



Eye Magazine

The Magazine of The International Academic Forum | Issue 5 | Fall 2014

On the Fringes

Vincent van Gogh's Symbolist Interpretation of Rembrandt's Slaughtered Ox

Reclusive Shut-ins: Are Hikikomori Predominantly a Japanese Problem?

Critical Events in the Lives of Male Dancers

Plus

J.A.A. Stockwin
on New Directions
in Japan's
Constitution,
Defence and
Nationalism



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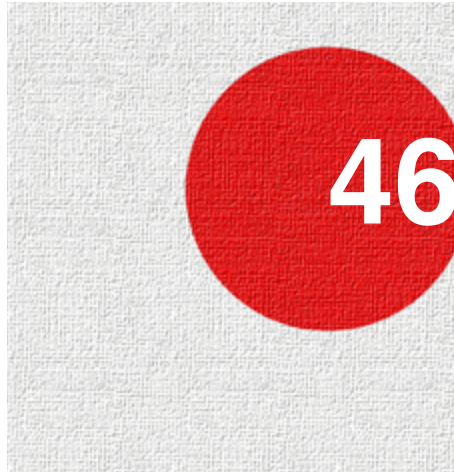
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A word from the editor

Welcome to the Fall 2014 edition of Eye Magazine, the International Academic Forum's own in-house e-magazine publication. In this month's Eye we once again have a great line-up of articles and opinion pieces. From Dilton Riberio, we have a fascinating article on using international dispute resolution to solve outstanding territorial issues in the East Asian region. Craig Mark looks at the collective defense arrangements that the Abe government in Japan is now focusing on. Alex Kreig looks into the social dilemma of hikikomori, or societal shut-ins, and Jared Baxter reveals insights into Vincent Van Gogh and Rembrandt's painting Slaughtered Ox. Through Alexandra Salas we also have a look at how VoiceThread can impact classroom engagement and learning and from Brian De Silva we learn about his research into the societal challenges faced by male dancers.

This edition of Eye publishes a fascinating interview with Professor Alfonso Garcia Osuna about his research work into Latin American filmic narrative and how it creates national identity. We also have an article based on the recent European Conference on Politics, Economics and Law keynote address by Oxford University's Professor Arthur Stockwin. Professor Stockwin offers his British perspective regarding Japan's new directions in defence, nationalism and constitutional revisionism.

IAFOR has a strong relationship with the Japan-based Hope International Development Agency

who work in rebuilding lives after disasters and in poverty relief. In this edition, Hope International's Lowell Shephard and Elena Omura explain how Hope goes about its work and some of the successes they have had in their years of work. Assistant Editor of Eye Magazine Lindsay Lafreniere writes about hiking Japan's Kumano Kodo pilgrimage trail. The editorial in this Fall edition of Eye casts a critical eye on the legal and political machinations surrounding the recent International Court of Criminal Justice ruling against Japanese whaling in the Southern Ocean.

As Editor, I must give special thanks again to my assistant editor Lindsay Lafreniere and IAFOR'S Media Manager Thad Pope for their assistance in getting this magazine together and looking so good. I must also thank the voluntary contributions of our writers. They are the people who really make Eye the insightful, intelligent and interdisciplinary magazine that it is. We hope you enjoy reading it and feel inspired to contribute yourself.

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Having a Whale of a Time

Should a small Japanese industry hold the country's favourable international reputation at ransom?

BY MICHAEL LIAM KEDZLIE



Killing whales for scientific research purposes is exempt under Article VIII of the 1986 International Whaling Commission (IWC) moratorium that bans commercial whaling. Capitalizing on the Article VIII scientific research exemption, Japan was able to continue lethal whaling by granting parties within its fishing industry special

permits for scientific purposes under a program called JARPA II. The permits are issued to the Institute of Cetacean Research (ICR), which then contracts Kyodo Senpaku, a whaling company, to carry out the whaling. Once “scientific research” has been conducted, ICR then releases the whales to Kyodo Senpaku for a sale at a fixed price set by the Japanese Ministry of Fisheries

to fish wholesalers. Nevertheless, the scientific research output stemming from JARPA II has been rather underwhelming. Just two peer-reviewed scientific papers have been produced over the last decade. In the same period over six million kilograms of whale meat ended up on the dining tables of upmarket Tokyo restaurants and elementary school lunchrooms.

In a move to protect whale species and dwindling whale stocks, the IWC, in 1994, established the Southern Ocean Whale Sanctuary. This sanctuary, though non-binding, had the purpose of prohibiting all forms of lethal whaling and extended the prohibition to the use of factory ships. Japan however, has continually objected to both the commercial moratorium on killing whales and to the establishment of the Southern Ocean Sanctuary.

This attitude and practice from Japan has caused great controversy. By 2010, then Australian Prime Minister Kevin Rudd began the process of taking the scientific whaling issue to the International Court of Justice (ICJ), the UN's highest judicial body to have the matter settled. The Rudd government had lost patience with the tactics from the Japanese whaling industry and fisheries ministry and was under strong political pressure from an angry Australian public who felt that a country some 10,000 kilometers away coming into their "backyard" and killing whales in a Whale Sanctuary was not acceptable. The New Zealand government soon joined in the action as an intervener in the case, describing JARPA II as "pointless and offensive." The public of New Zealand was also angered by the actions of the Japanese, taking the same view as the Australian public that it was also "our part of the world".

The "our part of the world" sentiment is uniquely strong within both the New Zealand and Australian public. This is particularly so around the maritime environments of the Southern Ocean and South Pacific. New Zealand famously snubbed both France and the United States during the later part of the Cold War over the nuclear power and weapons issues. The Australian public strongly supported their government's case to the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea in 1999, which sought to stop Japan's "experimental fishing



Photograph by Mark Stevens / Flickr and calltheambulance / Flickr

program" for Southern Bluefin Tuna, which faced rapid depletion.

Publicly, however, the Obama administration cautioned the legal action in the International Court of Justice (ICJ) as both Japan and Australia were close trade and defence allies with each other and with the United States as well. Nevertheless, Australia felt that a principle was at stake and went ahead anyway. It was the Australian government's view that as long as the IWC loophole exists to allow for lethal scientific whaling, there is no incentive for Japan to comply, nor is there a mechanism to enforce it. Nevertheless, Australia demands compliance and enforcement of transgressions.

In June of 2013, both sides gathered in The Hague for the landmark case. Submissions from were presented to the court and oral advocacy from interested parties was robustly conducted to the full International Court of Justice bench of 16 international judges. In September of 2013, the judges retired to deliberate and produce their verdict. On March 30, 2014, the international environmental community celebrated

the landmark decision of the International Court of Justice, which called on Japan to end the JARPA II scientific whaling program that killed 6,700 Antarctic minke whales over the course of JARPA's 18-year history.

The ICJ ruled that Japan had abused an exemption to a commercial whaling ban for scientific research purposes. The court also ruled that any state seeking to kill whales for scientific research must demonstrate to the International Whaling Commission why non-lethal methods were not an option.

Reacting to the judgment, the Japanese government stated to the media that it would act "positively" and abide by the ruling of the ICJ. After killing just 250 minke whales in Antarctic waters during the previous season, some 750 whales fewer than its pre-hunt target, the Japanese government called for the cancellation of its 2014-15 Antarctic hunt. Greenpeace and the Sea Shepard anti-whaling activists launched a global social media campaign to bask in the limelight of the Australian victory in the ICJ.

However, one of the first people to



pour cold water on the celebrations of the international environmentalists was UN Rapporteur for the World Heritage Convention Professor Al Gillespie, from the University of Waikato School of Law in New Zealand. In interviews with BBC Radio and CNN following the ICJ judgment, Gillespie stated that Japanese “scientific” whaling would continue in another form and that the actual intent of the Japanese Government would be business as usual. Within months, Gillespie was proven right as a Japanese Ministry of Fisheries spokesperson revealed Tokyo’s plan to resume research whaling in the Antarctic for the 2015-16 season. Japan then formally confirmed this new scientific whaling program at the recent September IWC meeting.

On September 18, 2014, Jun Morshita, Japan’s Commissioner to the International Whaling Commission, stated to international media that Japan would abide by its decision to stop the scientific whaling under JARPA II. But the often outspoken Morshita shocked the conservation movement when he confirmed that nevertheless Japan would, from the 2015-2016 Southern Ocean whaling season, continue the practice of scientific research whaling. Thus JARPA II is gone and is to be

replaced by JARPA III. Anti-whaling organizations such as Greenpeace commented that it was obviously a clear breach of good faith and a snub to both the international community and international law. Greenpeace argues that postponement of whaling by Japan over the 2014 to 2015 season is only happening so they can buy the extra time to find a new loophole to cynically exploit the rules and wrap the issue in a blanket of self-legitimacy. In the meantime to abide by the new regulations, Japan would have to submit a plan to the scientific committee of the IWC by the end of the year.

What needs to be remembered is that the ICJ ruling back in March put an end to the fraud of JARPA II. It did not put an end to lethal whaling for scientific purposes. The case presented to the court could not be framed as a total ban on whaling and the court was in no position to go ultra vires and make a judgment otherwise. The March ICJ decision against Japan was in no way able to resolve the fundamental cultural conflict between those who believe whales should not be hunted and those who are willing to restrict hunting as part of a wildlife management program. Those changes will have to be enacted at the International Whaling Commission. With the issue split between the anti-

whaling group and the pro-whaling group at the IWC level, any change, which may resolve cultural factors, will be a long time coming. Nevertheless, in the individual summations of some ICJ Judges such as Justice Sir Kenneth Keith, Professor Hilary Charlesworth and Justice Hisashi Owada, their views were made crystal clear on what is either acceptable or not acceptable about scientific whaling.

The general consensus amongst maritime conservationists and international lawyers is that Japan will continue to pay only a cursory compliance to the International Whaling Commission resolution as it stands. Any intention to go ahead with a revised scientific whaling program next year basically signals that the country won’t in practice abide by the IWC rules that establish the framework for scientific research into whales. Most of its current energy is primarily geared to the mechanical and logistical requirements of conducting further Southern Ocean whaling and not attempting to begin the hard yards on making compliance to the scientific research regime even plausible. It will continue to kill first, ship to restaurants and schools all over the country and then deal with the niceties of the paper work later.

At the most recent September IWC meeting, the Japanese complained that they were “ambushed” by a variation to the regime proposed by New Zealand, which would disallow any future permits being issued for any whaling research without proof of tangible scientific necessity and limit on the ability of any country to unilaterally set its own quotas for lethal research whaling in the future. The proposed change by New Zealand was passed by the IWC membership 35 votes for the motion and 20 votes against.

This now makes it very difficult for Japan to come up with a scientific

It will continue to **kill first**, ship to restaurants and schools all over the country, and then **deal with the niceties of the paperwork later.**

research program that would allow any lethal whaling, which would be acceptable to the IWC. In reply, Japanese representative to the IWC Hideki Moronuki attacked not just the variation but also lashed out against the prior ICJ judgment stating that “New Zealand’s understanding of the ICJ judgment differs from Japan’s. Japan cannot accept the resolution as it now stands.” Moronuki added that, “The court judgment only says that Japan should revoke existing authorization or a permit and not the other special permit activities.”

However, Moronuki misses the

point. It is no longer solely about the judgment. It is about taking steps within the IWC to give legal efficacy and clarity to the judgment. Moronuki, obviously dejected by the events within the September meeting, fails to understand that the variation introduced by New Zealand was to clarify the vagueness in the present IWC regime and bridge an amendment to the IWC legal framework. The ICJ was explicit about the requirements of science research to demonstrate why non-lethal methods were not an option. It was simply a subsequent legal move by New Zealand that flowed on and addressed

an outstanding issue and not one in which the Japanese are now trying to infer is a wrong interpretation of the originating ruling. Japan was not able to make a convincing argument to the September IWC meeting and lost. They were out maneuvered, legally harpooned by the New Zealand lawyers and part of their current misery is that they know that the next time anyone takes Japan to the ICJ, which is a foregone conclusion if Japan heads once again down to the South Ocean Sanctuary and starts killing whales as part of a JARPA III, then with the clarity now present in the IWC rulebook any future ICJ



hearing on the matter can adjudicate with greater precision. Moreover, Moronuki was also conveniently silent on the ICJ's criticism that the Japanese scientific research publications were not anywhere proportionate to the number of animals killed.

