded the principles of economics and completely changed the methods of business. These great scholars belonged to the so-called middle class. They were neither government administrators nor the laboring masses. Theirs was exactly that middle position which leads the world by power of intellect. Once some device or invention takes form in someone’s mind, a private company is founded to

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<sup>216</sup> Fukuyoshi, *Fukuzawa Yukichi tagen teki ‘shimin shakai’ ron*.

concretize it in practical form. It can then make a lasting contribution to the great happiness of future generations.<sup>217</sup>

Fukuzawa's words clearly set up a distinction between the government, the so-called *shōmin* (小民), or "small people," and the middle class of intellectuals and businesspeople. He suggests that this division of society entails a hierarchy in which the state wields the most power, the "small people" the least, and his middle class a moderate amount that can serve as a counterbalance to the repressive force of the government. In that way, when the phrase middle-class appears, it is less concerned with the question of economic status (though that was certainly correlated with the position he describes), than it is with "authority" (*kenryoku* 権力). What his language suggests is that the duty of the government is to simply keep out the way of the creative and entrepreneurial members of the middle class *shimin* who, in his view, are the real drivers of "civilization."<sup>218</sup>

In this way, Fukuzawa's language takes the idea of civil society and turns it to define the citizen. In contrast, John Hooker's 16<sup>th</sup> century invention of the phrase "civil society" was a product of a longer historical discourse of citizenship.<sup>219</sup> Fukuzawa's texts invert this relation,

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<sup>217</sup> Fukuzawa Yukichi, *An Encouragement of Learning*, 41. This is also evocative of Samuel Smile's descriptions of Watt and the like in *Self-Help*.

<sup>218</sup> In his own words: "この諸大家はいわゆるミツヅル・クラスなる者にて、国の執政にあらず、また力役の小民にあらず、まさに国人の中等に位し、知力を持って一世を指揮したる者なり。その工夫発明、まず一人の心に成れば、これを公にして実地に施すには私立の社友を結び、ますますの事を盛大にして人民無量の幸福を万世に遺すなり。この間にあたり政府の義務はただその事を妨げずして適宜に行うしめ、人心の向かうところを察してこれを保護するのみ。" Fukuzawa Yukichi. 2009. *Gakumon no susume*. Tokyo: Keiō gijuku shuppansha.

<sup>219</sup> Oxford English Dictionary. "civil society, n."

and instead invoke the concrete description of the practices of European civil society to define the role of the *shimin*. The consequence of this move is to configure the role of the citizen primarily as participation in the new space of civil society, not in government. That is, it is precisely the citizens' separateness from the state that allows them to fulfil their function. Matsumoto Sannosuke argues that the failure of the so-called "Taisho Democracy" of the 1920s was the result of the separation of the political participation as a means from the values of security and the pursuit of happiness.<sup>220</sup> Fukuzawa's language of citizenship suggest that this important connection was tenuous (at best) from the very beginning.

For example, this is clear in one of the next passages from the same 1874 speech. Fukuzawa has now turned to addressing "we" members of the "middle class," that is, his colleagues and students at *Keiō gijuku*. He answers the question of what the work of these educated members of the middle class should be this way:

"Fields [for us] to work in are too numerous to mention. Business, law, industry, agriculture, the writing and translation of books, publication of newspapers—almost every affair of civilization—must be made our own. We must take the lead of the people, and act in concert with the government, so that the proper balance of powers of the public and the private will increase the potential of the whole nation"

The role of the member of the middle class is to educate one's self and then participate in the fields he points to. The *shimin* of the middle class must take their part in the new society because reason demands it. Their duty is to ensure that reason is the primary criterion of judgment about political action. Government is clearly not included in this list. Indeed, he sets government apart from the duties that adhere to the name "middle class." The duty of the middle class *shimin* is to

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<sup>220</sup> Matsumoto, *Meiji shisō ni okeru dentō to kindai*. Tokyo: Tokyo daigaku shuppankai, 15-16.



work “in concert” with the state as the bearer of reason. As he suggested above, it is a question of intercourse or friction with the state (*kōsai* 交際).

Fukuzawa clarifies what this question of harmony or friction with the state means in Chapter 7 of *Gakumon no susume*, the title of which Dilworth translates as “The Duties of the Citizens of the Nation.” In this instance, Fukuzawa uses the word *kokumin* (国民) as opposed to *shimin* (市民). “Duty” is represented as *shokubun* (職分). In order to explain the relationship between the state and the citizen, he relies on a metaphor of “master” (*shujin* 主人) and “guest” (*kyaku* 客). Similarly, throughout this section Fukuzawa relies on a parallel distinction between *kokumin* (国民) and *jinmin* (人民). As I suggested above, *jinmin* suggests individuality within a broader whole, whereas *kokumin* points to a comprehensive unity in political authority.

Fukuzawa makes an argument for popular sovereignty on the basis of a social contract. He elaborates little more than to say that the government is based on an exchange of the people’s taxes and obedience to the law for protection by the state. He argues that this contract has already been concluded and that the state therefore already “represents” the people in all matters.<sup>221</sup>

In Section two, Fukuzawa claims that this principle held with respect to the Tokugawa regime as well.<sup>222</sup> The problem in that case was simply that the shogunate and the daimyo did not deliver protection. The same principle holds for the Meiji state, and the paramount duty of the citizen is to obey the law. The problem, he asserts, is not only or simply tyrannical rule, but suggests that tyranny is in fact necessary when the public is “ignorant and uncultured.” When “stupid people” fail to follow reason, or are lazy and unproductive, the state necessarily turns

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<sup>221</sup> Fukuzawa, *An Encouragement of Learning*, 51.

<sup>222</sup> *Ibid.*, 51.

coercive to correct the situation. “Even Buddha or Confucius” could not devise ways to deal with these “stupid” or “illiterate” people, and therefore rule necessarily becomes heavy-handed. If the people want to avoid tyranny, he argues, the people must pursue learning. Otherwise they have no one to blame but themselves.

This duty to obey the law, to act as a “guest” in the house of the “master,” is inviolable. Although Fukuzawa presented the text of the American Declaration of Independence to Japanese readers for the first time in the first volume of *Seiyō jijō*, he denies any kind of natural right to revolt. Although he acknowledges that a tyrannical state should be opposed on rational grounds, he is coy on how to go about this. One option, open armed rebellion, he rejects out of hand as a great “evil.” Simple resignation and acquiescence is problematic as well because that is precisely what characterized, in his view, the imbalance of power written into the relation between people and the Tokugawa state. People who follow the third course should do as follows:

“...No matter how bitter the law under which individuals are made to suffer by a tyrannical government, they endure that suffering without letting their spirits break. Neither taking up arms nor using even the slightest degree of violence, they only bring pressure to bear upon the government by advocating just principles.... If rational pressure is brought to bear upon the government, the existing good administration and laws will not at all be harmed. Their just arguments may perhaps not be adopted, but since it is clear that they stand to reason, the innate sentiment of men will be swayed by them. What is not accomplished this year will be accomplished in the following year.”<sup>223</sup>

It is only “stupid” people who would turn to arms, and only weak people who would simply acquiesce. Nonetheless, it is not immediately clear how the exertion of “rational

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<sup>223</sup> Ibid., 52.

pressure” manifests itself.<sup>224</sup> This pressure arises in the sphere of civil society, but it is not translated directly to government by citizen participation. The duty of the citizen is to think and be critical, but not to step outside the bounds of the apolitical civil society that Fukuzawa’s language creates.

Fukuzawa echoes Mill’s harm principle when he says that, “...any desire that does not bother another person is good.”<sup>225</sup> He takes this logic to an extreme point of political disempowerment, however, when he suggests that it is never in the interests of either one’s self or one’s fellow *shimin* to interfere in the affairs of the state, to say nothing of actually rebelling openly. Fukuzawa rejected the institution of slavery in the United States as a wicked practice, however he also lamented the Civil War that ultimately did away with it as nothing more than “...a pack of devils fighting one another in the fields of Paradise.”<sup>226</sup>

The distinctions that Fukuzawa draws between civilization, semi-civilization, and barbarism in *Bunmeiron no gairyaku* reflect this understanding of the duties of the citizen. Barbarism is primarily the absence of a state. Semi-civilization might be seen as the ordering of a people under a central authority, yet not one in which the energies of those people are harnessed in such a way as to make them productive of overall well-being. Civilization is the culmination of institutions and the effective, rational, husbandry of the population to produce economically

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<sup>224</sup> We will see in the third translational moment that this suggestion to exert “rational pressure” is closely related to the practices of debate and speechmaking. I argue that Fukuzawa refigures the idea of rationality itself in connection with *enzetsu*.

<sup>225</sup> *Enzetsu* is one likely candidate for a practical alternative. Journalism and publishing are as well. Fukuzawa’s words are: “他人の迷惑にならない「欲望」は、すべて善である。”

<sup>226</sup> Fukuzawa, *An Outline of a Theory of Civilization*, 56. Quoted in Celerant, “An Outline of a Theory of Civilization by Fukuzawa Yukichi (review),” 1216.

and culturally. That is, Fukuzawa's citizens live up to their names insofar as they accept their status as "masters" passively and engage their capacities as "guest" energetically.

## Conclusion

Stuart Hall writes:

"The new born child who still...has to acquire the means of being placed within the law of Culture, is already expected, named, positioned in advance by the forms of ideology (parental/maternal/conjugal/fraternal). We experience ideology as if it emanates freely and spontaneously from within us, as if we were its free subjects, 'working by ourselves.' Actually, we are spoken by and spoken for, in the ideological discourses which await us even at our birth, into which we are born and find our place."<sup>227</sup>

These "names" are really not so very different from the Confucian forms of ideology that reproduced daily life in the Edo period. One lived up to one's name as a father or mother, a husband or wife, a brother or sister, or a friend, and people recognized the right course of action by appealing to their own innate good nature. One could work by one's self, so to speak, to rectify one's given position, but the social positions themselves were always already given. What separates Hall's suggestion from the Confucian model is of course the fact that these names are not hierarchized or limited to the so-called "five relationships" (*gorin* 五倫) or the *shinōkōshō* hierarchy. According to Hall's view, in society we are "spoken by and spoken for" the myriad names that we bear.

Fukuzawa's language centering around the word "citizen" articulated a new way for individuals to speak and be spoken in turn. What Fukuzawa's language of citizenship made

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<sup>227</sup> Hall, "Signification, Representation, Ideology: Althusser and the Post-Structuralist Debates," 106.

space for was the active, entrepreneurial, and productive member of civil society set in explicit distinction to the state. It configured a minimal, legal citizenship which guaranteed the protection of individual private property and thereby facilitated the development of a nascent capitalism. What it foreclosed, however, was a political citizenship which might have disturbed or interfered with the accumulation of capital as it was being managed by the Meiji state. People born into Meiji society could, after the diffusion of Fukuzawa's words, be born into the name "citizen" and the subjectivity that it came to imply.

The word *shimin* operated as a translation-metaphor for the English word "citizen" in Fukuzawa's writing of the 1860s and 1870s. In this context, it also became a metaphor for a variety of ways of living and being, both individually and collectively. Invoking the word *shimin* therefore also invoked ideas of commerce, self-cultivation, national wealth and strength, and a separation between politics (as we usually understand it) and civil society.

The creation of the word *shimin* created a political moment precisely because it broke down the rules by which people viewed their actions as beneficial or harmful, virtuous or vicious. It changed their self-perceptions about where they were allowed to appear (the worlds of commerce and education), and created new boundaries across which they were not supposed to cross (the world of government). It created new goals for the state and new goals for individual communities within it. *Shimin* was a metaphor for the individuals who created the strength and vitality England and America enjoyed. For readers in Japan, becoming a *shimin* was to become analogous to those individuals, but to be different from them in ways that the broader context of discourse in Japanese made available.

Perhaps most importantly, the appearance of the citizen asserted a novel claim about how judgments should be made. Fukuzawa's translations, as well as his original writings, took the

form of treatises written in simple language which lay out principles and defend them rationally. That is, his texts were intelligible on the condition that one accepted the primacy of transparency and logical consistency as criteria of aesthetic judgment. The politics which follows from this is therefore egalitarian, legal, and commercial. To this extent, the metaphor of *shimin*, made intelligible by embracing rationality as a primary virtue, illustrates the underlying relation between aesthetic standards of judgment and the constitution of political community.

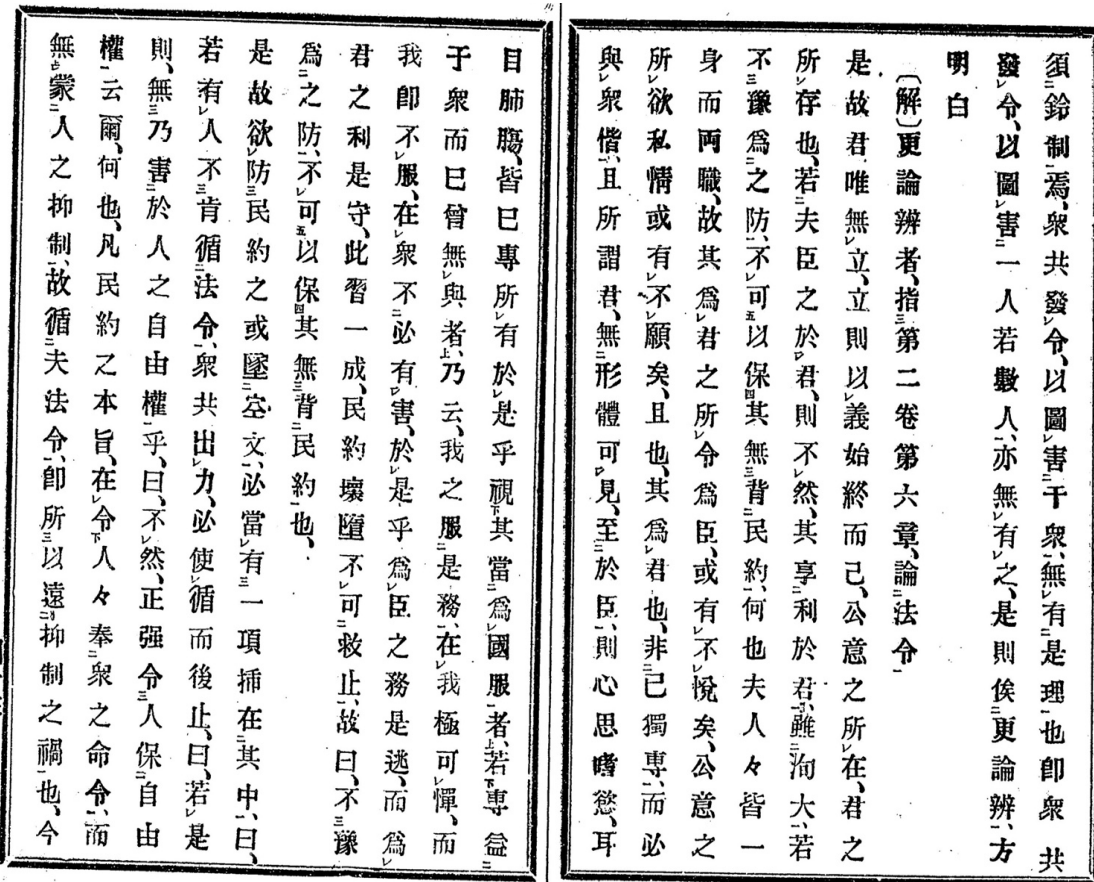


Image 3: Book 1, Chapter 7 of *Minyaku Yakkai* in *kanbun*.

The final paragraph on the left is the beginning of Chōmin’s translation-metaphor for the following complete paragraph of Rousseau’s:

“Afin donc que ce pacte social ne soit pas un vain formulaire, il renferme tacitement cet engagement, qui seul peut donner de la force aux autres, que quiconque refusera d’obéir à la volonté générale, y sera contraint par tout le corps ; ce qui ne signifie autre chose sinon qu’on le forcera à être libre, car telle est la condition qui, donnant chaque citoyen à la patrie, le garantit de toute dépendance personnelle, condition qui fait l’artifice et le Jeu de la machine politique, et qui seule rend légitimes les engagements civils, lesquels, sans cela, seraient absurdes, tyranniques, et sujets aux plus énormes abus.”

On the right, one of Chōmin’s exegetical notes follows the (解) at the indented beginning of the first full paragraph.

## Nakae Chōmin and the Community of Virtue

Since humanity was born into the world, where there have been things, there have been names... When it came to things having no form, because ordinary people could not discern them, the sages established names for them. Thereafter, even ordinary people could perceive and comprehend them. That activity was called ‘teaching by names’<sup>228</sup>

-Ogyū Sorai

The Master said: “As for a neighborhood, it is its [*jin*] that makes it beautiful. If you choose to live in a place that lacks [*jin*], how can you grow in wisdom?”<sup>229</sup>

-Confucius

## Introduction

The translation-metaphors for “citizen” that appeared in Fukuzawa Yukichi’s writing of the late 1860s suggested that belonging to the political community could best be experienced through the active pursuit of learning, commerce, and the improvement of one’s socially useful faculties. The counterbalance that middle-class people who had cultivated their talents provided to the authority of the state was essential to the maximization of well-being for all. This individualistic image of citizenship placed great value on the results of what John Stuart Mill might have called “experiments in living” that individualism encouraged.<sup>230</sup> In so doing, however, it was not necessary for individuals to actually participate in government itself. This vision of citizenship was translated and metaphorized with the neologism *shimin* (市民). In so

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<sup>228</sup> Ogyū, “Benmei,” 171.

<sup>229</sup> Confucius, “Analects: Resources for East Asian Thought.”

<sup>230</sup> JS Mill, “On Liberty.”



doing, it also affirmed the primacy of rationality and utility as the standards of aesthetic and political judgment.

If we were to ask Jean Jacques Rousseau about this vision of citizenship, he might make the argument that living in close quarters and pursuing one's private interests does not make one a citizen at all if there is no moral or cultural bond underlying the political community.

According to the Latin definition, there can of course be no citizenship without a *civitas*. Even though Fukuzawa's *shimin* metaphorized the English word "city," it focused on the city as a place of economic exchange rather than as a sovereign community of people closely bound by a sense of duty, common purpose, and mutual respect.

In 1882, Nakae Chōmin's translation of Rousseau's *Social Contract* offered a different metaphor for the everyday political relationship between individual people. Chōmin's text relied on the old term *shūjin* (衆人) to figure the French word *citoyen* in most cases. Crucially, because of this older term's historical association with certain elements of Confucian morality, it figures citizenship on the basis of very different aesthetic sensibilities.

The primary standard of political and aesthetic judgment from the standpoint of *shūjin* is not rationality or logical consistency, but sympathy and the practical realization a common sense of moral virtue. As we will see, being a *shūjin* is like being part of a community in which the moral relation between people takes priority over individuality. While *shūjin* certainly transformed the ways it was possible to live together insofar as it is like Rousseau's *citoyen*, it also continued to invoke and affirm longstanding Confucian rules for interpreting human relationships. In this way it is also not the *shūjin* of the Tokugawa past. It is something else which cuts across both Tokugawa class divisions and early Meiji individualism.

In what follows, I examine the ways in which Chōmin's translation, entitled *Minyaku yakkai*, plays with both Rousseau's text and elements of the Japanese Confucian tradition to transform the experience of political community. First, I clarify exactly what kind of document *Minyaku yakkai* is. Existing scholarship has treated the text as a straightforwardly mimetic representation of Rousseau's text. Instead, I take Chōmin's text primarily as an argument against the failure of the Meiji state to protect political and moral equality in practice. It might be read as a critique of the idea that equality can arise from the productive friction between society's parts that Fukuzawa described.<sup>231</sup>

Next, I consider the range of language the text uses to translate, metaphorize, and describe the French word *citoyen*. The starkest difference between Chōmin's and Fukuzawa's translation-metaphors for of the citizen lies in Fukuzawa's reliance on neologisms or loan words. *Seiyō jijō* created a cognitive and interpretive break with existing ideas about community by forcing the reader to confront something unfamiliar.<sup>232</sup> Although Chōmin asks the reader to reject the principle of paternal authority that he sees at the center of much Tokugawa Confucian thought, his translation-metaphors also suggest that the underlying moral conventions of Confucius and Mencius remain sound. He does so by writing in the *kanbun* style and repurposing old language rather than creating new words.

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<sup>231</sup> Indeed, all of Chōmin's major translations can be read as unique utterances. I mention briefly his translations of Veron's *Aesthetics* and Schopenhauer's *On the Basis of Morality* below, but Matsunaga Shozo also suggests that Chōmin's translation of Alfred Fouillee's *L'histoire de la philosophie* should be read as a critique of utilitarianism aimed squarely at the likes of Fukuzawa. Matsunaga, *Fukuzawa Yukichi to Nakae Chōmin*, location 922-935.

<sup>232</sup> Fukuzawa worked hard rhetorically to create this sense of a break. His insistence that Japan had no tradition of rhetoric, for example, was patently untrue historically, but supported his argument. Likewise, his claims about Japanese scholars' concern only with the relationship between the people and the state (rather than the individual and the state) are overblown in terms of historical fact but are rhetorically important.

I then show how *shūjin* (衆人) transforms community by creating a state of interactive difference in the relationship between Rousseauian *pitié* and Confucian *jin* (仁), or “sympathy.”

<sup>233</sup> In Rousseau’s terms, pity was critical to experiencing the common properly. Similarly, *jin* was critical to the idea of the common in the Confucian tradition. I suggest that the translation-metaphor *shūjin* indirectly invokes *jin* to serve as the basis for an experience of commonness in a way that is like Rousseau’s figuration of the relationship between citizenship and pity, but yet not equivalent. Matsunaga Shozo has suggested that Chōmin was sensitive to the cognitive dissonance that the rapid and unadulterated adoption of new cultural forms might have caused people in the early Meiji years.<sup>234</sup> The affirmation of the virtue of *jin* implied in the translation-metaphor *shūjin* perhaps reinvigorates a common moral ground upon which a new, truly equal Meiji politics could have taken shape.

Chōmin insists on the importance of digesting European thought before it can be made useful in Japan.<sup>235</sup> The metaphorical transformation that *shūjin* performs seems to do this by putting the figure of the *citoyen* into a productive tension with longstanding Confucian ideas

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<sup>233</sup> Different authors read the character 仁 as *ren* or *jen* in Chinese. Japanese sources read it as *jin* or *nin*. I address any important differences between the Japanese and Chinese usages directly in the text. Otherwise I take them to be the same. The *jin* (人) of *shūjin* is different from moral *jin* (仁), though the kanji do bear some relation. The former character means “person.” The second character is composed of the radical (the part on the left) for person (*ninben*). The right part of the character (二) means “two.” We might say that the character itself represents human plurality and having in common.

<sup>234</sup> *Ibid.*, location 785.

<sup>235</sup> Huang and Tucker. “Introduction,” 5.

about what holds political communities together.<sup>236</sup> Chōmin's language minimizes the distance between political and civil rights, but blurs distinctions between the state as a political community and an abstract nation as a moral unity. Ultimately, though, the metaphor constrains the very political moment that it occasions by replacing Tokugawa class inequalities with Confucian moral hierarchies.

### ***Minyaku yakkai* and its Standards of Judgment**

I wish to argue that Chōmin's text can be viewed primarily as a response to the failure of Meiji society to practically embrace the moral equality established between *heimin* (平民), or what Hirano calls "ordinary citizens" after the abolition of classes in 1872.<sup>237</sup> Often, though, *Minyaku yakkai* is often considered less in terms of its discursive intervention into Meiji culture than it is in terms of its status as the first more or less faithful translation of *Du Contrat Social*. I am concerned that this prevents us from appreciating the full contextual significance of Chōmin's text. It also positions the genre of the translation more broadly as a universal category, which not only affects how it is possible to appreciate *Minyaku yakkai*, but it also may have some pernicious political consequences.<sup>238</sup> Before we embark on an analysis of the problem of equality in Chōmin's text itself, let us first rethink the ways we categorize *Minyaku yakkai*.

To treat mimetic translation as a universal genre means that we must make assumptions about what interpreters are or are not doing when they reimagine a text in another linguistic and

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<sup>236</sup> This is in contrast to Fukuzawa Yukichi, who was quite happy with simply adopting European forms of knowledge production.

<sup>237</sup> Hirano, *The Politics of Dialogic Imagination*, 202.

<sup>238</sup> Asukai Masamichi perhaps more appropriately calls him Rousseau's *sojutsusha* (祖述者), or interpreter and successor, and does not treat this aspect of Chōmin's thought as the only or most important one. *Nakae Chōmin*, 6.

cultural context. The European traditions of translation tend to elevate the role of the source language author and devalue the position of the translator (or translators).<sup>239</sup> In the case of exchanges between European source languages and non-European target languages, this quite often means placing the value of European ideas above those that emerge from the target language transformation. What is at stake, therefore, in labeling a given work a translation is the hierarchical relation between the ideas contained in the source text and those embodied in translation-metaphor.

In the specific case of *Minyaku yakkai*, it is difficult to think about the complex relationship between Rousseau and Chōmin strictly in terms translational accuracy or faithfulness to a single, correct interpretation. As Judith Shklar writes: “I have come to accept that [Rousseau] is one of those authors who says something personal to every reader, and that it is both vain and illiberal to insist that one’s own reading is the only right one.”<sup>240</sup> Understanding translations from a mimetic perspective assumes that there must be a “right” Rousseau, which Chōmin does or does not successfully convert into a text which gives readers to this proper reading. Considering Chōmin’s text outside of the faithfulness paradigm, on the other hand, allows us not only to think about what Rousseau may have said to Chōmin personally, but to think more freely about the conventions of writing and interpreting that his language intervened in.

According to the criteria of mimetic translation, not only are texts viewed as insufficiently accurate often disregarded, but texts which are accepted as valid translations are then often viewed primarily in terms of their function as mirrors of foreign ideas. In this case,

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<sup>239</sup> See Venuti, *The Translator's Invisibility; The Scandals of Translation*.

<sup>240</sup> Shklar, *Men and Citizens*, vii, quoted in Bertram, *Rousseau and the Social Contract*, 4.

*Minyaku yakkai* has frequently been considered in terms of the degree to which it reproduced Rousseau's ideas and not in terms of Chōmin's own poetic activity. For example, the text is considered remarkable by many because it is believed to have been a primary conduit for the introduction of Rousseauian thought to the activists of the "Freedom and Popular Rights Movement."

However, Chōmin's translation of *The Social Contract* was not, strictly speaking, the first published version.<sup>241</sup> That distinction goes to an 1877 interpretation of the text by Hattori Toku and Tanaka Hiroyoshi that is today frequently overlooked because it is judged to be inaccurate.<sup>242</sup> It is worth noting, however, that this inaccurate translation was not without influence. Ueki Emori drew on this work in preparing his own thoughts on the social contract, and the connection between the concept of the social contract and the activities of activists and public speakers was established well prior to Chōmin's ostensibly more accurate version.<sup>243</sup> Although it is correct to say that Chōmin's text is more faithful to Rousseau's than Hattori and Tanaka's was (it was hard not to be), this sometimes obscures the fact that *Minyaku yakkai* only

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<sup>241</sup> Moreover, Chōmin himself had translated the first two books of the social contract in mixed *kana* form in 1874. Although he did not publish them at the time, they circulated among his associates.

<sup>242</sup> Essentially, Hattori and Tanaka describe Hobbes' vision of the social contract and call it Rousseau's. Calling it "inaccurate" is entirely fair, yet not what is most interesting about it. National Diet Library. "Modern Japan and France: Adoration, Encounter, and Interaction." For Hattori and Tanaka's complete text, see Hattori and Tanaka. "Minyakuron."

<sup>243</sup> As we have seen, Fukuzawa refers to the social contract repeatedly in *Gakumon no susume*, for example.

covers about 40% of Rousseau's text, includes many exegetical notes inserted into the text, and does not consistently represent many of Rousseau's key philosophical terms of art.<sup>244</sup>

Chōmin explicitly calls his work a *yakkai*, which is a very different endeavor from translation in many European traditions. Composed of the characters *yaku* (訳) and *kai* (解), this word draws together a sense of both a sense of figuration and interpretation that mimetic translation does not generally include.<sup>245</sup> *Yaku* is commonly represented as “translation” in modern Japanese, although ultimately, it means “to interpret” as much as it does anything else. Among its older definitions is *wake wo toku* (わけをとく), which has the sense of breaking something down into its constituent parts to extract an understanding.<sup>246</sup> Alternatively, it can be understood as *kaishaku* (解釈), which is the modern Japanese word used to translate “interpretation.”<sup>247</sup> “To make meaning clear” is another way one might explain its sense. The word *kaishaku* is interesting as its first character is the very same *kai* (解) that appears as the

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<sup>244</sup> According to Hazama Naoki, many theories exist as to why Chōmin did not translate *Du Contrat Social* in its entirety, but most explanations are unsatisfactory. More to the point, he argues that the reason cannot be definitively known, and therefore it is not a pressing issue for further scholarly attention. I agree with this assessment, and my interest is less in explaining Chōmin's behavior than understanding the reading experience his text resulted in. Hazama. "Nakae Chōmin 'Minyaku yakkai' no rekishi igi ni tsuite."

<sup>245</sup> This is in distinction to something like *Minyakuron* (民約論), or “The Theory of the Social Contract,” which was the title of Hattori and Tanaka's text. It is also clear that he does not call it a *honyaku* (翻訳), which is perhaps the closest word to “literary translation” in modern Japanese. Interestingly, Chōmin did call his 1874 draft *Minyakuron*. The choice to call it *Minyaku yakkai* in its *kanbun* form was probably not accidental or purely stylistic. Nakae, "Minyakuron."

<sup>246</sup> Kamata and Yasuda, *Shinkangorin*.

<sup>247</sup> That is, “interpretation” as in “my interpretation of the text” rather than to interpret for someone who speaks another language (that would use the character *yaku* in the phrase *tsūyaku* (通訳)).

second character of *yakkai* (訳解). This character's right half makes use of the radical *to* (刀) meaning "sword." The left half is the character *kado* (角), which can mean "corner," "point," or "horn"; the latter two being things which are meant to penetrate. Just as *yaku* had the sense of breaking something apart to understand its content, *kai* suggests penetrating something to grasp its core meaning.<sup>248</sup>

In this way, Chōmin's words suggest that *Minyaku yakkai* is an interpretation aimed at understanding the meaning of something rather than simply a transmission of ideas from one place to another. While it is possible to argue that the object of interpretation was the "correct" interpretation of Rousseau's text, what Chōmin's title might also suggest is that it is the meaning of the social contract more generally that he is trying to make clear or penetrate. In other words, there is no reason why such an endeavor need be confined to Rousseau's understanding of the social contract alone. Indeed, the social contract can be understood as a broader philosophical problem in many theories of government in European history since the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Moreover, because the idea of the social contract was already in circulation in certain Meiji circles well before the 1880s, Chōmin's text was not necessarily presenting a radically new concept to ignorant readers.<sup>249</sup> Rather, we might think about his text in terms of the metaphors it creates to articulate the social contract in a specific historical and cultural context.<sup>250</sup> From this perspective,

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<sup>248</sup> George Steiner uses the same metaphor for translation. *After Babel*. Sherry Simon considers the gendered aspects of this metaphor as well. *Gender in Translation*.

<sup>249</sup> Especially considering that his text is targeted at an educated, *kanbun* literate, elite.

<sup>250</sup> This is not dissimilar to what Sheldon Wolin argues is the value of political theory generally speaking. The central problem for Chōmin might not have been what Rousseau thought of social progress, the march of civilization, or how its negative effects on these moral bonds could be thwarted. Rather, what was at stake in working through *Du Contrat Social* was theorizing his and his readers' own situation. Wolin, *Politics and Vision*, 24-26.



we can consider *Minyaku yakkai*'s cultural impact more broadly. *Minyaku yakkai* was a way of redrawing the social contract for Meiji Japan of the early 1880s. Redrawing the contract meant also redrawing the boundaries between whose rights counted and whose did not in a moment when equality was established in law but not realized in moral practice.

Chōmin's political and literary activities offer insight into his critique of Meiji unequal equality. Chōmin was a prominent participant in the "Freedom and Popular Rights Movement" of the mid-1870s and early 1880s. Though he was active in the *jiyūtō* (Liberal Party), his most consequential activities during this period were primarily journalistic and literary. He started and edited several newspapers during the 1880s, including the *Tōyo jiyū shinbun* (Eastern Free Press), the *Jiyū shinbun* (Free Press), and the *Seiri sōdan*, although he was forced to close several of these operations after falling afoul of the government's restrictions on the freedom of the press. He ultimately was exiled from Tokyo in 1887 for his criticism of the Meiji government.

The nature of his criticism of the Meiji state suggests why it was necessary to rethink the idea of the social contract in a general way. For example, in 1881, in the first issue of the *Tōyō jiyū shinbun*, Chōmin wrote an outline of the paper's objectives. Unsurprisingly given the paper's name, its objective was the promotion of "liberty." He specifies more clearly what he takes liberty, or *jiyū* (自由), to be. He cites two things, naming them in French using the *katakana* syllabary. The first is *riberute moraru*, or "moral liberty" (*liberté moral* 即ち心身お自由). The second is what he calls *riberute porichikku*, or "political liberty" (*liberté politique* 即ち行為の自由).<sup>251</sup> By "moral liberty," he suggests freedom of conscience or belief through the characters *seishin shinshi* (精神心思), or "spirit and true thoughts." "Political liberty" refers to

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<sup>251</sup> Nakae, Chōmin. 1993. "Tōyō jiyū shinbun dai ichigo shasetsu," 13.

freedom of action or behavior (*kōi* 行為).<sup>252</sup> This includes things like the freedom of assembly, freedom of movement, freedom of speech, and other civil liberties. He proceeds to offer a translation of the French word *liberté* (リベルテー) as “self-determination” (*jishu* 自主) or “independence” (*fuki dokuristu* 不羈独立). In the countries of the West, he claims, people of both the highest and the lowest classes have these two kinds of freedom.<sup>253</sup> People of both classes in Japan, on the other hand, had neither in practice.

*Minyaku yakkai*'s primary focus seems to be on establishing the importance of practical equality in moral and political rights. The Meiji government had equalized the four classes in 1872, but in practice, those at the bottom lacked the opportunities to actualize their liberty through education and unfettered participation in civil society. Moreover, the oligarchic government made decisions in a more or less arbitrary manner and often without much concern for the equal application of laws. Prohibitions on public gatherings, publications, and speechmaking were vigorously, if not consistently, enforced, and the targets of these repressions were not generally elite figures. Chōmin himself discovered this the hard way. Particularly during the 1880s, a great number of farmers, merchants, and artisans involved in the nascent political parties and speech societies bore the brunt of state ideological repression.

Most importantly, the former peasants carried the weight of heavy taxation, suffered the disastrous consequences of economic policy designed to stimulate the development of heavy

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<sup>252</sup> Ibid., 14.

<sup>253</sup> Ibid., 15.

industry, and paid the “blood tax” by having their sons conscripted into the army.<sup>254</sup> Although all *heimin* (平民) were nominally equal before the law, the arbitrary nature of the Meiji state’s application of those laws reproduced many aspects of the dominance of former samurai over former farmers, artisans, and merchants. The poorest suffered while a class of formerly high-ranking samurai profited from the expansion of capital.

