

American Fiction of the 1970's

Minako Baba

American society in the 1960's and the first half of the 1970's was one great upheaval: so many unprecedented dazzling phenomena were reported daily by the mass media that it was difficult for a writer to present the extraordinary reality in a compelling fictional form. During the same period, the bicentennial of the nation seemed to induce writers to reconsider American history, society, and art. This explains the remarkable self-consciousness of the writers and the numerous novels about writing fiction in the turbulent contemporary society. Here it is also interesting to note in quite a few works of fiction the image of respectfully burying the father figure, which obviously symbolized the growing-out of the past tradition, both social and literary.

Then, since the latter half of the 1970's, after having come to terms with the past, writers have presented more positively the possibility of new modes of life and art in their works. Even Donald Barthelme, an ironic writer of fragments, seems to have adopted a slightly humanistic attitude and reveals somewhat hopeful signs of communication and dialogue between lonely individuals in his stories.

In this paper, I have chosen to discuss mainly the works of three writers: Saul Bellow as the spiritual propounder of the humanistic realist school, Donald Barthelme as an extreme example of the ironic non-representational postmodernist school, and Kurt Vonnegut as something of a cross between the humanistic realist and the post-modernistic avant garde.

Finally, Thomas Pynchon's *Gravity's Rainbow* is a unique achievement of the 1970's, involving the above themes and images in the framework of technology, and inviting the readers to participate in the reevaluation of the modern civilization and the search for viable ways of life.

American literature of the 1970's started out as rather solipsistic self-conscious writing. However, since the late 1970's when there was a general critical awareness of the need for natural conservation and peaceful coexistence, writers appear to have regained the sense of society and of a general reading public. The result is a wide variety of amalgam of humanistic attitudes and novelistic experiments.

Summary

Vagrancy and Faith—A Study of Miyazaki Yasu-uemon

Yu Sugise

Miyazaki Yasu-uemon, Dōan, (1888–1963), is a very remarkable Christian in Japanese spiritual history. More typical of the patterns of spiritual struggle of Japanese Christians is Uchimura Kanzo's *How I Became a Christian* which corresponds to a Japanese Pilgrim's Progress. In contrast Miyazaki's spiritual growth goes beyond Nature Mysticism, Pantheism, or Syncretism as known in Japan.

Throughout his life he was contented with "holy poverty" and had no fixed occupation or income. His ideal life was "the *Shukke* out of the *Shukke*", like St. Francis of Assisi and the Buddhist monks, Tōsui and Ryokan; he was known as "a poetic religious man". He arrived at his very unique understanding of the Gospel only late in life, when he was almost 70 years old, after a long study of Dogen, Honen, Shinran and other Japanese religious profits.

Contents:

1. Life and Books.
2. Supplementary Note for his chronicle.
3. The crucial problem for his indigenation of the Christian faith.
4. *The Bible for Hell*, his last book.
5. Vagrancy and the Christian faith, compared with other religious vagrants.

Summary

The Acquisition and Sustainment of Self-knowledge

Hiroaki Nakazato

In the phases of social interaction, people endeavor to seek, elicit and recall feedback from partners that confirm their self-conceptions. They regard such self-confirmatory feedback as very informative, whereas self-discrepant feedback tends to be dismissed, because their sense of control over the social world may be threatened. By using various strategies and tactics they should be able to stabilize and sustain their self-conceptions. The explanation of such self-verification processes as proposed by William Swann is presented here with some additional research.

Il concetto della decadenza ed il suo sfondo storico

Sampei Koseki

Che cosa è la decadenza? Questo tema è molto complicato e interdisciplinario.

Per studiare la sua essenza ed il suo significato, bisogna sapere una sintesi delle varie sfere accademiche—biologia, istologia, sociologia, criminologia, antropologia filosofica e teologia.

La decadenza è un processo sociale che è capito dall'analogia biologica, ed è accusato dai moralisti. Ma gl'artisti chi erano chiamati *décadent* nella *fin de siècle* della Francia crearono una nuova coscienza della bellezza, e criticarono la ipocrisia della borghesia e della chiesa. Cioé è stato un paradosso, perché desideravano la sincerità, la verità, la bontà e la salvezza. Perciò la dobbiamo vedere dialeticamente.

Innanzitutto, l'autore esaminò il senso originale della parola *decadence* nel secolo diciannovesimo, e dopo seguì il processo storico della polemica sull'estimazione estetica e morale dei fenomeni *decadents*. Queste procedure sono indispensabile per capire correttamente il vero significato sociologico, psicologico, filosofico e religioso della decadenza.