All of this begs the question to even the most causal observer. Why on earth does the Japanese government want to invite the growing international opprobrium against it over whaling? To answer that question one has to look into local Japanese politics. The Japanese whaling industry to survive as a commercial activity has needed to cultivate a pro-whaling lobby within both the Ministry of Agriculture's Fisheries Agency and with mostly right-wing lawmakers of its Diet. The industry itself is not viable and requires substantial subsidies from the government to survive, even to the point that \$29 million dollars was diverted from the post-earthquake and tsunami reconstruction budget allocation and siphoned into the whaling industry coffers.

The advocacy group International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW) estimates that whaling has cost Japanese taxpayers \$378 million since the Southern Ocean moratorium began. Part of that money heads overseas as part of a "vote buying" scheme to gain control of the IWC. In order to get its way within the IWC, Japan has been actively recruiting a number of developing countries to join the IWC and vote in its favour, against the ban on commercial whaling. It has been known to make ODA (overseas development assistance) conditional to this. Around 28 countries including the landlocked African nation of Mali have been recruited by Japan to the whaling commission as a result of Japanese ODA.

Within Japan there are vested interests somewhat similar to an old boys network, which wish to return

to full scale commercial whaling. The birth of the modern whaling industry was established in 1987 following the start of the IWC moratorium. Kyodo Senpaku, the company which conducts the whaling operations was established later that year after the dissolution of the previous JARPA I era whaling company Kyodo Hogeï. That same year the Institute of Cetacean Research (ICR) was established as a non-profit organisation substantially funded by the Kyodo Senpaku whaling company. Its primary function remains to conduct research into the southern hemisphere minke whale species, to thus create a veil of validity for the return to commercial whaling. All this is a very circular arrangement. Kyodo Senpaku sets up the Institute of Cetacean Research who are funded by an annual allocation from the Fisheries Agency. The ICR in turn solely contracts Kyodo Senpaku to conduct "scientific whaling" on behalf of the Fisheries Agency, whilst handing back the catch to Kyodo Senpaku, which had never left their possession in the first place, so they can then sell the "excess" whale meat to commercial fishery wholesalers. The bias in allocation of funds towards Antarctic minke is due to the fact that the Fisheries Agency sees the species as a stock ripe for commercial exploitation. ICR leadership roles have traditionally been seen as a well-paid "golden parachute" or Amakudari position for retired Fisheries Agency officials, which all helps for this tight little club to continue.

In the scheme of things, the Japanese whaling industry is just a tiny niche within its much larger fishing industry. However, to survive it has courted political patrons with nationalist tendencies and wrapped the whole issue up in ethnocentric principals. The Japanese whaling industry and officials in the Ministry of Fisheries consider whaling a fundamental part of Japanese culture. They also state that continual moves by Australia,

New Zealand, the European Union and other anti-whaling nations, including the United States, are part of what it calls an "alarmist crusade" and "cultural imperialism" against Japan. This ethnocentric view is however incredulous. The anti-whaling countries also strenuously protest Norway and Iceland and their commercial whaling activities. They are not singling out just Japan. The cultural imperialism argument markedly fails on the basis that if Japan were so cultural driven by whaling as a practice - why not only whale in one's own waters and not be commercial imperialists travelling across hemispheres and whale in an internationally recognized whale sanctuary? At any stage prior to the 20th century did the small fleet of traditional whaling boats travel the 15,000 kilometers to the Southern Ocean to whale, kill it and lug it the 15,000 kilometers home? Clearly not!

The fact that whaling is part of Japanese culture can indeed be accepted. There is evidence that whaling was conducted in and around the Japanese coastline thousands of years ago. The village of Taiji has long been well known as a whaling centre in Japan and the birthplace of the amatori method of killing whales that spread to a small number of other whaling villages, such as Ayukawa and Wada, in the 17th century. Furthermore, there is a provision for such cultural whaling within the IWC. Since its inception, the IWC has recognised that indigenous or 'aboriginal subsistence' whaling within prescribed limits is perfectly acceptable and not subject to the 1986 moratorium on commercial whaling. 'Traditional aboriginal subsistence' whaling continues in a number of local communities in Alaska, Russia, amongst Inuit tribes in Canada, the Caribbean, and on the island of Lembata in Indonesia. Just this last month the IWC gave aboriginal communities in Greenland the right



to take whales under this clause of the IWC rules. All that Japan would need to do is prove that the aboriginal subsistence' whaling can meet the legal test of being for "the cultural and subsistence needs of their people." That is the way forward for Japan, the cultural solution in which the majority of those who have recently opposed the way Japan has gone about whaling over recent decades are likely to support.

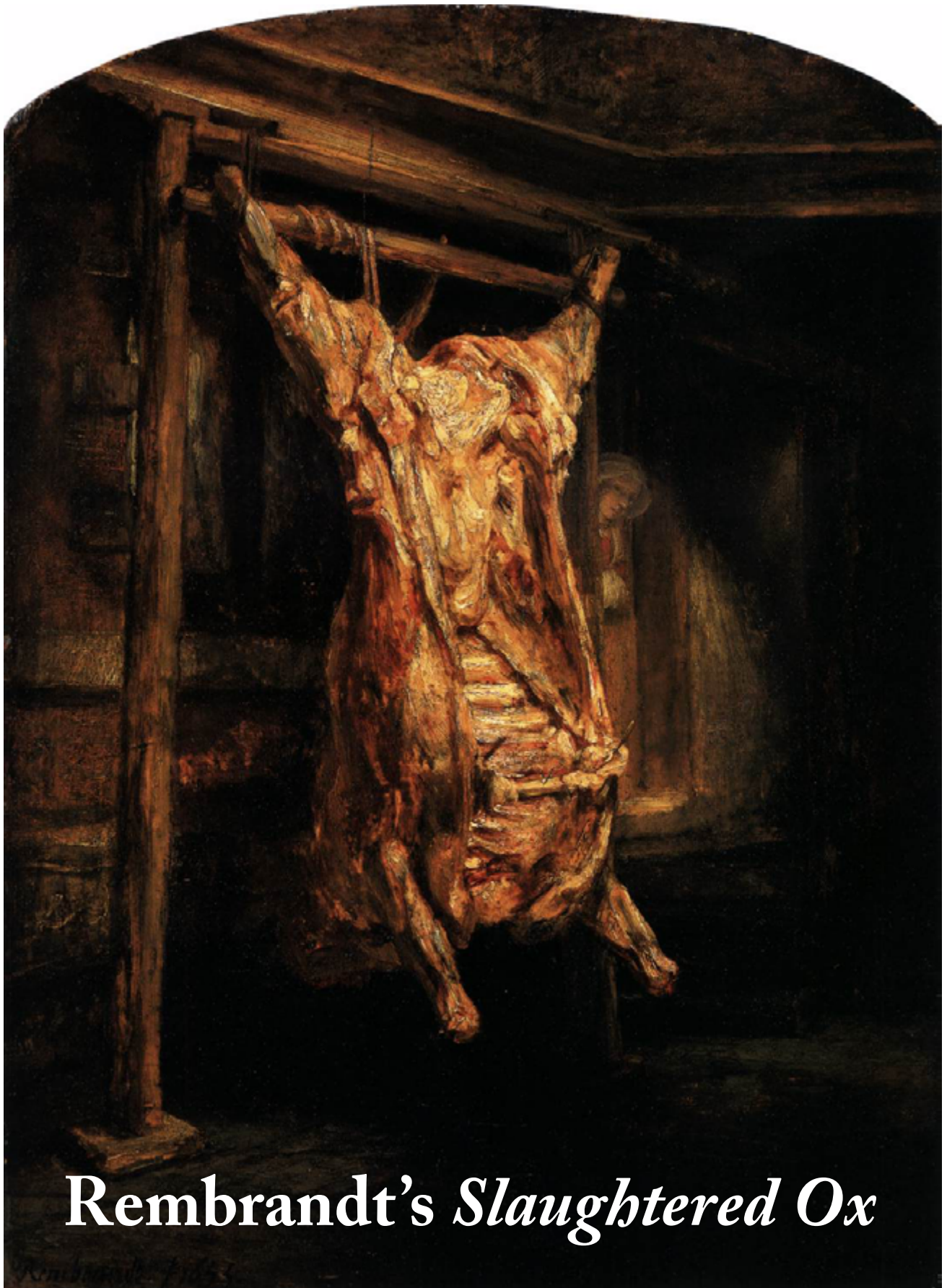
Japan could also learn from its Asian neighbor and trading rival South Korea who dropped its plans to resume whaling in its coastal waters amid a storm of international criticism, and will now instead use non-lethal methods to conduct research on the mammals. The Korean government is now in the process of finalizing its plan to study whales through non-lethal techniques, like Australia and New Zealand do. Environmental agencies predict that the provocation of anger that will be generated by the international community will be more intense if a JARPA III program goes ahead compared to the past. Korea realized that it was bad for business and bad for its international

reputation. China, who formerly was pro-whaling, has joined the pro-moratorium group, will no doubt seize the opportunity to create a wedge issue it can use in its propaganda war with Japan.

What the anti-whaling majority will not support is Japan continuing under any future JARPA III program in the Southern Ocean. They will not support any lethal whaling activity, which is demonstrably not a traditional cultural activity but a commercial activity. Their view is that Japan will have to decide whether it believes its own rhetoric about whaling being a cultural activity. It is clear that Japan needs to move away from its basic position of seeking to resume sustainable commercial whaling to something, which can retain cultural traditions with integrity. The lethal killing of 1000 whales a year in the name of junk science is a ruse that builds distrust and disrespect within the international community when the Japanese whaling industry is at the same time elevating its cultural whaling dimension as a justification to continue.

Any resumption in scientific whaling late next year is going to have significant diplomatic and international blowback on Japan. It is a miscalculation by the Abe Government in that it will undo so much of the goodwill that other nations have recently had towards the nation, especially since the Great Tohoku Earthquake in 2011. According to a Pew Research Center poll, Japan is considered to be the most respected country within the Asian region by the rest of the international community. China is now second. Loss of that goodwill will be a circumstance that directly undermines Japan's "Smart Power" meme that it has so carefully cultivated within the international community since China began her rise twenty years ago. The way that the geo-politics are unfolding in the 21st century, it is very clear that Japan needs its global friends more than it needs to support a discredited tiny whaling industry.

Michael Liam Kedzlie is the Research and Policy Manager for IAFOR and is the Editor of Eye Magazine.



Rembrandt's *Slaughtered Ox*

Vincent van Gogh's Symbolist Interpretation
by Jared Baxter

“The patron of painters — St Luke — physician, painter, evangelist — having for his symbol— alas — nothing but the ox — is there to give us hope.”

Although he died 125 years ago, Vincent (as he preferred to be called) remains the poster child for tortured artists everywhere. The icon of tormented genius, he sacrificed everything for his art – his health, his sanity and even his life – earning next to nothing while alive. A labyrinthine creative, he held specific ideas about sacrifice, torment and suffering, values that were grounded in his deeply religious youth. His visage of the archetypal tortured artist was not that man in his mirror but rather, Jesus Christ; whom he tried lifelong to imitate.

*Rembrandt – sad hospital filled full with murmurings
Decorated only with a great crucifix
Where the tearful prayer exhales from the filth,
And brusquely traversed by a ray of winter.*

This quatrain by nineteenth century Symbolist pioneer Charles Baudelaire began a heated discussion between Vincent and his pen pal, the artist Émile Bernard. The discourse would ultimately disintegrate their friendship. Bernard, who was less talented with brush and palette than those comrades of the *Petit Boulevard* (Vincent, Gauguin, Toulouse Lautrec and others), was arguably the greatest theorist and innovator, laying claim to originating two artistic movements: Cloisonism and Symbolism. Vincent’s interpretation of Rembrandt’s *Slaughtered Ox*, with its multiplicity of metaphors, reveals his syncretic ideation of Symbolist art – a definition that won’t please pedantic art critics – but should illuminate how he perceived and worked within the movement.