Furthermore, since the defeat of Tokugawa forces in the Boshin war, a clique of samurai from the Satsuma and Chōshū domains held control of the state. The persistence of domain identities within the government was remarkable not only in the years surrounding the restoration, but even into the 20<sup>th</sup> century. After the opening of the diet in 1890, one’s former domain status mattered greatly in terms of the influence one could wield. Chōmin was elected as a representative from Osaka to the lower house, but quit two years later out of frustration with the government’s domination by former Satsuma and Chōshū retainers.<sup>255</sup>

*Seiyō jijō*’s emphasis on juridical civil rights over participatory political rights points to some of these same concerns. However, Fukuzawa Yukichi’s focus in his didactic writing of the 1870s on the middle class as the vehicle of “civilization” and the bulwark of rationality explicitly excluded the “small people” (*shōmin* 小民) from both important civil and everyday political roles. To a certain degree, it justified the impositions of the state on those at the bottom for the sake of the development of those in the middle. Fukuzawa’s emphasis on self-cultivation suggested that hardworking and capable individuals could rise even under these conditions, but

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<sup>254</sup> After the institution of universal conscription in 1872, some farming families literally believed that the “blood tax” required their sons’ blood to be drained for consumption by foreigners.

<sup>255</sup> Chōmin was originally from the Tosa domain. He was also an incorrigible alcoholic, and cited his drinking as his official reason for resigning his diet seat.

this was not common in practice. Although Fukuzawa's metaphor for citizenship implied that both people in the middle stratum or at the bottom could be politically equal, Chōmin's experience of Meiji society illustrated that such claims were often little more than empty words.

Chōmin believed that it was important for people at all levels of society be able to practically enjoy the fruits of liberty. This was so not only because he considered it a natural (*tennen* 天然) gift from heaven, but also because it would create a stronger state and a more vibrant cultural community.<sup>256</sup> This suggests that Chōmin may have been skeptical of Fukuzawa's emphasis on friction between or the counterbalancing of different sources of authority. Chōmin's language, on the other hand, undoes Fukuzawa's replacement of Confucian harmony with liberal friction as a way of delivering on the promise of equality.<sup>257</sup>

What *Minyaku yakkai* provides is a new metaphor for political equality with the power to remake the experience of having in common. Equality appears as a fundamental principle which not only generates liberty but which unites the political community as a whole. According to Matsunaga, Chōmin ultimately envisioned an ideal society in which politics as usual was no longer necessary.<sup>258</sup> What would hold people together in such a world was their capacity for moral action, not legality or rationality alone. In this sense, the standard of judgment to be applied to political action was the traditional ethics of virtue in the Confucian "five relationships." The goal of peace without politics was not one that Chōmin created from nothing.

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<sup>256</sup> Ibid. 14. Chōmin speaks to the importance of liberty of conscience for the development of the state and culture in his 1881 essay "*Shinshi no jiyū*," 25-28. Having liberty was critical for exercising and cultivating moral virtue. I will explore this in more detail below.

<sup>257</sup> See the first translational moment for more on this contrast between harmony and friction.

<sup>258</sup> "政治の究極の理想は政治を必要としないところにある." Matsunaga, *Fukuzawa Yukichi to Nakae Chōmin*, location 1662.

In fact, this vision of an ideal society was, in broad view, the same as that as that held by Confucius and Mencius nearly two millennia before.<sup>259</sup> This kind of rule was indeed also widely discussed by proponents of the emperor system as *tokuchi shugi* (徳治主義).<sup>260</sup> What Chōmin drew from Rousseau seems to be the belief that this moral and political community could not exist on the basis of class inequality or the denial of basic liberties. A complete mutual intelligibility between people could make these practical distinctions appear as groundless as they actually were. Chōmin's language of citizenship constructs metaphor for the principle that hierarchy is an impediment to its realization the realization of moral virtue.

*Minyaku yakkai*, and Chōmin's translation-metaphor for *citoyen*, *shūjin*, therefore created a political moment when it metaphorized the citizen as a participant not in a legal order, but as an equal participant in a community of virtue. Rather than smashing the Confucian worldview altogether, it produced the *shūjin* to presence in the interstices of the *de facto* class hierarchy. While this disrupted class boundaries, it did not unsettle other, more fundamental principles of virtue.

### **Chōmin's Translation Words**

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<sup>259</sup> The classic debate between Confucianism and Legalism in Chinese thought rests on this particular point. Confucians held that the governors should rule through moral suasion, and that strict laws with harsh punishments would be unnecessary so long as rulers ruled and people behaved according to the moral precepts of the ancient sages. On the other hand, Legalists such as Han Fei believed that people were naturally wicked, and only rigidly enforced laws supported by public examples of (often brutal) punishment could force people to obey.

<sup>260</sup> Mastusmoto, *Meiji shisōni okeru dentō to kindai*, 19.

How did *Minyaku yakkai*'s language for *citoyen* specifically metaphorize the class equality I have described? Chōmin's text translates *citoyen* in several ways, often quite differently from the ways in which Fukuzawa translated "citizen." Table 2 lists the ways in which Chōmin directly translates *citoyen* in *Minyaku yakkai*. Rousseau uses the term 90 times in

**Table 2:** Translations of *citoyen* in *Minyaku*

Translation	Uses
<u>Shūjin</u> (衆人)	6
<u>Minshu koku no tami</u> (民主国之民)	1
<u>Ryokoku no hito</u> (兩國之人)	1
<u>Kono kuni no hito</u> (其之国之人)	1
<u>Shi</u> (士)	1
<u>Shin</u> (臣)	1
<u>Shū</u> (衆)	1
<u>Kokujin</u> (国人)	1
<u>Hito</u> (人)	1
<u>Hitori</u> (一人)	1

the whole of *Du Contrat social*, however, *citoyen* is discussed on 13 occasions in the section that Chōmin addressed. Broadly speaking, the language in this table can be divided into four categories. The first category is comprised of words that suggest already existing roles well entrenched in Tokugawa-era

discourse and practice. Second, there are the translation-metaphors which resonate with the character *shū* (衆). These words centered on *shū*, I argue, insist upon a fundamental equality and a mutual sense of understanding that neither the Tokugawa-era class roles nor Chōmin's other translation language suggests. Next, there are Chōmin's translations which build on the character *hito* (人), or "person." As we saw with Fukuzawa's translation-metaphors, compounds incorporating the character *hito* (人) tended to suggest individuality or the independence of individual members within a broader whole. Chōmin's usage seems consistent with Fukuzawa's in this sense, although the manner in which he metaphorizes the place of the individual within the community is, as we will see, rather different. Fourth, there are the translations based on the character *min* (民). Also as we saw with Fukuzawa's language, *min* suggests a people without

emphasizing the individuality of the constituent members. Particularly with the word *kokumin* (国民), the sense moves closer to an a union between nation and state.<sup>261</sup>

Hazama and Kubō have both claimed that Chōmin’s preferred *kanbun* translation word for *citoyen* is the word *shi* (士).<sup>262</sup> It is true that in many of Chōmin’s newspaper writings of the 1870s and 1880s, he frequently uses the character *shi* to discuss those who participate in government specifically or “gentlemen” a more general sense. The character suggests one who is cultured, educated, or virtuous. More importantly, *shi* was simply a conventional way to refer to those in positions of authority. Of course, under the Tokugawa system *shi* literally referred to samurai. After the end of official class distinctions, the title persisted as a courtesy although it was unrelated to one’s former status. The character often appears in Confucian texts to mean someone of great wisdom and cultivation in moral sense (*shinshi* 紳士). It is used in the Japanese word *bushi* (武士), meaning *samurai*, or “scholar-warrior.”<sup>263</sup> In this sense, it appears to parallel aspects of the English- and French-language etymological relations between *civis* and “civilization.”

One could understand why Chōmin might have considered the word *shi* (士) to be a satisfactory translation for *citoyen* in *Minyaku yakkai*. *Shi* has a long history in Japanese Confucian philosophy. As such *shi* might be read as establishing variety of appropriate roles for the citizen, all of which were grounded in existing political and cultural practices which might

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<sup>261</sup> Again, see the first translational moment for more on this.

<sup>262</sup> Hazama, “Nakae Chōmin "Minyaku yakkai" no rekishi igi ni tsuite”; Kubō in Chōmin, *Minyaku yakkai*.

<sup>263</sup> It can also mean “man” or “male.” I consider citizenship and gender in more detail in the fourth translational moment.

have made it more digestible to readers of *Minyaku yakkai*. Fukuzawa's word *shimin* (市民), on the other hand, explicitly rejects existing Confucian practices of in favor of an emphasis on public speaking, enterprise, and individuality's priority over community. Those new activities and the ethic that supports them, however, also required definition and were somewhat opaque to readers encountering them for the first time.<sup>264</sup> *Shi* might be read as offering parallels to some of the implicit meanings that "citizen" and *citoyen* had absorbed over their histories in Europe. The connection to duty and office, as well as education and cultivation are not lost. Indeed, it is possible to argue that it even reflects a certain connection with the physical, sometimes quite violent, dimension of the 1789 revolution and its aftermath that *citoyen* evokes but "citizen" perhaps does not. It could perhaps reflect this dimension through Chōmin's immediate personal experience of the aftermath of the Paris commune.<sup>265</sup>

Nonetheless, *shi* is not the translation-metaphor which appears most regularly in *Minyaku yakkai*. Although *shi* does appear once, *shūjin* (衆人) is by far the most common translation-metaphor for *citoyen*. Again, although *shi* does appear in Chōmin's essays, it is not a specific translation of "citizen," *citoyen*, or any other foreign term. *Shūjin* is in this sense distinctive. This being the case, how might we interpret this metaphorization?

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<sup>264</sup> In the language of translation studies, *shi* might be understood as a domesticized representation opposed to the foreignized *shimin*. See Venuti, *The Translator's Invisibility*.

<sup>265</sup> Kristin Ross points out that the use of the word *citoyen* in the months leading up to March 1871 was explosive precisely because it evoked memories of 1789 and 1848. It drew on a specifically combative aspect of citizenship forged in the revolutions. Ross, *Communal Luxury*. Chōmin frequently discussed the French Revolution and French history more generally in his newspaper writings.



First, *shi* is problematic because of its historical ties to an absolutist state and a class system in which treated most people as pure subjects.<sup>266</sup> The feudal *shinōkōshō* (士農工商) hierarchy, placing samurai (*shi*) above farmers (*nō*), artisans (*kō*) and merchants (*shō*) in an unchanging set of relations which denied upward mobility or meritocracy were precisely the kind of inequality which Rousseau's texts suggest was essential to abolish in order for a civilized-yet-free political community to develop. *Shū* (衆), or *shūjin* (衆人), on the other hand, means “common” or “popular” in contrast to the elite nature of *shi*, but does not have the subordinate connotation of *shin* (臣), or “subject.” *Shū* emphasizes similarity or sameness in the “many” or “mass.” *Shūjin* is often translated as “average,” “normal,” “common,” or “regular” person, where the implication is always that a person is just one example of a great number of more or less identical beings. Some dictionaries explain it with the phrase *atarimae no hito* (当たり前の人), which suggests naturalness, or obviousness.<sup>267</sup> It can be treated as a synonym for *ōzei* (大勢), which often simply means “crowd,” but historically could also mean “natural.”<sup>268</sup>

Chōmin did also use it in several of his various critical essays prior to the publication of *Minyaku yakkai*. Often he juxtaposes *shū* with *kun* (君), which can mean “ruler” or “lord.”<sup>269</sup>

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<sup>266</sup> Chōmin explicitly makes the comparison between slavery and those excluded from citizenship. He claims that even Ancient Rome was built on a distinction between those from aristocratic families who had political rights and those who did not. All who lacked political rights were, in his words, slaves (*dorei shūryo* 奴隸囚虜). Nakae, "Tōyō jiyū shinbun dai ichigo shasetsu," 14.

<sup>267</sup> *Bonjin* 凡人. See *shūjin* 衆人 in Kamata, and Yasuda, *Shinkangorin*.

<sup>268</sup> *Ibid.*, 大勢.

<sup>269</sup> Nakae, "Tōyō jiyū shinbun dai nigo shasetsu," 17.

Particularly interesting is the appearance of the term in *Minyaku yakkai*'s definition of *res publica*. Of course, *res* appears as “thing,” or *mono* (物). For *publica*, however, Chōmin invokes the phrase *kōshū* (公衆), which could be defined as “the people of society” (*shakai no hitobito* 社会の人々) “average people” (*ippan hitobito* 一般人々), or more profoundly, “the people” (*minshū* 民衆).<sup>270</sup> *Minshū* in particular has strong democratic connotations. Understanding the meaning of “the public” or “the people” was indeed a serious philosophical problem in the 1870s and 1880s, and to that extent Chōmin's uses made this new figure perceptible in new ways.<sup>271</sup> As we saw, Fukuzawa's metaphors suggested that “public” did not necessarily mean “political.” Chōmin's seem to suggest otherwise.

*Shūjin* is an old term which has long carried with it a sense of reciprocity or mutual intelligibility. It appears in the Confucian Analects 13 times, in 10 separate sections, to refer to the common people. Importantly, it often figures the people as the object of the virtue of *jin*, or “sympathy,” “pity,” or “humaneness.” These kinds of figuration were common outside of the Analects as well. For example, it appeared in 94 BC in Sima Tan's *Records of the Grand Historian*. In the chapter on the “five assassins,” Yu-Rang is claimed to have said: “I have served in the houses of Han and Zhong where they treated me as a regular person. I repaid them by acting towards them as a regular person.”<sup>272</sup> “Regular person” in this instance is *shūjin*. What is

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<sup>270</sup> *Shinkangorin*, 公衆.

<sup>271</sup> For example, to help fix the definition, Inoue Tetsujirō included *kōshū* as the translation for the English word “public” in his 1881 *Dictionary of Philosophy* (*Tetsugaku jiji* 哲学字彙). His definition occurred independently of Chōmin's it seems. Inoue, *Tetsugaku jiji*, 101. Incidentally, there is no entry included for “citizen.”

<sup>272</sup> This line from the *Grand Historian* appears in the same entry for *shūjin* in the *Shinkangorin*: 范·中行氏、皆衆人遇我、我故衆人報之。

interesting even in this very old configuration is that this phrase forms the basis for a reciprocal relationship of mutual understanding, and one that is explicitly related to Confucian virtue.<sup>273</sup> Yu-Rang's story is recorded as an example of virtuous action, but is remarkable for both the protagonist and antagonists' mutual recognition of one another's capacity for virtue (despite their attempts to kill one another). In Meiji literature, the phrase *tenka shūjin*, or "everyone under heaven" (天下衆人) was in common use. Fukuzawa Yukichi himself used it frequently, although not specifically as a translation-metaphor for "citizen."<sup>274</sup> This phrase *tenka*, or "under heaven," had its roots in the neo-Confucian cosmology that linked human beings and nature through *li* (理), or "principle."<sup>275</sup> In modern Japanese, the phrase *shūjinkanshi* (衆人監視) is often used to describe being in front of everyone's eyes, or being visible to the whole world. That is, it implies common judgment of one by many equals.

In short, *shū* and the various compounds in which it figures have long been associated with commonness or sharedness. This perhaps gives it a strong relationship of likeness with Rousseau's *citoyen*. Tracy Strong argues that the central concept that at work in *The Social Contract* is "the common."<sup>276</sup> That is, according to Strong, Rousseau's question is what bound

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<sup>273</sup> Yu-Rang, much like the 47 Rōnin of Japanese legend, was a retainer who went to extraordinary lengths to get revenge for his lord who was killed unjustly. He was given great credit for his loyalty even by those who would be harmed his act of revenge, however. The back and forth of mutual respect for loyalty and right action between Yu-Rang and his would-be victim is fascinating. Like the 47 Rōnin, Yu-Rang committed suicide for the sake of his lord's honor.

<sup>274</sup> The phrase appears in *Seiyō jijō*, *Bunmeiron no gairyaku*, and some of his essays. I have not taken a precise inventory, however.

<sup>275</sup> Thomas, *Reconfiguring Modernity*, 32.

<sup>276</sup> Strong, *Jean-Jacques Rousseau*, 77.

the “common people” together, and then what precisely it was like to “have the experience of having in common.” From this perspective, the experience of having in common was expressed primarily through Rousseau’s idea of the citizen and the virtues which characterize that social role. The translation language of *Minyaku yakkai* reflects this connection between citizenship and the idea of having-in-common or sharedness through the words *shū* and *shūjin*. Insofar as it lacks the explicit link to law that *heimin* (平民) carried, the empty intersubjectivity of *yojin* (世人), or the atomizing particularity implied in *jinmin* (人民), *shū* suggests the existence of an inherent mutual intelligibility between human beings as the basis for a republican politics. Chōmin’s language reflects precisely this concern with sharedness and having-in-common insofar as he takes us to be able understand one another because fundamentally we are the same.<sup>277</sup>

*Shūjin* nonetheless is also not *citoyen*. Chōmin’s words contain the suggestion that the political community could take shape on the basis both of Confucian moral norms and the belief that “civilization” is incompatible with the rigid division of classes or the narrow regulation of political rights. In other words, it sets up a productive non-identity in the space between Confucian morality and republican virtue.

### ***Shūjin* and the Politics of Community**

To see this productive non-identity, we need to consider in more detail how Chōmin’s language reconfigured the idea of the social contract itself. In Rousseau’s words, the social contract was the solution to the problem of finding “...a form of association that will defend and

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<sup>277</sup> Another interesting possible use of *shū* is as a respectful pluralizer for groups of people. Japanese does not ordinarily distinguish the singular from the plural, but when it is necessary there are a variety of characters indicating the relative social position of the speaker or the group in question. *Shū*, historically at least, was a polite way of doing this.

protect the person and goods of each associate with the full common force, doing this in such a way that each of them, and by means of which each, uniting himself with all, nevertheless obeys only himself and remains as free as before.”<sup>278</sup> Fukuzawa Yukichi had appealed to a so-called social contract in which private citizens should pay taxes in exchange for protection of their civil rights (which primarily meant rights of property). This arrangement provided means of adjudication when the liberty of two individuals, each pursuing their own self-interest, collided. Those who received protection, he suggested, should not bother themselves with what the state does in the name of that mandate. They should continue to act as “guests.” Moreover, this contract was of primary importance to those in the middle stratum of society who possessed something to protect. This apparent inequality persistently lodged in the heart of both Fukuzawa’s language and the practice of the Meiji state were evidence that a true social contract had yet to be realized by the early 1880s. It was plain that the person and goods of all were not being defended with the “full common force.”

One of the central differences between Chōmin and utilitarian thinkers like Fukuzawa was that Chōmin began from the standpoint of morality and worked towards practical reality.<sup>279</sup> Fukuzawa, on the other hand, started from reality and made moral arguments from there. In other words, Fukuzawa insisted on the necessary friction between elements of society in order to create a richer and more powerful state. Friction required divisions, and divisions imply inequality. In Fukuzawa’s formulation, practical benefits are purchased at the cost of what might be considered moral goods. Chōmin’s language, on the other hand, seems to suggest that it is the establishment of a full moral equality that is a prerequisite for any practical development of the

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<sup>278</sup> Rousseau, *The Social Contract*, 49-50.

<sup>279</sup> Matsunaga, *Fukuzawa Yukichi to Nakae Chōmin*, location 1051; 1087.

state. *Minyaku yakkai* can therefore be considered in terms of this movement from the moral to the practical.

The metaphor *shūjin* suggests a vision of moral equality insofar as it establishes a relation of similarity between Rousseauian pity and the Confucian virtue of *jin* (仁). *Jin* is often translated as “humanness,” “compassion,” or “pity.”<sup>280</sup> Like the passion of *pitié*, which grounds civic virtue in Rousseau’s account, Chōmin’s language (*shūjin*) grounds civic virtue on a fundamental aspect of human nature (*jin*) rather than a practical political problem (as Fukuzawa had). We have seen how the word *shū* has a long history linked with Confucian discourse. In the 10 verses of the *Analects* in which the word *shū* appears, it is explicitly connected with *jin* in 6 of them.<sup>281</sup> The rough agreement between Rousseau and the Mencian tradition’s insistence on the natural goodness of human beings grounded in pity or sympathy also suggests that Rousseau’s notion of a modern, yet free polity could be made relevant in the Meiji context. Just as *pitié* is in a way the ground from which Rousseau’s *citoyen* grows, *jin* might be the place where *shūjin* strike their roots.

Establishing a stable ground for moral judgment was a vital intellectual endeavor for Chōmin from the time of his return from France until his death in 1901.<sup>282</sup> Chōmin appears to

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<sup>280</sup> “The concept of *jen* [*jin*]...is one of the most important in Chinese thought. The very fact that ‘*jen*’ has been translated into many English terms--benevolence, love, altruism, kindness, charity, compassion, magnanimity, perfect virtue, goodness, true manhood, manhood at its best, human-heartedness, humaneness, humanity, ‘hominity,’ man-to-man-ness, shows that it is an exceedingly complicated concept.” Chan, “The Concept of Jen,” 295.

<sup>281</sup> The character *shū* 衆 appears in the following sections of the *Analects*: 1.6, 2.1, 6.30, 9.3, 12.22, 15.28, 17.6, 19.3, 20.1, and 20.2. Section 19.3 does not reference *jin* directly, but instead mentions the *junzi*, or virtuous gentleman. However, Confucius reminds us in section 4.5 that “If one takes [*jin*] away from a *junzi*, wherein is he worthy of the name? There is no interval so short that the *junzi* deviates from [*jin*]. Though rushing full tilt, it is there; though head over heels, it is there.” Confucius. 2015. “The Analects of Confucius: An Online Teaching Translation.”

<sup>282</sup> Matsunaga, *Fukuzawa Yukichi to Nakae Chōmin*, location 785.

have been concerned that the breakdown of Tokugawa subjectivities during the first 15 years of the Meiji era was so thorough that people had lost their senses of both right and wrong and common belonging. The introduction of new customs in the 1860s and 70s disrupted the patterns of behavior which made people capable of making basic moral judgments at all. In Europe and America, Christianity provided a basic moral foundation which made judgment possible, even in the face of changing technology and new modes of social stratification. Japan's foundation, on the other hand, had been undermined.<sup>283</sup> Without a grounding in a comparable understanding of human nature, Western learning would be essentially useless because there was no guide for the ends to which it could be put.

Chōmin was a resolute atheist, and in any event Christianity was itself a disruptive force for existing social relations. From this perspective, Japan could not, therefore, simply adopt Christianity as a foundational philosophy in the way some advocated.<sup>284</sup> The alternative grounding would have to be something already firmly established in people's ways of judging and acting. In addition to *Minyaku yakkai* and some of his newspaper articles of the early 1880s, Chōmin takes up the question of moral grounding in his comparisons between the East and the West in 1887's *A Discourse by Three Drunkards on Government*. There, he makes the distinction between the aggressive imperialism of a scientific and rational Europe and the tendency towards peace in cultures with a Confucian heritage. Chōmin's other translations might

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<sup>283</sup> Aizawa Shiseisai's 1825 notion of *kokutai* (国体) was a response to a similar problem, and it is no accident that Chōmin's language also points towards a national consciousness. The idea that Christianity was the source of the West's superior wealth and knowledge was behind the conversion of some important intellectuals in the 1870s, and even caused some to propose that Japan officially adopt Christianity as the state religion in order to facilitate modernization. See Aizawa and Wakabayashi, *Anti-Foreignism and Western Learning in Early Modern Japan*.

<sup>284</sup> The Meirokusha are among the many prominent figures who considered the possible value of Christianity to Japan. See Braisted, *Meiroku Zasshi*.

be considered responses to the same problem rather than mimetic representations alone. His 1889 translation of Jules Barni's *On Morality in Democracy* also echoed the pacifism described in the *Discourse by Three Drunkards* in its justification of the morality that made republican community possible.

Perhaps more significantly, he was the first translator of Schopenhauer's *On the Basis of Morality*.<sup>285</sup> Schopenhauer criticizes Kant's categorical imperative for remaining fundamentally egoistic. That is, the self remains the standard against which moral judgments are made insofar as one would not will for others what one would not will for one's self. Schopenhauer praised the Chinese tradition, particularly Mencius, for making sympathy or compassion the basis for moral action. The primacy of compassion can be understood by rejecting the closed individuality that Kant suggested in favor of the identity of all people and things in the Will.

Therefore, we can say that Chōmin consistently figured community as being based on a shared moral system grounded in a mutually intelligible human nature. Specifically, it was founded on a human nature that was fundamentally compassionate rather than individualistic. In Fukuzawa's metaphors, it was precisely the differences and incommensurabilities between people in terms of their unique talents and cultivated abilities that strengthens and improves the state. The sphere of society is certainly a shared space outside of government, but the fundamental experience is not one of collective self-realization. Rather, it is the space in which the individual *shimin* can develop regardless of whether or not he or she is understood by others. The relation that binds dissimilar people together in this way is the law.

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<sup>285</sup> Chōmin translated Schopenhauer from Auguste Burdeau's 1879 French translation of the German original (1840).



*Minyaku yakkai*, on the other hand, presents citizens as *shūjin* in a framework akin to Hobbes' reading of the inscription on temple at Delphi. The Latin version of the inscription reads *Nosce Te Ipsum*, which Hobbes translates as "read thyself."<sup>286</sup> He invokes this meaning to articulate the idea that by looking at one's own constitution, one can understand the workings and motivations of others. For Hobbes, of course, this is the central insight at the foundation of the Leviathan. In both Rousseau and Chōmin's words, this mutual intelligibility also appears to be of fundamental importance. It is the source of a fundamental likeness between *pitié* and *jin* which secures a ground for moral judgment.

The account of human society presented in Rousseau's Second Discourse makes it difficult to imagine the concluding of a social contract or the emergence of a community of virtuous citizens on the basis of *amour de soi*, *amour propre*, or some kind of enlightened reason alone. Although virtue is ultimately the glue that holds the republic together, the passion of *pitié* is critical to understanding the experience of being a political subject in the first place. Judith Shklar argues that *pitié* is "a great equalizer" and ultimately the "most binding" of human experiences.<sup>287</sup> For Tracy Strong, *pitié* "is the archetypical activity that "...makes the commonly human and the humanly common available."<sup>288</sup> To the extent that "...suffering is the most universal of human experiences," many see *pitié* as central to the republican virtues which allow the general will to express itself. Although Rousseau does not use the word *pitié* in *The Social*

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<sup>286</sup> Intentionally erroneously, of course. "Know thyself" is the traditional translation. Hobbes, *Leviathan*, 10.

<sup>287</sup> Shklar, *Men and Citizens*, 54.

<sup>288</sup> Strong, *Jean-Jacques Rousseau*, 36.

*Contract*, Shklar writes that Rousseau's identification of active consciousness with suffering "...is the very essence of his egalitarian vision."<sup>289</sup>

Chōmin was intimately familiar with the Second Discourse as well as *The Social Contract*. His student Nōmura Yasuaki's translation, the first in Japanese, was almost certainly edited by Chōmin himself and published in his newspaper, *Seiyō seiri sōdan*. Moreover, it appeared only a month after the final installment of *Minyaku yakkai ran*. This suggests that Chōmin may have envisaged a fundamental relation between the two texts. Tracy Strong suggests that the question of "how it is possible to experience political society as a human being" is what unites Rousseau's Second Discourse, *Du Contrat Social*, and *Emile*.<sup>290</sup> The Second Discourse is concerned with the question of political anthropology, he claims, whereas the Social Contract deals with a fundamentally ontological question which follows from that political anthropology. Strong argues that the central claim of the *Social Contract* is that the human being is nothing prior to politics. The citizen is made by political society into a "being in whom the thought of the common is realized," and this common world is the only one that is really human.<sup>291</sup>

Pity can be seen as a key ingredient of the glue that binds the republic together as a moral community, at least as it is figured in the Second Discourse, *Du Contrat Social*, and *Emile*. Strong writes that: "The idea of the contract as the basis for society is thus first a claim about the qualities central to human beings."<sup>292</sup> Rousseau's civic humanist understanding of virtue

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<sup>289</sup> Shklar, *Men and Citizens*, 54.

<sup>290</sup> Strong, *Jean-Jacques Rousseau*, 33.

<sup>291</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

<sup>292</sup> *Ibid.*, 70. Bertram makes a similar point. Bertram, *Rousseau and the Social Contract*, 24.

certainly seems to draw on a passion of mutual recognition above and beyond *amour propre*, insofar selfless love of country and devotion to one's fellow citizens cannot be engendered on the basis of honor or glory alone. Brooke claims that "pity was a *prerational* impulse and, far from being a vice, was presented as the origin of all of the natural virtues."<sup>293</sup> Likewise, Melzer argues that "...Rousseau shows that there is a near-perfect correspondence between the theoretical principle of the modern, social contract 'law-state' -fairness or identification- and the (second) principle of human nature: the expansive impulse to empathetic identification."<sup>294</sup> This experience of having in common grounded in mutual intelligibility and compassion is also central to the Confucian virtue of *jin*. In Chōmin's language, *jin* does some of the same theoretical work as *pitié*, but also transforms it with important consequences for how the political community might take shape.

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<sup>293</sup> Brooke, "Rousseau's Second Discourse: Between Epicurianism and Stoicism." In *Rousseau and Freedom*.

<sup>294</sup> Melzer, "Rousseau and the Politics of Sympathetic Identification," 124. In contrast, Frederick Neuhouser has suggested that rather than *pitié*, it is actually *amour propre* that holds the community of citizens together and encourages virtue. More precisely, *amour propre* is both the cause of, and solution to, many of civilization's ills. According to his argument, when *amour propre* is inflamed it leads people to all the selfish, anti-social ways of being that Hobbes warns so forcefully against. On the other hand, *amour propre* is a fundamental part of human nature once we are constituted as linguistic, intersubjective beings. A moderate degree of *amour propre* is healthy insofar as it gives a reason for people to stay together. The desire to be recognized as unique by fellow human beings means appearing in public and presenting one's self for judgment by others. This appearing confirms one's own sense of self-worth, and positively integrates individuals into a broader moral community. The republican model of citizenship, Neuhouser claims, is Rousseau's way of acknowledging the fundamental nature of *amour propre* while most effectively limiting its potential excesses. Neuhouser's argument perhaps overstates the rigid dichotomy between pity and *amour propre*. That is, both have important roles to play. Rousseau's human beings are complex, and are shaped by history, language, and the conventions of their time and place. Certainly *amour propre* does not explain all the problems facing civilization, just as one cannot count on *pitié* alone to resolve them. Rather, a correctly oriented sense of *amour propre* necessarily relies on *pitié* for its realization, just as *pitié* is inseparable from the experience *amour propre* in a world of civilized human beings. Neuhouser, *Rousseau's Theodicy of Self-Love*.

## The Tradition of *Jin*

*Jin* provides a foundation for a new kind of social contract which is both like and yet not that provided by *pitié*. We can see this most clearly by tracing its development in Tokugawa thought and its integration into Chōmin's metaphor. One characteristic of Japanese Confucian thought is its relative comfort with philosophical syncretism.<sup>295</sup> Unlike many Chinese Confucians who rejected any attempt to assimilate of Buddhist or Daoist insights, and chafed at the assimilation of Confucian ideas into those other bodies of thought, Japanese Confucians sought to explain or incorporate elements of these other philosophical schools at least as far back as Matsumura Sekigo in the 17<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>296</sup> The effect of this was ideologically important for the Tokugawa regime in terms of establishing a coherent vocabulary of rule that accounted for political, moral, and economic institutions comprehensively. This willingness to amalgamate Confucian principles with other philosophical orientations, and its attention to temporal and geographical context made it both flexible and durable in the face of practical challenges throughout the Edo period.

Chōmin's approach to reading, writing, and interpretation can be placed within this long-established strain of ecumenical, philological Confucianism. His metaphors subsume an old morality into the new practical realities of Meiji society by using some of the same modes of

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<sup>295</sup> Tucker, "The Meanings of Words and Confucian Political Philosophy," 35.

<sup>296</sup> This is not to say that Chinese Confucianism did not incorporate some Buddhist or Taoist thought whether it intended to or not. Chinese Confucianism was never as pure as many would have liked to portray it. Indeed, the neo-Confucian revolution of the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> centuries draws heavily on the *I Ching* and certain elements of Taoist cosmology. According to Wing-Tsit Chan "Not only is [*jen*] the backbone of Confucianism, but it also ranks very high in the Buddhist and Taoist scales of value." Even among the supposedly more rigid divisions of Chinese thought, *jen* was ultimately a profoundly influential moral concept. Chan, "The Evolution of the Confucian Concept of Jen," 306.

analysis that his Confucian predecessors did. The flexibility of Sekigo's, Itō Jinsai's, and Ogyū Sorai's Confucian responses to both material threats and ideologically-rival systems of thought was not lost on Chōmin as a student of this philological tradition. Chōmin was deeply aware of the inadequacies of the Confucian thinking of the past, particularly the class hierarchy, for the moment in which he found himself. However, Chōmin was also concerned with the inability of his Meiji contemporaries to smoothly integrate the ideas they encountered in their engagements with Europe and America into the context of Meiji Japan. Chōmin writes:

“Followers of Jinsai and Sorai offered new interpretations of Confucian texts, but they were nonetheless Confucian thinkers. Although some people among the Buddhist monks proposed some new ideas and created a new school, all of them remained confined to the realm of religion and so their work was not pure philosophy. Recently [there] appeared people like Katō [Hiroyuki] and Inoue [Kowashi] who call themselves philosophers. And they are recognized as such. However, they are just introducing in Japan theories from the West without taking time to digest them. That attitude is not worthy of philosophers.”<sup>297</sup>

Thus, Confucianism could not simply be reproduced in the Meiji period. It had to be transformed.

What specifically did *jin* mean in the context of Japanese philological Confucianism? Matsumura Sekigo's *Ethics* explains that *jin* is “the virtue of the human mind” (*shin no toku* 心之徳) and “the principle of love” (*ai no ri* 愛之理) born within “the original mind” (*honshin* 本心) of humanity and endowed to everyone. Manifested externally, humaneness is our sense of

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<sup>297</sup> Huang and Tucker, "Introduction," 5.

compassion and feeling. He argued that because everyone is born with this sense of compassion, people are in essence “no different from the sages” in any fundamental way. One crucial difference between *pitié* and *jin* is the fact that pity is a passion while *jin* is something different.<sup>298</sup> Chan argues that the neo-Confucian passions, or feelings, are “... joy, anger, sorrow, fear, love, hate, and desire.” On this basis, Ch’eng I rejected the idea that *jen* and love are the same thing. The Japanese Confucian thinkers that Chōmin had studied intensely in his youth treated *jin* similarly. *Jin* is not simply an instinct, but rather an aspect of human nature that defines the virtue of the human being.<sup>299</sup>

Sekigo, Jinsai, and Sorai approached the question of human nature from a different philosophical and methodological perspective than either the Ch’eng brothers or Zhu Xi, although they retained the basic suggestion that not only was *jin* the central human virtue, but that it was also the central political virtue. Sekigo, a student of Fujiwara Seiko, wrote that human nature and the passions are unified. This unification of nature and feeling is the means by which the morality of the Way is expressed in the human world.<sup>300</sup> Sekigo drew heavily on Chen Beixi, a 12<sup>th</sup> century student of Zhu Xi’s. Beixi’s *The Meanings of Human Nature and Principle* (*Seiri jigi* 性理字義) exerted a considerable influence on Japanese Confucian studies through its

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<sup>298</sup> Joshua Dienstag argues that *pitié* is as much a capacity as it is a passion or a sentiment. Insofar as it requires training and cultivation to be made useful as the basis of political solidarity, it is at once visceral and pre-rational as well as subject to rational cultivation and deployment. Itō Jinsai also viewed *jin* as both a part of human nature and as a capacity. Despite somewhat different metaphysics, most of the Confucian thinkers discussed below see *jin* in these terms. Dienstag, *Pessimism*.

