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Michael S. Molasky. *The American Occupation of Japan and Okinawa: Literature and Memory.* London and New York: Routledge, 1999. ix + 244 pp. $57.95 (paper), ISBN 978-0-415-26044-2; $190.00 (library), ISBN 978-0-415-19194-4.

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Subversive Sheep: Literary Memory of Foreign Occupation

Michael S. Molasky in *The American Occupation of Japan and Okinawa: Literature and Memory* offers an analysis of the "occupation literature" written and published during the postwar period (p. 3). Specifically, the author examines select writings that depict the interaction between the American occupiers and the conquered people. These writings include both popular and lesser-known writings. Although the author wishes not to "valorize memory over history" (p. 4), he nevertheless correctly insists that literature is a part of a people's memory. History and memory, in fact, are part of a dialectical relationship. Literature is important because it functions as a preserver, creator, and disseminator of memory.

In his overview of the history of the American military occupation of Japan, Molasky distinguishes the occupation of the inhabitants of the four main islands of Japan (1945-52) from that experienced by the Okinawans (1945-72 and 1972 to the present). Okinawa, he explains, has a history of "dual subjugation," first by Japan (with the "annexation" of the Ryukyus in 1879) and then later by the United States (p. 12). The island had been forcefully colonized by Japan, but following World War II it became the primary site of American occupation. With the outbreak of the Cold War, the American presence became a permanent reality. In 1952 the San Francisco Peace Treaty was signed, which effectively ended the occupation of the main islands of Japan, but also gave the United States the right to exercise authority over Okinawa and to maintain military bases in Japan. From the perspective of the Okinawans, the 1952 peace treaty was a betrayal in which the Japanese government bargained away sovereignty for Okinawa in exchange for the end of the occupation of Japan proper. In 1972, after an extensive citizen mobilization drive, Okinawa was officially reverted to Japan. Even so, the American presence continued with 75 percent of its Japanese military bases situated in Okinawa. In fact, one-fourth of the island remained in the hands of the Americans. Near the end of the twentieth century Okinawa was home to some 27,000 American military personnel and 28,000 dependents.

"Over half a century since it began," Molasky observes, "the American occupation remains a touchstone for a polarized political debate in Japan. Yet for most Japanese the occupation was not so much a political phenomenon as it was a time in their lives" (p. 7). One irony that hovers over any discussion about the occupation is serendipity, which included "liberation from domestic militarism" (p. 7) and democratic reforms. Japanese intellectuals, the author notes, emphasize "continuity" (*renzokusei*) as opposed to "disjuncture" (*danzokusei*) when discussing the transition period between wartime society and the postwar era. Depending on how one chooses to interpret the occupation literature, both views of continuity and disjuncture can be supported.

More distinction could be made between "occupation literature" written by authors who directly suffered wartime defeat and those who grew up under conditions of American hegemony as opposed to direct military control. Some readers will disagree with the elasticity of the term "occupation." The presence of military bases, despite the obvious impact on the surrounding communities, is not the same as occupation if the two nations involved mutually agreed to the arrangement. As Hawaii, despite its colonial past and forced annexation, is a part of the United States, so Okinawa has to be regarded as a part of Japan. If Tokyo consented to the continued presence of American military forces on Okinawa, then the bases should be viewed as a treaty agreement between two sovereign powers and not as an occupation. This, of course, does not excuse the pattern of outrageous behavior committed by American troops stationed on the island.

Molasky is careful not to presume that any specific text speaks for all of Japan. "In the final analysis, no single author can be expected to represent an entire nation's experience of an era," he writes. "Nor is it fair to ex-

pect a single group of writers–whether defined by gender or generation, by region, class, or ideology–to capture a truly comprehensive view of life under occupation. Such a view is only accessible through a broad cross-section of texts, including (but not limited to) those often deemed too low-brow, regional, or otherwise undeserving of critical attention" (p. 189). He is also careful to distinguish Japanese writings from Okinawan ones. The soundness of both his literary theory and historical understanding serves the author well when he offers close readings of numerous texts in the seven chapters that follow the introduction.

A vast array of writings, ranging from the high literary to the obscure, are analyzed, which include: in chapter 1, Kojima Nobuso's "The American School" (1954) and Oshiro Tatsuhiro's *The Cocktail Party* (1967); in chapter 2, Higashi Mineo's *An Okinawan Boy* (1971), Genga Asayoshi's "The Town That Went Pale" (1975), and Tanaka Kokei's "Children of Mixed Blood" (1972); in chapter 3, Oe Kenzaburo's "Prize Stock" ["The Catch"] (1958), Matsumoto Seicho's "Painting on Black Canvas" (1958), and Arakawa Akira's "The Colored Race" (1956); in chapter 4, *The Chastity of Japan* (1953) and *Female Floodwall* (1957); in chapter 5, Sono Ayako's "Guests From Afar" (1954), Hiroike Akiko's "The Only Ones" (1953), Nakamoto Takako's "Women of a Base Town" (1953), and Hirabayashi Taiko's "The Women of Choice, Hokkaido" (1952); in chapter 6, Oe Kenzaburo's "Human Sheep" (1958) and Nosaka Akiyuki's "American *Hijiki*" (1967); and, in the epilogue, Matayoshi Eiki's "The Wild Boar that George Shot" (1978), Uehara Noboru's "1970: The Gang Era" (1982), Yoshida Sueko's "Double Suicide at Kamara" (1984), Nagado Eikichi's "A Paper Airplane from the Empire State Building" (1993), and Saegusa Kazuko's *A Winter's Death* (1989).