In quanto alla psicologia sociale e al suo contesto storico della società europea nel secolo diciannovesimo, saranno analizzati nell'altra monografia.

On the Root System of Windbreaking Forests (*Quercus dentata* Community and *Larix leptolepis* Community)

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An investigation of the root system of the windbreaking forests of *Quercus dentata* Tunb. and *Larix leptolepis* Gordon was made in the suburbs of Obihiro city in August 1980.

I. As a result of the investigation, the following characteristics were recognized about the horizontal distribution of roots classified by a diameter.

1. While the fine roots and small roots in *Sasa chartacea* var. *chartacea-Quercus dentata* community grow apart from the tree base and the medium roots and large roots grow profusely close by the tree base. The distance the lateral roots of *Quercus dentata* Tunb. invade into the pasture is about 10.6 m.

2. The distribution of *Larix leptolepis* Gordon roots shows a tendency for the fine roots, small roots and medium roots to be distributed almost equally, but the large roots are distributed widely close by the tree base. The distance the lateral roots of *Larix leptolepis* Gordon invade into the pasture is about 4.8 m.

II. As the result of investigation the following characteristics were recognized about the vertical distribution of roots classified by diameter.

1. Concerning the vertical distribution of *Sasa chartacea* var. *chartacea-Quercus dentata* community (A profile), the fine roots extended down to 60–140 cm in depth and the medium roots and large roots extended down to 40–60 cm; the small roots appeared nearly in balance from upper to lower layers.

2. Concerning the vertical distribution of *Sasa chartacea* var. *chartacea-Larix leptolepis* community, the fine roots, small roots, medium roots and large roots all extend down to an upper layer 0–20 cm in depth.

III. Underground structure of the plant community

1. The underground structure of *Sasa chartacea* var. *chartacea-Quercus dentata* community. The roots of *Quercus dentata* occupy the lower layer in the pasture and the upper layer is occupied by the pasture plants; it is estimated that the relation of competition is only remotely related, as they mutually divide the space of underground.

2. The underground structure of *Sasa chartacea* var. *chartacea*-*Larix leptolepis* community.

In this community both *Larix leptolepis* roots and pasture roots occupy an upper layer 0–20 cm in depth so it is estimated that the competition in underground is very keen. As the result of investigation, it is deduced that concerning the influence the roots of windbreaking forest act on the pasture, *Larix leptolepis* influences greater than *Quercus dentata*.

Summary

Notes on the “Commentary” on the Back of the Scrolls of *Sōgō-Bunin*

Toshio Minato

The *Sōgō-Bunin* is compiled in *Dainippon Bukkyo Zensho*; *Kōfukuji Soshō* (Anthology of Buddhism in Japan; Kōfukuji Series I), and its original text is an Important Cultural Object, *Sōgō-Bunin*, 6 vols., owned by Kōfukuji Temple.

It seems likely that a study of the text of *Dainippon Bukkyo Zensho* was conducted while the original text was being copied and some parts of the text which could not be read before have been deciphered. When I compared the original Kōfukuji text with the copy now placed in the care of the Nara National Museum (for which I served as curator), however, I found several misprints, misinterpretations and lacunae in the “Commentary” on the back of the copied text.

The purpose of this paper is to report my findings in the process of my study of the said material.

Summary

A Survey of the Publications for the People in Nineteenth-Century England

Masaie Matsumura

The serial publication of the *Pickwick Papers* in monthly parts which started in March 1836 was a phenomenal event in the history of the English novel. Sticking to this newly invented method of publication, Dickens played the leading role in both popularizing the novel and increasing the number of the reading public.

The English reading public, however, varied, undergoing various stages in its making. When Victoria came to the throne in 1837, about half of the whole nation could not even read or write their names. The Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge sponsored by Henry Peter Brougham published the *Penny Magazine* in 1827 as an attempt literally to diffuse useful knowledge among the people. It was followed by a series of cheap weekly magazines such as *Chamber's Journal*, *Christian Penny Magazine*, *London Penny Journal*, and more notably, *London Journal*. Chapbooks and broadside ballads flourished, too. G.W.M. Reynolds and J.F. Smith as writers, and James Catnach as a printer cut conspicuous figures in producing thrillers and dreadfuls, all of which gained immense popularity for making the readers' "blood run cold."

The enormous success of "penny dreadfuls" in the mid-nineteenth century triggered off an institution of "writing up to block." Numerous printers and literary hacks competed with each other to make capital out of the fashionable public readings, but none after all were so successful as Dickens, who originally started his career writing for Robert Seymour's sketches.