Vincent’s reaction to the quatrain was seething and contemptuous:

Ab... Rembrandt... all admiration for Baudelaire aside — I venture to assume, especially on the basis of those verses....

*that he knew more or less nothing about Rembrandt [...] But see, have you ever looked closely at ‘the ox’ or the interior of a butcher’s shop in the Louvre?
You haven’t looked closely, and Baudelaire, infinitely less so.*

Art historian Kenneth Craig published the most compelling interpretation of *The Slaughtered Ox*, explicating it is a religious painting by demonstrating Rembrandt distilled the essence of a storied Flemish *vanitas* tradition that depicted the Prodigal Son parable by prominently featuring a flayed carcass as allegorical of Christ’s crucifixion. He concluded:

The killing of the fatted calf at the joyous return of the Son is the symbolic equivalent of the sacrifice of Christ on the cross. Sermon after sermon as well as innumerable commentaries on Luke 15 make this point: the ox stands for Christ.

Craig uses the “fatted calf” and “slaughtered ox” interchangeably here and several other times. And so it begs the question: does the calf stand for Christ or is it the ox, or is it maybe both?

Digging into the various lexical histories doesn’t really solve the problem. The original Greek word from the parable is “moschos,” in the Latin Vulgate it’s “vitulum” and in the 1637 Dutch Bible, it’s “kalf” and all clearly denote a young bovine, not an ox. While there appears to be a conflation, dating back thousands of years, perhaps the argument should be made that the calf stands for the infant Christ and the ox, His passion.

Vincent, in all likelihood, embraced this crucifixion representation. However, he also perceived a lost interpretation heretofore unpublished by art historians. He explained to Bernard:

The symbol of Saint Luke, the patron of painters, is, as you know, an ox; we

must therefore be as patient as an ox if we wish to labor in the artistic field.

The ox also stands for Luke, an important nuance, especially when we consider Luke is also the patron saint of butchers, compounding the correspondence within Rembrandt’s depiction all the more richly. Correspondences, or, multiplicities of metaphors are a cornerstone of Symbolist art. Interestingly, a similar tradition was practiced by Vincent’s Dutchmen. *Bijschrijvenpoëzie*, or “imagepoetry” is the marriage of poem and picture, in which a theologian would take a reverent image and ascribe to it, poetic thoughts, typically from the scriptures, or hymn books of his day. The idea is that a poem is a picture, and a picture, a poem. Artistic lines between genres are blurred, ideally, synesthetically. This was also an important tenet of Symbolist art: to evoke a state of mind within the viewer in which the senses are completely bedazzled.

Vincent’s beliefs about St. Luke illustrate his feeling that the artist’s plight begins with labor. About his own laborious, artistic endeavors, he lamented, quoting Delacroix, “Art is jealous and demands all our time, all our strength,” echoing this sentiment from Flaubert in a later letter, “*talent is long on patience*” – and originality an effort of will and intense observation.” Art takes strength. Art takes patience. In short, art takes work. It takes all the exertion of an ox to become a great artist, the greatest of whom, in Vincent’s opinion was not Rembrandt, Michelangelo or St. Luke, but Christ; as he explained to Bernard, “he made neither statues nor paintings nor even books.... he states it loud and clear.. he made.. living men, immortals.”

As the ox struggles ever through the field, labor leads to suffering. This doubleedged sword for Vincent was reflected in his mantra to be “sorrowful yet always rejoicing” and illustrated



Self-Portrait with Portrait of Gauguin
Émile Bernard
Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam

in his view that artists were beasts of burden, including his several references to “the poor Impressionists” as “Parisian cabhorses.” His friend and rival, Paul Gauguin wrote him during this nascent creative period:

The artist's life is one long Calvary to go through! And that's perhaps what makes us live. Passion enlivens us, and we die when it has nothing more to feed on. Let's leave these paths full of thorny bushes, but they have their wild poetry all the same. I'm studying young Bernard, whom I don't know as well as you do; I believe you'll do him good, and he needs it. He has suffered, of course, and he's starting out in life full of bile...

These artists embraced as a prerequisite that one must suffer to create art. It follows that the greater the suffering, the greater the artistic output. Which artist had suffered the most? He whom had earned the symbol of the ox through His passion, Christ. The result of which – according to Vincent – was the creation of humanity and immortality for all those who believe in Him.

When Vincent fled to the south of France, he had given up hopes of a wife or children, empathizing with his brother, “we try to create thoughts instead of children; in that way, we're part of humanity all the same.” Humbled in the Arlesian brothels, Vincent felt impotent in the physical world, “creating thoughts instead of children.” Oxen, castrated, are

also unable to procreate. The abandonment of the physicality for the creative, was now Vincent's destiny. But he was in good company. Those beasts of burden, St. Luke and Christ had been celibate, rejecting their physical selves in favor of discovering their spiritual perfections.

From the asylum at St. Remy, a year after lambasting the Baudelaire quatrain, his relationship with Bernard and Gauguin all but dissolved; Vincent derided their attempts at Symbolist art as rife with crude Catholic iconography, exhorting, “in order to give an impression of anxiety, you can try to do it without heading straight for the historical garden of Gethsemane.” His point was to be more subtle, was to be more sublime. The greatest artists challenge their viewers to discover elusive, symbolic meanings, as evidenced in the myriad of epiphanies experienced while closely examining *The Slaughtered Ox*. Thus, Vincent interpreted the Rembrandt as an allegorical self-portrait and mirroring of the artist's plight and destiny: labor, suffering, castration, and crucifixion, but ultimately, salvation.

Jared Baxter is an independent researcher living on the outskirts of the Portland, Oregon sprawl in rural Washington, Washington. Originally from Salt Lake City, Utah he was educated in Manchester, England and Davidson College, North Carolina. Over the last three years, his research has focused on Vincent van Gogh, in particular, how Vincent's enduring embrace of Christianity manifested itself in his later life and artwork.

Pietà (after Delacroix)
Vincent van Gogh
Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam



Reclusive Shut-ins

Are Hikikomori Predominantly
a Japanese Problem?

by Alexander Krieg







“Hikikomori” is a term that describes both the state and the sufferer of acute social withdrawal. First coined by psychiatrist, Tamaki Saito in 1998, the term and the condition gained immense popularity in Japan following several newspaper articles and television interviews with Saito. While technically a transliteration of the English term ‘social withdrawal’, shakaiteki hikikomori was soon reintroduced to the English-speaking community as a uniquely Japanese term (and phenomenon) through Canadian journalist Michael Zielenziger’s 2007 book *Shutting Out the Sun* and the *New York Times*’ article “Shutting Themselves In.” Since then, the number of scientific investigations and popular editorials has exponentially increased around the world. The topic continues to intrigue individuals from various social science and humanities backgrounds today.

When one mentions “hikikomori”, the immediate image that comes to mind is a young Japanese man, who has isolated himself within a bedroom in his parents’ house for years on end, refusing to speak, interact, or even be seen by anyone—sometimes including his own family. Meals are brought to the door a few times a day, and garbage and other refuse are left out in return. He might have started off spending his time playing video games or chatting online, but those activities lost their charm long ago. He now simply stares off into space. Hikikomori. The world of perfect isolation.

While the previous description of hikikomori is not necessarily incorrect, it describes only a subsample of individuals. Because of the diversity of traits and characteristics accompanying hikikomori, much effort has been put into defining the term in a way that consolidates the condition that we are examining. Saito originally

describes social withdrawal as the disorder and any accompanying psychiatric symptoms as the expression of this disorder. As a part of the psychoanalytic tradition, he considers hikikomori a “problem of adolescence”, particularly related to how adulthood has now been postponed to one’s thirties. According to his belief, the only cure is the “development of social character into maturity.”[3] Despite the psychoanalytic roots, there have also been many attempts to behaviorally define the condition, creating an apparent discrepancy between the proposed etiology and the definition. The best behavioral definition to date was proposed by Teo and Gaw (2010). This definition of hikikomori captures the core constructs associated with the condition in six criteria: (1.) most of the day nearly every day is spent at home, (2.) persistent avoidance of social situations, (3.) persistent avoidance of social relationships, (4.) experienced distress or impairment in an individual’s normal routine, (5.) duration at least six months, and (6.) not better explained by another psychiatric disorder such as social phobia, major depressive disorder, schizophrenia, or avoidant personality disorder.

Similar to how there have been some disagreements and inconsistency with the definition, there are many more misconceptions and misinformation surrounding hikikomori. These include, but are not limited to, (1.) the number of hikikomori in Japan, (2.) the existence of hikikomori outside of Japan, and (3.) whether the phenomenon is caused by modern Japanese culture or society. These will be discussed one by one in the following sections.

“One Million Hikikomori”

Saito’s initial estimate numbered the individuals in a

state of hikikomori to be about one million. Since then, other media sources, such as Phil Rees' BBC special "Hikikomori: The Missing Million", have echoed this figure primarily to highlight the significance of this "emerging epidemic." However, the estimate of one million has no empirical basis. There have been three studies to date that have attempted to calculate the number of hikikomori in Japan based on sampling statistics. In 2002, Miyake's team[5] found 14 cases amongst a sample of 1,646 people in Okinawa, extrapolating to about 410,000 cases in the entire country. In 2008, Inui[6] used statistics on labor market participation to estimate that the number of hikikomori is actually less, about 200,000 cases nationally. The best attempt at ascertaining this number, however, can be found in an epidemiological study by Koyama's team[7] that used state-of-the-art sampling and statistical techniques to estimate that there are 232,000 hikikomori in Japan. This works itself out to be a lifetime prevalence rate of 1.2% for Japanese individuals between the age of 20 and 49. The scientific community considers this to be the most accurate estimate as of 2010.

"Hikikomori is Uniquely Japanese"

When first investigating this phenomenon, Saito (2008) emailed mental health professionals from around the world asking if they have ever seen a case as he described. While the statistics from this survey were not made available, Saito (2013) highlighted the respondents that replied that they had never heard of it[1, 3]. In a more recent systemized replication of this study in 2012, Kato (2012) and his team found that among 124 mental health professionals from eight countries around the world, nearly all of them stated that they have seen or heard of someone in their own country who matches this description. Similarly, there have been hikikomori case studies from several countries outside Japan including, Spain, Oman, the United States, Canada, Italy, the United Kingdom, France, Taiwan, and South Korea. There has even been exploratory research comparing hikikomori cross-nationally on traits such as loneliness and treatment preferences. In my own place of employment, a child assessment and treatment center in Hawaii, we have seen no less than six individuals in the last two years that meet criteria for hikikomori by Teo and Gaw's definition (excluding criterion 6). Also pertinent to this question, the epidemiological estimates of hikikomori in South Korea are approximately the same population percentage as in Japan (2% or about 100,000 people). Despite this strong emerging evidence that the hikikomori phenomena is worldwide, certain investigators and reporters have tried to construe the issue as uniquely Japanese (see next section), and in that way pathologized the country and culture. Even after Teo and Gaw's proposal to formally add hikikomori as a "culture-bound" psychiatric disorder, they specifically stated in a later publication that the term "culture-bound", which denotes only occurring in a certain cultural context, should actually be "culture-influenced." However, by that definition, every psychiatric disorder from oppositional defiant disorder, to major depressive disorder, to schizophrenia is "culture-bound." Needless to say, all of this evidence culminates to underscore that while the term "hikikomori" is Japanese, the phenomenon is global.