<sup>299</sup> In Aristotle’s conception of the virtues, virtue is doing the thing that something is meant to do well. For the eye, virtue is seeing clearly. For a horse, virtue is running fast. While Aristotle has his own ideas about what constitutes human virtue, perhaps we could say that in the Confucian tradition, *jin* is the perfection of the human in the same way.

<sup>300</sup> Tucker, “The Meanings of Words,” 50.

philological method. Beixi argued that unless concepts could be correctly defined, it was impossible to practice the Way, and it was therefore impossible to either live morally or correctly govern a state. Therefore, each name or role that had been handed down needed to be carefully reconstructed to reveal its truth. This method, according to Tucker, was precisely what Confucius called the “rectification of names” (*seimei* 正名).<sup>301</sup>

Sekigo took up the rectification project in the context of a newly-consolidated regime under the Tokugawa family in the first half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Justifying this regime made it necessary to give new words and concepts ideological power, and the Confucian redefinition of terms played a critical role in this process. Sekigo’s *Ethics* (*Irinshō* 彝倫抄), which appeared in 1640, worked to reconfigure the foundations of the political order on a correctly understood cosmology and its corresponding moral categories. For Zhu Xi, Beixi, and Sekigo, the Mencian doctrine of innate goodness was central to this cosmological order. For Mencius, the passions obscured the underlying and fundamental sense of *jin* that unites people. For example, Ch’eng I wrote; “Since Mencius said that the sense of commiseration is *jen*, scholars have considered love as *jen*. But love is man’s feeling, whereas *jen* is man’s nature. ... The sense of commiseration is only the beginning of *jen* .... It is incorrect to equate universal love with *jen*.”<sup>302</sup> For Sekigo, finding the correct way to represent *jen* was the cornerstone of any possibility for cultural improvement in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. According to Tucker, “Sekigo is certain that with instruction, even an illiterate person can be instructed in the Confucian way so that having heard the ‘names’ (*ming* 名 *mei*) ... he will not violate the way of loyalty and filial piety.” Because the correct

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<sup>301</sup> Ibid., 35.

<sup>302</sup> Chan, “The Concept of Jen,” 306.

meaning of names can be understood and practiced by everyone, the transformation of society begins with the correction of names and education about their true meaning.

Itō Jinsai carried this lexicographical method further with the aim of criticizing Zhu Xi's metaphysics, which placed *Dao*, or “the Way” prior to and above moral action. Jinsai's interpretations of the *Analects* and *Mencius* recast the Way as immanent in practice. That is, the Way was only realized in acting morally, and did not transcend the everyday world of human beings living together.<sup>303</sup> Jinsai's method was based on re-reading the old classics and cross-referencing the usages of key terms across different texts and historically contemporary commentaries. In this way, he redefined *jin* on the basis of what he took to be its objectively valid meaning in Confucius' and Mencius' own words.<sup>304</sup>

Jinsai wrote: “If we can love others, others will also love us. This means being deeply affectionate like parents and getting along harmoniously like siblings. If we can make all our actions like this, all our affairs can be successfully achieved.”<sup>305</sup> Critical to Jinsai's point was a correct understanding of what it meant to be parents and siblings. The names had to be made correct before anything could be accomplished. In contrast to Zhu Xi's more metaphysical understanding of *jen* as located prior to both thought and action, Jinsai recognized the potential for *jin* in human nature, but not necessarily its realization. Realization was possible only in the

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<sup>303</sup> “Itō Jinsai thought that the *Analects* is ‘the loftiest, the greatest Primal Book in the whole universe’ precisely because it conveys are the principles of ordinary daily living.” Huang and Tucker, “Introduction,” 16.

<sup>304</sup> *Ibid.*, 20.

<sup>305</sup> Jinsai's own words are “自分が人を愛することができ、人もまた我を愛するのである。互いに親愛することは父母と親しむようであり、兄弟と睦み合うようである。かくてあらゆる行為ができ、あらゆる物事が成し遂げらる”日常の回復：江戸儒学の「仁」の思想を学ぶ。” Tucker, “The Meanings of Words and Confucian Political Philosophy,” 52.



context of life with others, meaning that in order for *jin* to be manifest, living together was a necessary precondition. Because it was a matter of practice, a manner of collective living in which people were prevented from acting humanely was incompatible with the development of their moral potential. According to Hall, “Jinsai argued that morality transcended the level of the individual. By this he meant that morality existed within society as the overall structure in which were subsumed the multiplicity of human relationships. In that this overall structure reflected social purposes and desires common to all people, it broadly accorded with the individual's natural sentiments.”<sup>306</sup> Jinsai’s work was remarkable for the impact it had on not only the scholarly elite, but people of more common background as well.<sup>307</sup> His reinterpretation of Confucius and Mencius made the practice of moral action important for people regardless of their station within the feudal hierarchy. Practicing *jin* was no longer predicated on understanding sophisticated metaphysics as it was in many of the Chinese neo-Confucians. Rather, practices of *jin* were centered in the kinds of relationships that all human beings had, and were immediately comprehensible on the basis of daily experience.

Ogyū Sorai, a near contemporary of Jinsai, criticized him (rather unfairly) for allegedly remaining bound by the abstraction of the Song Confucian cosmological principle. While building on Sekigo and Jinsai’s methodological principles, Sorai rejected the fundamental connection between morality and *li*. Instead, reflecting a return to a pre-Mencian understanding of the origin of virtue, Sorai held that it was the Sages of antiquity who had established the Way,

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<sup>306</sup> Bito, *Thought and Religion 1550-1700*, 423.

<sup>307</sup> “Through Jinsai, Mencius took on a fresh moral and intellectual cogency among commoners often not adequately appreciated by historians of thought. Through Mencius, ancient text had framed action in the present at whatever level in society that could be moral in a universally human sense.” Najita, *History and Nature in Eighteenth Century Tokugawa Thought*, 603.

and that correctly understanding their words was the correct way to understand the true and fundamental principles of political order.<sup>308</sup> Sorai most clearly engages with the concept of *jin* in his *Benmei (Distinguishing Names)*, circulated during his lifetime among advisers and high-ranking members of the shogunate, but published only in 1740. He argues that: “Humaneness [*jin*] refers to the virtue that provides for the prosperity of everyone and the peace and stability of the people... The sages modeled themselves on this virtue.”<sup>309</sup> For Sorai, writing to an audience of *daimyo* and other elite members of the shogunate, *jin* was characterized most fundamentally as a concern for the well-being of all. He exhorts rulers to treat the people with *jin*, citing Confucius’ famous question; “If a ruler abandon’s his humaneness [*jin*], how can he complete his title?”

Although he is addressing this elite audience with the intention of facilitating reforms necessary during a time of economic instability, his text also does not ignore the importance of *jin* for common people. He writes; “While human nature does differ from person to person, regardless of an individual’s knowledge or ignorance, worthiness or worthlessness, all are the same in having minds that mutually love, nourish, assist, and perfect one another.” The work of the ruler is to organize the people into groups within which this mutual assistance might most effectively manifest itself.<sup>310</sup> This organizing is predicated on the assumption that people can and

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<sup>308</sup> In this sense, Sorai is less ecumenical or flexible in his moral approach than some others, although his philological methods were a major innovation.

<sup>309</sup> Tucker, “The Meanings of Words and Confucian Political Philosophy,” 186.

<sup>310</sup> For example, Sorai writes that “A ruler [should have his people learn], hoping that each person will develop their talents so that they can serve the government in an official capacity. They can then contribute to the work of providing peace and stability for the people at large....” Sorai is often treated as a proto-modern thinker. While this characterization remains ahistorical and not particularly helpful, it is nonetheless interesting to see the parallel between this view and that suggested by Fukuzawa in the previous translational moment. Ōgyū, “Benmei,” 6.

do cultivate their capacity for *jin*, and that *jin* is best cultivated and realized under the correct spatial disposition of bodies. Revealing the correct nature of *jin* established by the ancient sages in turn reveals how to configure the realm and distribute names in the present.<sup>311</sup>

What these three thinkers' reflections on *jin* reveal is an intimate connection between moral self-reflection and the political community one inhabits.<sup>312</sup> The original goodness that Mencian thought insists upon is never a completed fact. Although the potential for good is innate, it remains nothing more than a "seed" without the appropriate conditions for growth. The fact that these seeds are innate in everyone means that they can be cultivated through similar methods. The principle of extending one's self "...so as to include others..." means acknowledging an identity between self and other.<sup>313</sup> It also means having the opportunities to practice *jin* and improve one's capacity to recognize it. Being surrounded by good examples of people living up to their names, and being encouraged to live up to one's own name by good friends and family are important to maintaining the clarity of one's "childlike mind." However,

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<sup>311</sup> The metaphor that Sorai uses is that of a *go* board. *Go* is game of strategy based on the distribution of stones on a board to occupy territory. Politics, for Sorai, was similar insofar as it was the ruler's duty to place merchants where they could flourish, farmers where they could produce, and artisans where they could create. The mixing of classes, or the inappropriate division of classes in space, is akin to a poor strategy in *go* which fails to hold territory in stable way.

<sup>312</sup> Fung Yu-Lan explains Mencius's understanding of this relation this way; "Every man should, without thought of personal advantage, unconditionally do what he ought to do, and be what he ought to be. In other words, he should 'extend himself so as to include others,' which, in essence, is the practice of *jen* (humanity). But though Confucius held these doctrines, he failed to explain why it is that a man should act in this way. Mencius, however, attempted to give an answer to this question, and in so doing developed the theory for which he is most famed; that of the original goodness of human nature."

<sup>313</sup> Boyd shows how pity, unlike *jin*, can actually serve to divide people in some cases. Boyd, "Pity's Pathologies Portrayed."

clearing the mind of vices which obscure innate goodness is necessarily an internal process. In this way, the “rectification of names” is an ongoing process of internal self-cultivation.<sup>314</sup>

*Shū* recapitulates this commonness and reaffirms the principle of moral equality. Although it is located internally, *jin* is also the most externally-oriented of the main Confucian virtues. Perhaps it is not too much to say that *jin* envisions a fundamental sense of identity with others, whereas pity or sympathy maintains a fundamental distinction. The recognition of a shared humanity makes it imperative not only to work to prevent suffering, but to relieve it wherever possible.<sup>315</sup> *Shūjin* reflects this. Rather than the bourgeois connotations that Fukuzawa’s *shimin* carries, or the legalistic overtones of the widely circulating *heimin*, *shūjin* articulates a commonality that transcends rational-legal boundaries and instead appeals to an inherent moral commonality that is ostensibly shared by all human beings. In its capacity as a translation word for *citoyen*, it takes on board a new set of institutional implications.

One practices citizenship from this perspective by living up to one’s name as a *shūjin*. The rectification of names means reflection on one’s own moral practice vis-à-vis others, and correcting one’s behavior in order to maximally embody the virtue of one who inhabits that role. Being a *shūjin*, therefore, meant constantly working to realize one’s potential for *jin*. One practices *jin* on an individual level through small measures in daily life which resonate outwards toward the whole of the society. Similarly, those in government who aspire to virtue must

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<sup>314</sup> The Analects similarly point towards this interpretation. Confucius famously exhorted his students to do as Tseng Tzu said; “Every day I examine myself on three counts. In what I have undertaken on another’s behalf, have I failed to do my best? In my dealings with my friends have I failed to be trustworthy in what I say? Have I passed on to others anything that I have not tried out myself?” Confucius, *Analects*, 139.

<sup>315</sup> Strong argues that “the general will is the thought of the humanness of the human being, ontological rather than (merely) moral.” Strong, *Jean-Jacques Rousseau*, 84.

address themselves towards the common people on the basis of humaneness. Sorai makes this central to his definition of *jin*, although it is a theme in the *Analects* and *Mencius* as well. A king or official who ignores the suffering of the people under their rule not only courts disaster but also acts badly. In the Mencian tradition, because human nature is inherently good, or inclined to help those who suffer, it is only someone who has been educated badly and trained in vice that can reject this humanness. Confucius described the active dimension of *jin* in terms of externality as well when he says; "...Now the man of perfect virtue, wishing to be established himself, seeks also to establish others; wishing to be enlarged himself, he seeks also to enlarge others."<sup>316</sup>

This is the same understanding of the relationship between rulers and the ruled that animated Sakura Sōgorō's decision to petition the shogun. In Chōmin's time, this understanding of the political dimension of *jin* enabled new possibilities for political action when the capacity for practicing humanity was affirmatively extended to all people regardless of class. The Fukushima and Chichibu rebellions, for example, were guided by this understanding of the relationship between ruler and ruled.<sup>317</sup> Likewise, later popular movements, such as the late Meiji environmental protests led by Tanaka Shōzō, also drew on this discursive history. In these cases, popular resistance to state policy was predicated on the idea that it was the moral duty of virtuous rulers to demonstrate humaneness towards people who were physically and morally the same. New taxes, military conscription, and increasing economic disruptions caused by increasing foreign trade were taken as evidence that the state and its officials were indifferent to the suffering of the common people, and therefore were worthy of condemnation. By appearing in public to ask for humane treatment, and to be seen as fellow human beings rather than objects

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<sup>316</sup> Confucius, *Analects*, 194.

<sup>317</sup> See Bowen, *Rebellion and Democracy in Meiji Japan*.

of pity, popular resistance instantiated these same traditions. Chōmin's appeal to humaneness through his use of the term *shūjin* instead of *shimin* can be understood in terms of its capacity to legitimize and animate both popular resistance to injustice and humanity on the part of those with power.<sup>318</sup>

This vision of the social contract, therefore, is rooted in the moral imperative to help one's fellow human beings to be the most virtuous being that they can be. By affirming a fundamental equality between all people, and by making that equality a primarily moral feature rather than simply an abstract definition, politics becomes a matter of performance rather than a legal agreement. In other words, every *shūjin* must constantly enact his or her equality with respect to others as a matter of great political importance.

Equality, then, is something that is constantly discovered in the self and in one's own reflections on one's behavior. It is never imposed or simply established by fiat. It is a practice that requires cultivation. Therefore, we can say the responsibility for building a political community of equals depends essentially on individuals making themselves into trustworthy, committed members of the group, as opposed to the group (i.e. the state) making them into committed members. Each person is responsible for discovering their own moral virtue, rather than being didactically provided with a morality from one's more enlightened superiors. The foundation of political life in this configuration rests on the set of mutual commitments that individuals constantly renew and restore through self-examination and the rectification of names. Solidarity is possible because all people share a common, mutually comprehensible humanity, and it is precisely because it is mutually comprehensible that humanity can create bonds of

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<sup>318</sup> Chōmin's thought, and *Minyaku yakkai* in particular, was central to the so-called "Freedom and Popular Rights Movement."

mutual obligation to practice *jin*. We might therefore rephrase Chōmin's critique of the Meiji state to say that people were not living up to the name *heimin* (平民), or "ordinary citizens."

What was needed was a transformed understanding of *shūjin* to articulate the full equality of a valid social contract. The name *shūjin* provided a vehicle for the republic of *jin* to manifest itself.

Fukuzawa's articulation of citizenship in his writing of the 1870s had been a simple rejection of existing practices and an exhortation to adopt both European institutions and, more importantly, what he understood as the European rationality that underpinned them. Chōmin's proposition is radically different insofar as his characterization reconfigures a preexisting language and its accompanying practices of political morality. Instead of treating Meiji culture as beset by the persistence of "evil customs" that needed to be purged before a free polity could develop, he recognized a basically healthy, longstanding, shared ethical sense that could be developed into a practical social contract under the right conditions.

The idea that the moral promises of benevolence or humaneness were not being realized is reflected in the literature of late Edo and *bakumatsu* periods. Even prior to the arrival of the black ships, a radically changing economic order, challenged by a series of famines and unsupported by various rounds of reform had resulted in not only samurai officials but other literati in a number of domains claiming that it was not institutions that needed to be reformed, but popular morality.<sup>319</sup> The shogunate consistently blamed the realm's various problems on lapses in samurai morality, the depravity of farmers, or the greed of merchants. The economic disruptions were blamed on a growing taste for luxury, particularly by a rising *shōmin* (商民) class empowered by the growth of the money economy. Additionally, the dynamism of the

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<sup>319</sup> See Hirano, *The Politics of Dialogic Imagination*; Harootunian, *Towards Restoration*.

pleasure quarters in Edo, where people of a variety of classes mixed and rejected their given class names and the moralities that accompanied them, were a major concern for the shogunate.<sup>320</sup>

This concern with morality, however, was primarily focused on the samurai elite and was restricted by the lines of class. The merchants and other non-samurai who frequented the pleasure quarters were to be physically managed, but these people's psychological interiority was not the primary target of state moralizing. For 95% of the population, physical presence, rather than psychological condition, was at issue. Hirano has shown how the shogunate's anxiety over people's physical desires and their expression of a morality which challenged the feudal order grew in the *bakumatsu* period and carried over into early Meiji. The concern after the restoration was for developing civilized physical practices, including things like Western hygiene, the adoption of European dress, and the introduction of changes to labor and the mode of production.<sup>321</sup>

Nonetheless, following the restoration, these late Edo concerns about the appropriate distribution of bodies in space lost some of their importance. As Fukuzawa's engagement with the idea of the citizen showed, the problem was building an ethic compatible with the new distribution of people in Meiji institutions. This ethic had to be what animated those people to perform productive activity in the service of a new collective goal. The practice of citizenship as

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<sup>320</sup> For a fuller discussion of the contradictions that emerged between the political order, the economic system, and the cultural forms of late Tokugawa, see Harootunian, "Late Tokugawa Culture and Thought"; Najita, *Conflict in Modern Japanese History*.

<sup>321</sup> Fukuzawa's writings on women are representative of this attitude. Fukuzawa does not argue for the abolition of prostitution, for example. Although he considers it a despicable practice, his greatest concern is that it be hidden from view, particularly from the view of "civilized" foreigners. "On Japanese Women," "On Morality," "On the Association of Men and Women," etc. in Fukuzawa, *Fukuzawa Yukichi on Japanese Women*.



the self-cultivation of rationality, individuality, independence, and one's own productive talents and abilities was in direct contradiction to the shogunate's rigid placement of people into groups and groups into an apparatus designed purely to statically reproduce itself.

Chōmin, on the other hand, responded to this redistribution of bodies by affirming the universal capacity for the self-cultivation of moral virtue in people of all the former classes. Rather than focusing on the cultivation of interiority as a means of individuating people, Chōmin turns to it as a means of drawing them together.<sup>322</sup> If we understand *shūjin* to reflect a Confucian basis for common life, Chōmin's configuration essentially extends the interiority of the former samurai class to the whole population, thereby erasing the main line of political inequality that had characterized the Tokugawa world. In short, Chōmin's moral contract based on *jin* looks to people's common sense of humaneness to give shape to "civilization."<sup>323</sup>

## Conclusion

Rousseau writes that the essence of the social contract is "...the total alienation of each associate, together with all his rights, to the whole community; for, in the first place, as each gives himself absolutely, the conditions are the same for all; and, this being so, no one has any

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<sup>322</sup> Chōmin's translation of Eugene Veron's *L'Esthetique* in 1883 and 1884 is perhaps another suggestion that this common sense based on a shared interiority was important as a political principle. See Doak, *A History of Nationalism in Modern Japan: Placing the People*; Nakae, *Yūshi bigaku*.

<sup>323</sup> We can see this concern with interiority in Chōmin's practice as a writer more generally. In the mid-1880s, Chōmin praised the technique of Japan's earliest novelists and literary critics, such as Futabatei Shimei and Tsubouchi Shōyō. Futabatei and Tsubouchi's realism was attractive to Chōmin because it revealed the moral complexities of social life in a way that was mutually intelligible to people. Although the novel was fiction, it was fiction which depicted more fundamental truths about the makeup of the inaccessible, "hidden nature of the flesh and blood world." Nakae's own writing, exemplified in *A Discourse by Three Drunkards on Government* is fictional in precisely this way, laying bare the inner thoughts of one person by fictionally splitting himself into three. Chōmin's translations, perhaps, can be read in the same spirit.

interest in making them burdensome to others.”<sup>324</sup> Chōmin’s republic of *jin* operates on precisely this basis. The constant, reciprocal extension of selves and others that operates in the Confucian morality of humaneness alienates individuality in certain important ways. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, many books were written on Japanese political culture which claim that Japan has a tradition of collectivism opposed to the West’s individualism.<sup>325</sup> Some have blamed this supposed lack of individualism for people’s acquiescence to fascism in the 1930s and 1940s.<sup>326</sup> Although both Rousseau’s and Chōmin’s formulations of the social contract give priority to the community as the condition for political freedom, that does not mean that they obliterate the individual altogether. Rather, the individual is free to practice the things that make him or her properly human, and to pursue his or her own passions securely knowing that those neighbors who might otherwise pose a threat share the same fundamental sense of duty and responsibility. This moral foundation for community in fact enhances the individual’s capacity to live well.

In this sense, there is some agreement between Fukuzawa’s metaphor of citizenship and Chōmin’s insofar as both considered independence and at least some measure of equality as the cornerstones of a good polity (and of Western strength, for that matter). Likewise, both considered the legal enactment of a constitution to be critical to defending these principles over time. However, Chōmin goes further to suggest that a constitution is also a condition for right

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<sup>324</sup> Rousseau, *The Social Contract*, 50.

<sup>325</sup> See Ishida, *Japanese Political Culture*. Particularly in the 1970s and 1980s, the genre of so-called *Nihonjinron*, or “Theories of Japaneseness,” went through a revival. Although it for the most part shed the openly racist arguments about Japanese biological superiority that appeared in the 1930s and 1940s, it nonetheless recapitulated many old tropes about essential differences between “East” and “West.” The collectivity/individuality dyad was thoroughly worked over in this literature.

<sup>326</sup> See Maruyama, *Thought and Behavior in Modern Japanese Politics*, 50.

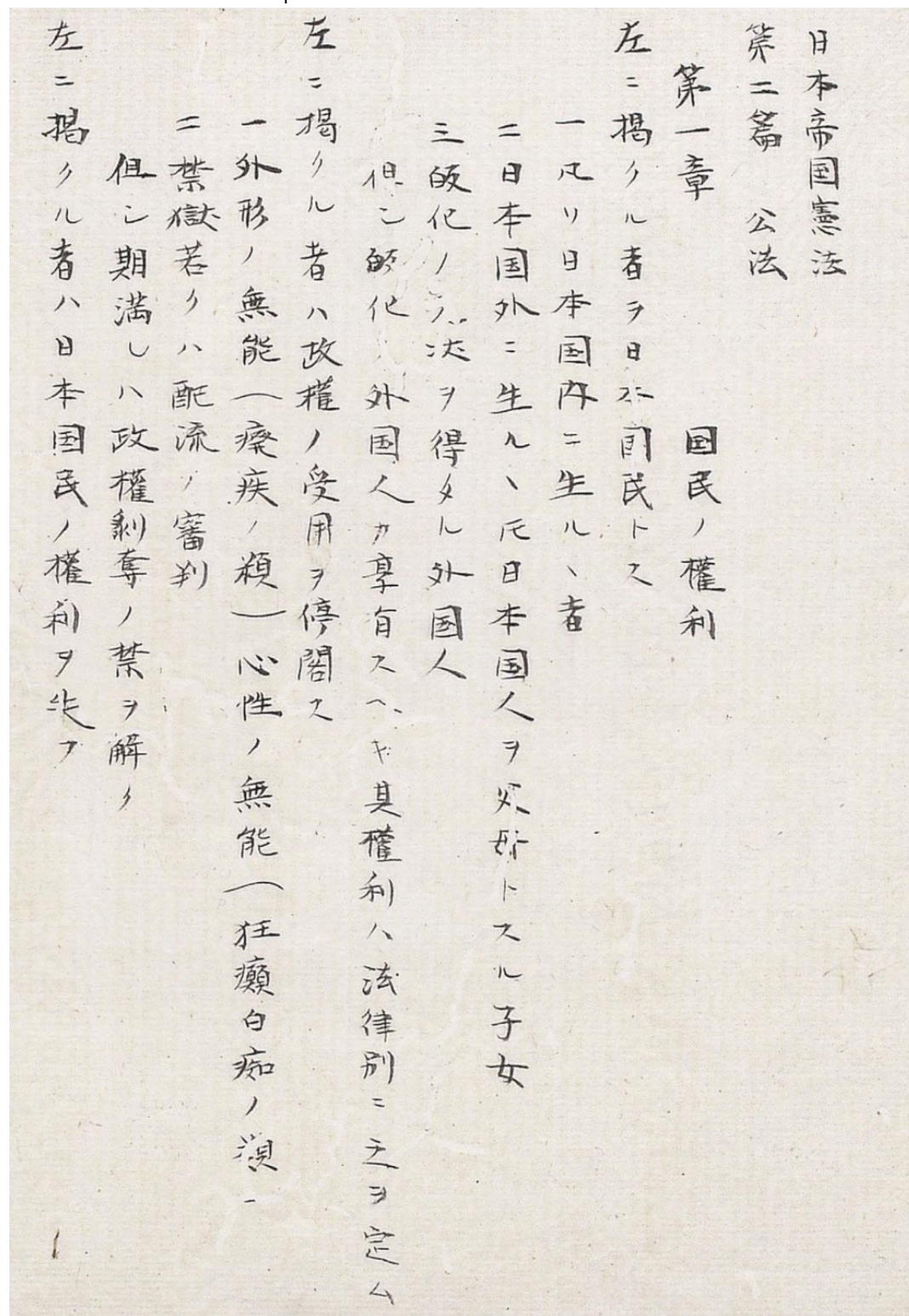
action and the development of popular morality. That Chōmin translated only book 1 and most of book 2 illustrates this. These sections of *The Social Contract* are primarily concerned with the refutation of any basis for natural or paternal authority. Rather than becoming concerned with precisely what form a republic should take, Chōmin instead text focuses on in establishing the principles which make a republic legitimate and vibrant.

In Chōmin's translational moment, the most pressing practical issue was the simultaneous undermining of old ideas about natural class authority and the re-invigoration of morality as a basis for community and as a standard of aesthetic judgment. The subsumption of Confucian moral thought into Rousseauian contract theory that Chōmin's metaphor suggested was necessary for establishing an ethic of mutual recognition between the former classes. The development of a constitution and a national assembly was the final step in enshrining this moral foundation and the principle of a relatively classless equality in practice. Fukuzawa's language severed the Confucian identity between state and moral practice by cordoning the moral realm off and emphasizing the value of the civil rationality. Chōmin's, on the other hand, resuscitated morality by rejecting rationality in favor of the metaphorization of the practices and objectives of political citizenship with *jin*.

Finally, we should note that Chōmin's metaphor did not come without its own opportunities for redrawing lines of inequality across Meiji society. Chōmin's figuration of the citizen gives priority to community invited debates about the boundaries of that community. By grounding citizenship and the possibility for an equal political community in a culturally specific moral principle, Chōmin's language sets up distinctions between "Japanese" and "foreign" that may have been consequential for the imperial project of late Meiji and beyond. If the requirement for belonging was a recognition of *jin*, the legitimacy of forcing others with a

Confucian history into a political relationship became less doubtful. It is important to note that *jin* in no way precludes partiality towards those closest to one's self. Indeed, for Confucius it would be unnatural for one to put the suffering of someone unknown and distant before the suffering of one's own family. In this way, the community of *jin* might be seen as compatible with even a very strong sense of nationalism.

Unquestionably, however, Chōmin's weaving together of republican community and Confucian morality in metaphor radically disrupted the existing ways of seeing divisions between the classes. The class equality at the heart of Chōmin's language not only delegitimized old views of class hierarchy, but also reconfigured the new visions of legal citizenship emerging from the liberal thought represented by Fukuzawa Yukichi. Chōmin's metaphor charts a path that provides a steady foundation for moral judgment while undermining the institutions which made that morality difficult to realize in practice.



**Image 4:** The Itsukaichi draft constitution. This section introduces the “Rights of Citizens” (国民権利).

## The Intelligible Citizen

Political argumentation is at one and the same time the demonstration of a possible world in which the argument could count as an argument, one that is addressed by a subject qualified to argue, over an identified object, to an addressee who is required to see the object and hear the argument “normally” has no reason either to see or to hear. It is the construction of a paradoxical world that puts together two separate worlds.<sup>327</sup>

-*Jacques Rancière*

### Introduction

As Sōgorō’s example so clearly showed, under the Tokugawa hierarchy, the farming, or *nōmin*, class was comprehensible largely in terms of its capacity to physically produce. That is, it was treated in many ways as an extension of the land itself, a natural attribute of the territory enclosed by the *han*. The people who performed the labor did not interact with their samurai lords except through the mediation of village elites recognized by the samurai as having the capacity to speak. The interruption of this distribution of roles by peasants (like Sōgorō) who attempted to appeal directly to the *daimyo* or even to the *shōgun* himself was a crime punishable by death. Agricultural laborers were not recognized as having the capacity for speech, and their assertions otherwise were generally stamped out as quickly as possible.<sup>328</sup>

The language of citizenship that was emerging through various translation-metaphors did mimetically represent a position opposed to this. With the legal levelling of classes that took place in 1872, nominally there was no longer any distinction between former samurai and former peasants. In the early- to mid-1870s (at the end of the period of what I have called his

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<sup>327</sup> Rancière, *Dissensus*, 39.

<sup>328</sup> Although the Tokugawa period is characterized as one of peace, peasant rebellions were a common feature of domain life. These expressions of dissatisfaction at the Tokugawa order have been widely studied, and it is important to not understate the conflictual nature of Tokugawa politics. See Najita and Koschmann, *Conflict in Modern Japanese Politics*.

translational writing), Fukuzawa Yukichi did not deem this stratum of society as yet capable of meaningful speech. His term *gumin* (愚民), or “stupid,” “ignorant,” or “foolish” people, established that the *nōmin* class clearly lacked the capacity for citizenship as he had described it without further development. Indeed, his resistance to the introduction of a popular assembly was not based on a Spencerian evolutionism so much as it was on a fundamental doubt that most people (not necessarily restricted to the lowest class) were as of yet capable of what he considered the core political practices of the citizen. Namely, as we saw in in the first translational moment, that included things like speechmaking, cultivating a thirst for knowledge about the world, and developing an entrepreneurial ethos that brought individuals into social intercourse apart from the state. By the reckoning in his 1878 essay “A Theory of Popular Rights,” only “one or two in a thousand” had the requisite knowledge. The remaining 999 were written off as idiots.<sup>329</sup> That proportion, 0.1% of people living on the Japanese islands, is far less even than the 5% who had status as samurai under the Tokugawa regime. Fukuzawa’s distinction between civil rights and political rights rested squarely on this argument.

Similarly, although Nakae Chōmin’s term, *shūjin* (衆人), is founded on a fundamental mutual intelligibility, he nonetheless addressed *Minyaku yakkai* at an elite, *kanbun*-literate segment of the Meiji intelligentsia. Although he certainly recognized the universal capacity for benevolence, it is less certain that this implied that everyone immediately had an equal capacity to speak in the realm of everyday politics. His *Discourse by Three Drunkards on Government*, for example, is skeptical of the uneducated in some of the same ways Fukuzawa is. Chōmin was also particularly doubtful about women’s ability to participate.

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<sup>329</sup> Fukuzawa, *Tsūzoku minkenron*, 577. Of course, the Greek word *idiotes* referred to a private individual who shunned public affairs. The opposite of *idiotes* was *polites*, or “citizen.”

In what follows, I examine the language and actions of the participants in what has been called the “Freedom and Popular Rights Movement” to understand how they challenged the boundaries of what counted as intelligible public utterances translationally rather than mimetically. I argue that these challenges cleared the space for an emergence of “the people” as a political subject and the condensation of new interpretations of “freedom” and “rights” by embracing new standards of knowledge production tied to the metaphoricity of citizenship. The practices of the participants were a translation of the developing language of citizenship found in Fukuzawa’s, Chōmin’s, and others’ translation-metaphors. However, these practices themselves also challenged Fukuzawa’s and Chōmin’s figurations in particular insofar as they demonstrated that intelligible public speech was not the domain of a narrow few. Just as Fukuzawa and Chōmin operated within the confines of particular cultural and linguistic frameworks, those people outside of the large cities and those who were not members of the former samurai class operated from theirs. The consequence of this difference of social experience was a different manner of reaction to the language of citizenship than that anticipated or intended by Fukuzawa, Chōmin, or the state for that matter. The burden of taxation, the redistribution of land, and the implementation of universal conscription all amplified the daily struggle to survive. It was precisely these changes, however, which made new ways of enacting “the people” possible. It enabled not new textual translations *of* citizenship, but the concrete taking part that constituted citizenship *as* translation. People created something that both was like and yet was not the translated words for citizenship that Fukuzawa, Chōmin, and others produced.

In order to understand the transformations of intelligible public utterances and their re-metaphorizations of citizenship, I examine the explosive spread of public associations and



speech societies between mid-1870s and the mid 1880s.<sup>330</sup> I claim that these associations were the site of another critical translational moment. They created the opportunity for people of the new *heimin* class to transform into citizens, that is, to become speaking, thinking, political subjects. Furthermore, the associations' acceptance of new standards of knowledge production legitimized the claim for their utterances to be recognized as politically intelligible and valid. Many have suggested that the political thought of the people living in rural areas in this period was ultimately more “radical” than that of the urban intellectuals.<sup>331</sup> While this certainly had something to do with the differences in economic conditions and the unequal burdens of new policies like universal conscription and mandatory education, it was also a product of the struggle to define which kinds of speech counted and which did not. The distinction between being a citizen and being a subject overlaps in large part with the definition of the intelligible public utterance.

### **Individuals, Truth, and Politics**

According to Saito Tsuyoshi, depending on one's social class and occupation, “...from ancient times horizontal links in such institutions as *kō* 講 (associations), *kumi* 組 (groups), *za* 座 (gatherings), and *moyai* 催合 (cooperatives) emerged.” Participants in these kind of society “...would have *yoriai* 寄合い (meetings) which resemble meetings as we understand the concept nowadays....” Nonetheless, these pre-Meiji forms of association “...still retained a strong

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<sup>330</sup> The Japanese word is *kessha* (結社), or “associations.” Irokawa Daikichi points out many of these associations are “grassroots” phenomena. That is, they were not created by the state or well-known intellectuals, but by members of the *heimin* (平民) class of former farmers, artisans, and merchants (the *nōkōshō* part of the old *shinōkōshō* hierarchy). Irokawa, *The Culture of the Meiji Period*.

<sup>331</sup> Irokawa, *The Culture of the Meiji Period*; Inada, *Jiuminkenundo no keifu*.

hierarchical control structure, and as a matter of course a person knew his place (*bun 分*) and had no choice but to be content with it.”<sup>332</sup>

The spread of the debating societies in the 1870s and 1880s, however, was something different. They were also places of meeting, but they were marked precisely by their opposition to hierarchy. Although they had officers and a formal structure, their purpose was to bring together people in a space of equal exchange, in which the only relevant distinction was the quality of one’s against rival proposals. These spaces appeared spontaneously, and contained within them a pattern for a “people” properly constituted.