Molasky's overall analysis is manageable and comprehensible because he carefully organizes his findings into heuristic themes. He examines how various authors utilized language, landscape, and gender to articulate cultural identity and victimhood. Rape and prostitution, for example, are metaphors of how some Japanese, primarily male, depicted the American occupation (pp. 11-12). However, Saegusa Kazuko, offering a woman's perspective, dismisses this stereotypical concept of postwar humiliation. For women, she argues, the occupation actually ushered in some liberation from Japanese patriarchy. In one passage a prostitute is empowered by her high heels, taking wider strides and enjoying a higher line of vision, and is able to "strut down those roads that she used to walk so timidly" (p. 184). In other passages the same author suggests that the refusal of Japanese men to intervene to stop rape attacks by the occupiers speaks not only of cowardice but ingrained patriarchal attitudes. Drawing parallels between Japan's wartime "comfort women" and the postwar prostitutes and mistresses outside American bases, a female character in one of Saegusa's novels candidly states, "Whether they're Japanese or Americans, soldiers are all the same, you know" (p. 187).

The author also focuses on the issue of race. In Japan's occupation literature the subject of race is addressed directly and indirectly. For the Japanese, both white and black represent "other." However, African Americans represent "differences within the realm of difference" (p. 73) or "a darker shade of difference" (p. 74). In some cases, blacks have been accorded solidarity, as revealed in the poem "Black and Yellow, Part 1," in which the Okinawan poet Arakawa Akira writes, "You who are Black / and we who are Yellow, / Together, we are the Colored Race" (p. 97). Although blacks have been treated with empathy in Japanese postwar literature, it was not apart from racism. This relates to why, in Okinawa, the "most outcast progeny" were (and are) children born of African-American fathers and Japanese mothers (p. 65). In the postwar literature, the black man is typically depicted as animalistic, primitive, and sensual. "The black soldier," Molaksy observes, "is rarely permitted to represent anything but his race" (p. 75). The "black boom" of the 1980s in Japanese media, which was characterized by an obsession with the highly sexualized black body, is best understood when studied in the context of the earlier occupation, when large numbers of blacks first arrived in Japan. According to Mokasky, "This discourse on blackness is a monologue, not a dialogue, and is concerned above all with interrogating Japanese identity, achieving a personal transformation through the phallic power of the racial other" (p. 72). Furthermore, "blackness serves to mediate Japanese identity in relation to whiteness" (p. 74).

The humiliation experienced by the American military in the Vietnam War seems to have influenced subsequent occupation literature, especially that penned by Okinawan writers. In "The Wild Boar That George Shot," the Okinawan writer Matayoshi Eiki depicts a white, paranoiac GI who shoots an old Okinawan man because he imagines the old man has been laughing behind his back. Eiki's story was inspired by the December 1960 shooting death of an Okinawan farmer by an American soldier who afterwards insisted that he thought the victim was a wild boar. But instead of portraying the occupier as callous and invincible, this story shows a pathetic person who lacks moral courage and at the same time

longs for respect. One sleepless night the GI leaves the barracks to search for the old man, a local who ekes out a living as a scavenger of scrap metal. Finding him, the GI points a gun to the old man's face, but the victim shows no sign of intimidation or fear. Instead, the old man passively looks at the occupier. The GI tells himself that his target is a wild boar and then commits the murder. This story is important, Molasky suggests, because it "begins to break down the stereotypical image of the distant and invincible occupier, and by doing so it stakes out a new confident stance toward the United States" (p. 179).

Considering how the earlier occupation literature typically depicted the Japanese as sheep (e.g., Oe Kenzaburo's "Human Sheep"), passively enduring first their own militaristic leaders and afterwards the American occupiers, Eiki's story is an important shift. However, at the surface level, the old man acted like a sheep because he did not fight or struggle against the GI. By offering careful analysis here and elsewhere, Molasky provides a superior tour de force of Japanese occupation literature. Humiliation is naturally a recurring theme in occupation literature, but the writings are often nonetheless rich in subversive moments. This must have been empowering to the original readers. To ponder the complexities of humiliation during the time of occupation, one should consider the issue of learning the occupier's language, English, which represented both empowerment and estrangement (p. 33). Liminal characters, such as prostitutes, in the various writings often are able to display linguistic superiority over the occupiers because they know both Japanese and English, and this skill is at times used as a tool of resistance in the face of domination (p. 160). To write (and read) about the experience of occupation offered the conquered people not only the possibility of facing up to the new realities, but to articulate their own interpretations, in other words to take control of their lives and destinies. The old man who did not blink when the gun was pointed at him triumphed over his conqueror, even though he lost his life.

The American Occupation of Japan and Okinawa: Literature and Memory is a definitive work, the result of a Herculean task. Researchers for years to come will be indebted by this groundbreaking project. Although it is not recommended reading for undergraduates, certain graduate students will find this work a model for how to do cross-cultural research. This reviewer possesses a packet of letters written by his father-in-law, now deceased, who was part of the U.S. Army occupation the year following the end of the war. These letters, from son to mother, were written in occupied Japan, but they are extremely banal and lack textual richness. The lesson of Molasky's book suggests that these letters written home were purposeful in leaving out a lot of the details. By reading the narratives of Japan's occupation literature, the rest of the story is revealed.

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