"Hikikomori Represents a Culture in Crises"

This claim is more difficult to refute because it is so inherently subjective. Some investigators such as Zielenziger (2007 and Sugai (2013), rely on the fictional assertion that hikikomori does not exist outside of Japan, have compared and contrasted cultural characteristics of Japan and other countries to demonstrate the cultural etiology of hikikomori. None too abashed is the subtitle of Zielenziger's book, which reads "How Japan Created Its Own Lost Generation." Various cultural and societal factors including (1.) individualism/collectivism, (2.) Japanese education system, and (3.) Japanese family system/functioning have been attributed to the "rise of hikikomori." For the following discussion it is first important to recognize two things: Japan, as a society and culture, produces far more non-hikikomori than hikikomori; and that factors that may predict someone becoming hikikomori within Japan, may not be the best explanation on why someone would become hikikomori



in Japan as oppose to another country (i.e., within-group vs. between-group predictions). The impact of collectivism and educational systems are outside the scope of this article, and instead of commenting on them directly, I would simply advise investigators to recognize that this type of causal evidence is very difficult to obtain, and that this type of conclusion should be tentative at best when other more parsimonious explanations have been ruled out. In regards to Japanese families, there have been many assertions that fundamental flaws in family functioning represent a key reason for hikikomori, whether this be parenting style, mother-child attachment or family functioning in general. The evidence for this is that hikikomori and their families

Despite this strong emerging evidence that the hikikomori phenomena is worldwide, certain investigators and reporters have tried to construe the issue as uniquely Japanese, and in that way pathologized the country and culture.

frequently report these concerns, but while these two issues may certainly be related, there has been no evidence to date to infer that one causes the other. Furthermore, while some investigators purport that contemporary Japanese families do not meaningfully communicate with each other[21], it is unclear how “meaningfully” is conceptualized and whether this is unique to Japanese families with or without hikikomori—let alone compared to contemporary families in other countries. In an investigation of family functioning among families of autistic, hikikomori, and healthy children, Koshihara (2007) and her team found that family functioning was lower amongst the hikikomori and autism families than the control group. However, just as family functioning did not “cause” the predominately biological disorder of autism, it is unclear how it influences hikikomori. In another large scale investigation led by Umeda and the World Mental Health Survey Group (Umeda & Kawakami, 2012), parenting style was not related to hikikomori, but psychiatric illness amongst one of the parents was. It is not clear, however, whether the latter relationship is because of a biological predisposition or environmental factors (or both). Furthermore, the relationship between parents’ and children’s psychiatric concerns is a fairly robust finding globally (Goodman, 2011), and does not necessarily denote that “Japan is in crises.”

Diagnostic Labels as Descriptive and Predictive

Now that we have discussed what hikikomori is not, what is it? Just a buzzword? A media hype? While we have certainly challenged some of the common notions and misinformation that has been disseminated about hikikomori, the question still stands: how can we best account for and describe the various characteristics, behaviors, and symptomology experienced by these people who are suffering so deeply? In the end, it isn’t about the

label “hikikomori” or otherwise, but it is finding the best way to conceptualize this condition that would have the most clinical utility and lead to the most treatment success. Issues of comorbidity, psychiatric disorders that co-occur with hikikomori, further complicate this. While the working definition of hikikomori specifies that no other psychiatric condition can be present (criterion 6), this describes only a small subset of individuals who presented as hikikomori. Even Saito admits that the majority of his cases meet criteria for another disorder such as social phobia, obsessive-compulsive disorder, schizophrenia, and pervasive developmental disorder. Early estimates indicated that the comorbidity rates between hikikomori and other psychiatric disorders ranged between 54% and 73%. These studies, however, had key methodological flaws and did not assess for developmental disorders or psychotic disorders, both of which have been demonstrated to be highly comorbid (between 20 and 33%) with hikikomori in other studies. The most thorough study to date reliably demonstrated 99.7% comorbidity (all but one case) with other psychiatric disorders amongst their sample of 337 hikikomori from multiple treatment centers assessed by multiple, highly-trained psychiatrists/psychologists. Because social withdrawal is a symptom for many psychiatric concerns including anxiety disorders, depressive disorders, psychotic disorders, personality disorders, and pervasive developmental disorders, this means that the entire syndrome of hikikomori (and its heterogeneous presentation) could potentially be explained by already well-established and well-researched psychiatric conditions. Furthermore, comorbidity violates criterion 6 of Teo and Gaw’s definition, meaning that in the majority of cases, hikikomori are not technically hikikomori. At this point, it is important to remember that all diagnostic labels are, in a sense, “made up.” They are ideas that professionals have about how different disorders work and what symptoms are associated with them. The purpose of these labels is to (1.) describe the condition and (2.) prescribe the appropriate treatment that would lead to the greatest success. In this way, it is important to anchor these ideas in empirical observation in order to provide validity, explanatory power, and clinical utility for these diagnostic labels. It is apparent that the next step in the hikikomori research includes providing discriminative validity (the ability to empirically differentiate between diagnostic labels) and explanatory power, by answering the following question: “Can hikikomori explain the condition of acute social withdrawal and accompanying symptoms over and above existing psychiatric disorders?” Until then, it is possible to make the argument that the diagnostic term, “hikikomori”, may represent fiction altogether.

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The Territorial Disputes between Japan and China

An Opportunity for Change

by Dilton Ribeiro



In his book *On China*, Henry Kissinger mentions the Sino-Indian War of 1962. Indian and Chinese troops were locked in a stalemate over a territorial dispute in the Himalayas based on two different historical versions of their territorial boundaries. Mao Zedong searched into Chinese tradition and, based on a reasoning grounded in ancient principles, led a strong attack on Indian positions but later retreated to the previous line of control.

Japan's concern over territorial disputes with China is thus not unreasonable. This example with India demonstrates that history and ancient principles are very important elements in the conduction of foreign affairs with China and could lead to deep conflicts, even if for a short time, and amidst a general understanding that both nations are, in most periods of time, friends. In the light of Japan and China's long, complex and sometimes contentious history, one cannot disregard a myriad of reasons, which could amount to major undertakings to assure a territorial supremacy.

The current worrisome Sino-Japanese territorial dispute is over a set of islands called the Senkaku by Japan, or Diaoyu by China. The Senkaku/Diaoyu is a group of inhabited

islands located in the East China Sea between Japan, China and Taiwan. The islands were officially incorporated by Japan in 1895 on the basis that they were terra nullius and not under control of the Qing Empire. Control of this set of islands passed to the United States after the Second World War and since 1972 they have arguably been administered by Japan. In the 1970s, China first contested Japanese sovereignty over the Senkaku/Diaoyu islands (affirming that the land belonged to them before the Japanese incorporation). Each country now argues they have historical reasons to control this territory and each claims that the other had previously acknowledged their historical sovereignty over the islands.

The international community closely follows this dispute, especially because of the political and economic importance of both Japan and China. But the dispute also reaches beyond East Asia and may involve the United States, which has potential obligations to Japan under the Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security in the event there is a military conflict over the islands.

Debate over this issue ranges from legal questions of the right of possession and ownership over the islands to



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concerns about the need for more investment in military defence as well as broader and divergent political and historical interpretations. This last point resonates strongly with Japan, which knows that historical principles and tradition can be a decisive reason for military and political action by China. For their part, the Japanese may seek the potentially Herculean task of amending their pacifist constitution to allow for a stronger military system, which requires massive support of both the Diet and the population.

A war would be generally regarded as ill-advised, possibly illegal and probably unwanted by both countries. China and Japan's economies are increasingly interdependent. The East Asian future and the need for continuous growth depend on an economic and political partnership between both countries. However, this could be seen not through the lenses

of possible wars or the furthering of political grievances. What we face here is an opportunity: a chance to deepen the rule of law in the East Asian context and consequently strengthen the arm of international law.

I believe this territorial dispute is an opportunity to reshape the international relations in East Asia based on what is common and complementary between China and Japan. Rather than examine their points of contention, this territorial dispute could be a door to examine the points of congruence between Japan and China, which could further strengthen the relations between these two important nations. This dispute demonstrates the need for a rule of law mechanisms that take into account their cultural and historical context and also presents the possibility of further extending it.

International law is not really a European creation or a solely Western enterprise. Stephen Neff, in his book *Justice among Nations*, argues that if we understand international law as comprising of general principles based on philosophical framework instead of a mere myriad of state practices, then we can confidently point to Ancient China as its birthplace. This historical understanding of international law was deeply rooted in Confucian tradition and has four key elements. First, there is an emphasis on deference and hierarchy (e.g.: of children to parents, of younger to older siblings and of society as a whole to the ruler). Secondly, the Confucian international law is rooted in the notion of reciprocal duties coupled with a sense of nobleness. Thirdly, this system of duties contributes to a harmonious and well-ordered society in which individuals have specific roles to play. Finally, this system

focuses on benevolence (including of the ruler) and virtue as key aspects to inspire and educate society, including the subjects of the sovereign. This is a theory grounded in pacifism.

These key elements of the Confucian international law could easily describe both China and Japan. These nations are deeply connected and have influenced each other throughout history. Their common Confucian roots can work as a pathway to create a legal bridge focusing on the common elements instead of on things which could set them apart in order to establish systems of communication grounded in the rule of law. Furthermore, this could be crystalized in an international organization, which would stress their core cultural and legal values and peacefully implement a system of conflict resolution. An 'international organization' is also not a Western invention. For example, during the Spring and Autumn Era (722-481 B.C.) and especially the Warring States period of Chinese history (481-221 B.C.), a number of State leagues were formed by multilateral treaties to coordinate agreements, trades, extradition and dispute resolutions under a tributary system.

It is clear that Japan and China share core values and aspects of legal culture that can be traced back to the Ancient times. Nowadays, Japan can play a key role in developing an East Asian and world-oriented system whereby this region's culture and history are understood through the lenses of modernity and human rights. Perhaps no other state has so impressively managed to merge ancient East Asian and deeply held Japanese cultural values with modern western traditions. Both China and Japan would have equally important contributions to this East Asian system: China in rescuing its Ancient tradition of Confucian law of nations; and Japan in providing its strong and effective tradition of rule of law as a framework to guide international relations in East Asia. Such a model would be based on pacifism, rule of law and human rights.

Especially after the Constitution of 1946, Japan's legal system has been

strongly grounded in the respect of the rule of law, pacifism and human rights. In modern times, Japan has successfully merged individual and communitarian perspectives to provide the foundation for a stable and prosperous nation. Japan's deep Confucian values, maintained within a modern and stable system of law, can contribute to a strong regional international organization in East Asia which would have the power to settle international disputes and take into account the region's cultural and historical values and nuances.

Unilateral arguments, even those based on international law, are destined to fail. Whether one asserts sovereignty over the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands based on the distance from a shoreline (based on the requirements of the Exclusive Economic Zone, for example) or on who exercised effective control over a longer period of time, neither argument will settle the conflict. Only a forum based on a congruent view merging the historical and cultural aspects of both Japan and China, coupled with a strong emphasis on the rule of law, can put an end to this and other territorial disputes.

The Senkaku/Diaoyu disputes represent a good opportunity for both Japan and China to focus on their commonalities that could serve as the starting point for a comprehensive treaty establishing a regional international organization and an international adjudication system merging contemporary legal developments with cultural and historical values deeply important to both countries. Such values include harmony, pacifism, benevolence and kindness, which can and should walk hand in hand with a system of law. This approach could help both countries develop and show that East Asia is again the centre stage of the world, but this time organized within a cooperative system that embraces its core values and cultural aspects.

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New Directions in Japan's Constitution, Defence and Nationalism

From the British Perspective

By J.A.A. Stockwin



J.A.A. Stockwin presented this keynote address at The European Conference on Politics, Economics and Law (ECPEL) 2014, in association with the IAFOR Japan Research Institute, in Brighton, United Kingdom on July 4, 2014.

David Cameron, as leader of the opposition, once famously told Tony Blair at Prime Minister's Question Time: "You were the future, once". In 1979 the Harvard scholar Ezra Vogel published a book entitled *Japan as Number One*, arguing that the political economy of Japan, and indeed Japan as a country, was the wave of the future, and that the United States should sit up, take notice and reform its own systems to match this up-and-coming superpower, if it wanted to stay ahead.

Yes, Japan was the future, once. The Japanese economy in the 1980s seemed unstoppable, Japanese companies

were buying choice pieces of real estate and famous companies in the US and elsewhere, economic growth rates were the envy of the world and the value of all land and buildings in Tokyo's central business and government district was said to be the equivalent of all the land and buildings in Canada. All this came crashing down at the beginning of the 1990s with the collapse of a monstrous asset bubble, the banking system struggled under a mountain of toxic debt, and the 'lost decade' (so described by the Tokyo University economist Professor Yoshikawa Hiroshi), began. Only the lost decade moved into a second lost

decade, serious deflation set in, and the process may not have stopped even now, although the business world has become more bullish.