In other words, the translational moments in which people turned the metaphors of citizenship into action might be considered instances of what Jason Frank calls “constituent moments.” According to Frank, “Constituent moments invent a new political space and make apparent a people that are productively never at one with themselves.”<sup>333</sup> They are founded on the authority of the people creating the moment, and on that authority alone. They are therefore neither the same as what came before, nor are they entirely unlike it.

Moments such as these were possible in Meiji Japan in part because many people no longer knew what their place was. The older forms of association that Saitō describes were dismantled by changing economic practices, the formal abolition of classes, and the cultivation

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<sup>332</sup> Saito, "The Creation of the Term 'Kojin.'" Irokawa Daikichi argues that these forms of organization had a significant role in creating horizontal social relations. This is certainly true, however Irokawa himself concedes that the most fundamental decision making authority in the village, the *yoriai*, was often dominated by relatively elite figures. Furthermore, the horizontal relationships that Irokawa describe can exist within a hierarchical structure. At the broadest level, the *shinōkōshō* hierarchy exhibited a significant degree of equality across the stratum of farmers. It also was sharply differentiated from the samurai class. Irokawa, "Japan's Grassroots Tradition: Current Issues in the Mirror of History."

<sup>333</sup> Frank, *Constituent Moments*, 8

of an individualized subjectivity. Not only did people lose their sense of place, but the dissemination of a newly-reconfigured language of *gakumon* (学問), or “learning,” contributed to the destabilization of the regime of truth production itself. I argue that it was not purely the willful efforts of the likes of Itagaki Taisuke, Ueki Emori, or Numa Morikazu to spread an ideology of “popular rights” that caused the proliferation of these new societies. Rather, the spread of the societies was made possible by a particular conjunction of circumstances in which a new configuration of “the people” could take shape.

Perhaps what is most remarkable at first glance about these new kinds of association is simply their great number, wide distribution, and diversity of foci. According to Irokawa Daikichi, the number of organizations associated with “popular rights” numbered over 100 in Kōchi and Kanagawa prefectures alone, and the number in Japan as a whole “...must have been well over a thousand.”<sup>334</sup> Other organizations not in any way obviously associated with the freedom and popular rights movement must have increased this number. Learning societies devoted to ostensibly non-political issues, women’s associations, and other groups for mutual improvement increased in conjunction with more typically political *minken* bodies.

Just West of Tokyo, in the mountains bordering the Musashi plain, is the small town of Itsukaichi. Irokawa Daikichi’s most famous work, *The Culture of the Meiji Period*, is predominantly based on a raft of materials left by the various discussion associations of Itsukaichi in the early- to mid-1880s. They sat undisturbed in a dilapidated storehouse until the 1960s, when Irokawa discovered and interpreted them. Itsukaichi at present is home to 22,000 people or so, but this is after its administrative amalgamation with four or five other small villages over the course of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In the early Meiji period, it was a small and isolated

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<sup>334</sup> Irokawa, *The Culture of Meiji*, 196.

place indeed. Nonetheless, Irokawa's archive contains materials from no fewer than seven popular organizations dedicated to political discussion, speech making, and Western learning that left traces between 1880 and 1886.<sup>335</sup> Nearby towns of similar size and comparable isolation boast similar numbers of organizations appearing in the same period.

What linked these groups conceptually was not an explicit commitment to any particular kind of politics, but a broader commitment to "learning" (*gakumon* 学問). Learning and self-improvement were of course very important to Fukuzawa Yukichi. Indeed, as I have claimed, the central duty of the civil citizen in Fukuzawa's terms was to cultivate one's capacities to aid in the pursuit of one's interests. Fukuzawa's work, especially *Sekai kunizukushi* (*Countries of the World* 世界国尽) and of course *Gakumon no susume*, were certainly immensely popular among the participants in these organizations. According to Irokawa, no works are as commonly found among the books and documents left by the rural *minken* groups as those of Fukuzawa.<sup>336</sup>

In Fukuzawa's vocabulary, "learning," or *gakumon*, is somewhat different from its pre-Meiji usage. Fukuzawa's advocacy of learning is often assumed to be restricted to the equation of *gakumon* with *jitsugaku*, or "practical study." *Jitsugaku* largely meant "useful" bodies of knowledge like the natural sciences, engineering, mathematics, foreign languages, or law. While this was certainly a different set of knowledges than Tokugawa-era *gakumon* addressed, Fukuzawa's "learning" retained the Confucian concern with the cultivation of virtue, the polishing of manners, the development of aesthetic sensibilities, and the accumulation of practical experience. Certainly, the morality and manners that Fukuzawa believed needed to be

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<sup>335</sup> Ibid., 49. He also lists another organization, the "Learning and Debating Society" (*gakujutsu tōronkai*) on page 97 that he did not include in his chart on page 49.

<sup>336</sup> Ibid., 66.

learned were quite different. But the broad commitment to learning as a part of self-cultivation remained consistent. Ultimately, his promotion of *jitsugaku* was tied to an insistence on the duty of the individual to cultivate his or her capacities as a member of “society” (as we saw in our first translational moment).

One of the most important cultural practices tied to both *jitsugaku* and the activities of the citizen (*shimin*) was what Fukuzawa called *enzetsu*, or speechmaking. Although Fukuzawa did not invent the word *enzetsu* as he himself claimed, he reconfigured its meaning radically to serve as a translation word for the English word “speech.”<sup>337</sup> Again, as we saw above, Fukuzawa claimed that in the West, *enzetsu* was practiced at nearly all official and social gatherings “of more than 10 people.” He cites specifically not only the national assemblies of England and the United States, but he also mentions occasions like weddings, the opening of shops and businesses, and academic gatherings. In his interpretation, the practice of speechmaking was not only a social nicety, but a critical part of building a functioning society as a collective subject. Learning how to make speeches was therefore a central part of *jitsugaku* and central to the practice of citizenship.

Fukuzawa’s 1874 essay “How to Hold a Conference” (*Kaigiben* 会議弁) gives the fullest elaboration of his view of speechmaking as a practice.<sup>338</sup> As the title suggests, *Kaigiben* is a “how to” manual for organizing and managing public speeches and debates. It explains the process of the formal institutionalization of societies for public speaking and debating, including rules, regulations, and goals. It provides examples of speeches for readers to model, along with an example charter (from Fukuzawa’s own *Mita enzetsukai*) for readers to use as a template for

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<sup>337</sup> Matsuzaka, *Mita enzetsukai to keiō gijyuku keienzetsukai*.

<sup>338</sup> This is Kim’s translation of Fukuzawa’s title. Kim, *The Age of Visions and Arguments*, 229.

creating their own societies. The model debate even shows idealized rhetorical practices in contrast to those of the untrained (and ultimately “uncivilized”) layperson. The standards that it emphasizes are argumentative clarity and organization over ornamental speech.

According to Kanke and Morooka “...Fukuzawa held a rather restrictive, even reductive view of debate. That is, unlike People’s Rights activists who conceived debate as a tool for spreading their political views to the masses, he regarded it as a means of exchanging ideas and cultivating knowledge among educated citizens.”<sup>339</sup> Rather than Fukuzawa’s vision of debate being reductive, we could perhaps say that it was in another sense actually much more expansive. Instead of being narrowly conceived as a conduit for mimetically distributing ideas from the top down, Fukuzawa emphasizes its status as a key element in an egalitarian learning broadly conceived. While speech certainly could, and indeed should, be used to transmit political ideas of one sort or another, Fukuzawa’s process privileged the dialogic nature of organized discussion over the didactic, unidirectional consciousness-raising that perhaps figures like Itagaki and Ueki might have seen as primary.

Fukuzawa insisted that speechmaking had never been a part of the culture of Japan for samurai, commoners, or Buddhist and Shinto officials anywhere. John L. Morrison agrees, arguing that: “...the art of persuasion apparently has had no tradition in Japan as in the West...some 1350 years of recorded history up to and roughly including World War II evidence no rhetorical tradition.”<sup>340</sup> While Branham and Tomasi have shown that this claim is not entirely historically accurate, it seems that it was nonetheless an important rhetorical point in Fukuzawa’s

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<sup>339</sup> Kanke and Morooka, "Youth Debates in Early Modern Japan."

<sup>340</sup> Morrison, "The Absence of a Rhetorical Tradition in Japanese Culture."

theorization of the role of speech in Japanese society.<sup>341</sup> In other words, Fukuzawa's formulation of the issue did not so much make a claim about the historical manifestations of public deliberation as it was an attempt to signal a point of disjuncture with existing practices. While Japan did have traditions of debate, they operated on the basis of a different conception of what knowledge was, how it should be distributed, and how it could be transmitted. Thus, Fukuzawa's language constructs a break between Tokugawa knowledge and the "civilized" knowledge of Meiji. What constituted the difference between civilized and semi-civilized knowledge in his language was the manner in which it was produced. This shift in the constitution of knowledge was theoretical, but necessarily embodied in practice. That is, for the meaning of knowledge to change, the practices of producing it had to change as well. The institution of formalized methods of debate and speech were the translation of this point of view.

None of this is to make the clearly false claim that people in the Tokugawa, Sengoku, or Heian eras did not deliver messages orally to gatherings of listeners. They most certainly did. What might be more appropriate to say is that these utterances were all part of speech genres quite different from that of the "speech" (*supiichi* スピーチ) as Fukuzawa conceived of it.<sup>342</sup> For example, the recitation of a sutra at a temple was simply the mimetic reproduction of the words of others. The reading of a decree from a *daimyo*, carried out in a different vocabulary and in a

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<sup>341</sup> Branham, "Debate and Dissent in Late Tokugawa and Meiji Japan"; Tomasi, *Rhetoric in Modern Japan*, 27. Tomasi in particular argues that rhetoric is fundamentally the art of composition rather than public speaking alone. From that perspective, Japanese texts regarding the proper construction of *waka* (Japanese verse) or the practice of *rakugo* (comedic storytelling) form the backbone of a rhetorical tradition reaching back to the 8<sup>th</sup> century. Descriptions of eloquent Buddhist sermons even go back as far as the Asuka period (6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> centuries) (37-39). Regardless, what is important is that there were certain conventions for intelligible speech and artful delivery that were transformed in the translational moment.

<sup>342</sup> Bakhtin, "The Problem of Speech Genres," 78-79.

different tone of voice, was another. One might also consider the cries of merchants selling goods on the street, the address of kabuki or *nō* performers, or even the narration of a *bunraku* puppet theater performance. These modes of speaking were concerned with the transfer of information, real or fictional, from one place to another. They were not designed to test the validity of a statement by subjecting it to criticism, however. In Fukuzawa's interpretation, what set speechmaking apart as a separate genre of public speech, and as a critical part of "civilization," was its formalized, dialogic nature.

Fukuzawa himself was probably not aware of the underlying complexity of the argument he was making about the importance of *enzetsu*. As people took up the practice of *enzetsu*, they also unwittingly but necessarily accepted three philosophical assumptions that ran counter to many of the premises of the Tokugawa aesthetic imagination (and the related class hierarchy). First, Fukuzawa's arguments underpinning the importance of *enzetsu* assume that each human mind constitutes a unique individuality essentially isolated until it encounters another individual in the exchange of language. Second, *enzetsu* is founded on an empiricist theory of knowledge in which premises are tested and either accepted as true or falsified by observation and counterargument. Third, this regime of knowledge production requires certain political conditions for its realization, and underpins certain political institutions' claims to legitimacy. The formation of a language and awareness of "individuality" coincided with the spread of speaking and debating societies. What separated the debating societies from the dissemination of language in texts, however, were the physical practices of equality they required, and the structured pairing of individual consciousness against individual consciousness.

Speechmaking, in Fukuzawa's interpretation, was characterized as a poetic activity based on two critical features. First, it was a process designed to govern the orderly exchange of



utterances between a designated speaker and a designated listener. These two participants necessarily participated as political and moral equals, at least within the confines of the institution which brought them together. This experience of the equal exchange of utterances was rather different than many existing modes of public interaction. *Enzetsu* was therefore instrumental in the development of political subjectivity on the level of the individual insofar as it trained people to act in ways compatible with this new set of assumptions. Irokawa claims that speech and debate associations were "...able to produce a number, even dozens, of new personality types..." in the people who participated in them not because of the messages that they transmitted, but because of the routines and rituals they required. For example, regardless of the content of the utterances made at different types of association, the utterances were supposed to consist of the original thoughts and opinions of one self-contained consciousness otherwise inaccessible to others. What is notable is the constitution of the individual intelligence as an isolated phenomenon.

In English, the words as "individual" (both a noun and an adjective), and "individuality," used to describe a single human being distinguished from the many, or a particular personality characterized by a set of idiosyncrasies can be traced to the early 17<sup>th</sup> century. It became an explicit political position, that is, *individualism*, only in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>343</sup> In Japanese, the modern translation word for "individual" is *kojin* (個人). This particular phrase appears for the first time in Hattori and Tanaka's 1877 "translation" of *The Social Contract*. The first translation

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<sup>343</sup> The OED cites Henry Reeve's 1835 English translation of Tocqueville's *Democracy in America* as the first use of the term "individualism" to mean a "self-centered feeling or conduct as a principle. A mode of life in which the individual pursues his own ends or follows his own ideas. Free and independent individual action. Egoism." The first use of the term to refer to "the social theory which advocates the free and independent action of the individual as opposed to communistic methods of organization and state interference" appeared in an article by John Stuart Mill in the *Westminster Review* in 1851. Oxford English Dictionary, "individualism, n."

of the word “individual” from a European language into Japanese occurred in the late 1850s or early 1860s with the Dutch word *individueel*. Around this time, Koga Masaru, the head of the “Institute of Barbarian Books” (*Bansho shirabesho* 蕃書調所), published a series of articles from *Nederlansch Magazijn* as a miscellany called *Takujutsu kangen* (度日閑言), or *Leisurely Words from Days Gone By*. The *kanbun* phrase, complete with *furigana* reading *injibijuwēren* (インヂヒヂユエーレン) (各殊之人身) appears to suggest that it refers to “an individual unit.”<sup>344</sup> This practice of using foreign pronunciation in combination with kanji to convey a rough sense of meaning was used frequently in the absence of any similar concept in existing modes of speaking and writing.<sup>345</sup> Its strangeness would have immediately and physically struck the reader.

The concept of the individual as a bearer of natural rights was elaborated upon by Katō Hiroyuki in his *Rinsō* (*Our Neighbor* 鄰艸) and *Rikken seitai ryaku* (*Outline of Constitutional Government* 立憲政體略) in the 1860s, and then and *Shinsei taii* (The Substance of True Government 真政大意) in 1870. According to Saitō, these works “...proved profoundly enlightening to Meiji men who were concerned with the idea of the natural rights of man, the individual as a subject of rights and obligations, and the linkage of the individual and society.”<sup>346</sup> Although Katō did not develop a consistent or novel translation word for the idea of individuality, he did advance the language of both “equality” and “rights” which gave it conceptual form.

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<sup>344</sup> Saitō, "The Creation of the Term 'Kojin,'" 10.

<sup>345</sup> Some Chinese dictionaries included an entry for the word “individual” during the 1860s, but they were not consistent and did not articulate the social context of the concept.

<sup>346</sup> *Ibid.*, 17.

Nakamura Masanao's translation of *On Liberty* in 1871 provided a more concrete phrase with a Japanese pronunciation. He translated "individuality" as *ikko no jinmin* (一個ノ人民). *Jinmin*, as we saw in the first translational moment, was used as a substitute for the word "citizen" in Fukuzawa's early texts and also in Nakamura's translation of *Self-Help*. It emphasized the particularity of the single person in differentiation from the whole. *Ikkō* doubles down on this particularizing, insisting on the separateness of the single person. Interestingly, the kanji *ko* 個 is a combination of the elements for "person" (*hito* 人) and "hard," "indivisible," or "fundamental" (*katai* 固い).<sup>347</sup> Japanese requires special words for the counting of certain objects. *Ko* (個) is used for counting individual objects of relatively small size that do not dissolve into one another.

Until the late 1870s, Nishi Amane, Fujita Mokichi, and others used variations of the kanji *ko* and *hito* (for example, 個々人々 or 各人), however they continued insisting on reading the *kanji* compound in its English pronunciation. Thus, instead of reading 個々人々 as *kokohitobito*, Nishi Amane gave *furigana* indicating that it should be read *injiuijuaru* (インジウイジュアル). This explicitly differentiates the word from any other phrase that the reader might know and understand. It insists upon either a sense of novelty or a fundamental alienness.<sup>348</sup>

Hattori's translation of *The Social Contract* appears to be the beginning of a consensus built on reading the compound 個人 in its Japanese pronunciation *kojin*. Hattori's *Minyakuron*

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<sup>347</sup> Kamata and Yasuda, *Shinkangorin*.

<sup>348</sup> It activates what Yanabu Akira calls the "cassette effect." Foreign words that appear in the midst of one's native language have important aesthetic and psychological consequences. The meaning of these foreign words is not necessarily related to their use in the source language at all. *Honyakugo seiritsu jijō*.

was followed by Takahashi Tatsurō's 1878 translation of Thomas Lacey Smith's 1853 text, *Elements of the Laws* (*Beikokuhōritsu genron* 米國法律原論), which also used the Japanese reading. The Itsukaichi Constitution used the phrase in 1880 or 1881.<sup>349</sup> By 1884, when the Ministry of Education published a translation of Gustav Adolf Constantin Frantz's *The Physiology of States* (1857), *kojin* appears to have gained wide acceptance.<sup>350</sup>

The spread of the language of individuality attests to a social need for a standardized word to refer to it. This is not to say that the word created the concept, or the concept created the word fully formed, but rather that language and practice developed in dialogue with one another such that by the late 1870s “individual” was an increasingly consolidated idea associated with the characters 個人. We will explore the training of people in the practices of individuality in more detail below.

The second position that Fukuzawa's model of speechmaking articulates is clearly drawn from his reading of Mill. Mill considered the open exchange of ideas to be central the cultivation of the well-being of society. This view of exchange is certainly utilitarian, but perhaps more importantly, it is founded on a deeper epistemological claim which is evident in Fukuzawa's language. Mill writes: “Complete liberty of contradicting and disproving our opinion, is the very condition which justifies us in assuming its truth for purposes of action; and on no other terms can a being with human faculties have any rational assurance of being right.... If even the Newtonian philosophy were not permitted to be questioned, mankind could not feel as complete assurance of its truth as they now do. The beliefs which we have most warrant for, have no

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<sup>349</sup> Though interestingly, the *Ōmeisha* Constitution does not. Neither does the 1889 Meiji constitution. These are the result of theoretical differences, however, not linguistic ones.

<sup>350</sup> Saito, “The Creation of the Term ‘Kojin,’” 23.

safeguard to rest on, but a standing invitation to the whole world to prove them unfounded.”<sup>351</sup>

Mill’s point is that the only way that human knowledge can approach the status of truth is to subject it to relentless criticism and critique. Even something as apparently successful Newton’s scientific theories would be undermined if they could not be potentially falsified in the crucible of debate. Mill speaks at length about the problems caused by the Catholic Church and its dogma of infallibility, not because what the church said was *a priori* untrue, but because what it proclaimed as truth could not be tested or challenged.

Fukuzawa seems to have been deeply impressed by this argument. He claims in the second paragraph of *Kaigiben* that: “Despite their eloquence and personal wealth, humanity would never have benefitted from either [Benjamin] Franklin’s ability nor Newton’s scientific prowess without public discussion.... However, we [in Japan] haven’t developed the ability to benefit from the exchange of people and ideas...”<sup>352</sup> The benefit that Fukuzawa refers to here is not the practical utility of their ideas, but rather certainty in the validity of those ideas. This certainty has important consequences. First, certainty contributes to the practical use of theory. That is, having confidence in a principle justifies further experiments or the institution of policies that rely on it.

Another consequence is that it allows people to construct and to talk about the subjects of any carefully vetted theory as real or objective. For example, “gravity,” the force of attraction that Newton described, was only realized as a noun describing something invisible-yet-real in the

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<sup>351</sup> Mill, "On Liberty."

<sup>352</sup> Fukuzawa, *Kaigiben*, 616.

process of debating it.<sup>353</sup> In the Japanese context, this was important for the consolidation of new abstractions like “freedom” and “the people.” These terms were reified precisely through debates over what they signified and on what foundation they stood.

The third position that Fukuzawa’s language assumes is that the production of knowledge is linked to political institutions and political outcomes. As Foucault argues, “modern” governments which wager the life of the population on the correct management of social forces are judged not by the standards of moral good and evil, but by their capacity to harness knowledge to promote “well-being.” Indeed, “...the greatest evil of government, what makes it a bad government is not that the prince is wicked, but that he is ignorant.”<sup>354</sup> Fukuzawa seems to have taken note of this in European societies.

Empiricist sensibility had precedent in the *bakumatsu* era writing of Sakuma Shozan, who also was quick to recognize that knowledge production and political organization were closely linked. The widely known doctrine of “Eastern morality, Western technology” (*Tōyō dōtoku seiō gakugei* 東洋道德西洋学芸) was his suggestion.<sup>355</sup> Fukuzawa’s work, however, made the connection between the conditions which promoted certainty, the structure of the polity, and the well-being which derived from having an a properly ordered polity, and knowledge production.

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<sup>353</sup> In Japanese, the noun *jūryoku* (重力) was translated from the Dutch word *zwaartekracht*, which Shogunate scholars encountered in the process of reading 18<sup>th</sup> century overviews of European medicine. Dutch was the only language that was translated with any frequency in Tokugawa Japan due to the Dutch monopoly on trade with Europe centered on Nagasaki. Newton’s *Principia* was not translated from Latin into either Dutch or Japanese until the 20<sup>th</sup> century, though English translations appeared in the early 18<sup>th</sup> century. Clements, *Cultural History of Translation in Early Modern Japan*, 153.

<sup>354</sup> Foucault, *The Birth of Biopolitics*, 17.

<sup>355</sup> Harootunian, *Towards Restoration*.

Likewise, Fukuzawa's discussion in *An Encouragement of Learning* of the "imbalance of power" (権力の偏重 *kenryoku no henchō*) mirrors Mill's critique of the Church. The truth of those with no ability was imposed under the threat of violence and, as Sōgorō discovered, that truth was not subject to public discussion of its merits.

Tokugawa moral, legal, and scientific truths were rigidly enforced for the preponderance of the Edo period. The formal prohibition of Christianity by Tokugawa Ieyasu in 1612, as well as the ban against foreign travel issued by his grandson, Iemitsu, in 1632 were extensions of Toyotomi Hideyoshi's policies. Toyotomi's rationale was that the influence of foreign doctrines was dangerous for a political formation that had not been fully consolidated. Ieyasu continued to struggle to impose Tokugawa rule over all of the domains of the three main islands, and his desire to stamp out other claims to truth followed from that imperative. From the early 17<sup>th</sup> century forwards, absolute rule by the shogunate implied absolute, but ultimately arbitrary, standards of true and false in the realm of knowledge. Thus, Fukuzawa's call for an advancement in learning was as much a call for the reconfiguration of the standards of what counted as knowledge. Ultimately, Fukuzawa's denigration of Chinese learning (that is, Confucianism, Chinese medicine, astronomy, and techniques of divination and geomancy) can be understood as a rejection of their underlying epistemology as much as it was their practical utility.

Balibar argues that "From the point of view of the subject, power's claim to incarnate both the good and the true is entirely justified: the subject is he who has no need of *knowing*, much less *understanding*, why what is prescribed to him is in the interest of his own happiness."<sup>356</sup> As the power of the shogunate waned, so did its capacity maintain order amongst subjects who had no need or ability to know their own well-being. As the shogunate weakened

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<sup>356</sup> Balibar, "Citizen Subject," 40.

and eventually collapsed, new truth claims sprang up from every corner of society precisely because subjecthood was undermined.

Along with a resurgence of Christianity, new religious groups sprang up across Japan, each claiming to have access to a particular kind of truth about nature and the human world.<sup>357</sup> The Meiji state reconfigured the practices of local spirit worship and ancient myth into state Shinto, which was a profoundly effective tool for legitimizing the actions of the oligarchy through claims about the Emperor's divine descent from the sun goddess.<sup>358</sup> Amidst these other competing regimes for determining what counted as knowledge, Fukuzawa and others propounding theories of "civilization" advanced a utilitarian empiricism gleaned from their experiences abroad and their readings of European philosophical texts.

*Enzetsu* was one of the primary methods by which social or political truths could be approached. Critical to the proper functioning of this epistemological system, however, is the correct training of the individuals who were to participate in it. Untrained people incapable of making clear, reasoned arguments based on knowledge about the world derived from experience would not be capable of enacting the steps in the process necessary to have confidence in its outcome. Similarly, people unaccustomed to listening to speakers of various backgrounds and taking them seriously would not be capable of participating in the debate.<sup>359</sup> For this reason, Fukuzawa's very early insistence on training students in the practice of *enzetsu* (as both listeners

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<sup>357</sup> See Hardacre, *Shinto and the State*; Sawada, *Practical Pursuits*.

<sup>358</sup> See Jansen and Gluck for more detail about how the Meiji state used the emperor to legitimate its policies. Jansen, *The Making of Modern Japan*; Gluck, *Japan's Modern Myths*.

<sup>359</sup> This is the problem of former samurai dismissing the ideas of farmers because of status, or conversely, farmers accepting what former samurai said simply because of their belief in their own inferiority.



and speakers), and his extraordinarily detailed procedural descriptions of how public deliberation was to occur were part the formation of a broader epistemological position.

From the Tokugawa perspective, it was not people's thoughts or statements that needed policing so much as their physical distribution in space and their modes of consumption and production. Although the shogunate certainly did monitor ideas and texts that it deemed inappropriate, it was mainly concerned with ensuring that farmers, artisans, and merchants performed their mechanical functions in the Confucian cosmological order. Within this framework, the targeting of hearts and minds could be to some extent omitted because farmers, merchants, and artisans were not regarded as capable of making utterances which could count as truth.

As the practices of *enzetsu* spread, however, so did institutions which disciplined people as individuals, trained them to evaluate true and false on the basis of competing arguments, and insisted that good government was government which recognized the equality of utterances vetted by open critique. At this point, regulation of individual interiority became an important object of state policy. The 1875 *shinbun jōrei* was an extraordinary limit on what could be publically disseminated in the press. Likewise, the 1879 prohibition on state employees attending *enzetsukai* was aimed at preventing them from internalizing anti-hierarchical practices which might delegitimize the Meiji oligarchy. These rules might be understood to be concerned with the body insofar as they disrupted the physical practices of debate that established knowledge and reinforced individualism. More importantly, however, are the ways in which they targeted the interior domain of individuals' thought by prohibiting the reception of particular messages.

### **Speech, Rhetoric, and the Emergence of Subjects**

Although literacy rates were comparatively high and printed materials of various sorts were widespread in the Tokugawa period, Fukuzawa prized the oral transmission of information because of its comparative clarity.<sup>360</sup> The very complex and nuanced debates of 18<sup>th</sup> century Confucian scholars were instigated by the opacity of both Confucius' and their own written language. By the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the huge number of different doctrines of Confucian learning that competed with one another was in some ways a product of the nature of the *kanbun* style.<sup>361</sup> This is to say nothing of the fact that *kanbun* was a written style accessible only to a small elite, and generally not the language of the non-samurai classes.

Fukuzawa took care to write all his works in plain language mirroring the spoken. He apparently once asked of those who wrote in *kanbun* whether "...they expect only Chinese to read their works?"<sup>362</sup> Fukuzawa's point was that the dissemination of new knowledge could only succeed if it appeared in a form close to natural speech. The so-called *genbun itchi*, or "unification of speech and writing" movement which emerged in the 1880s drew on this same basic assumption. Indeed, as we saw in our second translational moment, *kanbun* is complex and necessarily polysemic.<sup>363</sup> For Fukuzawa, oral speech was the most direct way to transmit "useful" information, and it was a means which virtually all people could employ. For Fukuzawa, it was especially necessary in Japan that citizens should develop skills in

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<sup>360</sup> Though he did not disagree with Mill that freedom of publication was also essential to the development of knowledge.

<sup>361</sup> Clements, *A Cultural History of Translation in Early Modern Japan*, 34.

<sup>362</sup> Fukuzawa, *The Autobiography of Fukuzawa Yukichi*, ix.

<sup>363</sup> As Naoki Sakai argues, it is polysemic not only because of the accumulated readings and compound contexts, but simply by the fact that kanji are to a greater or lesser degree pictographic rather than phonetic. Sakai, *Translation and Subjectivity*, 26.

speechmaking so that the exchange of ideas could take place. Fukuzawa therefore spent a great deal of energy explaining the mechanics of how speechmaking, and just as importantly, speech listening, was to occur.

Fukuzawa was possibly more important for his institutionalization of speechmaking than he was for his theorization of rhetoric. From 1874 at the latest, Fukuzawa included rhetoric on the syllabus for first-year students at *Keiō gijuku*.<sup>364</sup> While schools of Chinese learning had long taught composition according to the shared standards of the *kanbun* style, Fukuzawa was probably the first to teach speaking and writing in the persuasive style of European debate.<sup>365</sup> He used George Payn Quackenbos' *Advanced Course of Composition and Rhetoric*, which treated written prose and oratory to be of the same fundamental nature. Critical to both was the systematic and orderly presentation of ideas with the goal of explaining one's internal, private thoughts or persuading the listener or reader of a particular conclusion that the author had reached. Quackenbos held that rhetoric is "...an aid in enabling us to communicate our thoughts in the best manner." In Fukuzawa's view, communicating in the "best manner" meant adhering to rules and procedures which provided a framework by which statements could be publically evaluated. Quackenbos added that "...it would seem as if the value of rhetoric would be obvious to all; yet there are some who venture to call it in question. Rules, they say, hamper the mind.... They prefer leaving the writer... to chance or the inspiration of the moment; ridiculing the idea of his inquiring, while in the act of giving utterance to a thought, what is required, or what

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<sup>364</sup> Matsunaga, *Fukuzawa Yukichi to Nakae Chōmin*, location 672.

<sup>365</sup> The style required by the Chinese state examination system was by the 19<sup>th</sup> century relatively ornamental and lyrical. Of course, the Chinese state examinations were primarily a measure of the mastery of the Confucian classics, and not designed to test the examinee's ability to produce an organized argument in the European philosophical sense.

prohibited, by rule. This principle, if true of rhetoric, obviously applies to logic, grammar, and even the elementary branches of education; and it follows that, through fear of cramping the natural powers, we should do away with training of all kinds. The absurdity of this conclusion is manifest.”<sup>366</sup> In this way, Quackenbos, and by extension Fukuzawa, make the organization of knowledge essential to the development of “civilization.”

The battle for the reorganization of knowledge production and transmission along the lines of European philosophical arguments was not only fought in Fukuzawa’s classrooms. For example, Fukuzawa was a founding member of the *Meirokeisha* (明六社), or “Meiji Six Society.”<sup>367</sup> The *Meirokeisha* are remembered today both for their influential journal, the *Meiroke zasshi*, but equally for their widely attended public speeches. The members of the *Meirokeisha* were all prominent intellectuals who had traveled abroad and were more or less in agreement with Fukuzawa about the value of public speech and debate. However, the public speeches that the group eventually hosted almost did not occur because many members, notably Mori Arinori, believed that the Japanese language was simply inadequate for the delivery of public speeches. They believed that the conventions of Japanese speech made it impossible to present a thesis and provide valid reasons in an organized way. Perhaps they doubted the ability of Japanese listeners to accept the practices of listening and reply that this mode of speaking implied. Ultimately, Fukuzawa was forced to deliver an extemporaneous oratory to demonstrate that one could in fact produce coherent public speeches of the sort that many members had heard

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<sup>366</sup> Quackenbos, *An Advanced Course of Composition and Rhetoric*, 168.

<sup>367</sup> Thus, the name comes from the date the group was formed. 1874 was the 6<sup>th</sup> year of the Meiji Era according to the Japanese count.

in the parliaments of Europe in Japanese.<sup>368</sup> The *Meirokeisha* speeches were therefore an important demonstration of the principles of European rhetoric and a mechanism for disciplining the participants in the practices of speaking, listening, and replying.

Although less well known, but probably more important, was the institution of *Keiō gijuku*'s speech society (*enzetsukai* 演説会) in 1873. This organization in fact preceded the formal constitution of the *Meirokeisha* in 1874. The group had been meeting in *Keiō*'s facilities, and even sometimes in Fukuzawa's own house, until the construction of a permanent debating hall at *Keiō gijuku*'s Mita campus in 1875. Fukuzawa provided 2000 yen of his own money to finance the building, which was an impressive sum at the time.<sup>369</sup> The building, which is still in use at today's *Keiō University* was designed to facilitate debate, speechmaking, and mock parliamentary procedures. The *Keiō enzetsukai* became one of the predominant venues for public speaking and debate throughout the Meiji period. The *Meirokeisha* disbanded in 1875 after coming under pressure from the state, however the *Keiō enzetsukai* was a vibrant gathering point for many interested in questions of "civilization and enlightenment" in Tokyo and beyond throughout the Meiji period.

Fukuzawa drew his vision of how these and other public societies should function from studies of American and British theories of rhetoric and outlines of parliamentary procedure.<sup>370</sup> Fukuzawa's own experiences in America and Europe observing congress and various other deliberative bodies left a strong impression on him. According to Matsumoto Sannosuke,

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<sup>368</sup> Kim, *The Age of Arguments*, 233.

<sup>369</sup> Probably about \$40,000 in 2015 USD. The yen was very closely tied to the dollar for export purposes at the time.

<sup>370</sup> Tomasi, *Rhetoric in Modern Japan*, 175.

Fukuzawa's firsthand experiences of the organization of space in the debating chambers and the back-and-forth exchange of arguments between equals convinced him that the problem in Japan was not only institutional, but philosophical. Of course, information was a problem for the many uneducated former farmers and artisans, but what was more fundamentally at stake in Fukuzawa's view was the underlying practice of organized deliberation.<sup>371</sup>

In *Kaigiben*, Fukuzawa claims to have drawn on a work called *American Debation* for many of his ideas, although no text by that title seems to have been published.<sup>372</sup> It was in fact James McElligot's *The American Debater* (1855) that Fukuzawa was inspired by.<sup>373</sup> McElligot writes that "The time has come, when public speaking, not that alone which is the result of careful premeditation, but that, especially, which, in order to defend truth in the moment of her danger, must itself be the offspring of the moment, can be not otherwise considered than as a necessary preparation for the active duties of life."<sup>374</sup> This is of course in line with Fukuzawa's ideas concerning the purpose of learning, the role of public speech in the advancement of reason, and of course the duties of the citizen. McElligot goes on to say clearly that "...it is the duty, of every American youth to prepare himself, as best he can, to figure advantageously in deliberative bodies."<sup>375</sup> Fukuzawa had doubts about the capacity of most former peasants, farmers, and artisans to do this, which is precisely why he simultaneously held that Japan was not ready for a parliament and actively taught public speaking and parliamentary practice at Keiō.

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<sup>371</sup> Matsumoto, *Meijiseishin no kozo*, 32.

<sup>372</sup> Tomasi notes that he was unable to identify a text by that title.

<sup>373</sup> Morooka, "A History of Rhetorical Studies and Practices in Modern Japan," 418.

<sup>374</sup> McElligot, *The American Debater*, viii.

<sup>375</sup> *Ibid.*, 9.

Fukuzawa also drew extensively on two other English-language works on rhetoric and debate.<sup>376</sup> Frederic Rowton's 1850 book, *The Debater: A New Theory of the Art of Speaking* seems to have been particularly important in terms of its conceptualization of speechmaking's way of relating knowledge and society. In contrast to Demosthenes' claim that the art of speechmaking is primarily an exercise in appearance and style, Rowton argues that the primary virtue of any speech has to do with the knowledge it contains. Rowton is explicit in precisely the same terms as Fukuzawa about the goal of speaking being the transmission of original thoughts, ideas, and opinions out of one mind and into another. Rowton's text contains transcriptions of model debates to illustrate not only the type of language that makes speeches distinctive (including polite forms of address, ways of disagreeing amicably, etc.), but also the process of speaking and hearing in turn. Rowton also begins his text with a discussion of the proper institutional matters essential to any speech organization. Electing a chairperson, designating a note-taker to record the minutes, allotting time for association business, and deciding the order of speakers are all discussed in detail, and recapitulated by Fukuzawa in very similar terms at the beginning of *Kaigiben*. Fukuzawa also apparently drew on Luther Stearns Cushing's *Manual of Parliamentary Practice: Rules of Proceeding and Debate in Deliberative Assemblies* (1854), which gives still greater details about how deliberative bodies are organized and function smoothly. Ōshima Sadamasu published an adaption of this text in 1884.<sup>377</sup>

Keiō's *enzetsukai* left extensive records of its activities which are now housed in Keiō University's library. The materials suggest that *Kaigiben* was perhaps written in direct

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<sup>376</sup> Tomasi, *Rhetoric in Modern Japan*, 175.

<sup>377</sup> Not a translation, just as Chōmin's *Minyaku yakkai* was not strictly a mimetic translation of *The Social Contract*. See Kanke and Morooka, "Youth Debates in Early Modern Japan."

conjunction with the formation of the society.<sup>378</sup> That such scrupulously recorded notes of the proceedings remain is itself a product of the procedures that Fukuzawa argued that speech societies should adopt. The crucial point, however, is that in many ways, the Keiō form was reproduced in many of the other societies that emerged later in the 1870s and 1880s. This includes not only speech societies (*enzetsukai*), but also discussion (*tōron* 討論) and learning societies (*gakkai* 学会) as well.<sup>379</sup>

To return to Itsukaichi, among the groups that Irokawa studied are the “Arts and Sciences Discussion Association” (*Gakugei kōdankai*), the English Study Circle (*Eigo gakkai*), and the Public Hygiene Assembly (*Kōritsu eisei gikai*). These stood alongside more explicitly political groups, including the Itsukaichi branch of the Jiyūtō (or Liberal party), the Learning and Debating Society (*Gakujutsu tōronkai*), and the Itsukaichi Debate and Speech Society (*Itsukaichi tōron enzetsukai*). These societies, despite their distance from Keiō in both time and space, nonetheless exhibit many of the same formal institutions and practices that took place there. Copies of the charter documents of the Itsukaichi Arts and Sciences Discussion Club remain in

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<sup>378</sup> Fukuzawa, as well as several students of *Keiō gijuku* at the time played roles in the mock debate that was transcribed in *Kaigiben*. Tomasi’s *Rhetoric in Modern Japan*, suggests that *Kaigiben* is a “translation” drawn from multiple Western texts on rhetoric (175). This is apparently the “traditional” view of the text. However, *Kaigiben* is not simply a translation not only because it does not clearly identify its sources, but because it is an interweaving of Fukuzawa’s own experiences in the Mita *enzetsukai* and his experience with the European practice of rhetoric.

<sup>379</sup> Fukuzawa has been credited with having created the word *tōron*. This seems not to be the case, however. Fukuzawa does not deploy it in *kaigiben* or any of his previous writing. However, Kanke and Morooka attribute it to Ōshima Sadamasu’s previously mentioned interpretation of Cushing’s *Manual*, which appeared in 1884. They claim that Fukuzawa’s *Kaigiben* appeared circa 1884 as well, but this date is incorrect. *Kaigiben* appeared in 1874.



an archive at the Akiruno City Library in Tokyo.<sup>380</sup> What is remarkable about them is not only their formal tone and the precision of their language, but the fact that they were printed for wide dissemination. In a small village in which the inhabitants likely knew each other quite personally, the fact that the charter was so labored over suggests that the process of the discussion circle's institutionalization was as important to the participants as the content of the discussions that followed.

Just as both *Kaigiben* and Rowton's manual on debating suggest, the first article of the Itsukaichi charter establishes the name of the society. The second article describes the society's goals, which primarily is to facilitate "the exchange of knowledge of each member" on the subject of the arts and sciences. The group then states that the discussion of political and social matters is one of its core objectives. In addition to facilitating the exchange of knowledge, one of the objectives it cites is the advance of each member's knowledge through that exchange. Besides setting the abstract goals of the association, the charter also fixes some of the more mundane mechanics of the group's functioning. For example, again just as Rowton's manual suggests, the charter fixes the frequency and date of each meeting (the 5<sup>th</sup> of each month, in this case). It specifies rules concerning members' attendance, and procedures for the distribution of printed materials related to the speeches that take place. About 40 people signed on as founding members.

Arguing that it was primarily dedicated *minkenka* that instigated the growth of rural speech associations is probably an oversimplification. Either way, it is a restricted view insofar as it denies the participants in those rural circles an active role in their institution. This argument

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<sup>380</sup> Many of these documents are available online:  
[http://archives.library.akiruno.tokyo.jp/gallery/index.php?mode=image&id\\_1=1&id\\_2=2](http://archives.library.akiruno.tokyo.jp/gallery/index.php?mode=image&id_1=1&id_2=2)

is predicated on the assumption that what Itagaki, Ueki, and others spread was first and foremost the ideological underpinnings of democratic association, which then gave rise to the formation of the independent associations. That is, in this narrative, the *minkenka* simply told the people that they had rights, people easily understood the meaning of “rights” and “freedom” in their essence, and thus they began to put them into practice. The *minkenka* were certainly an important link in the establishment of the branches of the political parties established by Tokyo intellectuals like Itagaki, particularly the *Jiyutō*. Nakae Chōmin was also among the important members of the Liberal Party. They were not, however, the sole decisive factor in the spread of the associational format. Their role needs to be re-evaluated.

The influence of dedicated *minkenka* like Ueki Emori on the development of these circles and associations was certainly not negligible. Ueki was among the first and perhaps most widely heard practitioners of *enzetsu*. Ueki, a former samurai from Kochi, was a devoted reader of Fukuzawa and Itō Hirobumi in the mid-1870s. Fukuzawa’s two 1878 essays “A Theory of Popular Rights” and “A Theory of Popular Sovereignty” seem to have been especially influential.<sup>381</sup> According to Ueki’s diary from that period, his primary daily activities were reading newspapers in Tokyo’s many tea rooms (which rented papers by the hour) and attending lectures and discussions at various sites around the city. Ueki seems to have been a particularly frequent visitor to the *Keiō gijuku enzetsukai*, and he left numerous descriptions of his attendance there.<sup>382</sup> Ueki was also associated with Nakae Chōmin, and had the opportunity to read Chōmin’s unpublished, draft vernacular translation of book 1 of Rousseau’s *Social Contract*. At the outset, Ueki was opposed to the opening of a popularly elected assembly, largely as a result of Itō

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<sup>381</sup> Fukuzawa, *Tsūzoku kokkenron*; Fukuzawa, *Tsūzoku minkenron*.

<sup>382</sup> Kim, *The Age of Arguments*.

Hirobumi's Spencerian influence. Following a brief period of imprisonment for the publication of a newspaper article which ran afoul of the Meiji government's Press Ordinance of 1875 (*Shinbun jōrei*), Ueki renounced evolutionism and committed himself to opposing the Meiji oligarchy and advocating for a popular assembly.

Although Ueki's numerous writings are interesting for their passion and rhetorical flourishes, his most important contribution may not have been his words themselves so much as it was the means by which he distributed them. Although he was a skilled rhetorician, what was important was simply that he demonstrated how "civilized" public speaking was to be practiced. This means not only the mechanics of appearing on the stage, but much more fundamentally, the reorganization of spaces of public performance in which speakers speak, an audience listens, considers, and responds interactively. Although his particular views did not necessarily agree with those of Fukuzawa (particularly concerning the wisdom of establishing a parliament early), his practices of speaking and producing knowledge absolutely did.

Unquestionably various art forms, from *nō* dramas to *kyōgen* (a comedic form of kabuki theater), puppet theater, and *rakugo* (a form of popular comic storytelling) had delivered esoteric political critique along with whatever other unintentional cultural impacts they may have had. What set *enzetsu* apart was its novel valorization of the political ideas of individuals, and the capacity of individuals to contribute to the production of political truths through the exchange of their individual ideas. The content of the political ideas that Ueki spread was perhaps less important than the example of an individual expressing his or her own thoughts. Particularly in rural communities removed from the cities, the appearance of the *minkenka* into their midst might well have been the first concrete demonstration of the practice of *enzetsu* that many witnessed.

The spread of the practice of *enzetsu* coincided with the diffusion of Fukuzawa's admonitions for people to practice learning in the expansive sense described above. Thus, part of learning was developing an aesthetic sensibility for *enzetsu*, and part of developing an aesthetic sensibility was to engage in the practice of *enzetsu*. The practice of *enzetsu*, as we have seen, was as much about the organization of the forum as it was to do with the rhetoric of the speech. In this way, the exemplary practice of *minkenka* like Ueki was what was translated by the villages rather than the language itself. The result of that translation was the spontaneous creation of societies for speech and debate.

The spread of the *enzetsukai* was not as a result of the deliberate planting of societies in new places by the *minkenka*. Rather, it was a process of translation undertaken by those who attended *enzetsu* meetings. The earliest formalized associations, like Fukuzawa's *Mita enzetsukai* and the Meirokusha, were astonishing in terms of their capacity to attract audiences. For example, the opening of Fukuzawa's *Mita enzetsukan* in 1875 attracted more than four hundred. Some meetings of Numa Morikazu's *Ōmeisha* society, founded in 1878, drew upwards of 1000.<sup>383</sup>

Inada Masahiro argues that the *enzetsu*, just like the early newspapers, were a kind of media which were responsible for disseminating the message of "popular rights." One particular event that he cites as important is the imposition of the restrictions on critique of the government in the press in 1875. From the earliest publications of the 1860s onwards, newspapers had grown progressively bolder in criticizing the government and making demands for reform. Particularly with the publication of Itagaki's "White Paper on the Establishment of a National Assembly" in 1874 by John Reddie Black's *Nisshin shinjishi* (日新真事誌), the state was wary of the influence

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<sup>383</sup> Inada, *Jiyūminkenundō no keifu*, 83.

of the press. Following the *shinbun jōrei*, a period of “exchanging the brush for the tongue” (*hitsuzetsu kōdai* 筆舌交代) ensued. Many journalists ceased to publish inflammatory articles, and instead made their views known in the various speech societies in the metropolitan areas. This resulted in a boost in participation for the *enzetsukai*, and also a sharpening of the critique pointed at the government in the speeches themselves.<sup>384</sup>

While Inada’s approach is useful in thinking about the relation of the newspapers to the speech societies, his concern with the dissemination of a particular message obscures the more important consequences that mediation itself produces. In other words, we should consider how the various available forms affected the ways in which the message could affect people.

The boom in participation in the speech societies caused by the *shinbun jōrei* meant that speeches were now more visible in society and perhaps more dramatic as a result of the more critical messages that began to appear. This drew greater numbers of people from outside of Tokyo to attend the meetings, which also meant that the practices of speechmaking were being transported outwards into increasingly rural parts of the country. In the first years of the spread of the *enzetsukai*, especially the larger gatherings had an aspect of carnival about them, where some people attended for the excitement of the atmosphere rather than any desire to learn or improve themselves (as Fukuzawa Yukichi might have wished). Regardless of people’s motivations for attending, general interest in rhetoric expanded throughout the late 1870s and early 1880s across Japan.

Nishi Amane was the first to coin a new term for the English word “rhetoric,” which he figured initially as *bunjigaku*, and later simply as *bungaku*. *Bungaku*, of course, is modern Japanese word for “literature,” and Nishi’s use reflects a new awareness of the unity of oral and

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<sup>384</sup> Ibid., 85-90.

written rhetoric.<sup>385</sup> Fukuzawa's *Kaigiben* was a very formal instruction manual for the structuring of space conducive to public speaking and debate. As attendances and the number of opportunities to hear public speaking multiplied in the mid-1870s, many people did develop a more sophisticated taste for effective or elegant public speaking. This was accompanied for many by a desire or need to practice it themselves as members of one of the many societies appearing in both urban and rural settings at this time.

We can find evidence of this in an explosion of literature on rhetoric and the activities certain famous speech societies from roughly 1877 onwards. That year, Ōzaki Yukio published another manual on public speaking, *Kokai enzetsuhō* (公会演説法), or "How to Speak at Public Meetings." In 1879, he published a second volume, and at least three other texts concerning speechmaking by other authors appeared as well. In 1880, the number of texts published grew to eight, including collections of speeches of well-known *enzetsuka*, a collection of *minkenka* speeches, and guides for eloquence. In 1882, more than 30 volumes appeared, which in one year alone exceeded the sum of all texts published in the history of Japan on the subject rhetoric up to that point. The boom in 1882 is perhaps a consequence of the Meiji government's promise to introduce a constitution and national assembly by 1890. In that context, books on public speaking and rhetoric continued to appear throughout the 1880s.<sup>386</sup> What these texts shared was not anything to do with the content of the speeches themselves. The compilations of speeches served as examples of rhetorically powerful speeches, well-organized presentations of ideas in general, or templates for emulation. Indeed, it was in this spirit that Fukuzawa included his mock debate in *Kaigiben*.

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<sup>385</sup> Tomasi, *Rhetoric in Modern Japan*, 45.

<sup>386</sup> *Ibid.*, 95-96.

A critical part of the ability to stir listeners, however, was a product of the format of the *enzetsukai* themselves as much as it was the content of the speeches. The desire to practice *enzetsu* was legitimated by the notion inherent in the format that individuals could freely deliver their own ideas, and that their own ideas were worthy of being heard by morally equal peers. The popularity of these gatherings, the impressions they left attendees with, and the engagement of people primarily resident outside the major cities led to the diffusion of the practices of the *enzetsukai* into progressively more remote areas. As Matsuzawa argues, following the introduction of the regulations prohibiting state employees from attending the *enzetsukai* in 1879, the *Ōmeisha* readjusted its recruitment efforts towards people living outside of Tokyo itself. By the 1880s, over 64 percent of its membership was rural.<sup>387</sup>

That it was the structure of the groups and their effects on knowledge that were disseminated can be seen in the manner in which the practices of existing groups were translated into altogether new associations. In other words, many of the groups that were established in the later 1870s and early 1880s especially were splinter groups from, or political wings of, existing societies. Others were created by members for slightly different but related purposes by existing members. Still others were founded by non-members, but were closely modeled the institutional structures of existing groups that the founders had perhaps visited or read about. The *Keiō gijuku enzetsukai*, for example, spawned four organizations for public speaking and debate within *Keiō gijuku*. *Keiō's Kaigisha* group opened up to people not associated with the school in 1878, and the *Mita seidankai* was created to give people from outside *Keiō* the opportunity to practice debate. This particular group in turn gave rise to the *Seidansha* in 1881, the *Kōyūkai* in 1882, and which then eventually became the *Jiyūtō*. The *Seidansha* split to create the *Meiji seidan*

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<sup>387</sup> Ibid., 209.

*enzetsukai* in 1882 as well. There were splits in this group's membership which resulted in still more new associations. Fukuzawa Yukichi himself was a member of several of these derivative groups in addition to the original *Mita enzetsukai*. Many of the groups that would become the first political parties had their roots in earlier speech associations and discussion societies besides the *Jiyūtō*.<sup>388</sup>

Associations therefore often spread either parallel to or out of one another. The establishment of a society for speech and discussion was likely to occasion the creation of separate association for the study of science and the arts, for example, because of the connection between empirical knowledge and socially accepted truths the association format implied. As we saw in Itsukaichi, in addition to the Arts and Sciences Discussion Group, these adjunct associations included the English Study Circle, as well as the Public Hygiene Assembly.<sup>389</sup> Many of the members of one society in one village might very well be members of several others simultaneously. All of the groups were focused on developing the capacities of the participants and the community through the techniques of critical deliberation.

While the dissemination of the speech and debating society format itself was critical to enabling the spread of associations, so was the spread of the subjectivity that made the format work. What most associations had in common was not their status as official political organizations necessarily, but rather their commitment to a broader conception of learning and

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<sup>388</sup> The *Jiyūtō* emerged out of Numa Morikazu's *Ōmeisha*, which was itself an evolution from an earlier study association created by Numa and a handful of associates.

<sup>389</sup> Hygiene was an important focus of many educators in the early Meiji period. The concern with public health was in part driven by new scientific knowledge about the spread of disease, but also by the negative moral judgments Western visitors to Japan made about certain practices being "barbaric." This included things like mixed bathing, public urination, and public breast feeding.



self-improvement that linked the cultural, social, and political together. As I have argued, the spread of the organizational techniques championed by the likes of Fukuzawa Yukichi was one condition of their emergence. These organizational techniques were important in reconstituting the standards by which knowledge was produced. The change in standards implied by the model of the speech societies meant that knowledge could be produced by anyone provided that they subjected their ideas to rigorous public critique. That is, they valorized the ideas of individuals as products of a sovereign consciousness which could be then elevated to the status of truth by the application of the appropriate techniques of argumentative verification.

As Fukuzawa suggested, training in both speaking and listening was imperative. Learning to accept the ideas of another as equally valid as one's own was precisely antithetical to what the *shinōkōshō* hierarchy embodied. The samurai class' defense of its various privileges, both in the Tokugawa era and in the Meiji period when they were being dismantled, were founded on the idea that they constituted the metaphorical "head" of society. Neither the stomach nor the hands think thoughts. This hierarchical categorization of different kinds of knowledges was intrinsic to the social order up to the beginning of the 1870s. Being trained to treat ideas as equally worthy, that is, to listen openly, was a critical skill, particularly for many of the former samurai attempting to find a new place for themselves in a post-Tokugawa society.

In the rural associations, however, learning to speak was perhaps the more daunting change. First came the development of the realization that their utterances had equal formal status with those of the former samurai class. Second, they developed the sense that if they adhered to the practices of vetting knowledge publically, their utterances had equal chances to be treated as true. Thus, the participants in speech societies came to recognize themselves as politically-interested individuals distinct from those around them. The societies imposed

responsibility for their thoughts and judgments on individuals alone. This responsibility was tested in confrontation with other, separate subjects who were responsible for making their own judgments and articulating their own distinct thoughts in opposition. This oppositional framework disciplined members in the practices of self-differentiation, and inculcated assumptions about the nature of both politics and society that had important consequences.

### **Legitimate Utterances**

Another feature of the epistemological framework underlying *enzetsu* and *tōron* was its inherent claim to universality. That is, knowledge produced anywhere, so long as it was subjected to the appropriate vetting, could be regarded as certain. In this respect, the vast number of scientific texts, technologies, and social institutions arriving from Europe and America were regarded by many as credible because they were perceived as having been subjected to open discussion and critique in their own contexts. Fukuzawa wrote in *An Outline of a Theory of Civilization* that “Civilization is an open-ended process...we cannot rest content with the standard of Western civilization.”<sup>390</sup> What he meant was that rather than dominating militarily, Japan could lead the world by its capacity to produce useful, objective knowledge.<sup>391</sup> In short, “civilized” cultural and scientific knowledge could arise from anywhere provided they met the correct criteria of validity.

For the people who absorbed the assumptions underpinning the *enzetsukai*, the potential universality of the knowledge they produced was not without consequence. Insofar as participants in the rural society cultivated a stronger sense of individuality, and the practices of

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<sup>390</sup> Fukuzawa, *An Outline of a Theory of Civilization*, 20.

<sup>391</sup> Of course, developing this capacity would also produce military power as a byproduct. This point was not lost on Fukuzawa or any of the other proponents of Western models of education.

knowledge production they engaged in treated all utterances as equal prior to the process of public critique, it became clear that the conclusions reached in their debates were ostensibly no less valid than those produced by the *Mita enzetsukai*, the *Ōmeisha*, or even the oligarchic Meiji government itself. So long as the conditions and procedures of open contestation were adhered to, any utterance could be universally accepted as valid regardless of who originally uttered it.<sup>392</sup> Any individual anywhere, even without “eloquence” or “personal wealth” as Fukuzawa suggested, could contribute to “civilization.” This was true not only for scientific principles, but political principles as well. In other words, anyone could produce a valid political utterance worthy of being heard. The procedures at the heart of the *enzetsu* associations thus not only solidified the individuality of the participants, but in so doing they consolidated their confidence in their own capacity to make important, legitimate, public utterances.

In this respect, the many draft constitutions written by speech and debating societies, the early political parties, and even private individuals were regarded as incredibly important by the people who produced them. Many were sent for publication; some were sent directly to the government for consideration. Newspapers were filled with the drafts and commentary on them. The drafters of these documents were adamant that their drafts were worthy of the attention of others concerned with the formation of the Meiji state, and that through the critique and contestation made possible by open publication, their drafts could be as practicable as anything the Meiji state might offer.

Although the *Ōmeisha* began a draft in 1880, the real explosion in debate over the form the constitution should take occurred after the political crisis of 1881. Following a long series of

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<sup>392</sup> Chōmin makes a similar point, linking this specifically to the practices of “freedom.” See Nakae, *Shinshi no jiyū*, 25-28.

conflicts with members of the Satsuma-Chōshū elite, Okuma Shigenobu instigated an attempt at reform by exposing state corruption and by proposing to institute a British-style parliament with immediate effect. This came about in an already tense period characterized of widespread criticism of the government in the papers and *enzetsu* associations following Okuma's revelation that the state was engaged in the clientelistic distribution of contracts for the development of territory in colonial Hokkaido. The redistribution of state property resulted not only in a massive financial loss for the treasury, but was tied to the deflationary economic policies of Finance Minister Matsutaka Masayoshi. These deflationary policies had a disproportionately negative effect on rural farmers because of the resultant collapse of commodity prices. Although Okuma's challenge resulted in his expulsion from the government, this conjuncture of challenges forced the hand of the Meiji oligarchs, who drafted a rescript for the Meiji Emperor to read. The rescript called for gradual political change, and cautioned the Emperor's "subjects" against radical action. However, it did promise to enact a constitution and introduce a national assembly by the end of the decade.<sup>393</sup>

As a result of this promise, people set about proposing ways in which it might be fulfilled. Irokawa notes that by the late 1960s, more than 30 separate proposals had been discovered. In 2005, Matsunaga Shozō, Ienaga Saburō, and Emura Eiichi listed 57 different texts which appeared between 1865 and 1890.<sup>394</sup> The actual number, including drafts produced but undiscovered or lost is surely even greater. The question is, what made this profusion possible, and why did so many people think it important to undertake such an exercise?

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<sup>393</sup> Jansen, *The Making of Modern Japan*, 385-386.

<sup>394</sup> Matsunaga and Emura, *Shinpen Meiji zenki no kenpō kosō*.

It is remarkable especially in contrast to the events of 1868. At the enthronement of the Meiji Emperor, the leaders of the Satsuma-Chōshū domain coalition that had defeated the Tokugawa forces in the battle of Toba-Fushimi in January of that year had the Emperor read what is known as the “Charter Oath,” which consisted of five promises. The very first was that “deliberative assemblies shall be widely established and all matters decided by open discussion.”<sup>395</sup> This promise did not instigate a widespread discussion of the forms of deliberative assembly. In fact, the promise was largely ignored by the state and by most people until the mid- to late-1870s.<sup>396</sup>

The difference in conditions has two aspects. First, of course, factual knowledge about the European experiences of constitutions and parliaments was widespread by 1881. Many people even had firsthand experience of deliberative assembly through their participation in the *enzetsukai*. Second, but perhaps more importantly, the intervening decade coincided with the development of individual self-belief in the capacity to make intelligible public statements deserving of argumentative consideration outside of the class framework. That is, many farmers came to understand that their correctly articulated utterances could count equally with those of former samurai.

What, then, did they utter? Or perhaps more accurately, we should ask how they translated their experiences in the speech societies into formal rules for state politics? Among the surviving draft constitutions written by private associations or individuals (*shigikenpō* 私擬憲法), the Itsukaichi Constitution written by Chiba Takusaburō is among the most well-known.

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<sup>395</sup> Notehelter, “The Meiji Restoration,” 7.

<sup>396</sup> Indeed, the vast majority of the texts gathered by Matsunaga, Ienaga, and Emura are from the early 1880s.

Chiba began writing his draft in the winter of 1880, but he drew great inspiration from a copy of the *Ōmeisha* draft constitution he received in January 1881 at a joint meeting of the associations of Musashi and Sagami.<sup>397</sup> The constitution was completed at some point later that year before Chiba, a teacher's assistant at the local school, left Itsukaichi following the state prohibition on teachers' participation in associations or political activities.

As Irokawa says, the draft is evidently written by someone with passion, but without formal legal training. The first chapter concerning the Imperial house is copied entirely from the *Ōmeisha* constitution. The copying of this section also causes some confusion by contradicting later claims about private rights and the powers of the national assembly. Irokawa criticizes the draft for its inclusion of "inappropriately mundane" content, like an article on public sanitation. The major demands that the constitution makes are for a bicameral legislature with an open lower house and an upper house drawn from an elite class of those who have served the government for a considerable period in a high position, such as lower house members who have served 3 terms, or state bureaucrats who have attained the 3<sup>rd</sup> administrative rank or above. Also included in this group are members of the imperial household or the aristocratic class (*kizoku*), though interestingly Chiba reverses the order of the *Ōmeisha* draft to put these categories at the bottom of the five listed. He does not make the categories more inclusive, however, so what this inversion signifies is unclear. More specific demands are for an end to capital punishment (perhaps related to some of the debates held by the Itsukaichi Debate and Speech Society, but also found in Ueki Emori's draft), and the rather cryptic provision that the national assembly

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<sup>397</sup> Irokawa, *The Culture of the Meiji Period*, 110.

“...shall have the power to argue resolutely against, remand, and prohibit...” any governmental action which defies morality, equality, or individual freedom.<sup>398</sup>

### **The Constitutional Contradiction**

A curious difference between several of the draft constitutions lies in the ways in which they address the question of who is, and who is not, formally counted as a citizen. First, the various constitutions use different language when speaking about the people the document applies to. For example, the phrase used in the Itsukaichi constitution is either *Nihon kokumin* (日本國民) or *oyoso Nihon kokumin* (凡ソ日本國民), while the *Ōmeisha* draft more frequently uses the phrase *Nihon jinmin* (日本人民). The Meiji Constitution emphasizes subjecthood -not citizenship- in its use of the phrase *Nihon shinmin* (日本臣民). As we saw in the first translational moment, the difference between *kokumin* and *jinmin* is the difference between placing an emphasis on the collective as opposed to the individual. *Kokumin* asserts a kind of political unity that *jinmin* does not.

Regardless of the terminology, an interesting set of differences between the various constitutions lies in the manner in which the drafts do, or more frequently do not, specify who the *kokumin*, *jinmin*, or *shinmin* are. The *Ōmeisha* draft, as well as the Meiji constitution that went into force in 1890, leave the question of belonging to be settled by past and future law. Ueki Emori’s draft seems to make the same kind of deferral. The *Kōjunsha* association’s intervention, in which Fukuzawa Yukichi was involved, only bothers to discuss the roles of the Emperor, the cabinet (*naikaku* 内閣), and the organization of parliament without specifying

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<sup>398</sup> Ibid., 111.

anything about the contours of political belonging.<sup>399</sup> The Itsukaichi draft answers the question directly, but nonetheless takes the category of being “Japanese” (日本人) as natural and self-explanatory. All of these place limits on who can ultimately serve as a member of either house of the national assembly, but hardly address the question of who can vote, who civil rights apply to, and who of those at the margins (both geographical and cultural) will be counted.<sup>400</sup>

In Chiba Takusaburō’s Itsukaichi constitution, being counted as a *Nihonkokumin* meant being an “average” resident of Japan, a resident of a foreign country born to two “average” Japanese parents, a foreigner who had been naturalized, or others who have been granted the status by law.<sup>401</sup> Curiously, however, Chiba does not bother to specify who is and is not “average” or “normal” (*oyoso* 凡ソ), nor how the naturalization process might work. While this lack of specificity could be attributed to Chiba’s lack of legal training, a better explanation becomes clear when considered in parallel with the *Ōmeisha* draft and the Meiji constitution.

The *Ōmeisha* draft carefully enumerates and describes the fundamental, natural rights of citizens, but it too does not specify who is and who is not a citizen in the first place. It employs the phrase *oyoso Nihon jinmin* (凡ソ日本人民), or “ordinary Japanese citizens” in the first article concerning the rights of the people, but only insofar as to say that under the constitution, all of those people are equal. Other drafts make similar statements on the natural equality of

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<sup>399</sup> The *Kōjunsha* draft appeared in the *Yūbinhōchi shinbun*. See *Kōjunsha, Shikōkenpo soan*, 198-201.

<sup>400</sup> In the debates of the time, these categories were designated as *seiken* (政權) and *minken* (民權) respectively. *Sei* (政) means “politics” or “government.” *Min* (民), as we saw in the first and second moments, means, “a people,” or those subject to government. As we saw with Fukuzawa, *seiken* means “political rights,” and *minken* means “civil rights.”

<sup>401</sup> Chiba’s phrase for “two Japanese parents” is: 凡ソ日本國內ニ生ル者.



people followed by silence on the specifics of voting rights or other boundaries of political inclusion and exclusion. While they specify rights, they do not specify who the “ordinary Japanese citizens” are and are not.

There are two ways of interpreting this omission. First, it is possible that given the universalizing nature of the citizenship implied by the practices of the speech and debating societies, it should be obvious that all are permitted to participate. This, however, is almost certainly not what was meant. For example, Katō Hiroyuki, with a delightful obliviousness to contradiction, argues in “An Outline of the Constitutional Political System” (*Rippō seitai ryaku* 立法整体略) that “Everyone under heaven without distinction has the right [to vote for elected officials] by nature. However, there is no country that does not limit these rights with a few rules. Nobody argues that women, children, the mentally ill, or those ignorant of the system...should be given this right.”<sup>402</sup> That is, he accepts universality within the confines of an unstated and what seems to him to be an obvious definition of particular kinds of human essence.

The second possibility, clearly articulated in the Meiji constitution, is that citizenship was to be determined by existing or future law.<sup>403</sup> Although this made it a subject fit for the new parliament to take up, before that the confines of who was and was not an *oyoso Nihon kokujin* or *Nihon shinmin*, that is, an ordinary citizen of Japan, had already been legally specified. The record of who was and was not included did certainly exist, and it was to some extent organized by the law of the Meiji state. In 1872, when the state implemented the abolition of the domain system and ended distinctions between samurai, farmer, artisan, and merchant, it also formally

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<sup>402</sup> Katō, “Rippō seitai ryaku,” 161-163.

<sup>403</sup> Chapter 2, article 18: 日本臣民タル要件ハ法律ノ定ムル所ニ依ル. Available on the National Diet Library’s website: <http://www.ndl.go.jp/constitution/etc/j02.html>

subsumed Tokugawa practices of delimiting populations. It enshrined the *koseki* system (戸籍制度) of household registration as the core of political belonging. I suggest that the state's embrace of this system was only partially organized by law because the system had a long, long history. It was deeply ingrained in social practice and the everyday consciousness of people at all levels of society. The obviousness which Katō appealed to in his framing of “all under heaven” was juridically coded in the *koseki* system. The fact that this system existed, and that it could be referred to without mention as the obvious source of determinations on who was and was not included under the Meiji state invited a paradox between the universalism represented by the constitutions themselves and longstanding practices of inclusion and exclusion.

## **Conclusion**

The translational moment initiated by the speech societies occurred spontaneously and was characterized by a redistribution of bodies in space, a reorganization of knowledge production, and proposals for a rewriting of the roles of politics. The language of works like *Kaigiben* and the numerous other texts concerning rhetoric that followed was important not necessarily because it presented a cohesive definition of what the ideal citizen should do or what the ideal polity would look like, but because it transformed the relationship between standards of knowledge, concrete social rituals, and the physical distribution of community. The spread of the speech and debate societies was made possible in significant part by the spread of knowledge about how to organize and orchestrate the meetings in terms of the distribution of bodies in relation to one another. This attention to the physical experience of participation facilitated the related experiences of a sense of individuality and public agency. In this set of circumstances, the participants in the societies came to recognize their capacity to make public utterances that were

universally intelligible and worthy of public consideration. This changed their expectations about what government could be and what it should do.

This change in the meaning of intelligibility by the mid-1880s is extraordinary when considered in relation to the practices of the Tokugawa order and the Meiji state of the early 1870s. In the Tokugawa order, the standard by which an utterance could be regarded as intelligible, and the question of how it was to be interpreted, were inseparable from the question of where the person making the utterance fit in the hierarchy of classes and ranks. For those at the lowest end of this hierarchy, the capacity to speak intelligibly was simply not recognized. As we saw with Sakura Sōgorō, attempting to do so could result in one's crucifixion.

Part of what made the change in standards possible was the end of the threat of violence for challenging them. The end of the threat of violence coincided with the end of the samurai class' capacity to reproduce itself economically in the face of the challenges of opening the ports to international exchange. These difficulties in the material aspects class reproduction also undermined the reproduction of the systems of knowledge that supported them and which they supported. As a result, the exploration of new epistemological forms was not only a possibility, but in fact a necessity.

Although the standards for what could count as an intelligible utterance certainly changed, and undoubtedly contributed to the relative viability of the constitutional system that emerged in the years following 1890, many questions remained. Fukuzawa Yukichi's translations of Wayland and Buckle provided no explicit guidance about who should count as a citizen. The speech and debating societies were based on an epistemology which in principle made political discussion universally open and intelligible. That is, anyone who was capable of participating in the exchange of ideas could be regarded as a viable citizen. In principle, this

would make all residents of Japan, including the lowest peasants, women, and members of the former *eta* or *hinin* classes theoretically capable of citizenship provided they attained a socially accepted standard of learning.<sup>404</sup>

This was not the aesthetic experience of politics that prevailed, however. In order to attempt to form an answer as to why, we must consider the impurity of the translational moment. The transformation of practices is of course only one part of a much more complicated story. The development of a consciousness of individuality and the acceptance of public debate as the criterion for utterances counting as valid knowledge did not mean that existing standards altogether disappeared, or that the consciousness of individuality did not coexist and overlap with other notions of collective belonging, both new and old. While the material decline of the samurai classes was a critical part of the conditions of possibility for change in both notions of individuality and standards of knowledge, this does not mean that the memories of samurai authority or the training that millions of former farmers, artisans, and merchants received under that authority were immediately effaced. In fact, the most curious feature of many of the draft constitutions is that they do not explicitly address the question of who is or is not included in the rights and duties of citizenship at all. That is, the most radical constitutions operate on aesthetic standards which at once broke down old distinctions between valid and invalid speech and yet validated the old standards of who is included in the political community itself.

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<sup>404</sup> This standard might well have been made practical by the establishment of the national education system in 1872.