What a difference 25 years can make! Japan is now portrayed by some as an aging society, economically stagnant, with a declining population, internationally famous firms are said to have lost their entrepreneurial spirit, complacency and inward looking attitudes seem to prevail, and Japan is threatened by a resurgent China having designs on territory Japan regards as its own. In 1990 Chinese GDP was around 25 % of that of

Japan. Today China has pushed the economy of Japan from second into third place in world rankings and is continuing to widen the gap. Very recently, the Japanese Government announced a policy to ensure that in 50 years the population, now under 127 million and falling, will not have dipped below 100 million. But Japanese women have gone on a 'birth strike' and what can the government do about that? The population of China is more than ten times that of the present population of Japan, though China is also beginning to face population growth slowdown, partly as a result of the one child policy, now being relaxed.

But in Japan something of great significance occurred as the result of general elections held in December 2012, now 18 months ago. This was the election by an impressive majority of a government based largely on the venerable Liberal Democratic Party (which was out of power for just over three years but had been dominant for almost all the years since the 1950s), now led by an ambitious right wing radical, Mr Abe Shinzō.

I think that I should lay my cards on the table and say where I am coming from in terms of my perceptions of Japan. Having been studying the country and its politics now for a half century and more, I consider myself a friend of Japan, an admirer of a people that succeeded in overcoming the catastrophe of war in China and the Pacific between 1937 (the Marco Polo Incident and start of Japan's China war) and defeat in 1945, then building a democratic, peaceful and prosperous society based on a rich culture, a dynamic economy and functioning institutions. Problems during the lost decades have been serious, but Japan still works well in many areas, so that an intelligent, far-sighted, radically reformist approach to a difficult situation should be welcome. But certain aspects of the present

government's reform agenda cause me deep disquiet, and I know that this is shared by many of my friends in Japan. In so far as Mr Abe's reforms concern economics I welcome his attempts to grapple with deep-seated issues through what has come to be called 'Abenomics', though I have some doubts about whether these policies can succeed in their entirety.

Therefore we need to focus on three main areas of concern. The first is the political system and successive attempts to reform it, culminating in the current situation under the Abe Government. The second is the 'Peace Constitution', defence and foreign policy, and the present government's strategy of constitutional revision, whether by textual revision or by reinterpretation (which is highly topical), as well as the relations with China and with Korea. And thirdly, human rights and freedoms, including freedom of expression.

Political system reform

The political system that emerged from the Allied (largely American) Occupation between 1945 and 1952, was based on widely accepted democratic principles and marked a radical departure from the 'authoritarianism with democratic elements', characteristic of the pre-war period, culminating in the 1930s when the system was becoming more and more militarised. By the 1950s Japan had a bicameral elected parliament to which the prime minister and cabinet were directly responsible (and through it to the electorate), the Emperor was retained as 'symbol of the State', but stripped of all political power, the civil service was supposed to implement policies devised by prime minister and cabinet, while both chief executives and assemblies were chosen by election at local level.

Even though on paper this looked much like the British system, it developed its own characteristics.

The civil service exercised a great deal of semi-autonomous power and for many years effectively manipulated cabinet. From the 1950s party politics was competitive in form but hardly in substance. The broadly right-of-centre Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) won elections with monotonous regularity and formed nearly all governments, either on its own or in coalition with minor parties. It has often been compared with the Christian Democrats in Italy, though the Christian Democrats imploded but the LDP has survived. Opposition parties contested elections but were permanently out of power, until the 1990s. LDP political dominance combined with bureaucratic power facilitated an economic miracle between the 1950s and the 1980s, but the powers of the prime minister were restricted in practice. This didn't matter much while the economy was forging ahead, but when the economy began to stall in the early 1990s, problems of weak leadership and endemic corruption became salient. The system was corrupt because it depended on powerful factions within the LDP, and on iron triangles linking LDP politicians with bureaucratic and private sector interests. The 1990s saw political turmoil and disillusion on the part of an electorate suddenly faced with an economy in serious disarray.

Important reforms were put in place in the late 1990s and early 2000s that enabled the talented, if maverick, right wing politician Koizumi Junichirō, to exercise leadership in the interests of greater economic efficiency. His neo-liberal reforms (including his flagship reforms to postal services, especially the enormous postal savings bank) came to be associated with longer term problems of inequality and loss of job security, but the economy began to grow again. But after he stepped down in 2006, much of his political momentum was dissipated by his successors, including the present Prime Minister Abe during

his first term (2006-7). Such was the level of disillusion with government after the start of the global recession in 2008 that in the August 2009 elections the LDP was replaced by a new government based on the main opposition Democratic Party, formed only 13 years earlier, in 1996. The LDP languished in grumbling opposition between September 2009 and December 2012. The new Government was inexperienced, divided, and faced daunting problems, especially the triple disasters in northern Japan on 11th March 2011. The Democratic Party was routed in the 2012 elections.

In the meantime, Mr Abe had reinvented himself after the failure of his first administration five years earlier, and became prime minister in circumstances where he could exercise far more power than most of his predecessors. And he was hungry to exercise power in the interests of an ambitious and coherent right wing nationalist agenda.

Rather than seeking to reform the way politics was conducted, he was the beneficiary of reforms that had already taken place, particularly the strengthening of the prime minister and cabinet that had already benefited Koizumi in the early 2000s.

The 'Peace Constitution', defence and foreign policy

In April 2014, article 9 of the Japanese Constitution was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize on the initiative of a group of Japanese women, in the name of the Japanese people. Apparently, the nomination has been accepted, and we shall know the result on 10th October. I am not quite sure how an article in a national constitution can receive a prize like this – you can't exactly hang the prize round its neck – but the nomination indicates the seminal importance of the peace clause in the history of post-war Japan. Of course, the act of proposing it was

deliberately provocative to Mr Abe and his government, but it shows just how controversial this issue is, and has been since 1947, when the present, still totally unrevised, Constitution came into force.

Article 9 reads as follows: "Aspiring sincerely to an international peace based on justice and order, the Japanese people forever renounce war as a sovereign right of the nation and the threat or use of force as means of settling international disputes. In order to accomplish the aim of the preceding paragraph, land, sea, and air forces will never be maintained. The right of belligerency of the state will not be recognised".

It is the fierce ambition of Prime Minister Abe to revise the post-war Constitution so as to make Japan a 'normal country' able to project military power outside Japan. His biggest obstacle is article 96 of the Constitution, which makes it difficult to revise (though not as difficult as revising the US Constitution). You require a two thirds majority of members of the House of Representatives, a two thirds majority of members of the House of Councillors and a simple majority in a referendum of the people. At one stage, the idea was to revise article 96 to make its conditions easier, and then go for a substantive amendment proposal, but this now seems to have been dropped. Parliamentary arithmetic now suggests that a two thirds majority in Parliament might be feasible, but public opinion polls indicate that reaching a simple majority in a referendum would be problematic. Moreover, the Buddhist-based Kōmeitō, junior partner in the Abe coalition government, is ambiguous in its views on revision. In his first administration, however, Mr Abe steered through Parliament a bill institutionalising procedures for a popular referendum, showing he is serious about wanting to revise the Constitution.

Through legal reasoning that would take too long to explain, article 9 has been interpreted to allow the euphemistically named land, sea and air Self-Defence Forces, which are no mean military force, closely aligned with US forces under the Japan-US Mutual Security Treaty. Successive governments, however, have interpreted the 'peace clause' as limiting the Self Defence Forces to defence of Japanese territory, and denying them the right to engage in 'collective defence', even by cooperating with US military actions in the region. Several kinds of military capacity deemed 'offensive' are banned under current constitutional interpretation. Such interpretation has been in the hands of the Cabinet Legislation Bureau, which until the second Abe Government has ruled collective defence impermissible under the terms of the 'peace clause'. Mr Abe has now appointed an official sympathetic to his views to head this Bureau.

Mr Abe has established a National Security Council and other institutions dealing with defence issues. The Constitution's text being hard to revise, he is pursuing a different strategy, to revise it by reinterpretation. On 15th May this year, a committee set up by the Prime Minister (the Advisory Panel on Reconstruction of the Legal Basis for Security) recommended that collective security should be permitted under certain conditions. These included:

1. that a close partner to Japan (read 'US') should be under illegal attack.
2. that such use of force posed a clear threat to Japanese security.
3. that a request from the partner had been received, even if Japan were not directly attacked.
4. that taking action should not undermine trust in the Japan-US alliance
5. that Japan had permission from other states to transit their



territory if necessary.

6. that the use of collective defence was approved by Parliament.

7. that the level of use of force was judged by the National Security Council as necessary and proportional, given that collective self-defence was a right, not an obligation.

The Prime Minister welcomed the report, which he would study, and promised to boost military capacity to deal with ‘grey zone’ situations, including a possible armed landing on the disputed Senkaku/Diaoyu islands (which he referred to as “Japan’s remote islands”). He also pledged at his press conference to “defend the peace ideal (*heiwashugi*) proclaimed by the Constitution”, and argued that “by increasing deterrent power, conflict can be avoided and the prospects of Japan becoming involved in war will be lessened”. (Asahi, 16 May 2014).

On 1st July, a bill to allow collective defence was adopted by Cabinet, to the dismay of its opponents.

Mr Abe was at pains to dissipate the fear that Japan might be dragged into a war not of its own making by engaging in collective security with the United States. The contrast between the six decades of peace and prosperity since 1945 and regular large scale warfare from the 1860s to 1945, ending in colossal destruction, the fire bombing of major cities and nuclear bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, is a theme etched deeply into the Japanese consciousness. A poll in the Asahi newspaper in April this year showed 63% of those polled opposing collective defence. I recommend to you an interview in the Guardian for 1st July with Professor Ishida Takeshi, who fought in the last stages of the Second World War, and was so

appalled with the militarist attitudes he encountered at that time that he has devoted the rest of his long life to defence of the ‘peace constitution’. In the article he is quote as saying: “Not killing anyone abroad is, in a sense, a precious part of our heritage. Why should we have to throw it away on the orders of one man rather than through the will of the people?”.

In a recent article in *The Diplomat* (June 2014) the Australian scholar Aurelia George Mulgan argues that in analysing the argument about collective defence two distinctions need to be made. The first is that current attempts by the Abe Government to relax what she describes as “some of the tightest rules and regulations [imposed] on any military in the world” should be distinguished from 1930s militarism, where warfare was “built into the very ethos of the state”.

The second is that Prime Minister Abe's aspirations to enable Japan to escape from some of the constitutional constraints on the use of the Self Defence Forces in cooperation with US forces ought not to be confused with the ultra-conservative policies of Mr Abe in other areas. Collective security, or freedom to cooperate fully with the Americans in deterrence against China, is much needed, in her opinion, whereas other areas of government policy may be far less admirable.

But in an interesting qualification of her argument she maintains that if 'collective defence' means "participating in combat 'outside the territory', [it] does not necessarily enhance Japan's ability to defend itself... [It may indeed] damage Japan's security further by drawing it into conflict that it might otherwise have avoided". She also concludes that at present the Abe and Obama administrations, despite the

imperative for them to cooperate in containing China, do not particularly like each other.

This seems to me to reach the nub of the issue. While I think that there might be a case to be made for collective defence in Japan's current circumstances, the ideological character of the Abe Government gives me cogent grounds for concern. While collective defence and the Abe ideology can be separated theoretically, in practice they are all too likely to fall over each other and become intertwined. Putting it another way, if this were a liberally minded government with firm democratic credentials, a proposal to amend constitutional interpretation in favour of collective defence would be somewhat less worrying. But for reasons that I shall discuss, it is difficult to characterise the Abe Government in such terms.

At this point it is worth citing an

interesting point made by the Swedish scholar Linus Hagström concerning Japanese exceptionalism. It has long been argued by various observers that Japan has a 'Galapagos complex' that fights against globalising tendencies and is passionate about maintaining a special kind of political culture and outlook. In Hagström's opinion, the radical pacifism of the left wing since the 1950s is an obvious manifestation of this exceptionalism. But he also identifies a sharply contrasting form of exceptionalism, that associated with the far right, revisionist about Japanese war responsibility, uncomfortable about war apologies made by earlier leaders, in denial about the veracity of the Nanjing massacre of 1937, and regarding large scale forced prostitution conducted by the Imperial forces during the war as natural and common to most wars (*East Asia Forum*, 23rd June 2014).