Translational Moments| Four



**Image 5:** Kishida Toshiko appearing in public. From the cover of Marnie Anderson's *A Place in Public*.

## The Appearance of Women and the Transformation of the Confucian Family

The five worst infirmities that afflict women are indocility, discontent, slander, jealousy, and silliness. Without any doubt, these five infirmities are found in seven or eight of every ten women, and it is they that cause women to be inferior to men.... Such is the stupidity of her character that it is incumbent upon her, in every detail, to distrust herself and obey her husband.<sup>405</sup>

-Kaibara Ekken

If it is true that men are better than women because they are stronger, why aren't our sumo wrestlers in the government?<sup>406</sup>

-Kishida Toshiko

### Introduction

The great irony of many of the speech and debating societies' activities in the 1870s and 1880s is that the philosophical assumptions which supported their beliefs in the capacity to make intelligible and valid public utterances also allowed them to make utterances which denied the same capacity to others. The most glaring example of this is in the treatment (or non-treatment) of women in many of the societies' draft constitutions that appeared after 1881.<sup>407</sup> Despite an implicit universalism in their conceptions of citizenship based on public appearance, most of the draft constitutions took the decidedly anti-universalist position that women would

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<sup>405</sup> "Silliness" in this case might also be translated as "stupidity." Fukuzawa gives the full Japanese version of this passage where "silliness" is given as *chie asaki* 知恵浅き. Kaibara, *The Greater Learning for Women*, 261.

<sup>406</sup> Sievers, *Flowers in Salt*.

<sup>407</sup> Marnie Anderson observes that only 4 out of more than 40 draft constitutions that she has reviewed even mention women political status. *A Place in Public*, 33-34.

never be capable of rational public speech, and therefore never be capable of democratic citizenship either.<sup>408</sup> How did this apparent contradiction arise?

It is especially puzzling given the fact that recent scholarship in both English and in Japanese has shown how deeply involved women were in the spread of public speaking in the 1870s and 1880s.<sup>409</sup> There can be no doubt that many women experienced the same kind of public equality that men did in these venues. Indeed, their appearance on stages and in the debating halls was only one part of a much broader emergence of female citizens across Meiji society which allowed men and women to encounter one another in new ways. For many women of the lower economic classes, their appearance in factories as laborers was another way of enacting a new equality between duty-bound individuals. These events were part of a translational moment in which an emergent masculine citizenship was metaphorized differently by women appearing where they had not been and did not belong.

Despite the appearance of women in new places and their saying of new things, these transformed experiences of public equality did not result in lasting political emancipation or even full civil equality with men. On one hand, the appearance of women as legitimate public

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<sup>408</sup> Ueki Emori is a possible exception to this. His draft constitution is similar to others in that he does not explicitly specify who is and is not a citizen. He claims simply that “Those within the political society of Japan are Japanese citizens.” However, perhaps more than any other of the *minkenka*, he not only advocated on behalf of women, but regularly engaged with them in debate and discussion. Furthermore, in addition to women, other groups were similarly excluded. Former *eta* or *hinin*, the indigenous peoples of Okinawa, the Ainu, to name only a few, were also excluded from the domain of intelligible speech. Nakae Chōmin spoke to the issue of the exclusion of the former *eta* class, though he seems to have emphasized the civil dimensions of exclusion rather than the political. Ueki “Nihonkoku kokkenpō, 184”; See also Moris-Suzuki, *Re-Inventing Japan*, 188.

<sup>409</sup> See Patessio, *Women and Public Life in Early Modern Japan*; Miyagi and Ōi, *Nihon joseishi*; Kim, *The Age of Visions and Arguments*; Copeland, *Lost Leaves*; Walthall, “Devoted Wives/Unruly Women”; Sievers, “Feminist Criticism in Japanese Politics in the 1880s: The Experience of Kishida Toshiko.” Anderson, *A Place in Public*.

speakers and as economically productive workers outside of the home affirmed a citizenship rooted in the equal capacity to act publically. On the other hand, this citizenship was also constrained by longstanding ideas about the relationship between women and the family, and the family and the state. Understanding how this apparently contradictory figuration of citizenship took shape helps us to understand the limits of the translational moment.

Crucially, it was precisely the contradiction of the new public role for women with retrenchment of the Confucian discourse of the family that advanced nascent Japanese capitalism in important ways. The moment of equality created by female speakers and laborers contributed to the freeing of millions more women to either work themselves or to play a role in cultivating a new managerial class through child-rearing and new forms of domestic labor. It performed an important ideological function in binding women to the factory and legitimizing the non-democratic aspects of the Meiji state and the emperor system through the idea of the *kazoku kokka* (家族国家), or “family state.”

Therefore, I want to examine the distinctions between civil rights (*minken*) and political rights (*seiken*) that emerged with women’s appearances as public speakers and in the growth of a predominantly female labor force in the textile industry.<sup>410</sup> As Mara Patessio has correctly argued, the practices of citizenship that pioneering women like the well-known public speaker, author, and popular rights activist Kishida Toshiko engaged in the late 1870s and early 1880s were critical to the development of ideas and practices that made later kinds of feminist

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<sup>410</sup> Marnie Anderson’s work considers the issue of gender in relation to broader debates about citizenship and political participation. She discusses the debates about *senken* (選権), or voting rights, in relation to household headship in particular. *Senken* and *seiken* as I discuss it are synonymous in many respects.



association and political activity possible.<sup>411</sup> Nonetheless, there was a discernable hesitance or reserve in the calls for equality that many women articulated and practiced. Despite the optimism that the egalitarian universalism embedded in the practices of the speech and debate societies might have inspired, by the end of the 1880s, many women enacted a limited and rigidly gendered kind of citizenship.

I will begin by briefly examining Confucian ideas on women and their concrete manifestations in late Edo and early Meiji. I will then move to explore in more detail the content of Kishida Toshiko's public speeches to draw out the ways in which a persistent Confucian morality interacted with the critique of Meiji society's treatment of women. This interaction made it possible to defend women's *minken* (civil rights), but to do so separately from their *seiken* (political rights). Finally, I will show how this new separation of *minken* and *seiken* rooted in Confucian visions of the family took hold in society more broadly, notably in the rapidly expanding textile industry. As silk and cotton production was reorganized on the basis of capitalist economic relations, many women recognized both the validity of their appearance in public as workers, yet and remained bound by Confucian constraints on that validity similar to those found in Kishida's speeches. Ultimately, I argue that the growth of Meiji capitalism was facilitated both by the breaks that Kishida and the workers in the silk mills created through their appearance, and the smoothing-over of those breaks with the ideology of the Confucian family.

### **Confucianism and Women in Japan**

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<sup>411</sup> Patessio, *Women and Public Life in Early Meiji*, 175. Many accounts of Japanese feminism still suggest that a true women's rights movement only took shape in the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century with Hiratsuka Raichō's founding of the women's literary journal *Seitō*, or "Bluestocking." The name was of course adapted from the English Blue Stockings Society of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The formation of the New Woman Association (*shin fujin kyōkai* 新婦人協会) in 1923 is often cited as the beginning of the formalized the struggle for women's rights, despite ample evidence locating it in the early Meiji period.

Late Tokugawa and early Meiji Confucian thinking limited the horizons of many women's worlds. While many Confucian sources did not speak at length about the role of women specifically, they certainly did establish definitions of male and female subjectivity in their extensive discussions of the family. In the neo-Confucian cosmology which linked the natural world, moral behavior, and political order, the family was taken to be the constitutive unit of human society. The "five relationships" (*gorin* 五輪) which formed the basis of much of Confucian morality, specified proper conduct between husband and wife, parents and children, siblings, friends, and rulers and subjects. A parallel existed between women's deference to husbands, children's expected deference to parents, and subjects' expected deference to political authority.

These relations were certainly hierarchical, but it would be mistaken to say that their purpose was the management of individual behavior only. This set of intersecting relationships specified not only codes of conduct for the people inhabiting each of these "names," or roles, but established the framework which would ensure social harmony. Thus, acting as a filial son or daughter was important not necessarily because it was a good-in-itself, beneficial, or satisfying for the individual (it often was not), but because it was essential to the reproduction of social harmony that was itself part of a broader natural harmony. At the most basic level, harmony within the family was the primary objective of moral practice. Harmony within the family spilled over into harmony within the village. This cascade proceeded upwards towards a universal harmony of "all under heaven" (*tenka* 天下).

Within this broader framework, the Tokugawa political order established a particularly rigid patriarchy linked to the ideological requirements of the domain system of economic production and the *shinōkōshō* hierarchy that allocated roles within that system. Tokugawa

Ieyasu's consolidation of power in the early 17<sup>th</sup> century was predicated on a continuation of existing models of the hereditary transmission of territorial authority and military capacity. Heredity was patrilineal and primogenitary, which meant that having sons was of paramount importance for domain lords.<sup>412</sup> In the peace of the Tokugawa period, the reproduction of stable political relations therefore depended on the maintenance of stable domains bound to the shogunate by hereditary, male-male relationships of loyalty. To this end, people at the higher levels of samurai class status practiced concubinage well into the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>413</sup> This system gave concubines a very distinct legal status which ensured that any sons born to a concubine could be recognized as the legitimate heir to the domain.<sup>414</sup> According to Sievers, this system viewed women as property which provided "borrowed wombs."<sup>415</sup> That is, the concubinage system made many women resident in samurai households an important part of the economic potential of the domain only insofar as they were necessary to produce heirs.<sup>416</sup>

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<sup>412</sup> Sugiyama-Lebra, *Above the Clouds*, 202.

<sup>413</sup> By the 19<sup>th</sup> century, some wealthy merchants practiced concubinage as well in order to ensure the transfer of their property. The upper echelons of the merchant class were also envious of the prestige accorded to samurai houses, and attempted to emulate their practices in many respects.

<sup>414</sup> Sugiyama-Lebra, *Above the Clouds*, 204.

<sup>415</sup> Sievers, *Flowers in Salt*, 4. Sievers notes that the first use of the phrase "borrowed womb, or *hara wo karimono* (腹を借り物) appeared in Ishida Mitoku's *Gogin wagashu* of 1661. For more on the phrase's provenance see: Ackroyd, "Women in Feudal Japan."

<sup>416</sup> Fukuzawa Yukichi discusses this particular phrase as well, and offers a similar analogy. He likens wives under this system to rice cookers, which serve a functional purpose and can be discarded when they do not perform their required service. Similarly, he calls concubines "pots" which can exist in the same cupboard with the "rice cooker" and used for the same purpose. Fukuzawa, "On Japanese Women," 48; Fukuzawa, "Nihon fujinron," 66.

An ideological correlate of this system was the widespread belief in the slogan *danson johi* (男尊女卑), or “respect men, despise women.”<sup>417</sup> This was tied both to the economic role that women played in Tokugawa samurai houses and the Confucian discourses which structured the political order. Unlike women in farmer or merchant households, samurai women had little control over the upbringing of children or the management of the household. Whereas farm women’s labor was essential to the sustenance of the household, and merchant wives and daughters would be expected to work alongside husbands and brothers, higher-ranking samurai women were prevented from performing much economically useful labor or assisting their husbands in the performance of their administrative or military duties. Because they were not expected to perform useful labor, many women were not educated to be able to do so. In girlhood, samurai women might be trained in tea ceremony or music in order to enhance their marriage prospects somewhat, but no training in mathematics or economic matters, to say nothing of everyday politics, was provided.

Women of the lower classes might receive some such education to assist in their productive roles. Merchant daughters would likely be able to read and write at a basic level, as well as to perform some mathematical calculations or use an abacus. The daughters of farmers were less likely to receive formal instruction in letters as it was their physical labor that was primarily required by the family to feed itself.

The good of the family, though, was best provided for by girls making suitable marriages. Confucian morality supported the choice of husbands by parents. In the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup>

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<sup>417</sup> This is Siever’s translation, and it is used very frequently in English-language discussions of women’s circumstances in the Tokugawa period. Interestingly, though, the characters *son* 尊 and *hi* 卑 could also be read as “valuable” and “base” respectively, suggesting an economic connotation.

century, this might mean that wealthy daughters would be wed to lower ranking samurai in an exchange of status for capital. This provided a small degree of social mobility for some families as the economic situation of the samurai class grew increasingly desperate in the years leading up to the restoration. For most families at the lower end of the hierarchy, simply delivering a daughter into a marriage which did not end in divorce was regarded as a success as it meant one less mouth to feed. It was widely believed that too much education would make girls *namaiki*, or “willful,” “irreverent,” or “cheeky.” As a result, families saw educating their daughters as a liability not only because it might take them out of the house when they reached an age at which they could be performing useful work, but because it would damage the family’s capacity to unload the daughter later by marriage. To make a “harmonious” household, therefore, daughters were subservient to fathers and brothers in every respect. Of course, women who were uneducated and provided no useful labor except for the bearing of children (in samurai families), or were viewed as economic liabilities (in very poor families especially) were not recognized as subjects capable of independent speech.

The text that perhaps most clearly articulated the place of women in this system was the *Onna daigaku* (女大学), or *The Greater Learning for Women*, which appeared in 1672.<sup>418</sup> Kaibara Ekken, a well-known naturalist and Confucian moralist, created the text as part of his broader efforts to spread Confucian learning to broader audiences. He wrote in a relatively simple manner, and intended texts like *Onna daigaku* to be used in Confucian academies and for the teaching of women in wealthy merchant or samurai families.<sup>419</sup> The title speaks to the importance many placed on the work. One of the key texts of the Confucian canon is entitled

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<sup>418</sup> Kaibara, *Onna Daigaku*.

<sup>419</sup> De Barry and Tucker. "Confucian Revisionists," 255-256.

*The Greater Learning*, or *Daigaku* (大学). Zhu Xi's 12<sup>th</sup> century commentaries on the text are one of the pillars of what we now recognize as neo-Confucianism. None of the Four Books that make up the foundation of Chinese Confucian thought offers explicit moral prescriptions for women alone. Ekken, an interpreter of Zhu Xi for Japanese audiences, provided the first example of Confucian thought which explicitly defines women's moral role and their place in the broader Confucian worldview. In his view, "Such is the stupidity of [woman's] character that it is incumbent upon her, in every detail, to distrust herself and obey her husband."

Ultimately, the exhortations in Ekken's text were meant to reinforce the view that the family was the irreducible unit which composes the base of society. For example, Ekken writes that: "A woman has no other lord; she must look to her husband as her lord and must serve him with all worship and reverence, not despising or thinking lightly of him. The Way of the woman is to obey her man." This reference to the Way points towards the broader moral and cosmic significance of this kind of obedience. In Zhu Xi's language, the "Way" was more than simply a set of guidelines or one path to an objective among several possibilities. Nature has a "Way" which it cannot help but follow. Similarly, people have a Way which best accords with their nature. In this sense, "The Way of the woman" is to act in harmony with her essential, natural constitution. This Way harmonizes with the nature of men as husbands, families as units of the village, and villages as the units of the state.<sup>420</sup>

Although other Confucian thinkers like Sōrai and his student Daizai Shundai criticized Zhu Xi's cosmological interpretation of the Way, it nonetheless had central importance in

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<sup>420</sup> Yamauchi, "Kaibara Ekken: The Founder of Japanese Neo-Confucianism," 97-110; See also Tucker, *Kaibara Ekken*, 108.

Tokugawa views of moral rightness.<sup>421</sup> Returning to a position closer to that of Confucius himself, Sōrai and Shundai argued that the Way was not written into nature, but was the product of the great Chinese Sage Kings' discovery of the methods for creating social harmony. Although the Way was conventional in this sense, the distinction that they drew was essentially one between the barbarism that they believed existed before Zhao and Shun, and the harmony that existed afterwards. Moreover, the conventions that constituted the Way were interlinked. That is, culture (*bun* or *wen* 文), ritual, morality, and politics were a system that required each piece to be carried out correctly by all of society's members. Therefore, regardless of whether the Way was cosmologically grounded or understood in terms of convention, it was nonetheless the foundation of one's moral and social duties.

Because it does not change over time (either because it is written into nature itself or because it is the best possible set of conventions for living together), the Way is the fundamental essence and limit of subjectivity. For Tokugawa-era women in particular, this meant that life essentially had three stages. As a girl, she was to obey her male relatives. As a wife, she was to obey her husband. If her husband were to die, she was to obey her eldest son. Women who had no parents, husbands, or sons had few options in Tokugawa society. Because women were viewed as useful primarily in reproductive terms, women without families were an unintelligible figure to the samurai administrative apparatus, men more generally, and even women who viewed them from within families. This meant that a woman with no husband or children could

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<sup>421</sup> Flueckiger, "Human Nature and the Way in the Philosophy of Daizai Shundai," 215. Sorai himself wrote: "Since humanity was born into the world, where there have been things, there have been names... When it came to things having no form, because ordinary people could not discern them, the sages established names for them. Thereafter, even ordinary people could perceive and comprehend them. That activity was called 'teaching by names.'"

expect very little support elsewhere in society. The system of primogenitary inheritance so privileged men as the carriers of the family line that upon the death of a husband, it was not the wife that had a right to the property, but the next living male relative. This could mean a son, but it could also mean another relative of the husband's.

Thus, the political structure of Tokugawa society as a set of semi-autonomous domains united by relationships of loyalty exclusively between men marginalized women socially, politically, and economically. The need to produce male heirs to continue these male relationships required women to produce sons, but because heredity was patrilineal, it mattered little which woman produced a son for a high-ranking samurai or lord of a domain. The concubinage system legally defined women as replaceable, and reduced their social worth solely to their reproductive capacity. The essentialism of the Confucian worldview made change difficult.

Nonetheless, the conditions which supported this ideology began to break down somewhat in the changing economic situation of late Tokugawa society.<sup>422</sup> The gradual impoverishment of the samurai class as a result of problems with the rice-based economy, as well as the increasing wealth of the merchant class and their growing power over samurai houses deeply in debt to them contributed to a need for low-ranking samurai women to supplement the household income through productive labor. Women of merchant houses which had prospered had new opportunities for education as a result of increased freedom from labor demands and the financial resources of their fathers or husbands. Of course, the shock of the arrival of Perry's ships in 1853 destabilized the situation further. The beginning of trade with European countries

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<sup>422</sup> For more on these breakdowns and changes in subjectivity, see Najita, *Visions of Virtue in Tokugawa Japan*; Hirano, *The Politics of Dialogic Imagination*.



(besides the Dutch who were already established in Nagasaki) created export markets for new products and greatly impacted industries which produced goods that could be imported from abroad from 1858 onward. The beginning of the Meiji period was a continuation, and in some aspects, an intensification, of these tendencies.

The shogunate's efforts at control in this period were largely organized in terms of the physical distribution and regulation of bodies. The treatment of women within the household was certainly part of this. For women who were either expelled or escaped from the family system often wound up in the pleasure districts of castle towns. In Edo, places like Asakusa teemed with people from various segments of society that were out of place. For women, however, this often meant being forced into prostitution or other kinds of sexual performance. The state's attempts to regulate the "floating world" (*ukiyo* 浮世) of geisha houses and brothels was in part directed at keeping samurai out of places that did not suit the Spartan ethical code demanded by Tokugawa Confucianism (samurai men had a Way as well, of course). Likewise, the family system as it was constructed in state Confucian ideological discourse was in part designed to keep women in the household to separate them from this disorderly, bodily world. As economic changes continued, however, this separation became increasingly tenuous.

The Confucian discourse of the family remained the foundation of society even after the collapse of the shogunate, however it was required to change to accommodate new material conditions. The primary measure taken by the Meiji government to centralize political authority was to do away with the four classes and the domain system itself in 1872. With this change, male relationships of loyalty no longer determined political authority. Its new rationale, following the defeat of Tokugawa forces in the Boshin war, was the monopoly on the capacity to use violence. The elimination of the domain system and the abolition of samurai privilege

undermined the importance of birth and heredity. This, of course, also undermined the rationale for concubinage, and necessitated the re-situation of women within the structure family and society more broadly. The importance of upper class women as “borrowed wombs” was no longer primary. The end of the stipend for all samurai meant that more productive labor which resulted in cash income was required of the household to maintain itself. This created an opportunity for women to contribute in new ways. Some of these ways required education.

### **Nationality, Citizenship, and *Koseki***

The Confucian concept of the family was ultimately foundational to the emerging moral and legal discourses of nationality and citizenship bound together in the *koseki*, or household registration system. Changing internal and external constraints forced a confrontation between the Confucian family model which had governed the Tokugawa relationship between individual people and the state, and the new need to distinguish Japanese from non-Japanese in the legal and political senses. The confrontation between the Confucian family, legal nationality, and citizenship also figured the ethnic nation in new ways. The result of the intersection between family, law, and ethnos resulted in the constitution of nationality and citizenship in terms that excluded women. This offers a partial explanation for the contradiction between the logic of universal citizenship implied in the speaking and debating societies’ public utterances, and the limits on citizenship implied by their draft constitutions.

What allowed the draft constitutions to avoid specifying the conditions for citizenship was the existence of the household registration, or *koseki*, system (戸籍制度) as the primary mechanism for determining one’s status within the state. This method of census-taking was the cornerstone of the system of patrilineal inheritance for hundreds of years. The household registration system has roots as far back as the 6<sup>th</sup> century, but was fundamentally a product of

the Tokugawa shogunate's efforts to consolidate and centralize control over taxation and to regulate the relative strength of the domains. In contrast to the census models of many European countries which counted the individual as the basic unit of society, Chinese and Japanese registrations systems, grounded in Confucian ideas about nature and morality, are based on the family.<sup>423</sup> The household registry is an official record of all births, deaths, marriages, divorces, and place of residence for all families under the authority of the state. The *koseki* system remains in place today as the primary means of measuring the demographics of the citizenry of Japan. The Tokugawa system was actually comprised of several different, overlapping registers, but most consequential was the *ninbetsuchō* (人別帳), or the "Register of Human Categories."<sup>424</sup> The characters *nin* 人 and *betsu* 別 literally mean "person" and "divide" or "separate" on their own. This was the official record of each family's status in the *shinōkōshō* hierarchy, and therefore was of critical importance to the shogunate both practically and ideologically.

In 1871, the Meiji state consolidated the registration system into the single *jinshin koseki* (壬申戸籍) model. It did so in order to abolish the domains, consolidate central authority, and to strip the samurai class of its status. In Chapman's words the reform made the state "legible and controllable." The consequence, however, was that registration in the *koseki* was the "...sole means of determining legal status as Japanese...." until the passage of the Nationality Law in 1899.<sup>425</sup> The problem of "nationality" was an altogether new one. In the context of a shogunate

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<sup>423</sup> Chapman, "Geographies of Self and Other: Mapping Japan through the Koseki."

<sup>424</sup> Ibid., 3.

<sup>425</sup> Ibid., 6. The Nationality Law created the category of *kokuseki*, which more or less corresponds to the English category of "nationality" as the state of which one is a citizen. It emerged in response to the need for Japanese to travel abroad, as well as to Japan's colonial endeavors in Taiwan, Hokkaido, and Okinawa.

which actively prohibited any domain subject from leaving the islands of Japan without shogunate permission, the distinction between being “Japanese” or something else was relatively unimportant. Early conceptions of Japanese culture and language being distinct from Chinese emerged through the philological approach to Confucian studies led by Jinsai and Sorai.<sup>426</sup> However, nationality as a legal concept only emerged after Japan’s renewed encounters with Europe and America.<sup>427</sup>

The earliest direct reference to “nationality” was in Fukuzawa Yukichi’s translation of John Stuart Mill’s definition in chapter 16 of *Considerations on Representative Government*. That definition is not purely legal insofar as it is concerned with “common sympathies” and other feelings which lead a people to distinguish themselves from others. It ultimately concerns notions of patriotism and identity along with citizenship as the formal legal status of belonging to a particular nation. The *koseki* system was already a formal record of all the people bound together under political authority. It also specified the structure of these bonds, and thereby formalized the duties and roles that fell to each person recorded in the system. Thus,

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<sup>426</sup> Maruyama, *Studies in the Intellectual History of Tokugawa Japan*.

<sup>427</sup> Doak writes: “The April 1871 Household Registration Law, which took effect in February 1872, required all Japanese to register, whether samurai or commoner. The logic worked both ways: all Japanese were required to register, and those who registered were considered, *ipso facto*, Japanese. Although it retained for a while the usage of the names of new status groups (*ka shizoku heimin*), it marked a significant step toward nationalism by establishing the formal equality of all Japanese nationals, regardless of social status, and by making registration by law an essential part of the process of determining who was a Japanese national. It was also the first instance of the word *kokumin* in an official government document. Needless to say, the definition of nationality was no mere conceptual game: it had real consequences, as can be seen in 1871 when the Japanese government declared to be Japanese the fishermen on Miyafuru island in the Ryukyus who were murdered by “barbarians” (*seiban*) in Taiwan. It then sent troops to Taiwan to avenge the slight to Japanese national honor and prevent future massacres of the Japanese people.” *A History of Nationalism in Modern Japan*, 174.

“nationality” was registration in the *koseki* insofar as it was a legal record which implied moral duties between people. Because of the Confucian origins of the Tokugawa system, the Meiji reforms simplified the legal structure but could not undo the implied moral aspects immediately.

In this way, the draft constitutions were able to forego specifying who was and was not a citizen largely because the *koseki* was already a natural part of everyone’s everyday experience. That is, over centuries of use, the household registration model had become so naturalized as the instrument which determined one’s belonging that it would have been obvious to readers of the draft constitutions who they were meant to apply to. The reforms that the Meiji state made certainly streamlined and consolidated the system, but they did not undo the fundamental structure and practice of formalizing family units and integrating them into the overall architecture of the state.

The draft constitutions naturally excluded women precisely because the *koseki* legally enshrined the Confucian “Way of the woman.” Indeed, the modern *koseki* system implemented in 1872 has been thoroughly criticized for being patriarchal, and for good reason.<sup>428</sup> Just as in the distant past, the family name and property are transmitted solely through the male line. Women, even today, must be registered under their husband’s name in the *koseki*, and cannot choose to keep their own names. The 1872 rules, beyond the reasons mentioned above, were also in part drafted as a response to the incidence of intermarriage between Japanese and foreigners. Because the family name was transmitted through the male line, if a Japanese man married a foreign woman, the woman became part of the Japanese household and any children would be considered Japanese (according to the regulations, at least). Children of Japanese men born to

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<sup>428</sup> Campbell points out many of the criticisms that others have made. Campbell, “Geographies of Self and Other,” 9-12.

foreign women outside of marriage would not be considered Japanese because they were not registered under the *koseki*. Therefore, the category of “Japanese,” in all of its connotations, was largely regulated by registration in the *koseki*. As a result, the constitutions of the 1880s could simply dismiss the formal question of who counted as a citizen by referring to the register, and in effect, to existing practice.<sup>429</sup> Although many of the draft constitutions included language delegating the authority to modify the register to those who made law, this was in practice the same as making no explicit challenge to the legal designation at all.

In short, the drafters of the proposed constitutions were making a new kind of statement metaphorized in their own exemplary actions. The philosophical framework that made it coherent suggested that citizenship should be understood as an open category not tied to ethnos, class, or gender. Nonetheless, as a consequence of their reliance on the *koseki* system to define terms like *oyoso nihonjin* (“average” Japanese), the constitutions did nothing to deny that citizenship was fundamentally linked to ethnic status and limited to men. The provisions in many of the constitutions established aristocratic upper houses and insisted on property requirements to join either house. The emperor was in virtually all examples the foundation on which the rest of the state rested. These provisions were also all consistent with longstanding practices of class

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<sup>429</sup> That said, Aoki Shuzō’s 1874 draft, entitled *Dainihon seiki* (大日本政規), specifies in its third article that 人民土籍に入ツて日本国の民位に列シ或は其ノ位を脱する等の事件は政務両局の裁判タルベシ。In Aoki’s draft, there are only two classes: *kazoku* (hereditary nobility 華族) and *heimin* (ordinary citizens). He relies on registration in the *dōseki* (土籍), or local registration, for the determination on who lies in each. The courts can alter one’s status. The important point, though, is that all *jinmin*, or people of Japan, are registered in the *koseki* and that record determines their belonging and status. See Aoki, “Dainihon seiki,” 127.

differentiation.<sup>430</sup> In this way, the apparently “civilized” male participants in the speech societies could deny women citizenship without observing a contradiction.

Despite this omission, women were, in fact, practicing citizenship in ways both like and unlike Fukuzawa’s description of it. As we have seen, the speech and discussion societies of the 1870s were instrumental in allowing people to appear as individuals and in establishing standards of knowledge which were de-linked from social class. Although it is not often remarked upon in general histories of the “Freedom and Popular Rights Movement,” women actually regularly attended public speeches and formed their own associations in both urban and rural settings across the country. Moreover, a number of women were practitioners of speechmaking who traveled on the *enzetsu* circuits of the early 1880s. In this way, a great many women also appeared as individuals and were trained in the new techniques of knowledge production. While this certainly led many women to view themselves as individuals capable of making valid public utterances, many of those public utterances did not demand the institutionalization of political structures in which they could participate. That is, they argued for *joken* (women’s rights) grounded in a broader concept of *minken* (civil rights), but they separated *minken* from *seiken* (political rights) in a way which gave citizenship a moral basis but not a legal one.

Although there certainly were early Meiji women who spoke and wrote eloquently about obtaining political citizenship, they were the exception rather than the rule. More frequently, the most widely known writers and speechmakers insisted on fundamental changes to the structure

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<sup>430</sup> The 1872 *koseki* system included separate categories for members of the Imperial household. The emperor himself was excluded from the *koseki* because he was seen as the source of authority which legitimized the system and therefore could not be contained within it. As Hobbes argues, the Sovereign, as the source of law, must necessarily be outside of it.

of the family which were consistent with equal civil rights. This often took the form of calls for equality in rights of divorce, the right to own and execute property, and probably most frequently, the right to education. The argument in many cases was that the extension of these civil rights to women was important for helping upper-class men exercise their political rights. Just as the male practitioners of speech and debate defaulted to existing practices to define political rights, many women did as well. The question of who was and was not a political citizen therefore remained grounded in the discourse of the family.

One of the dominant figurations of “the Way of the woman” came from none other than Nakamura Keiu, the first translator of Mill’s *On Liberty*, Samuel Smiles’ *Self-Help* and a prominent educator in Tokyo.<sup>431</sup> There is a mistaken belief that Nakamura coined the phrase “good wife, wise mother” (*ryosai kanbō* 良妻賢母), which became the cornerstone of discourses of womanhood until 1945 (at the earliest). Although he did not invent the term itself, he elaborated on its basic content in his contributions to the *Meiroke zasshi*, notably in his 1875 essay “On Creating Good Mothers.”<sup>432</sup> He drew extensively on the work of Nishizaka Seian, a Tokugawa Confucian scholar who published an annotated version of Wang Xiang’s “Commentaries.” Similar to the project undertaken by Kaibara Ekken, Nishizaka’s was an attempt to popularize Confucian morality. It appeared as *Kōtei onna shisho*, or *The Four Books for Women Annotated and Revised*, in 1854.<sup>433</sup> Nakamura had a copy of this text in which he wrote extensive notes in the margins. Seian wrote; “Ah, if a woman is wise then she is certain to

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<sup>431</sup> See Nakamura, *Seikoku risshi hen*. Nakamura also translated Mill’s *On the Subjection of Women*.

<sup>432</sup> Braisted, *Meiroke Zasshi*.

<sup>433</sup> Sekiguchi, “Confucian Morals and the Making of a ‘Good Wife, Wise Mother,’” 106.



be wise as she becomes a wife, and certain to be wise as she becomes a mother. How can a wise wife and a wise mother fail to bear and raise wise children?” Nakamura seems to have taken this point to heart and translated it into his essay on good mothers. He argues; “If the mothers are superb, they can have superb children, and Japan can become a splendid country.”<sup>434</sup>

Although Nakamura undoubtedly had strong Confucian influences, he also showed some important differences, based primarily in the changing economic roles that Meiji women might have. The emphasis on “wise” was important insofar as it specified a need for women to be educated. Like Nishizaka, in Nakamura’s interpretation, educated women would contribute to the well-being of both the family and the nation by imparting their knowledge and intellectual habits to their children (particularly male children). Nakamura taught a number of prominent Meiji women at his *Dōjinsha* academy, and was an advocate for women’s education throughout his life.

This emphasis on knowledge and the importance of education should not be interpreted as a statement about women’s capacity to make valid, intelligible public utterances, however. The image of the family that this slogan was based in part on Nakamura’s own experiences in Victorian England. That is, the model for relations between men and women that he advocated was certainly different in some respects from the Confucian model, but retained a basic belief in women’s unsuitability for public life. The emphasis on education was tied to a new role for women in the household, one which was economically productive insofar as it was tied to the human capital of the children who would grow up to contribute to the well-being of the state and nation. Moreover, the kinds of knowledge a “wise” mother was expected to have included economics and other techniques for effective management of the household. In other words, this

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<sup>434</sup> Ibid., 108.

formulation constructed the role of women as domestic and essentially apolitical, but nonetheless economically productive in ways that the Confucian formula did not. The reform of the *koseki* system that included the abolition of formal class relations and undercut the importance of primogenitary inheritance ultimately, and probably unintentionally, configured a new reserve army of domestic laborers. That is, with the end of class reproduction through male heredity, the role of the “borrowed womb” was diminished. To this extent, women were suddenly available to fulfil new social functions which they were active in claiming for themselves.

### **Kishida Toshiko and the Translational Moment**

Kishida Toshiko created a sensation in the press in the early 1880s. At the time, most men doubted whether a woman was intellectually capable of delivering a coherent speech in public. What she showed was that not only were women capable of speaking publically, they were capable of practicing the same techniques of public deliberation and mastering the same elements of rhetoric that men were. In fact, Kishida became immensely popular not only among female attendees of the *enzetsukai*, but among men as well thanks to her abilities as a speaker. She herself stood as a translation-metaphor for the practices of rhetoric based on a universal intelligibility that had emerged from the speech and debate societies of the 1870s. Her stepping onto the stage initiated a translational moment.

Owing both to her message and her status as an exemplar, she attracted thousands of women to participate in numerous *enzetsukai* across Western Japan. At one single event in 1882, for example, she drew over 2000 people (mostly women) to hear her speak. The women who participated were of course not unaffected by the experience. Just as many men had been inspired by the examples of *enzetsuka* in the mid-1870s to undertake the formation of speech and debate societies themselves, so were many women. In fact, the number of women’s associations

associated with popular rights and women's issues increased dramatically in the early-to mid-1880s. They were based on the same formal procedures and processes as many of the other speech and debate societies were, and performed many of the same activities.

Kishida was a tireless advocate for women's education, and persuasively extended the Meiji conception of *gakumon* (学問, or "learning") to apply to women as well as men. The idea of *gakumon* was at the foundation of Fukuzawa's conception of citizenship, and was cultivated by the practices and rituals of the speech and debate societies. Kishida's extension of this concept to women similarly encouraged their participation in societies and demanded that they continue to cultivate their individual capacities in terms like, but different from those described by Fukuzawa.

Kishida, however, simultaneously expressed a Confucian concern with the family based on different assumptions about valid and invalid public appearances. These assumptions in many ways contradicted the aesthetic experiences of speaking and listening in public that her appearance on stage created. This concern also reflected the contradictory assumptions of the male participants in the speech societies of the 1870s about who was capable of valid political utterance and whose rights of political citizenship could be counted. This Confucian concern lingered in many of the women's associations that appeared in the years following Kishida's activities.<sup>435</sup> Perhaps one reason that many histories have downplayed the role of these women of the 1880s is because of the contradictions that arose in the translation-metaphors of citizenship and its practice.

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<sup>435</sup> For example, the activities of the upper-class women's societies of the Rokumeikan era of the late 1880s and early 1890s were modeled on Victorian practices of "ladyhood," but these were compatible with some Confucian ideas about female participation in society outside the household.