A former Australian Ambassador to Japan, John Menadue, who writes a



regular blog on matters Australian and Japanese, in a recent piece expresses his grave disquiet about actions by Mr Abe, including his appointments to senior positions in the national broadcaster NHK of several individuals who in public statements have made extreme statements insulting to the memories of hundreds of thousands of Chinese who died in the Nanjing massacre, to the 'comfort women', many of them Korean and some still alive, who were forced to serve in Japanese army brothels during the war, and also harmful to the principle of moderation in relations with neighbouring states. Mr Abe's visit to the Yasukuni Shrine in December 2013, though not unprecedented, was the first time that a prime minister had done so since Koizumi who visited the shrine several times during his term of office between 2001 and 2006.

Why is the Yasukuni Shrine so controversial? Is it not a functional equivalent of the Cenotaph and perhaps the Imperial War Museum in London, the Arlington cemetery in Washington D.C., or the Australian War Memorial in Canberra? There are two reasons for concern about the nature and purpose of the Yasukuni Shrine. The first is that the Shrine complex includes a war museum, known as the *Yūshūkan*, whose displays give a largely benign, even enthusiastic, picture of the Japanese war effort between 1937 and 1945, and play down the sufferings of Japan's wartime opponents. In parentheses here, I should mention that the Atomic Bomb Museum in Hiroshima, though it has occasionally been criticised for deploying a 'Japan as victim' message, makes a genuine and for the most part convincing effort to put the tragedy of the atomic bombing into a balanced historical context. It is also a place of immense emotional power, as I have myself experienced, first in 1971, and most recently in 2009.

To understand the second reason

requires a bit of history. The shrine was first established in 1869 as a memorial to those who had fallen in the Boshin war, fought between embattled elements of the former Tokugawa regime and armies of the rebellion that had overthrown it and were setting up a new modernising order at the Meiji Restoration of 1868. Yasukuni's status had been that of a national institution to glorify the souls of servicemen who had fallen in successive wars up to 1945, but the Allied Occupation after the war insisted that it should be privatised, in line with the disestablishment of the Shinto religion, which had been intertwined with nationalism up to the end of the war. And then in 1978 the head priest of the Yasukuni Shrine, in secret, enshrined the souls of 14 class-A war criminals as well as over 1000 lesser war criminals – all so designated by the Tokyo war crimes trials after the war. It was from this point that the Shrine became politically controversial, with the right wing accusing the war crimes trials of dispensing victors' justice, and moderates in Japan, as well as governments in China, Korea and elsewhere, objecting to the use of the Shrine by Japanese politicians to promote revisionist nationalism. Since the 1980s, official visits to the Shrine by leading politicians, especially prime ministers, have not ceased to enrage Japan's neighbours, especially China and South Korea. After the 1978 enshrinement of war criminals, the Shōwa Emperor refused to visit the Yasukuni Shrine, and his son, the present Emperor, has consistently refused to do so.

A distinction that is quite frequently made is the contrast between the conciliatory handling by successive German governments of war memory and compensation issues, and the much more nationalistic and unsympathetic approaches to such questions in Japan. While this in no way excuses belligerent activities by

China over the disputed Senkaku/Diaoyu islands and other territories disputed with Vietnam and the Philippines in the South China Sea, prime ministerial visits to the Yasukuni Shrine are inflammatory in the context of unresolved war memory issues. A statement from the White House that Mr Abe's December 2013 visit was "disappointing" registered high in the internationally understood scale of diplomatic protest language. It is also worth noting that since the Abe Government took office, not only have relations with China been strained (though that goes back well before 2012), but relations with South Korea remain frosty, with the Government of President Park Geun-Hye tapping a rich vein of anti-Japanese sentiment to boost her regime (which is currently at a low level of popularity following a terrible ferry disaster in April). She recently had to accept the withdrawal of her latest candidate for prime minister once the media discovered that he had given a church sermon saying that the Japanese occupation of Korea between 1910 and 1945 was "God's will", and on another occasion had said publicly that compensation for wartime 'comfort women' was ruled out under the terms of the 1965 Korea-Japan normalisation treaty.

A final question in this section that I need to address is that of Japanese public opinion. A book just out entitled *Governing Insecurity in Japan*, edited by Wilhelm Vosse, Reinhard Drifte and Verena Blechinger-Talcott (Routledge, 2014), examines an apparent contradiction evident in public opinion surveys, between increased feelings of insecurity in Japan over the past decade, and negative reaction to proposals for boosting military capacity or reducing restrictions on forward defence. Vosse constructed what he called a 'militarism index' based on questions concerning when war might be justified, whether war was inevitable, how defence spending

Mr Abe had reinvented himself after the failure of his first administration five years earlier, and became prime minister in circumstances where he could exercise far more power than most of his predecessors.

should be viewed and whether enhanced defence capabilities could be expected to produce a peaceful outcome. Administering the survey in the United States and Japan, he formed a three-category table: those whose attitudes were essentially militarist, those who had mixed views and those whose views were broadly anti-militarist. The contrast between the American results and those from Japan is striking. 'Militarists' were 51 per cent in the US, but a mere 8 per cent in Japan, those with 'mixed' views 40 per cent in the US and 47 per cent in Japan, and 'anti-militarists' 9 per cent in the US but 45 per cent in Japan (Vosse et al., p. 22). A chapter in the same book, by Paul Midford, shows (p. 35) that during a period when the successive governments of Koizumi and Abe were actively promoting constitutional revision, support for revision fell continuously from a high of 65 per cent in 2004 to a low of 42.5 per cent in 2008 (*Yomiuri Shinbun* polls). An NHK poll on 14th May 2013 showed that it had fallen even further, to 31 per cent. Moreover, when asked what revision they wish for, some respondents cite the need for more generous human rights clauses and the like, rather than revising the peace clause. An Asahi poll in April showed 64% of those polled were against revision of the 'peace clause'.

We may conclude that constitutional revision is far from being a done deal, and that if a revision process is indeed put in train, it may well end in failure.

Human rights and freedoms, including freedom of expression

American critics have from time

to time criticised the Japanese government for being too prone to leak secrets, in the absence of adequate legislation for the protection of secrets. Mr Abe was determined to remedy this, and in December 2013 the Japanese Parliament passed the Designated Secrets Law, designed to curb the leakage of State secrets. National security, diplomacy, 'dangerous activities' and counter-terrorism were the principal areas concerned.

Critics argued that the new law was a potential threat to basic democratic values, including press freedom. Structures for regular administration of the law were also criticised as too weak and have led to subsequent controversy. Perhaps the most controversial issue has been the harsh sentences proposed for government officials who leak (up to 10 years in gaol), and for journalists who obtain such information "in an inappropriate manner" (up to five years). By contrast with freedom of information legislation in the UK and elsewhere, government does not have to reveal secret information until 60 years have elapsed, and there seems to be no prohibition on destruction of documents. How the law will be administered is also controversial.

The Foreign Correspondents Club of Japan declared:

"The current text of the bill [this was before it became law] seems to suggest that freedom of the press is no longer a constitutional right, but merely something for which government officials 'must show sufficient consideration'"

On the other hand, a minority of Japanese constitutional law specialists, while regarding the nationalistic side of the Abe government as extremely dangerous, and opposing constitutional revision, wish to distinguish this from the actual text of the Secrets Law, which they regard as having merit (e.g. Kimura Sōta, private correspondence).

Revision of the 1947 Constitution is the touchstone of reform in the eyes of Japanese right wing conservatives, of whom Prime Minister Abe Shinzō is a typical but exceptionally motivated example. Within the constitutional revision movement revision of the 'peace clause' has always been the Holy Grail, with some nationalists arguing that the article was designed deliberately to keep Japan weak and under the thumb of the United States. There is an interesting contradiction here, because the LDP has been consistently in favour of the Japan-US Security Treaty as the best guarantee of Japanese security, whereas criticism of the Japan-US alliance has mainly been concentrated on the left. Nevertheless, criticism of over-dependence on the US does also exist on the right, and has its counterpart in occasional statements from American officials (mainly military, and in the past) that a secondary purpose of the Security Treaty is to contain Japan.

A less widely recognised, but extremely important, purpose of constitutional revision on the part of LDP right wingers is to modify the human rights clauses of the 1947 Constitution, seen as advanced at the time they were written. Some wish

to revive parts of the human rights section of the 1889 Constitution, which was long on duties to the State and short on rights of the individual. This touches on a cultural agenda, asserting 'traditional' collective rather than individualistic values, boosting the family as a unit, emphasising 'the public interest and public order', as well as responsibilities and obligations in compensation for rights and freedoms. Members of a household (the traditional *ie*) would be obligated to help one another, there would be an obligation to respect the national flag and the (controversial) national anthem, and to obey commands from the State or subordinate officials in a time of emergency, as well as an obligation to uphold the Constitution as such. In other words the revision ideas embedded in the thinking of the nationalist right are in line with what Mr Abe has called (in the title of his 2006 book) "Japan as a beautiful country". Some of this proposed language might seem innocuous enough, but in my view, and given what one knows about the ideological nostalgia for past times among Mr Abe and his supporters, the implications represent a serious danger for the health of democracy in Japan.

Towards a conclusion

There remain two issues. The first is how far, as some now argue, Mr Abe learned important lessons from his first term in the office of prime minister, and has modified his earlier policies to conform with reality and public opinion. He is no doubt aware (in fact has remarked himself) that the hefty majority his party obtained in December 2012 was brought about more as a result of disillusionment with the failed Democratic Party Government as with enthusiasm for a second Abe administration. A salient issue during his first period in office was chaos in the bureaucracy dealing with the pensions system. But Abe at that time promoted his

beloved nationalistic agenda rather than concentrating on sorting out the pensions fiasco.

In his second administration, Mr Abe has plainly learned the lessons of his earlier unhappy – some say disastrous – first period in office, especially by presenting an ambitious policy package designed to revive the economy, now dubbed 'Abenomics', which Mr. Arima is going to talk about. There is a good deal of public opinion poll evidence suggesting that what the electorate is principally concerned about is economic revival, rather more than constitutional revision or collective defence. It seems likely that his government stands or falls on the success or otherwise of his economic policies, rather than on foreign and defence policy. The problem is that the pragmatism he has learned through experience coexists with a backward looking ideology that causes problems with neighbouring countries and is hardly to the taste of ordinary Japanese people who aspire to live in a free, modern and prosperous society where they see their children educated without them being subject to nationalistic indoctrination, where jobs are available, opportunities for career advancement are widely available, where social services work well, and where economic inequalities are kept within reasonable limits.

The second issue is how far in evaluating the policies of the Abe Government, we should separate out policy from ideology. In particular, should relaxing the constraints on forward defence maintained under the 'peace clause' be welcomed in the interests of greater national security without considering the ideological agenda of a government that is promoting such a change? This question is of particular relevance in the context of the collective defence issue. My own view is that despite the pressures to relax constitutional constraints on Self Defence Forces

activities outside Japan, this is an option fraught with danger. Unfortunately, Mr Abe's overtly nationalist agenda makes it difficult to separate concrete policy objectives from an ideological mind set on the part of the Prime Minister. This exacerbates tensions with neighbouring countries and may well make resolution of disputes much harder to achieve. I find the situation concerning.

Finally, I want to end on a rather more upbeat note. Japan is far too much ignored in this country, which may have something to do with the fact that the UK for several reasons is extraordinarily self-absorbed at the present time. But Japan has the third largest economy in the world, more than twice that of the UK, Japan is one of our major trading partners and to a remarkable degree admires and seeks to learn lessons from British institutions and practices. Despite current problems, including demographic and economic decline relative to China and elsewhere, Japan remains a basically stable, prosperous and sophisticated country, with deep-seated cultural values from which we should be able to learn much of value. Japanese relations with the UK, and more broadly with Europe of which we are an essential part, can function as an anchor for stability and common sense in a turbulent world. Japan was the future once, and could be again. But there are, it has to be admitted, dark clouds on the horizon.

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“There’s A Man in Tights Dancing on Stage!”

Critical events in the lives of male dancers and choreographers

By Brian De Silva

What is wrong with a man in tights dancing on stage? ... apparently everything!

Dancing has always been perceived as a feminine pursuit and career, and everything related to dance has a strong feminine association. As a result in Western societies in particular, there is a strong taboo against male ballet dancers, or male contemporary dancers for that matter. Male dancers are viewed with great suspicion and for some can be a source of great unease. How many men do you know of who will freely admit to being a male ballet dancer?

In the very popular film *Billy Elliot*, Billy has a conversation with his father after being found out that he was taking ballet lessons instead of boxing lessons. This is what his father had to say:

“Ballet...it’s for girls...it’s not for lads...lads do football, or boxing, or wrestling...”

Although the quote is taken from the film script, Billy is based on the true life of a male ballet dancer from the Royal Ballet. Boys admitting to wanting to dance or enjoying dance can be subject to a large degree of suspicion from friends and family alike. It does not stop there. They may, can, or will be bullied and be subject to taunts. At its worst, they may even be subject to physical abuse.

Dancing is not deemed to be a manly pursuit, especially in predominantly Western societies. Geert Hofstede in his study of national cultures identified countries like Australia, New Zealand, United States, Canada, Great Britain and Ireland as culturally masculine. In these cultures, boys (and hence men) are raised with the belief that men and women are intrinsically different, not only from a biological or gendered point of view. It goes beyond that. Boys (and later men) are socially conditioned to believe that they should be tough and deal with facts, not feelings. They should also be assertive; they should never cry, and should never shy away from a fight when being attacked.

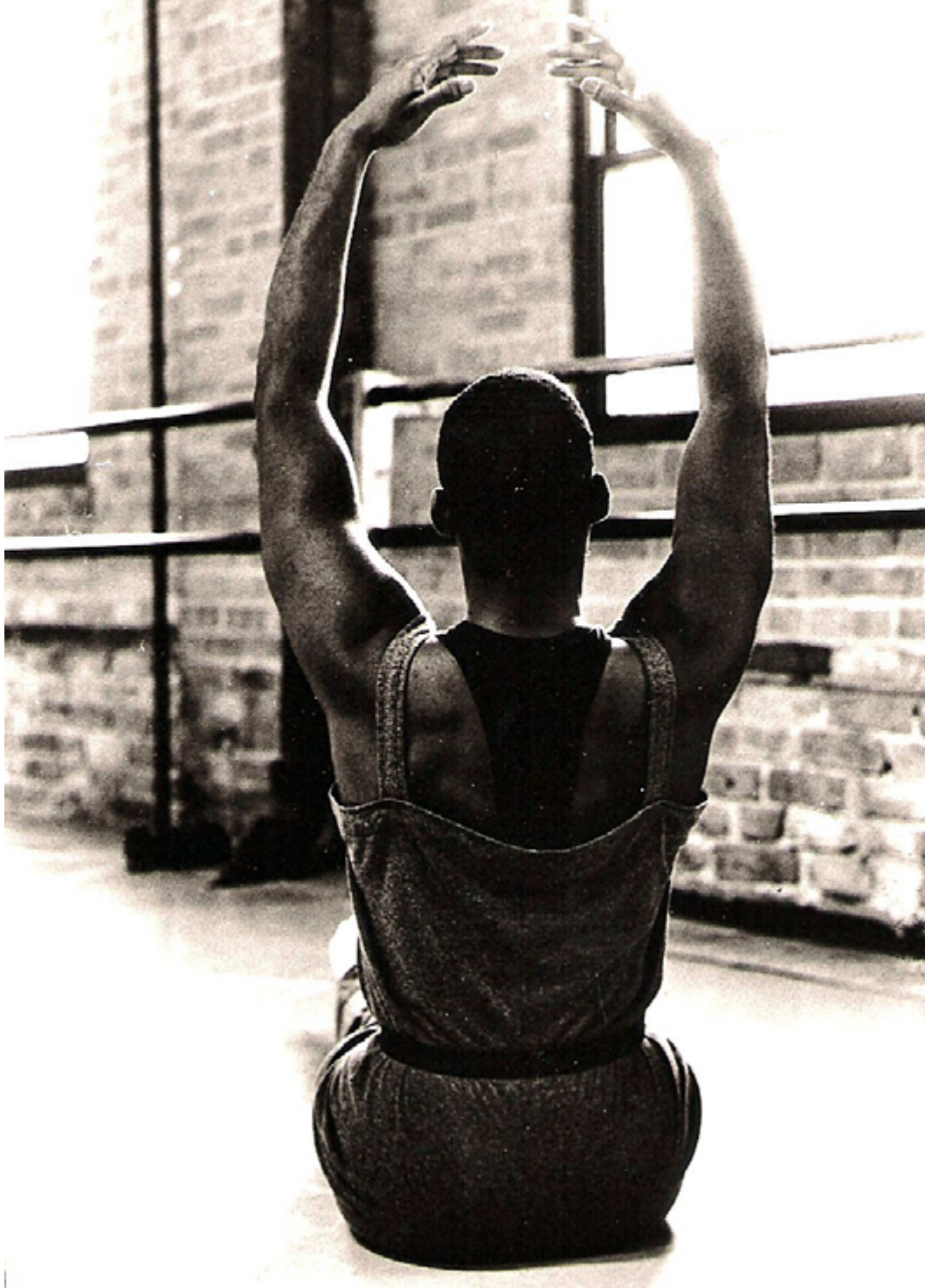
In addition, such culturally masculine countries tend to manifest a strong taboo in addressing sexual issues openly, and anyone expressing and/or adopting a sexual identity other than that of a heterosexual will be seen as a threat to masculine norms. They will be perceived as being different, and the source of their differentness will be viewed and judged as being against religion, immoral, and unethical, almost to a point of perversion. A fact must be highlighted: it was not until 1973 that the American Psychological Association (APA) finally voted to remove homosexuality as a form of deviance or mental illness. So for much of the 20th Century, it has been classed as a mental illness.

One has to ask the question:

Why is difference so bad, and why is being different such a source of contention even today?

We are genetically predisposed to be different. When we are born, we are endowed with unique and distinct features like the shape of our retina and our fingerprints. These are unique to every person regardless their sex or gender. These make us different from everybody else, but we do not view them as being a source of stigma and/or prejudice. As a child, we begin to learn to distinguish between mother (female) and father (male). By about the age of three researchers have shown that we have already been genetically





imprinted with what society deems to be behaviours appropriate for a boy or a girl. Social Cognitive Theory informs us that when parents tell their children “this is for girls” or “that’s not how a boy should behave” it is social imprinting. What society values as being important creates a very strong impact on our cognitive development to make us gender resonant.

What is significant here is that some differences are purely genetic like hair colour, eye colour, skin colour and/or tone, height, weight and body shape. We express very little concern for

these differences; in fact we accept that as being a part of life. Some differences are learned, through social imprinting, like gender, sex, sexuality, and sexual identity. Such differences or learned perceptions are predisposed to become stigma, especially if they are not what society values or sees as being normal and hence important. People or groups who are stigmatised tend to become marginalised, isolated, and at times even abused.

This raised a very important question: Why are we so predisposed to see difference(s) rather than learn to

accept and value these differences? I believe much of this is due to a lack of understanding and awareness of these people of difference, and the inherent fear associated with this lack of understanding. This led me to conduct my research on a group of men who not only chose to dance, but who were also brave enough not to be gender resonant, ie heterosexual. The overriding purpose of my research was to gain an insight, awareness, and understanding of the lives of these men. With understanding comes acceptance.

I had lived in Wellington, New Zealand, for close to a decade (1987-1996), and this capital city had a small but growing and vibrant performing arts scene of which I was a part of, principally as a member of the audience. My interest in the arts saw me undertaking dance classes in jazz and contemporary dance. I also immersed myself within this social milieu of actors, dancers, choreographers and performers, some of whom became close friends. When I moved to Australia in 1996, this interest persisted but in a different capacity, which saw me undertaking an M. Ed. (Arts Admin.) and subsequently, a PhD in Education. I undertook my PhD research on men in Australia and New Zealand as I had ready access to a group of men to interview as respondents.

In total, I interviewed seven men, whose ages ranged from 28 to 72 years. All of these men self-identified as being non-heterosexual (bisexual, homosexual, asexual and sexually ambivalent). All of them were dancers and/or choreographers at some point in their lives. This group of men constituted a representative sample coincidentally (not by design) as they encompassed most of the positions in dance companies: from corps de ballet to coryphée, soloist, and principal dancer. One of them was the classical dance teacher at a tertiary institution in Melbourne, and finally one was the Artistic Director of a National Dance School in New Zealand. Of the group, one had an established reputation and career as a choreographer; another was in the middle of a choreographing career, whilst another was just beginning his career as a choreographer. This really enhanced the research study for the PhD.

The PhD research was based on a very simple proposition viz.:

If men choosing to dance were subject

to many hardships and difficulties, both physical and psychological, why would some men deliberately choose to be professional dancers?

This was the main thrust of my research - I was interested in the lives of these men who chose to dance. The

findings I present herewith are based on the primary research question of my thesis, which was:

What are the critical events that impacted the lives of these male dancer/choreographers, and why were these events perceived as being critical by these individuals who directly experienced them?

After formulating the research questions, I turned my attention towards the research literature available that would inform my study. I looked at a number of key research articles in the area of dance and sexual identity. These works helped me to determine, understand, and focus on the critical and salient elements of my research.

Earl's 1988 study addressed the issue of dance as obsession and also looked at the life cycle stages dancers went through in their journey to adulthood and physical and psychological maturity. I incorporated his typology of life cycle stages in my interviews. Bailey and Oberschneider (1997) addressed the issue of sexual orientation in professional dance in the USA, and found that only one out of the forty two men he interviewed believed that his experiences in dance had a major influence on his sexual orientation.

The works of Burt (1994, 1995)

greatly influenced my thinking as he researched men in dance in relation to sexual identity. He conducted his research specifically in the UK, and he focussed on representations of masculinity in what he called British theatre dance. I also looked at the works of Risner (2001, 2009) who

Why are we so predisposed to see difference(s) rather than learn to accept and value these differences?

undertook his research mainly in the USA. He focussed his research on the plight of gay male dancers and the difficulties they faced in their training, and in their subsequent moves towards becoming professional dancers in the USA.

Finally, I looked at the work undertaken by Gard (2006) who focussed his research on dancing men in Australia, but his emphasis was on the aesthetics as it applies to dance, and attempt to capture what he calls the physical experience of dance. In this our research was distinguished.

I asked the respondents I interviewed to reflect on their past, and to identify the critical incidents in their lives. I also asked them to define what their concept of critical was and to describe qualitatively what made these incidents critical for them.

For these men, critical meant a range of concepts from life altering, to things changing their life or their perspective on life, turning corners in their life, and having an impact on their life in some way and in the course of the development of their life and career. One respondent in particular related it to moments of personal emotional upheaval. One other respondent related the concept of critical to choices he had to make about a place to live. The shift in



the socio-political and psycho-sexual context, along with artistic challenges contributed to his having to relocate countries on three separate occasions. Finally, for one respondent it afforded him the opportunity to escape from his family to find physical, mental, and emotional freedom.

The findings of my research on critical incidents did prove to be interesting on a number of different fronts. Of the incidents deemed critical, my analysis showed that they could be categorised as either personal or professional.

The incidents deemed to be of a personal nature were intrinsic to the individuals, who they are and related to family, religion, personal choices in life and their acquisition of an adult and sexual identity. Those critical incidents that were of a professional nature were extrinsic to them and were focused on their acquisition of skills, training, and dance career related choices that assisted them to become dancer/choreographers.

In the discussion below I emphasize only those issues that were raised by the majority of the respondents

interviewed. The extrinsic factors I chose to analyse were their ballet training and their experiences with joining a professional dance company. These factors rendered them gender resonant as their experiences would be the same for all male dancers and hence have no significant impact on their being different and/or located as other.

Most of the respondents started dancing from an early age except for three who started in their early teens. Two respondents trained at the Royal Ballet Upper School and one of them found the training there strict and petty as he was older than most of those in his class. Another trained at the Victorian College of the Arts Secondary School (VCASS) and found the strict training regime very challenging indeed. Of those who started dancing later in life, one felt despite his advanced age at the start, his training was superior as he was being offered what he called the full Russian training. Another started classical dance training (ballet) after he was 'bitten by the bug' attending performances by the Sydney Dance Company when he was in his mid-teens. The final respondent started dance classes after he dropped out of university after his first year.