Kishida, born in 1863, was the daughter of a middle-class merchant family in Kyoto. Like many women from such a background, she worked alongside her male relatives in childhood. Thanks to a mother who encouraged her to pursue some education, she was enrolled in one of the first primary schools for girls in Kyoto. She demonstrated a great aptitude for academic pursuits, and progressed through middle school as well. After sitting an examination on which she scored highly, she was accepted into one of the very earliest high schools for girls. Unfortunately, due to illness, she was forced to withdraw at age 16 after about two years of study.

The education she received was similar to that available at some of the private academies in Tokyo. For example, Nakamura's translation of *Self-Help* and Fukuzawa's *Gakumon no susume* and *Sekai kunizukushi* were included in the curriculum. At the same time, she carefully studied the main Confucian classics, and demonstrated a superior grasp of them by the time she left school. In addition to the "four books," the school also taught Ekken's *Greater Learning for Women*. What she made of this text at the time is unclear, but it was undoubtedly a reference point in her later thought.

After leaving school and recovering from her illness, Kishida was eager to use her learning in a constructive way. To that end, she opened her own private academy to teach the Confucian classics to women. After attracting a number of students, her activities became known to the Imperial household, then still based in Kyoto. At age 17, she was invited to become a tutor in Chinese learning to the Empress Shōken. She took up residence in the imperial household, and worked with the Empress for two years. During this time, she remarked on the differences between herself and the other women at the imperial palace. The women she encountered were essentially closed off from the outside world. They received very little information about events

outside the palace, and certainly did not mix with people, women or men, from lower classes. This closeted atmosphere, so different from her experiences at home and in school, led her to quit the imperial household. She claimed illness, but some have speculated as to whether or not in reality she simply found the environment too stifling.<sup>436</sup>

Following her departure from the imperial household, she undertook a journey through Western Japan, leading her eventually to Osaka and then to the former Tosa domain in Shikoku. Tosa was the home of many prominent *minkenka*, including Itagaki Taisuke and Ueki Emori. Upon arriving in Tosa in 1881, she met some of these figures, and became involved with many in the *Jiyūtō* (Liberal Party). These men recognized her abilities, and encouraged her to participate in some of the public speech events that were being organized at various places in Western Japan. For the following several years, she became a well-known *enzetsuka* and author of polemics defending civil rights.

Her first speaking event, in 1882, was arranged largely by men who wanted to create a sensational spectacle. The idea of a woman speaker was still shocking to many who believed that women were incapable of delivering a coherent argument in public without losing focus. The men who encouraged her to speak certainly recognized her talents as a thinker, but they were also keen to have an attractive woman appear on the stage to present a pleasant scene to attract more men. The carnivalistic element of the speech meetings never subsided completely, and in some ways Kishida was initially treated more as an attraction or a novelty than an intellectual on the same terms as the male speakers who also attended the meeting.<sup>437</sup>

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<sup>436</sup> Suzuki, “Kaisetsu.”

<sup>437</sup> There was a long tradition of creating spectacle through the exhibition of rare or unusual items or phenomena. In the Edo period, the *misemono* shows often exhibited grotesque items or arranged strange performances. In the early Meiji period, the *misemono* shows were transformed

This was of course not lost on Kishida herself. As she acknowledged in one of her most famous addresses, “Daughters Kept in Boxes” (*Hako iri musume* 箱入り娘), that “there are those who deplore my activities, saying that a woman who once dressed in brocade has now taken to the variety stage in a cheap bid to entertain.”<sup>438</sup> In spite of the criticism directed at her, Kishida understood the purpose of the *enzetsukai* in the following terms:

“But let us consider the two ideograms used to write the word ‘entertain.’ Taken in turn, do they not mean ‘to raise’ and ‘to achieve’? I may be the one who stands before you ‘entertaining’ for the sake of our country. But that is not to suggest that I alone am gifted with extensive knowledge or blessed with abundant talent. Without you in the audience, this speech would go unheard and would be meaningless. Together we share in this exchange of knowledge, and together we teach each other, with the mutual goal of raising the level of learning throughout the land. Surely it is not inappropriate to say therefore that my ‘entertainment’ benefits the country.”<sup>439</sup>

The exchange of knowledge for the mutual benefit is precisely the language that Fukuzawa made use of in his descriptions of speechmaking and debate, and which appeared in the mission statements of speech societies across Japan. In other words, she embraced the same principles of knowledge production that accompanied the spread of speech societies in the half decade or so

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into *hakurankai*, which were ostensibly organized to share new forms of culture and expand people’s awareness of new arts and technologies. In practice, they retained an element of the grotesque. The desire of the male *minkenka* to use Kishida in this way perhaps has echoes of these other forms of spectacle.

<sup>438</sup> Kishida, "Daughters in Boxes." “Brocade” here refers to her position in the imperial household.

<sup>439</sup> *Ibid.*, 63.

prior to her appearance behind the podium. The language of learning, also retains its expansive sense. This statement is also remarkable for the explicit linkage of learning and debate with the improvement of the nation. "Raising the level of learning throughout the land" is the principle benefit to the country that she believes she can accomplish in speechmaking.

Insofar as she was participating in the same rituals of speechmaking which valorized individual thought and the exchange of privately conceived ideas, her speeches made it possible for her audiences to emerge as individuals in the same ways that men's speeches did. Anderson remarks that women who attended the speech meetings "...like men, participated in the cheering and jeering that was central to the *enzetsu* experience. Geisha seem to have been particularly expert at calling out *no no* (ノノ "No no") and *hiya hiya* (ヒアヒア "Hear hear") at the appropriate intervals." What makes her speeches different is the fact that she provides an example of a woman who is an individual, and addresses the women in the audience as both individuals and individual women. That is, she not only continues the practices which contribute to allowing people to emerge individuals in general, but her example and her language articulate women's capacity for individuality in particular. Moreover, as Patessio has argued, the language of the early Meiji period had begun to distinguish a separate *fujin shakai* (婦人社会), or "society of women." Kishida's speeches contributed to the articulation of women as individuals within both society more broadly and *fujin shakai* on its own. To this extent, Kishida clearly embraced the same understanding of what constitutes an intelligible public utterance as the male speech and debate associations had demonstrated. In other words, her practice of speechmaking was grounded in the same universalizable image of citizenship that had begun to emerge elsewhere. Her example proved that women were capable of embracing both the new form and new principles of public appearance.

Kishida's notion of learning is expansive, and it is undeniably practically oriented in terms of her emphasis on the importance of improving the well-being of the country. Her description, however, is strongly gendered. That is, she asserts that there are practical types of learning appropriate to men, and those appropriate to women. "Daughters Kept in Boxes" frames the question this way:

"...what I call learning requires that a woman recognize, at least, the responsibility that she must shoulder as a woman; so long as she lives in this precious country of ours, she should refrain from squandering her talents. What I desire most is for a woman to prepare herself for marriage by assembling appropriate knowledge as the most essential item in her trousseau."<sup>440</sup>

Thus, learning stays linked to the family. The responsibility that one must shoulder "as a woman" is distinctive. One of its primary components in her formulation is to prepare one's self for marriage. Although one should not waste their abilities, the way in which these abilities can be used nonetheless remain squarely situated within the boundaries of womanhood as a particular role and the family as the horizon of that role. In this sense, she extends the Confucian logic of the family by reasserting the primacy of the family as a social unit. It is a successful family in which a woman carries out her duties as a "good wife and wise mother" that contributes to the success of "this precious country of ours."

Kishida goes on to describe the particular kind of knowledge that women should develop. The two subjects essential for a woman to bring into her marriage are economics and ethics. She points out specifically that training in economics is useful not only for household management, but as insurance against being left destitute following the death of her husband. Knowing how to

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<sup>440</sup> Ibid., 65.



handle money thereby falls under the rubric of women's responsibilities to the family and nation. The subject of ethics is especially interesting, however. She recommends two particular texts in addition to the "four books" of classical Confucian studies. Those two books are none other than the *Great Learning for Women* and its companion, *Small Learning for Women*.

What is it that women should draw from these two texts? Kishida laments the practices of parents who keep their daughters "in boxes" to protect their womanly virtue. The restrictions these parents place on their children, to the point of outright seclusion in some cases, are mistaken for several reasons. First, it makes the daughters miserable. The word "parent," she declares, should not mean "tormenter." Second, in more cases than not it results in girls learning lascivious and immoral skills such as dancing and playing the *shamisen*. These are the traditional practices of *geisha*, and although some parents believe educating their daughters in these skills instead of Confucian virtue will enhance their marriage prospects, in reality they are simply teaching them things that should make both the girls and the rest of the family blush. Third, these severe constraints prevent girls from realizing the potential of their natures.

Kishida writes that "...we cannot cultivate the human spirit to its full and brilliant potential if we restrict its freedom as would a gardener his flowers."<sup>441</sup> What is the result of cultivating the "human spirit" to its potential? As we have seen, Ekken's *Great Learning for Women* explicitly rejects individuality, asserts the natural invalidity of female thoughts and opinions, and circumscribes the scope for productive activity to essentially child-bearing alone. Why does Kishida encourage these texts? How could these texts be made compatible with the cultivation of the human spirit?

The next line of the speech following her recommendation of the two *Learnings* exhorts

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<sup>441</sup> Ibid., 68.

parents to cultivate in their children a thirst for knowledge. In the case of women, however, this runs quite contrary to Ekken's admonitions to defer to men in all matters and for women never to trust their own judgment. However, what is consistent between all that she has said elsewhere in the speech and Ekken's assertions about women's role is the importance of the family. Thus, although Kishida is obviously critical of Ekken's assertion of women's incapacity for learning, she is fundamentally in agreement with him, Nagazaki Seian, and Nakamura Keiu, in believing that women have a role to play in creating a harmonious household, and then in turn, a harmonious state. The responsibilities of women take a different form in Kishida's argument owing to the changes in political and economic circumstances that defined the early Meiji period, but remain grounded in the same essentialized understanding of "the Way of women."

In this sense, the cultivation of the human spirit is predicated on a differentiation between the essential male human spirit and the essential female human spirit. Her concern that parents may be crippling their daughters' capacity for virtue similarly rests on an essentialized, Confucian understanding of women's natures. She argues that "...all daughters are also young maidens who should protect their womanly virtue by obeying thoughtful advice and by conceding what it is they should concede."<sup>442</sup> The problem of learning is in part learning how to protect one's "womanly virtue." This can only be achieved if girls are allowed to experience the world and be educated in the proper kinds of learning; namely, Confucian morality. As Nakae Chōmin suggested, one must actively practice moral action in the world to develop proficiency in it. Preventing women from entering the world (or the community of *jin* as Chōmin figured it), denied them the capacity for moral subjecthood. She goes on to criticize the parents who keep their daughters in boxes because they "...do not understand even these basic virtues and refuse to

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<sup>442</sup> Ibid., 69.

do for their daughters what it is they should do. How greatly mistaken they are.”

Kishida concludes that if parents follow her recommendation and create a box that is wide enough to give the impression of freedom, girls will be able to learn the essential virtues. She claims that if parents follow her advice

“...I guarantee that you will produce a true and virtuous daughter. But if you do not... I have no doubt that your daughter will either escape or elope, and you will have to send your servants and maids out to search high and low to find her and drag her back. On the contrary, if the daughters in boxes today are allowed to feel as free as those outside the box, then the need to keep them tucked away in restrictive boxes loses its currency. And if we no longer need restrictive boxes, then daughters will no longer need to escape them, and servants and maids will no longer need to spend their time chasing after them. Their energy can be more appropriately applied to the management of the house, thus better utilizing household resources!”<sup>443</sup>

The implication of daughters escaping or eloping is that they do not have moral virtue. Kishida constructs the situation as one in which parents will have no choice but to “find her and drag her back” to preserve propriety. The need to keep women from eloping, in particular, stems from Kishida’s acceptance of the assertion that a virtuous woman accepts her duty to marry based on the approval of her parents. On the other hand, given the freedom to learn for themselves, the implication is that daughters will come to understand and appreciate their role and their duties “true and virtuous” daughters. Thus, expanding the “human spirit” does not mean cultivating independence. It means correctly developing an understanding the “Way of women.”

It is perhaps also worth pointing out the concern with correctly utilizing household

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<sup>443</sup> Ibid., 69.

resources. Although this is surely tongue-in-cheek, it nonetheless reflects Kishida's understanding of the duty women have towards the efficient management of the household. In other words, part of the guilt of the daughter who runs away lies in the fact that she is wasting the family's resources in an essentially egoistic endeavor. In Yamauchi's words, Kaibara Ekken "...asked that people preserve their own position in society and never disturb the social order. Social order and family order was much more important than the freedom of individual persons."<sup>444</sup> Kishida seems to affirm this position as well.

Despite this apparent harmony with longstanding Confucian discourses of the family, immediately after finishing this speech in October of 1883, she was arrested and charged with "insulting officialdom." Unfortunately, the record of Kishida's speeches is limited to only "Daughters Kept in Boxes," and the only reason we have that record is because she was arrested. At issue was her criticism of existing educational practices, which were deemed too "political." Although many *minkenka* faced police interference, Kishida's address seems to have particularly piqued the state's ire because it was delivered by a woman about issues pertaining to women. That is, the problem was not so much the critique of the state explicitly, but the undermining of the state's Confucian interpretation of public morality that Kishida's example, more than her words themselves, represented. Her appearing in public was itself a new kind of utterance which the state did not clearly know how to interpret. Following a harrowing eight days in jail, Kishida was released on grounds of ill health. The experience, though, led her to restrict her speaking activities significantly. Upon her marriage to the *Jiyutō* activist Nakajima Nobuyuki in 1884, she ceased giving public speeches altogether. This has led to charges that she abandoned her

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<sup>444</sup> Yamauchi, "Kaibara Ekken," 106.

advocacy of both popular rights and women's rights. The charge of having committed *tenkō* 転向, or a complete reversal and renunciation of one's previous ideas, has even been leveled at her.<sup>445</sup> Her husband was made a duke (*danshaku* 男爵) under the peerage system, and she apparently committed to living up to the duties and expectations of being a duke's wife.

While the charges of *tenkō* are certainly unfair, Kishida's separation of *minken* from *seiken* goes some way to clarifying how it was possible for later critics to make such a claim. For example, at one point in the speech, Kishida suggests that she would gladly trade any discussion of political rights if men would simply show "respect" to women.<sup>446</sup> This meant things like not smoking in front of them, holding doors, and other elements of Victorian etiquette towards "ladies" which were some male intellectuals and upper-class women were attempting to popularize in Japan. These signs of respect were elements of a conception of *joken*, but they were clearly quite different from political rights. Anderson argues that although Kishida did not discuss political rights directly, she would have been sympathetic to them. Based on evidence from Kishida's other writing, this certainly seems to be the case.<sup>447</sup> However, the fact that she nonetheless separated political rights from civil rights, and clearly gave priority to advances on the civil side, articulates a conception of women's citizenship based on a duty to contribute to the

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<sup>445</sup> Yokozawa, *Nakajima Nobuyuki to Kishida Toshiko*. *Tenkō* is the same term that was used to refer to the renunciations made by opponents of the state in the 1930s and 40s. Many Marxists in particular were forced to renounce their positions under state pressure. Other opponents voluntarily embraced the emperor system. Either way, *tenkō* has a pejorative connotation.

<sup>446</sup> Sievers argues that this may have simply a rhetorical device designed to capture men's attention. It is hard to know, as the text does not give any clear reason to doubt her sincerity.

<sup>447</sup> Patessio, *Women and Public Life in Early Meiji Japan*, 142. Kishida's serialized essay "To My Fellow Sisters" (*Dōhō shimai ni tsugu*) makes an indirect argument for political rights. The essay appeared in 1884.

nation through the vehicle of the family. The language of education and cultivation that she deploys also mirror Fukuzawa Yukichi's apolitical citizenship, which similarly separated *minken* from *seiken*. What Kishida adds, however, is the articulation of a citizenship for women based on the perceived differences between male and female essence.

We can see another example of this kind of gendered essentialism in the emergence of standards of rhetorical practice specific to women. As I have suggested, among the problems that Kishida and other women who practiced *enzetsu* faced was overcoming a skepticism of women's capacity to speak based continuing conceptions of human nature grounded in the ontology of the family. The rhetoric that Kishida herself developed was effective in the minds of many (though certainly not all) of her contemporaries because she fulfilled many of the audience's expectations about the nature of women. It was also important because she violated some of those expectations. Kishida's style was admired for its argumentative clarity, but also criticized for its wrongness for women. To speak at all was taken to be unfeminine, particularly by conservatives in the government, as Kishida discovered the hard way.

The resistance and unease Kishida's presence created were both ameliorated and heightened by her efforts to appear before the audience in a certain way. Speechmaking was still a form of performance not far removed from theater.<sup>448</sup> This meant carefully attention to her hairstyle and dress. According to Suzuki Yūko and Sōma Kokko, Kishida dressed "theatrically" and appeared "like a 'princess in a play'" when she was on stage.<sup>449</sup> As part of this theatricality,

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<sup>448</sup> Many halls where speaking was performed charged entrance fees as they would for a Kabuki performance. Sugano, "Kishida Toshiko and the Career of a Public-Speaking Woman in Meiji Japan," 173.

<sup>449</sup> Suzuki, "Kaisetsu," and Sōma, *Meiji shōki no san josei*, 49, cited in Sugano, "Kishida Toshiko and the Career of a Public-Speaking Woman in Meiji Japan," 173.

she seems to have altered her dress to suit the styles prevalent in each region she visited.<sup>450</sup> The men who initially persuaded her to participate in the *enzetsukai* chose her in part because of her physical appearance. As an element of her performance, Kishida also consciously capitalized on her capacity to present an attractive example of femininity.<sup>451</sup> According to newspaper reports of the time, this carefully crafted image of femininity left an impression on the crowd.<sup>452</sup>

Marnie Anderson, however, cites later reports from newspapers around the time of the “Daughters Kept in Boxes” speech which declaim Kishida for her unfeminine gestures and masculine rhetorical style.<sup>453</sup> To some observers, Kishida surely presented a masculine image no matter how she gestured or what she wore insofar as she was appearing in a space defined by its masculinity. Despite the critique of Kishida’s gestures or tone, however, we can conclude that she certainly did not ignore the feminine aspects of her appearance and performance altogether. In fact, they were a fundamental lowest common denominator of intelligibility (the “is like” of the translation-metaphor) which allowed her to transgress (the “is not”) the established, masculine norms of speechmaking. The feminine aspects of her performance were necessary for creating an interactional-metaphorical relationship with the masculinity of the space she occupied. Hearing what was assumed to be male speech coming from a beautiful woman is precisely what makes Kishida’s appearance a translational, and therefore political, moment.

Another of the key strategies that Kishida deployed was her linkage of *joken* with the improvement of the nation. This may have helped deflect attention from her status as a woman

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<sup>450</sup> Sōma, *Meiji shōki no san josei*, 50.

<sup>451</sup> Tanaka, *Women Writers of Meiji and Taishō Japan*, 22-23.

<sup>452</sup> *Ibid*, 23.

<sup>453</sup> Anderson, *A Place in Public*, 112.

by uniting her and the audience in a common form of political community.<sup>454</sup> Although it may have had this effect, it was not a fundamental denial of the essential differences between women and men. Rather, it was a characteristic Confucian assertion of the linkage between family and state which depended on the perpetuation of essentialized differences between women and men.

In summary, we can clearly see that Kishida Toshiko's appearance in public disrupted the standard categories of valid and invalid public appearance. It articulated a novel conception of the role of women in the family, and therefore the nation. Kishida certainly was a powerful advocate for advancing education for girls and women, and her example inspired many women to undertake the creation of various forms of association both for women specifically and men and women together as well. Even after her marriage, Kishida was engaged in the promotion of women's education through her numerous publications in newspapers, her literary activities, and her correspondence with other female activists. Her husband's role in the *Jiyutō* (and later the government itself) also gave her some scope for being involved in the important political questions facing the diet and the state.<sup>455</sup>

Nonetheless, Kishida's advocacy was filtered through longstanding discourses of the family, and the relationship of the family to the state. Kishida was able to argue for a new role for women within the family because of changing political and economic conditions. What is important is that changing economic conditions required changes in the family structure which Confucian thought was able to advance, rather than hinder. Kishida's appearance was part of a broader reorientation of Confucian principles which were conducive to the further development of capitalism. Kishida spoke from a privileged class position, largely to women who were also

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<sup>454</sup> Ibid., 112.

<sup>455</sup> Yokozawa provides the most detailed study of Kishida's husband, Nakajima Nobuyuki.



similarly classed. The productive capacity of reconfigured Confucian discourse about the role of women in the family was nonetheless active for women at the other end of the class spectrum as well. The best example of this can be found in the young girls and women who were sent to labor in the early silk and cotton spinning factories.

### **Filial Piety and Confucian Citizenship**

The labor of women of high-ranking samurai or wealthy merchant backgrounds was generally not required for the subsistence of the family. This was not the case with women from poor farming families or, by the late Tokugawa period in particular, low-ranking samurai families. As Tsurumi has shown, the labor of women both inside and outside of the household was essential for the survival of these families.<sup>456</sup> Improvements in technology over the course of the Edo period meant that women were able to take over some forms of labor that were formerly dominated by men, such as plowing, planting, and other physically demanding aspects of farming. Women were also frequently tasked with caring for the very young or the very old, although childhood was short for farming families as the labor of all members capable of producing was essential.<sup>457</sup>

Some have argued that the Confucian theory of the family did not penetrate to the lowest rungs of the class hierarchy. While it is certainly true that poor farming families would not have generally spent time studying the Chinese classics, the structure of Tokugawa society nonetheless imposed upon them social practices consistent with Confucian ideology. The principle of hierarchy within the domain gave samurai power over the traditional leadership of villages. The headmen also retained considerable power over the heads of families within village

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<sup>456</sup> Tsurumi, *Factory Girls*.

<sup>457</sup> Miyagi and Ōi. *Nihon joseishi*; See also Tsurumi, *Factory Girls*, 12-15.

insofar as they were involved in the collection of taxes, the transmission of grievances, and other interactions between the samurai administration and the lives of individual families. Taxation was recorded by family through the *koseki* system, which legally inscribed men as the primary bearers of responsibility towards the domain and the shogunate. This marginalized women not only in respect to authority outside of the family, but also within it. It legitimized decision-making by the patriarch alone for the sake of meeting social obligations outside of the family. Although village life was often quite removed from the happenings of the castle towns and the philosophy of scholars, Confucian discourse nonetheless played an essential role in reproducing the everyday for villagers and samurai alike.

The rice-based Tokugawa economy depended heavily on this Confucian discourse for its perpetuation. As that system eroded in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, and finally collapsed following the opening of the ports to trade in 1859, the primacy of the money economy nonetheless subsumed the many aspects of Confucian ideology to perpetuate itself. Among the changes that accompanied the consolidation of power by the Meiji oligarchy was the demand that taxes be paid entirely in cash. The abolition of the *shinōkōshō* hierarchy and the establishment of the right to buy and sell land trapped former *nōmin* into land tenancy arrangements which gave landlords ownership of the means of agricultural production. Initially, many tenants were allowed to pay rents in kind, which the landlord would then convert to cash to pay the taxes for the family. Increasingly over the course of the early Meiji period, however, landlords came to demand cash payment as well. For many farming families, as well as for many low-ranking samurai families in the late Tokugawa period, women had been active in sericulture or other handicraft industry in order to bring in much-needed cash to supplement either the produce of the farm or the rice stipend.

Thus, women played a vital role in the economy of the family, and they were very conscious of the importance of their sacrifices. According to Tsurumi, men of the lower classes, although they were caught in the patriarchal relationships structured by the Tokugawa ideology more broadly, also respected the economic contributions of women highly.<sup>458</sup> This recognition and the sense of self-respect that it engendered was permuted with the Confucian model of the family to produce a sense duty to the family as the central institution of social life. Many women understood their struggles and sacrifices for the family as their primary duty in life. Confucian morality institutionalized this sense of duty the primary moral obligation at the foundation of “the Way of the woman.” For women of the upper classes, “duty to the family” meant bearing children and raising them to be capable of contributing to the nation. For women of the lower classes, duty to the family meant producing economically for the family’s survival.

The unequal treaties that Japan had been forced to sign with the United States, Great Britain, France, Russia, and others were disastrous for many domestic industries in the 1870s. Sericulture and textiles were initially particularly hard hit as high-quality, inexpensive products from Europe flooded the Japanese market. The treaties prevented the Meiji state from raising any kind of significant tariffs to protect both domestic industrial products and those who depended on home production of silk as a component of their basic income. Even if tariffs had contributed to an equalization of prices for domestic and imported goods, the quality of Japanese textiles and silk thread was much lower than that coming out of Manchester or Lyon.

The Meiji state attempted to counter this by stimulating domestic industry. The state acted as capitalist for many new enterprises, contributed to the importation of new technologies and equipment, and was even engaged in training workers in new manufacturing techniques. If

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<sup>458</sup> Tsurumi, *Factory Girls*, 16.

capitalism begins when capital confronts free labor on the open market, the Meiji state had a role to play in providing capital and the aiding the processes of primitive accumulation which created the free labor necessary for that capital to accumulate. The state's strategy was to use silk and textiles as export products to gain much-needed capital to re-invest in heavy industry and military procurement. However, the 1870s remained relatively challenging for many silk and cotton enterprises as they were slow to adopt new technologies and struggled to accumulate enough capital to build factories at a scale which could dramatically reduce the final cost of the goods produced.

In 1881, the Matsukata deflationary policy went into effect, which took a great deal of state money out of industry. It had the desired effect of lowering prices, although not without serious social consequences. The policy caused commodity prices, particularly rice, to fall dramatically. In the space of 3 years, rice prices were less than 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of their 1881 value.<sup>459</sup> For the rural villages, this was an unmitigated disaster as the cash value of farm products collapsed, while taxes remained fixed and rents were very slow to fall. More than ten percent of all peasant proprietors were forced from their land.<sup>460</sup> For nascent industry, on the other hand, it was of great help as Japanese firms had access to new stocks of capital, could reduce wages dramatically, and produce low-cost goods that were more competitive with European imports.

This collapse in commodity prices forced many farming families into tenancy arrangements, or even off the land altogether. These circumstances had a number of terrible effects. In the northeast of the country, starvation was a serious problem. Mikiso Hane recounts

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<sup>459</sup> Vlastos, "Opposition Movements in Early Meiji, 1868-1885," 419.

<sup>460</sup> Hirano, "Thanatopolitics in the Making of Japan's Hokkaido: Settler Colonialism and Primitive Accumulation," 199.

several stories of entire families dying from insufficient nutrition. Similarly, the birth of a child into such circumstances was extremely problematic for the family concerned, leading to a spike in infanticide.<sup>461</sup> While reducing the number of mouths to be fed was always of concern for farming families, it was particularly so in dire circumstances such as these. The demand for cash created an influx of people into the large cities to look for work. While some young men and women left the farms to work as day laborers for wealthier families in relatively nearby villages, many were driven into factories. Daughters of farming families in particular were sent in increasing numbers to work in the silk, cotton, and weaving industries.

In 1872, the Meiji government opened a model silk production facility in Tomioka, Gunma prefecture. The Tomioka silk mill was built to serve as an example of modern silk manufacturing techniques, and as a training ground for silk workers to learn to work with European mechanical reeling equipment. The government initially demanded that the prefectural authorities each send 16 girls, aged between 15 and 25, to be trained in the facility for a period of between 1 and 3 years. After completing the training, the women would return to their home prefectures and assist local manufacturers in implementing mechanized silk production. The state hired a number of French experts to both oversee the construction of the mill and to train its first workers.<sup>462</sup>

There was great resistance on the part of many families to send their daughters to the mill for a variety of reasons. First, the economic imperative was not nearly as strong in the 1870s, particularly among former samurai families that retained some property and had a degree of social prestige. Additionally, though, many families had heard rumors that the French were

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<sup>461</sup> Hane, *Japan: A Short History*, 94.

<sup>462</sup> Tsurumi, *Factory Girls*, 26.

cannibals who would drain the blood and render the fat of their girls for consumption.<sup>463</sup>

Apparently some had seen the French drinking red wine and cooking with lard which gave rise to this rumor. It spread widely, and dissuaded many from going. There are stories of young girls blackening their teeth, a sign that a woman was married, to avoid being sent to the factory.<sup>464</sup> Eventually, the prefectural official overseeing the project sent his own daughter to be trained, which persuaded other families of relatively high status to send their own girls as well.

The first recruits to the Tomioka facility were encouraged by the belief that they were “reeling for the Nation.”<sup>465</sup> Many girls of former samurai houses were motivated by a combination of both filial piety and an awareness that their activity was a contribution to the development of the Meiji state. This was often strengthened by the excitement many girls felt at the opportunity to leave their home provinces and travel, meet people from other, distant places, and to learn something new and interesting. The Tomioka mill provided what by the standards of the time were very good working conditions.<sup>466</sup> The mill had relatively spacious and clean dormitories, provided at least some time for rest and amusement, and paid a comparatively decent wage.

The Tomioka mill was first and foremost an experiment, however. Many of the girls who graduated and returned to private facilities in their home prefectures were greatly disappointed

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<sup>463</sup> Ibid., 27.

<sup>464</sup> Hane, *Women, Rebels, and Outcasts*.

<sup>465</sup> This translation is Tsurumi's. I would like to point out that “country” might be another possible metaphor, insofar as a clear vision of the “nation” or the “nation-state” was still not consolidated.

<sup>466</sup> This is not to say that they were objectively good, however. The late 19<sup>th</sup> century is not remembered for the gentleness of its working conditions anywhere in the world.

by the labor conditions, the reluctance of local manufacturers to introduce new technologies, and the lack of care for anything other than the bottom line. As the 1870s wore on, the conditions at the mills worsened in line with the increasing availability of young girls and women to work in them. By the 1880s, many families had no economic alternative outside having their daughters work in the mills or selling them into prostitution. Although the Tomioka mill attracted girls of a relatively high class background, by the 1880s textile workers were almost exclusively from deeply impoverished families.

The primary mechanism by which girls were sent to work in the mills was through the agency of recruiters who visited farming villages in areas that were struggling economically. The recruiters arrived, spoke with the girl's father, and offered an advance loan on the wages the girl was expected to produce. Because of the need for cash to pay rent, taxes, and other expenses, fathers often had no choice but to accept. The recruiters were often called "foxes with no tail" in the songs that the factory girls sang because they promised that the girls would be well-treated, well-fed, and given opportunities for education and recreation.<sup>467</sup> In practice, these promises were almost never met. Moreover, the system of giving the family loans on the future wages of the girl was taken advantage of by the factories and the recruiters. On a loan of 100 yen, a recruiter and the mill might take more than half to cover claimed expenses associated with bringing the girl to the factory. Over time, families often made further withdrawals on the girls' wages, often without her knowledge, leaving the girls themselves stranded in indentured servitude at the mills.

Conditions in the private mills of the 1880s were horrible. Working days of between 12 and 17 hours were standard. The introduction of night shifts, facilitated by the advent of electric

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<sup>467</sup> Tsurumi, *Factory Girls*, 60.

lighting, further increased the physical toll that silk reeling or cotton spinning took by extending working hours further. In the case of absenteeism by other workers, some women were required to work 24 or even 36 hours continuously.<sup>468</sup> In both silk and cotton mills, the factories were deafeningly loud, and the work floors were kept extraordinarily hot and humid because it was believed that this helped prevent the threads from breaking. Conditions in the dormitories in which most of the girls were boarded were frequently described as prison-like by the girls themselves.<sup>469</sup> In order to prevent escape, the dormitories were often surrounded by fences topped with bamboo spikes or broken glass.

The close proximity of so many people in such tight spaces was of course conducive to the spread of infectious disease. For example, Tsurumi describes one facility in which 10 girls were forced to sleep in an 8 tatami mat room.<sup>470</sup> If any one of the girls contracted tuberculosis, it was highly likely that it would spread to others. Of course, no breaks were given to recover, and only when a patient was virtually certain to die would the factory send for her family. These dire circumstances were compounded by regular physical and sexual abuse at the hands of supervisors and male employees. While escape was a constant problem for the mills throughout the 1880s and 1890s, nonetheless many women and girls persevered in these conditions for years. What motivated them to continue?<sup>471</sup>

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<sup>468</sup> Sievers, *Flowers in Salt*, 75.

<sup>469</sup> *Ibid.*, 75-76. Sievers calls the dormitories “a preserve of captive labor.”

<sup>470</sup> One tatami mat is approximately 6ft by 3ft. The number of mats in a particular space is still a common way of describing living areas in Japanese. An 8-mat room is therefore roughly 144 square feet.

<sup>471</sup> This is not to say that these women submissively accepted the conditions they found themselves in. That is emphatically not the case. Indeed, it is no exaggeration to say that the labor movement in Japan began with self-organized strikes by women working in some of the



I will suggest two possibilities, though unquestionably their decisions to stay were surely individual and overdetermined in any case. First, we might consider these women's sense of duty to family to be a major source of motivation. They were acutely aware that their families were desperate for cash, and that failing to work would not only morally disappoint them, but would mean severe financial difficulty as well. Thus, there was a two-pronged conception of duty, rooted in Confucian filial piety, that forced many girls to stay at the factory. The first prong was primarily moral. That is, many girls were concerned that breaking their contracts would somehow bring shame on their families, or that complaining about their treatment and conditions would simply seem egoistical to parents waiting at home. In the Confucian discourse of the family, egoism, especially in relation to the needs of one's parents, was the epitome of vice. For women, whose primary moral duty was always centered on the family, this was especially acute. For women of the upper classes, these beliefs kept women in sometimes violent, very often unhappy marriages. For women of the lower classes, they often kept them wedded to the factory. The second prong is of course the concrete economic need for the money that the girls could produce. Knowing that leaving the factory would mean that her parents and siblings would be unable to afford rent, taxes, or food for the winter was a heavy burden for girls who were sometimes only 10 or 12 years old when they were sent to labor. In this sense, many women must certainly have felt that they had no choice.

A second reason that many women may have stayed in the factories may have been that the alternatives were perhaps direr still. For many women who escaped the factories and did not

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silk and cotton mills during the mid-1880s. Patessio, Sievers, and Tsurumi all describe the brave actions taken by these women to protest their treatment and to win important concessions on wages, working hours, and other conditions. Moreover, turnover at some mills in the 1850s was as high as 50% year-on-year. Sadly, suicides were also terribly common. See Sievers, *Flowers in Salt*, 65.

or could not return home, their alternatives were either to find a new mill which might hopefully provide better conditions, or to turn to prostitution. Of the women who left the mills, less than half returned home.<sup>472</sup> Because the factories provided no basic education (despite promises made by the recruiters), and the division of labor meant that women learned no practical skills that could be translated in to cash-earning activity at home or elsewhere, many women were left with almost no alternatives. Indeed, the Confucian discourse of the family, which did not recognize women outside the family unit as intelligible subjects, severely constrained their horizons. Particularly for women who had no family to return to, and therefore no clear status in terms of their place in the social order, they were left to take up economic positions in the pleasure quarters that were legally sanctioned as spaces removed from the hierarchies that governed the rest of society.

If the Confucian discourse of the family perpetuated these barbarous conditions, why did the Confucian discourse of the family itself persist? Why was it not rooted out as one of the “evil customs of the past” mentioned in the 1868 Charter Oath?<sup>473</sup> It persisted because it was at once thoroughly naturalized in the everyday experiences of women and girls, and written into the mechanisms of legal subjectivization through the *koseki* system. Thus, people were, on the one hand, trained in acting out familial relations in these terms. Indeed, Tsurumi remarks that even the relations between the workers and the supervisors at the mills were “feudalistic.” That is, “...workers and management were bound by a web of mutual obligations: the owners of managers would not think of discharging employees, nor would workers think of leaving employment, even if it were in their economic or other interests to do so.... The atmosphere in

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<sup>472</sup> Suzuki, "Kaisetsu."

<sup>473</sup> Notehelter, "The Meiji Restoration."

these early plants was supposedly ‘family like.’”<sup>474</sup>

On the other hand, this discourse was an extraordinary expedient for the development of nascent capitalist industry. For the entire period between 1894 and 1912, roughly 60 percent of the entire industrial workforce in Japan was female.<sup>475</sup> This was especially critical for the early stages of industrialization when exports were essential for bringing in capital for the state to reinvest in heavy industry. The two largest export industries until the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century were silk and cotton spinning, and the workforce in these industries in particular was overwhelmingly female. The industries were competitive with their European counterparts largely because bosses paid the women who worked in the mills impossibly low wages.<sup>476</sup> Insofar as the success of the silk and cotton industries was instrumental to the further development of the economy, it is perhaps not too much to say that Japanese women built Japanese capitalism while men reaped the profits.

What is clear is that the women who labored in the factories were not motivated by the state’s call to “reel for the nation.” Although many of the girls who came to the Tomioka mill were aware of the importance of their work to the state through the relatively high status of their fathers, this aspect of their upper-class background meant that they understood the relationship between the family and the state somewhat differently than the women at the bottom. Many women from farming families seem to have been motivated by a sense of duty to not to nation

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<sup>474</sup> Tsurumi, *Factory Girls*, 37-38.

<sup>475</sup> Sievers, *Flowers in Salt*, 54.

<sup>476</sup> As was the case elsewhere in the world, the wages paid to women were as little as two thirds or half of what men employed in the same factories received. Comparatively speaking, Japanese textile workers, both male and female, made less than cotton mill workers in colonial India, and certainly much less than silk workers in France or Italy. Tsurumi, *Factory Girls*, 153; 42.

through the vehicle of their families, but rather to their families alone as the primary horizon of their social responsibility. The Confucian discourse of the family was therefore instrumental in producing and maintaining the conditions conducive to the growth of industry, and to that end, the Confucian discourse of the family persisted.

Ultimately, the appearance of women in public, both in speech societies and in factories, was fundamentally new. This appearance, and the new subjectivities that emerged from it was facilitated by the redrawing of the boundaries of the sensible following the interruptions caused by the appearance of new translation-metaphors. A “women’s society” and its attendant subjectivity took shape only because women made themselves physically visible in the spaces in which they had previously been prevented from occupying. Women like Kishida Toshiko and the workers in the Tomioka silk mill were translations of new principles and metaphors for new ways of living. These new modes of being, however, remained enmeshed in the framework of Confucian policing that had defined the visible and invisible, just and immoral, since the 17<sup>th</sup> century.

## **Conclusion**

The appearance of women in speech societies and in factories affirmed the principle of equality between not only men and women, but all people. Their emergence disrupted the experience of being in public not only for women themselves, but for men as well. Whereas attending a public speech prior to Kishida Toshiko generally would have meant seeing few, if any, women in the audience (and certainly no female public speakers). With Kishida’s arrival, men and women came face to face in the audience, women’s speech and men’s speech appeared as equals on the stage, and the new practice of rhetoric struck the ears of audiences while their eyes took in a deliberately feminine image.

In the factories, women experienced new forms of public appearance occasioned by changing economic circumstances. Their appearance in these spaces made it possible for them to feel old constraints in new ways, insofar as Confucian discourses of the family which once justified their restriction to the home now justified their emergence onto the factory floor. The tactile experience of working was accompanied by the emotional experience of feeling anxiety about the well-being of a now distant family, guilt about letting them down, or pride in doing something to help them economically. This sensory experience was another translation-metaphor for citizenship.

In both cases, the Confucian discourse of the family not only handled conventional understandings of national belonging in a legal sense through the *koseki* system, but it also routed women's sense of duty to the polity through the family. For women of the upper classes, this meant adapting their role in the household to produce able, well-educated children capable of participating in the strengthening of the nation. For women at the lower end of the class structure, the connection between family well-being and national-well-being was not necessarily apparent to the women themselves, but Confucian notions women's duty to the family encouraged them to produce economically in new ways.

Although the Confucian discourse of the family seems antithetical to the kind of "liberal" subjectivity that many associate with modernity, we should bear in mind Gavin Walker (and Uno Kōzō's) suggestion that it is often the least modern practices which are the most essential for modernization in general.<sup>477</sup> In this way, the development of capitalist industry profited from the continuation of Confucian practices insofar as it gained access to a new reserve army of labor willing to work for low wages. In the longer term, the new vision of "the Way of the woman"

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<sup>477</sup> Walker, *The Sublime Perversion of Capital*.

that the upper classes adopted was instrumental to the cultivation of a pool of well-educated individuals capable of serving in management or the state bureaucracy. It was the transformation of views about education's importance in creating "good wives" and "wise mothers" who could oversee their children's education that facilitated the emergence of this class in the late Meiji period. These women's abilities in managing the household was also held to be critical to their husbands' capacity to exercise their political rights on behalf of the family.

None of this is to make the claim that the Japanese women of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century were docile, powerless, or somehow foolish for not immediately demanding full political rights or refusing to work in the mills. Quite the contrary. The women I have discussed are quite remarkable for the ways in which they actively participated in remaking their roles in society. The actions of someone like Kishida Toshiko, or the journeys made by thousands of women far from their homes and families to distant silk mills, would have been unthinkable only a few decades prior. Narratives of Japanese feminism that begin with the Bluestockings or the women's associations of the 1910s and 20s are missing the absolutely essential disruptions caused by the appearance of their Meiji predecessors. It was this appearance and the new ways of experiencing community created by this translational moment which made later feminisms possible.

While Kishida Toshiko's contribution to the legitimization of women's civil rights contribution is clear, the women who labored in the silk and cotton mills were instrumental in constructing a broad conception of solidarity between women outside of and beyond the family. The experience that many of the millworkers had being locked in the prison-like factory dormitories with girls from all parts of Japan was essential to the overcoming of very

pronounced regional cultural and linguistic barriers.<sup>478</sup> Although the Confucian discourse of the family was an important factor in drawing and retaining women in capitalist industry, it also created the conditions for its own undoing by bringing women together outside of the family.

Finally, this translational moment shows the impurity of any political moment. Although their appearances affirmed the underlying principle of equality insofar as Kishida and the mill workers showed that women could speak and work in the same ways as men, these moments were constrained by their emergence into existing discursive worlds. This is certainly not particular to Japan's late 19<sup>th</sup> century. As Althusser reminds us, "...ideology is as such an organic part of every social totality. It is as if human societies could not survive without these specific formations, these systems of representations (at various levels), their ideologies. Human societies secrete ideology as the very element and atmosphere indispensable to their historical respiration and life."<sup>479</sup>

In other words, although translation-metaphors disrupt ways of seeing and feeling, there limits to what can be seen and what can be broken at any given moment within a particular social order. The breakdown of some aesthetic constraints does not imply total freedom from these rules (or what Althusser might call "ideology") altogether. In this sense, the reconfiguration of Confucian ideology in the gap created by changes in economic conditions, the spread of new

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<sup>478</sup> Tsurumi tells an anecdote concerning one young worker at the Tomioka model factory who complained that she could not understand the words of her "French" trainer. Her trainer, however was actually a girl from another prefecture instructing her in French methods. The two girls from opposite ends of the country could not communicate because modern spoken Japanese was not yet consolidated as a single language. Regional dialects in the 19<sup>th</sup> century (and even to some extent today), were so different as to be essentially incomprehensible. Being thrown together in the mills was also important for the construction of a shared, national language.

<sup>479</sup> Althusser, *For Marx*.

practices of knowledge production and new limits on intelligible public speech created new possibilities for women while continuing to foreclose others.

Most importantly, understanding the possibilities and limits for Meiji women within the confines Confucian discourse of the family points to something important about Meiji translational moments more broadly. That is, the translation-metaphors took the form they did precisely because they were enmeshed in this complex set of changing social practices and the ideas which sustained them. While the implication of the practices of the speech and debate societies pushed towards universal political participation, the requirements of a burgeoning capitalism, the economic challenges facing people in different parts of society, and the formal subsumption of old ideas and practices pushed in other directions.



## Conclusion| Translating the World

For thinking is always firstly thinking the thinkable – a thinking that modifies what is thinkable by welcoming what was unthinkable.<sup>480</sup>

-*Jacques Rancière*

The metaphysical comfort...every true tragedy leaves us [with is] that life is at the bottom of things, despite all the changes of appearances, indestructibly powerful and pleasurable--this comfort appears in incarnate clarity in the chorus of the satyrs, a chorus of natural beings who live ineradicably, as it were, behind all civilization and remain eternally the same, despite the changes of generations and of the history of nations.<sup>481</sup>

-*Friedrich Nietzsche*

### Sōgoro's Return

There is a strong possibility that visitors to Japan today will arrive through Narita International Airport, located about 40 miles north of Tokyo. Most travelers will be unaware, but the construction of the airport in the 1960s and 70s was the subject of an intense battle. On one side, the central government (dominated by the Liberal-Democratic Party) was driven by the desire to continue the period of high economic growth by making Japan increasingly accessible to the global market. On the other side was a group of left-leaning activists who were dead-set on preventing the expropriation of land from farmers and the inevitable destruction of the natural environment that would accompany the construction of a major international airport.

The Sanrizuka-Shibayama Union to Oppose the Airport was an alliance of local farmers and New Left activists who had also opposed the US-Japan security treaty, the LDP's efforts to break unions, and the government's complicity in supporting American bombing raids in Vietnam. The Union went to extraordinary lengths to prevent the construction of the airport's

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<sup>480</sup> Rancière, *Aisthesis*, xi.

<sup>481</sup> Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, 59.

five runways. They dug ditches, held 24-hour vigils over the land, and faced waves of riot police wielding water cannons and tear gas at each attempt to push construction forward. People were killed in the struggle on both sides. One young student even hanged himself in protest. The government, however, would not be deterred.

Narita is located in modern-day Chiba prefecture, which was the home of none other than Kiuchi Sōgorō, the 17<sup>th</sup> century peasant martyr. The train to Narita International Airport runs through the villages of the former Sakura domain which Sōgorō saved through his appeal to the shogun. This significance was not lost on the Union or many of the other groups who supported it. The Japan Communist Party even established a local office in Sakura village as a result of this connection. The many participants in the movement to oppose the airport were keenly aware of their area's radical heritage. "We are the descendants of Sōgorō" was a common feeling among those who stood up to the government.<sup>482</sup>

This invocation of Sōgorō was not based purely on the geographical connection, however. What linked the Union to Oppose the Airport and Sōgorō's original act of defiance was a frustration with their inability to be recognized as legitimate, speaking beings. In the 1960s and 70's, the government was incapable of recognizing the protester's concerns as intelligible. The government experienced the protests as incoherent grumbling, to be put down with force if necessary.

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<sup>482</sup> Apter, *Against the State*, 37. Perhaps this might be the Japanese variant of "We are all German Jews." Ranciere writes that "...when demonstrators in the Paris of 1968 declared, against all police evidence, 'We are all German Jews,' they exposed for all to see the gap between political subjectification –defined in the nexus of a logical utterance and an aesthetic manifestation – and any kind of identification." *Dis – Agreement*, 59.

The Narita protests were the culmination of a longer history produced by a dividing up of the world which only gave those who advanced the policy of fast-paced economic growth a political part. The government's railroading of the US security treaty in 1960, its unwillingness to consider popular opposition to cooperation in the Vietnam war, and the consolidation of *de facto* one party rule since the 1950s made many ordinary people painfully aware of the unintelligibility of their world for those in power. The protesters and their friends on the left invoked Sōgorō as a call to appear precisely where they were not recognized, to force their words to be counted, and to demand recognition as equals capable of valid speech.

In other words, they translated Sōgorō's experience into their own time and place, making him a metaphor not for victory, but for the demand to be heard. This translation helped make the nature of the conflict apparent. It disrupted the standard perception of everyday politics by making the present seem as if it were another moment in which voices like those of the protesters were being ignored. It inspired perseverance, legitimized certain tactics, and animated new ways of talking about the relationship between the people and the state. It was a "constituent moment" that made the people and the state appear as distinct political subjects in opposition to one another.

Although the battle continued well into the 1980s, the movement did not succeed in preventing the construction of the airport. This is not to say that it achieved nothing, however. While the truly political moment does not hold out any guarantees of strategic success or inevitably lead towards lasting emancipation, it does always verify the potentiality of democratic equality to break through, if only for a moment. The emergence of a political moment is always another demonstration of the principle that politics is recurrent, and that no regime of perception (with its attendant relations of inequality), is timeless or immune to change. At stake in every act

of rebellion, therefore, is not only the possibility of victory in whatever struggle is being fought, but the reaffirmation of the promise that because there is no foundation to any of our contingent social arrangements, change will eventually come.

What I have tried to suggest is that while explicit acts of rebellion do hold out the possibility for social transformation, this same potential resides in humble acts of translation or metaphor-making as well. Because translations are a kind of metaphor-making, they destabilize the ways that we divide the world into visible and invisible, intelligible and unintelligible. These moments transform the world in ways that defy sensemaking, and force a realignment of people's standing in relation to one another. Each translational moment, precisely because it is also a political moment, opens the world to change.

I began with two questions about the nature of this change that were at once theoretical and historiographical. First, I asked how translation could be a political activity, and argued that translation creates new, metaphorical figurations of the world. These translation-metaphors not only transform our ways of taking part in society, but in so doing reaffirm the basic principle of democratic equality. Translation constantly provides moments of refounding and renewal by inserting creating space for new elements to slip into the gaps of everyday politics.

Second, I wondered how the decentralized Tokugawa system of rule was so thoroughly and rapidly replaced by a centralized state, capitalist economic relations, and the nation-form. The answer I have suggested is that through the translation activities surrounding citizenship, old subjectivities were broken down and new ones, conducive to institutions like capitalism and nationalism, emerged in their place. New institutions and subjectivities like these were not designed or imposed from above, but emerged from the interplay of words, actions, and values.

I should be clear that I do not take these questions to be fundamentally distinct, however. My understanding of what happened in Meiji Japan has informed my construction of a theory of translation. Likewise, my evolving thoughts on translation have helped me think differently about the events of the early Meiji period. In other words, I have tried to theorize as a mode of historiography, and to practice historiography as a mode of theorizing. As such, I hope that I have avoided creating the impression that I am simply imposing Ranciere's (or anyone else's) philosophy on Meiji Japan. Although I have found Ranciere's work helpful in thinking through moments of political disruption, Meiji history also clearly demonstrates some of the limits of his thinking.<sup>483</sup>

I have also tried to avoid creating the impression that I take ideas to be prior to material realities in the movement of history. I do not see a rigid distinction between the two. As I argued in the overture, translation can occur not only between words, but between words and images, images and sounds, and actions and any of the other technologies of representation one might imagine. As Voloshinov argues, signs are material. While I showed that ideas are important in making certain kinds of action possible in moments one and two, I also showed how actions and practices can transform ideas. These interactions occur without any teleology or developmental trajectory. To say that the interaction of words and things can create opportunities for the world to change is not the same as saying that it creates opportunities for it to change in a particular direction. Therefore, I take the politics of translation as I have described it here to be critical of Hegelian histories which recount the development of "modern" ideas in Japan (or anywhere else, for that matter).

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<sup>483</sup> I have tried to show this specifically in moments two and four above. Translational disruption was always constrained and subverted by material realities.

Finally, I'd like to close by reviewing some more specific lessons we might draw from these episodes of translation. Each of these moments is, of course, open-ended and therefore open to multiple interpretations. Nonetheless, I hope that I have at least provided some provocative points of departure for further thought about both Meiji history and the theory of translation.

### **Meiji Moments**

We have explored the redrawing of boundaries in Meiji Japan by looking at four episodes in which the words and practices of citizenship enabled different ways of being in-between the existing divisions of society. Fukuzawa Yukichi's egalitarian approach to writing, and his democratizing translation-metaphor of citizenship, *shimin* (市民), disrupted the Tokugawa Confucian hierarchy of samurai, farmers, artisans, and merchants (*shinōkōshō*). Fukuzawa broke the established order of people by introducing a new element, the citizen, which could not be counted in that framework. The moment of equality experienced by his readers as they were struck physically by this new, previously unfelt articulation of words and people cleared space for new practices and new institutions to emerge.

Practically speaking, Fukuzawa's language created a distinction between civil rights and political rights which played into the interests of the Meiji oligarchy. Although people acting as *shimin* had an important role to play in cultivating human capital, building private institutions, and contributing to economic development, they were most useful when they stayed out of politics. This rigid separation of the political and civil spheres nonetheless provided a form of counterbalance between the government and elements of society outside of the state.

Fukuzawa's language in his translational writing created a moment of equality, but his subsequent didactic writing dismissed the contributions of "small people" (*shōmin*) as

unimportant. This division of people into high, low, and middle reproduced some aspects of the old distinctions between samurai and the other classes. It did not reproduce them just so however. There was a fundamental transformation of the old into something else compatible with new political and economic institutions.

Nakae Chōmin's translation-metaphor, *shūjin* (衆人), drew the lines of sensibility differently. *Shūjin* was another profoundly democratic way of being that defied both the liberal citizenship of Fukuzawa and the class hierarchy of the shogunate. It emphasized the moral equality of all people regardless of status or origin. The basis for this equality was the transformation of Rousseau's *pitié* into an interpretation of the Confucian virtue of *jin* (仁). While *jin*, when combined with Rousseau's critique of arbitrary authority, broke down class boundaries, it also reinscribed older forms of inequality between men and women, old and young, and educated and ignorant.

*Minyaku yakkai* broke down not only the old class divisions, but the new legalistic figuration of individuals as belonging to the state. In its creation of a moral community of people united by a specific, culturally inflected principle, it furnished the material for the emergence of nationalism. Although *Minyaku yakkai* made it clear that an unreconstructed Confucian morality was inadequate for the world of the 1880s, it also suggested that "Japanese" culture was not something that could or should be totally abnegated by modernization. Chōmin's language was consistent with arguments calling for a constitution, suggested that such a constitution would be a formalization and defense of an already viable moral community.

The translation-metaphors of citizenship found in Fukuzawa or Chōmin's writing were both actualized and transformed by the men and women of early Meiji. Or perhaps it would be better to say that the men and women of early Meiji took part in the practices of citizenship

(despite being judged incapable of doing so) by transforming the spaces in which people could encounter one another. The speech and debating societies took the practices of *enzetsu* contained in Fukuzawa's metaphor *shimin*, the examples of speech societies like the Mita *enzetsukai*, the instructions for creating such a society in *Kaigiben*, and translated them into new ways of organizing the venues in which people spoke to and heard one another. They affirmed new grounds for creating knowledge and drew new boundaries for who was capable of making intelligible utterances. Their physical experiences of being together, as equals, affirming the opinions of all as valid were themselves translated and metaphorized in the draft constitutions that many groups produced following the Meiji government's promise to grant a constitution by the end of the 1880s.

Although the practices of the speech societies implied a certain kind of universalism, this ideal was not fully realized. The draft constitutions generally validated the household registration system (*koseki*) as the proper means for determining who counted as Japanese. The *koseki* register was grounded in Confucian ideas about the role of women in the family, and the draft constitutions therefore implicitly or explicitly excluded women from being counted as full citizens.

Nonetheless, we saw how this was challenged by women like Kishida Toshiko. Her speeches in front of hundreds or even thousands of eager listeners were another example something transformed appearing where it was not expected and did not belong. Prior to Kishida, women were regarded as incapable of practicing *enzetsu*, and treated as mute objects who could not possess the power of intelligible public speech. Kishida's appearance translated women into rights-bearing subjects, perhaps for the first time in modern Japanese history. However, Kishida's framing of women's rights in terms of civil, rather than political, rights channeled



women's citizenship back into Confucian notions of family. Although women needed greater civil rights, these rights were necessary for perform new economic functions supporting male political citizenship and the cultivation of the human capital of their children.

Similarly, although the appearance of women and girls in the silk mills on a scale unprecedented in Japanese history was a manifestation of the equality implied in citizenship. Changing circumstances and ideas made it possible (indeed, necessary) for women of the lower classes to leave the household and earn cash. This development too was made sensible in terms of a Confucian duty to family. Many of the women who labored under atrocious conditions in the silk mills perhaps did so on the basis of Confucian ideas about filial piety and their duties to the family. The appearance of these women in these changing spaces led to a transformation of Confucian ideas that was ultimately conducive to the development of Japanese capitalism in the 1890s and beyond.

Thus, these moments were each conducive in their own ways to the consolidation of the Meiji state, the emergence of a Japanese nationalism, and the capitalist mode of production. This occurred on two levels. First, the appearance of new categories of being in between the old delegitimized the organizing principles of Tokugawa society. For example, Fukuzawa Yukichi's *shimin* was a figure who could in principle emerge from any of the primary class backgrounds of the *shinōkōshō* system. The possibility of becoming something called a *shimin* required new institutions to accommodate it. These institutions included things like the parliament that eventually took shape, but perhaps more importantly, schools, universities, and privately held companies were the *shimin*'s natural home.

Second, it was the emergence of the kinds of psychological interiority that went along with the new translation-metaphors for citizenship that were important for animating the new

institutions. Fukuzawa's rationalism of course was important as a standard for judgment in the context of a liberal, entrepreneurial middle class. Chōmin's *shūjin*, on the other hand, made it possible to perceive a political community that was not tied to the state alone. Insofar as anyone could join the community of *jin* by being able to identify themselves with the group, the nation as a form of belonging distinct from and perhaps above the state was legitimized as well.

It was not simply the linguistic cutting that people like Fukuzawa and Chōmin performed that provided opportunities for new kinds of subjectivity to emerge. The practices of translation as citizenship embodied by the participants in the speech societies and the women of the factories simply took part in Meiji society with important consequences for what it was possible to be. Rural people who started their own speech associations showed that the citizenship was potentially universal. Ultimately, their appearance and the validation of the new standards of knowledge production they implied were supportive of the idea that Japan itself was an equal, distinctive nation among others. It affirmed the notion that ideas produced in Japan, provided they were subject to the correct scrutiny, were potentially as valid as those produced anywhere else. This not only ideologically facilitated cultural exchange with other countries, but surely justified commercial relationships as well.

The different ways of appearing suggested by each of these translational moments are of course not necessarily consistent with one another. Some, like the draft constitutions and the appearance of women in speech societies, led to conclusions that were not necessarily internally consistent. What was consistent, however, was the transformation of words and things which lead to the creation of different political possibilities. Each moment enabled something conducive to a new way of life. Some forms, like the rationalism implied in Fukuzawa's *shimin* or in the practices of the speech societies, or the nation-form hinted at by Chōmin's moral

community, took root and decisively influenced Japan's 20<sup>th</sup> century. Other forms, like the gender equality implied by Kishida Toshiko's appearance or the equality between classes suggested by the speech society's validation of individualism have still not been fully realized.

None of the figures who authored the translations which figured the world differently did so in full possession of an understanding of the effects their words would have. Certainly, none could have anticipated the way their particular figurations of society might have interacted with the others taking shape at roughly the same time. These translational moments, however, changed the ways that people could talk about and judge political actions, which in turn created certain possibilities and foreclosed others. I make no strong claims about what precisely each moment caused, but I have tried to suggest certain affinities between the transformed ways of experiencing life together each moment created and the concrete economic and political changes of the early Meiji period and beyond. To borrow a phrase of Max Weber's, the new subjectivities produced in translational moments seem to "hang together" with the broad socio-economic transformations that took place in the Meiji period.<sup>484</sup>

Although it has been said that citizenship was relatively unimportant in Japanese intellectual history prior to 1945, I have tried to show that citizenship was central to the debates and everyday political developments of the time.<sup>485</sup> Some of the debates initiated then still resonate today. Rancière explains that: "'Man' and 'citizen' do not designate collections of individuals. Man and citizen are political subjects. Political subjects are not definite collectivities. They are surplus names, names that set out a question or a dispute...about who is

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<sup>484</sup> Weber's word in German is *zusammenhäng*. See the first chapter of *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*.

<sup>485</sup> Avaneil, *Making Japanese Citizens*, 11.

included in their count. Correspondingly, freedom and equality are not predicates belonging to definite subjects. Political predicates are open predicates: they open up a dispute about what they exactly entail and whom they concern in which cases.”<sup>486</sup> Translation-metaphors of citizenship were part of the open dispute over who could be counted in Meiji society, and suggests that perhaps we might find something interesting in other moments of translation in other places and times.

### **The Politics of Translation-Metaphor**

My primary theoretical intervention has been to re-think translation in aesthetic rather than mimetic terms. In so doing, I hope to have validated the assumption that there is a unity between ways of representing the world and ways of living and being together in it. Ultimately, my argument has been that translational moments are democratic political moments. Although we do not know what the ultimate effects of a political moment will be, we do know that our experience of the world will change when one occurs.

Thinking aesthetically has led me to several specific claims. I mentioned above that at the heart of these claims is the idea of complicating the *com-* of comparison with the *trans-* of translation. While comparison insists on the existence of pre-existing categories to determine the validity of mimetic relationships, translation is a type of transformation that is, despite appearances to the contrary, unconcerned about the fit between two things. Rather, it focuses on the productive interaction between things that do not ordinarily find themselves together. It assumes that there is a miscount, and takes note of the possibility for the part not counted to intervene in the usual indexing of things in the world.

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<sup>486</sup> Rancière, “Who is the Subject of the Rights of Man?” 303.

Instead of participating in what has been called comparative political theory, I have tried to create a space for what we might want to call translational political theory. That is, emphasizing the transformational nature of the interactions between things rather than the co-presence implied by comparison helps us think about the relations that emerge without presupposing any particular subjectivity. Historically speaking, this allows us to reconsider how transformations of saying and doing allowed new ways of being to emerge without reference to national categories. Politically speaking, this approach recognizes the potential in our own time for the unexpected emergence of radically democratic moments.

Crucially, translational political theory does this without needing to send a political message. Although the early, translational Fukuzawa, Chōmin, Kishida, and the speech societies probably had certain political objectives in mind when choosing to translate, the politics of their actions were not a product of this intention alone. Both translations *of* citizenship and translations *as* citizenship did not insist that their readers draw a particular lesson from their words or actions. Comparison is by its nature didactic insofar as it makes firm judgments about what belongs and what does not. It specifies what fits and what can be jettisoned. Making a judgment about fit requires telling others to accept the terms of the judgment. Translation starts by recognizing the inevitability of the miscount and embracing the indeterminacy it implies.

Viewing translation as a form of comparison overlooks its complexity and fundamental democratic potential. Rather than saying that translation is a judgment about whether a given source-language word fits a particular target language word, we might take the alternative view that it is not a matter of fit, but of the interaction between things that do not usually appear together. This figuring of relations between heterogeneous things is the essence of democracy as much as it is translation. Translation produces third terms that are neither amalgamations of the

existing terms nor entirely unlike them. It produces something in between which changes how the relationship between the originals can be interpreted or experienced. It implies a change in the distribution of things in the world. Comparison, on the other hand, cannot help but reinforce the existing ways of experiencing our relationships with other. It insists that it is the only possible way of dividing the world. At the risk of sounding polemical, we could perhaps say that comparison is inherently anti-egalitarian.

The verification of equality that translational moments offer perhaps gives us new resources to think about democratic practice in general. As I mentioned at the outset, recent work in democratic theory by Aletta Norval and Bonnie Honig suggest several ways in which an openness to translation is vital to democratic politics. Norval's *Aversive Democracy* in particular effectively illustrates the open-endedness of democratic life. That is, ideals are rarely, if ever, fully realized. There is always a deferral of perfection implicit in the practice of proposing solutions and compromising with others to achieve workable outcomes. In a sense, this is not unlike the process of translation in which signs are transformed again and again.

For Norval, although democratic interaction is iterative, it is not teleological. We may act with the intention of improving the world according to our beliefs and values, but this does not happen according to universal trajectory of progress or moral development. Because the outcomes of our actions are unknowable in advance, in a sense we can only ever roll the dice, so to speak, and see what consequences come out on top. Translation is also both iterative and non-teleological. Interactions produce outcomes that may be better or worse than what came before. No one can guarantee that the consequence of a new rule, arrangement of words, or distribution of bodies in space will produce something freer, more equal, or more just. What we can do, however, is hope. At the very least, we can say that transformations which verify

democratic equality are inevitable so long as we continue to place things in new kinds of interactive relation.

Although we cannot anticipate the full consequences of our translations of the world, Bonnie Honig's account of the role of the foreigner in democracy suggests why it is important to keep translating. In the past, foreignness has played a critical role in the periodic reinvigoration of American democracy. It need not be understood as that which is antithetical to a pure domesticity, and we can say that "foreignness" is in many respects unrelated to borders or the legality of citizenship. To be foreign is to be that which does not initially fit. The foreign does not count in our usual reckoning of the world, and yet there it is.

The critical feature of foreignness is its undecidability.<sup>487</sup> Immigrants, to take just one manifestation, reinvigorate our democracy by affirmatively consenting to an essentially non-consensual politics. They often serve as metaphors for ideals of citizenship. Yet they also often symbolize a threat, either economic ("they take our jobs"), or political ("they do not share our beliefs"). This kind of ambivalence prevents us from simply comparing the domestic and the foreign. Just as immigrants make new ways of experiencing American democracy possible, new translations of words and images do as well. Immigration might well be considered a kind of translation at its core. In Honig's words, it both "shores up" and "unsettles" democratic practices, as translation-metaphors often do as well.<sup>488</sup>

Norval and Honig's work suggests that it is this open-endedness which make democracy viable over time. Norval's perfectionist, aversive democracy "...does not furnish us with an end state to be achieved precisely because these demands...run the risk of complacency...Were we

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<sup>487</sup> Honig, *Democracy and the Foreigner*, 76.

<sup>488</sup> Honig, *Democracy and the Foreigner*, 32.

to have such an [end state], the risk is that we concentrate on those elements only or to the exclusion of other, often unforeseen and unforeseeable events, concerns, and demands that may arise.... Hence, [aversive democracy] calls for attentiveness...to the contouring of the space in and against which demands are articulated and the relations it implies between ourselves and others....”<sup>489</sup> Maintaining the healthy generation of counterexamples to established ways of living not only prevents stagnation but makes it possible to respond to unexpected challenges that appear throughout history.

Norval points to the importance of the “exemplar” in democratic life. Honig shows how the figure of the foreigner plays a similar role. Exemplars, in both cases, are not patterns that one mimetically follows. While we may have people we admire in our lives, we can nonetheless never be copies of them. Instead, we are inspired by exemplary people to do things differently. We might attempt to become like them, but we can never actually be them. The role of exemplarity in Norval’s aversive democracy and of the foreigner in Honig’s account of democratic life is precisely to be an element in the interactive relationship of translation. By taking ourselves as we are and the other as we see them, we endeavor to become something that is both like and yet not either ourselves or the example we have chosen.

The citizens that Fukuzawa and Chōmin described, the *enzetsuka* that many observed firsthand, and the women who appeared in new public spaces were examples in precisely this way. Their ways of being and doing were foreign to the experience Meiji society. In some important ways, they were “foreign” in the literal sense of originating beyond the borders of what had become Japan. In other ways, they were simply previously unimagined ways of addressing one’s self to the world. This profusion of foreignness, both literal and metaphorical,

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<sup>489</sup> Norval, *Aversive Democracy*, 7.



introduced an element of radical democracy into spaces that were otherwise rigidly undemocratic. In Norval's view, a democracy is healthy precisely when its is renewed through the appearance of moments "foreignness." Honig similarly insists that foreigners are often critical for both the founding and refounding of democracy, and that foreignness is deeply implicated in the rejuvenation of democratic life.<sup>490</sup> What I believe the translational moments we have explored show is that it is translation that grounds the salutary effects of foreignness on democracy.

### **Final Reflections**

Although Sakura Sōgorō paid with his life, the risk he took in placing himself before the shogun probably saved the lives of many others. By appearing in a place he was not supposed to appear, speaking words he was not supposed to be capable of speaking, his action enabled a moment of equality between the lowest peasants and the shogun himself. This moment of equality disappeared, but certainly did not die. It returned again and again, transformed in the translation-metaphors of those who appealed to Sōgorō's example in the centuries that followed. Not every battle was victorious, but every battle verified the principle of equality that translation-metaphor so frequently makes apparent.

Translation-metaphor is therefore necessarily political, and it always exceeds the control of those who would wield it. Whatever objectives Fukuzawa had in mind when he first coined the term *shimin*, he surely could never have predicted the counter-metaphors, enactments, and excesses that came about in the 1870s and 1880s. The episodes of translation-metaphor we have

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<sup>490</sup> Honig, *Democracy and the Foreigner*, 39-40.

explored are independent precisely because they each appeared into a different discursive context bearing elements from outside in relations of “like” but “is not.”<sup>491</sup>

The Tokugawa harmony between the four classes, the Confucian cosmology that bound politics to nature, and the hierarchical model of knowledge production that accompanied it were all radically shaken by the new translation-metaphors that Fukuzawa, Chōmin, Kishida, and the others created. This shaking left elements of old and new meaning on the field, some of which were packed up and used to translate or re-translate other concepts like “nation,” “empire,” or “capitalism” along with countless other ways of being that it has not yet occurred to us to examine.

A democracy that is accustomed to adapting to new ways of thinking and being through practices of translation might not only be more stable but quite likely more just as it finds ways to adapt to a constantly-changing world. The crisis that the arrival of the black ships occasioned in 1853 was in some sense a product of the rigidity of Tokugawa assumptions about how the world was structured. The absence of counterexamples and the resistance to alternative moralities ensured that the shogunate broke rather than bent. The consequence of this breaking was violence, repression, and ultimately civil war.

As we have seen, in the aftermath of Perry’s appearance, it was practices of translation that ultimately injected the flexibility necessary to put the pieces back together. As the Meiji

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<sup>491</sup> Let me be clear that this “outside” is does not mean outside Japan. The point I have tried to make throughout the dissertation is precisely that European forms were never and could never have been mimetically copied. Elements of culture gain status as parts of a specific national culture only after their figuration as part of a broader discourse. The appearance of new words, practices, or ideas is necessarily pre-national. Therefore, when I say “outside,” I mean something closer to “unusual,” “abnormal,” or what Ranciere might call “wrong.” This wrong could later be figured as either “Japanese” or “Western,” but this is not a necessary or predetermined aspect of the wrong as it initially appears.

period progressed, it was also practices of translation that led to the appearance of new examples of ways that one could be, new figurations of the relations between people, and the appearance of people in places they were not seen as capable of appearing in. These new figurations were not the products of the mimetic reproduction of “Western” forms, but the realization of potentialities arising from the interactions between the various incommensurate elements of culture. These translational practices certainly unsettled but also shored up the Meiji polity in important ways through their essential open-endedness and indeterminacy. The incipience of something previously insensible alters the ways in which we can experience the world. It creates a moment of equality before new designations step in to once again separate and divide.

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