Joining a professional dance company for one meant starting right from the 'bottom of the heap,' and such companies, he found, could be very hierarchical in their approach to casting and promotions. One of the respondents who was accepted into a ballet company right after his training found his experience there rewarding as he was offered a scholarship to go overseas to visit and train with other European ballet companies. Two respondents did not receive offers from the ballet company immediately after completing their ballet training. One joined a regional ballet company before being accepted into the Australia Ballet, but he was required

to start right at the bottom again in the corps de ballet. Another joined a ballet company in South Africa, but returned to Australia after a car crash that rendered him a quadriplegic. He later formed his own company choreographing and performing in his wheelchair as a differently abled dancer.

The oldest member of the group of respondents was a founding member of the Australian Ballet when it was formed in the early '60s. His time at the ballet provided many memories for him, and was both motivating and exciting for him to be involved with the first full-time national ballet company in Australia. One respondent's memories of his time with dance companies was what he called the most awful experience of his life as he started dancing with professional companies with insufficient training which was reflected in the way he was treated by both the dancers and management alike. His experience of this was rather the exception, compared to the experience of the others I interviewed.

In terms of the intrinsic factors deemed critical, I focused on the personal factors acknowledging their sexuality and 'coming out' and that of having same sex partners and relationships. These factors rendered them gender dissonant as their experiences would be unique to them, and hence have a very significant impact on their being different and/or located as other.

'Coming out' and acknowledging your gay sexuality is difficult and one respondent felt he did not have a suitable gay role model at the ballet school to emulate. Another came out to his mother first, as she was good friends with many of his gay friends at dance school. Many expressed very little discomfort in coming out to family and friends as they found them supportive. One respondent even stated that being gay in the

dance world was not so unusual. One respondent pointed out that his sexuality had no impact on his choice of a career.

Having same sex partners and establishing relationships was another issue some had to contend with. The impact this had on their personal lives was very different for each of the respondents. One respondent stated that it's hard not to be attracted to other male dancers, but chose a partner outside of dance as a form of escapism. Another found relationships so fundamental to his life that he gave up his position at the Australian Ballet to be with another dancer in Europe. Others have had to pursue long distance relationships within Australia. One such respondent had two relationships: one in Perth and the other in Sydney. On both occasions he moved away to be with his partners

but both those relationships did not last long.

The picture we are beginning to see from this research is that although these dancer/choreographers self-identify as being non-heterosexual; their experiences in life are far from different to that of many heterosexual men. They faced many challenges in their training to become accomplished in their chosen field of endeavour. On a personal level they still seek and at times struggle to have and maintain stable emotional relationships.

We have been given a glimpse and insight (qualitatively) into the lives of these dancer/choreographers. What we find is a group of people, not unlike many other groups of people. This is an opportunity to open our eyes to see that sometimes we must embrace our differences and

learn to value these differences. Men in dance will always be viewed with suspicion unless we take active steps to change that worldview. Now is the time to make the change by seeking understanding and removing the fear of things different.

Dr A W Brian De Silva is currently an Honorary Research Associate with RMIT University, Australia. His current research interests include looking at gender issues impacting male dancer/choreographers, aspects of National Culture in Australian Dance, and the process of creativity extending across genres of the arts namely painting, dancing and choreographing.

A fully referenced version of this article is available on request. Contact: publications@iafor.org





Possibilities Across Oceans, Continents and Cultures

HOPE International shares the gift of clean water

By Elena Omura & Lowell Sheppard

It is a privilege to share the story and be present at the moment when a community first gains access to clean water. Whether it's a shallow well in Cambodia supporting five or six families, or a Village Water System in Ethiopia or the Philippines that involves capping a spring and creating a pipeline into a village, the effect of having clean water is quite profound.

The Mindanao village of Pigbalowan is one such example. In a twist of sinister irony, the village name actually means, "The word of God descended from heaven." The spiritually inclined B'laan should have felt blessed with such a name, but instead they felt cursed. Life was miserable, dark and hard in this village before clean water arrived. But now with water, pure and

readily available, the community's quality of life has been remarkably enhanced.

The village worked with HOPE International Development Agency's partners and staff on the ground to install the system, and when the day the tap was due to be turned on finally came, the community gathered around it with silent anticipation.

Just a few weeks before, an elderly woman had strangled herself while bearing a basket of water on her back from the former water source, five kilometers away. The strap over her forehead had slipped and instantly broken her wind-pipe. Her death was a strange one, but was by no means the only water-related death in the valley.

The liquid poison, which took a day for the women to fetch, killed many of their children. But things would be different from this point.

Clean water gushed out and splattered nearby feet and hands with shimmering droplets. A shriek of excitement burst forth from an old woman, steeped in tribal culture and memories of the past. She lunged towards the young development worker who oversaw the installation and, breaking a tribal taboo that prohibits a woman to touch any man besides her husband, piled her arms around him. The dam had burst, and one by one members of the community joined in the celebration, as they expressed teary joy.

HOPE International Development

Agency's mission is very simple. It is to extend compassion to the neglected poor and help them gain long-term access to basic necessities for life, such as clean water, in their quest to be self-reliant. What is not simple and requires a great deal of patience, dedication and time, is realising this mission – realising this mission in a way that respects the dignity and values of the people HOPE assists, and helping them become truly self-reliant.

There is a fine-line between respectfully assisting people and degrading them by being patronizing and culturally imperialistic. Words such as “pity” and “aid” have been removed from HOPE's lexicon as a result, and it never showcases images of people in their moments of great suffering. Instead, HOPE prefers to focus on what is possible and stress the importance of simply listening and being open to learn in turn. These are the methods through which root problems can be identified and viable solutions generated through compassion and collaboration with locals.

What HOPE has ascertained in its 40 years of working in developing countries is that extreme poverty is a vicious cycle, spun by the consistent lack of basic needs. Without clean water, people do not have the capacity to lead healthy lives and think beyond what they will feed their children for their next meal. Without the time -- some people spend more than 4 hours per day fetching water -- and resources to think past surviving, income can never be increased. Without education and a chance to invest in futures, younger generations will never have access to opportunities that will enable them to break free of the cycle. This is why HOPE attempts to alleviate extreme poverty through three main pillars: long-term access to clean water, micro loans and education.

HOPE is often known as the “water organisation” because the supply of clean water is the first element it focuses on in the field. Without this precious resource, other forms of assistance extended are futile.

The provision of clean water varies from country to country, but usually it involves the instalment of wells or pipelines to a filtered, clean water source. What does not vary is the requirement for people to fully participate in the construction of these water supply systems and training programs on water management, health and sanitation. HOPE has learnt that this is the only way to ensure sustainability and the self-reliance of people, for “if you give a man a fish, you feed him for a day; teach a man to fish and you feed him for a lifetime.” This proverb applies to all HOPE projects, regardless of whether they centre on water, micro-loans or schools, and regardless of whether the project is in Afghanistan, Cambodia or Ethiopia.

Working in multiple countries, with a multitude of backgrounds, values and circumstances can also make communication a challenge. To address this, HOPE project directors

in the field are always local, and they are the key figures that liaise between the families that HOPE assists, the HOPE offices and the rest of the world. In many ways HOPE's work is also about sharing stories and experience; it is about communication, from people to people to people.

None of this would be possible without the committed support of people residing in more economically developed countries, who channel their empathy for others into proactive compassion. HOPE is grateful every day for their support, and grateful for the compassion and smiles that individuals can afford one other, across oceans, continents and cultures. This makes nothing seem impossible.

Elena Omura is the Communications Officer and Lowell Sheppard the Asia Pacific Director at HOPE International. Sheppard is also a member of the Executive Council of the IAFOR International Advisory Board.

If you would like to learn more about HOPE's work, kindly visit www.hope.or.jp or their international website: www.hope-international.com







Walk like a Pilgrim

Hiking Japan's Kumano Kodo

By Lindsay Lafreniere

“The routes in the mountains were designed to be arduous and the journey over them part of the religious experience, rather than a means to an end.” – UNESCO

It's difficult coming from a country like Canada, only 147 years young, to really understand how extensive the history of some cultures are. While the aboriginal culture of Canada is strong and fascinating, Japan's lengthy history of traditions and culture is very much a part of everyday life here.

Now ranked as one of my favourite places visited in Japan, last year I hiked the ancient pilgrimage route of the Kumano Kodo, in Wakayama Prefecture, near Osaka. Along paths trodden for over a thousand years, through dense forest, my mother and I hiked.

The Kumano Kodo is one of two pilgrimage trails designated as

UNESCO World Heritage sites, together with Spain's El Camino de Santiago. Many of the paths have been developed over but some still exist as they did all those years ago. Pilgrims took the Kumano to worship at three main shrines — Kumano Hongu Taisha, Kumano Hayatama Taisha and Kumano Nachi Taisha. These paths also lead to Kyoto, Nara, Osaka and Koyasan.

Yunomine Onsen

There are many different ways to attack the Kumano Kodo; we decided to stay centrally in Yunomine Onsen. Getting there from Osaka is fairly easy, starting with a limited express train from Tennoji station to Kii-

Tanabe. From the station, it's an hour and a half bus ride along narrow roads twisting through rice paddies up into the mountains to Yunomine.

Yunomine is a quaint little spot, not really big enough to qualify as a town. Rather it's a collection of squat traditional inns--minshuku and ryokan-- with aging wooden roofs, lining a creek that the onsen, hot spring, pipes up from. Visitors shuffle along the lanes in yukata, light summer kimono, and geta, wooden sandals, from onsen to bath. This place only has two small convenience stores, selling, among other things, eggs, chestnuts and sweet potatoes to boil in the hot spring, and that's it in terms of places to spend your yen.





We stayed at Minshuku Teruteya, a small guesthouse run by a cute lady who spoke little English. In true Japanese inn style, huge meals were served with incredible variety. Nabe, tempura and even deer sashimi were presented and a bento lunch packed for our hike the next day.

The star of Yunomine is the Tsuboyu onsen — the only World Heritage hot spring that can be bathed in. A little wooden shack perched over the river, containing a tiny stone bath, steaming with hot water; it fits just two people or three small Japanese. It's also the oldest onsen in Japan and supposedly has healing powers. Was I healed? Well, the sake with the filling dinner and the very hot water sure put me to

bed early! That's a small miracle.

Kawayu Onsen

Other miraculous things exist around the Kumano Kodo, such as the magical river that winds through the village of Kawayu Onsen. Here it's possible to drink a cold beer while taking in the forest around you, as you lay on the riverbed — in hot water.

This is another special hot spring, but hidden from view and self made. Holes are dug into the gravel of the riverbed and then hot thermal water seeps in from below, making little onsen to bath in. In the winter much of the river is dug out to create Sennin-buro

— one thousand person bath.

Kawayu is quite close to Yunomine and accessible by bus, or by hitchhiking as we did.

Hiking the trail

The Kumano Kodo is an extensive network of trails — it's possible to do anything from a short stroll through the forest to a week-long trek across mountains. The Tanabe City Kumano Tourism Bureau website has numerous itineraries with different difficulty levels and maps.

We ended up hiking two sections of the Kumano Kodo. In the morning,

we set out from Yunomine on the Dainichi-goe trail, which runs right past Tsuboyu onsen. This was a fairly steep 3.4 km trail over the mountain, with lots of ups and downs. We went on a Friday morning in September and

path is well marked including many signs on paths leading into family gardens labeled “Not Kumano Kodo.”

In the afternoon, we hiked a portion of the Nakahechi Route, which was an

were surprised by how few people we encountered on the trails and there were almost no vending machines and shops. It’s important to pack adequate food and water and take note of when the sun sets, as this can be earlier than

Emerging from the forest, the giant torii gate can be seen from kilometers around. It’s the largest in the world, an imposing gateway to the sacred area of the shrine.

saw no other hikers. The mountain is pristine and quiet at the top, with a few small forest shrines along the trail. After about an hour and a half, the trail descends the mountain. The rushing sound of the Kumano-gawa River and unfortunately, the traffic from the road, is heard as the path begins to wind between backyards of the houses of the town of Hongu, home of the Kumano Hongu Taisha shrine. The

isolated trail with thick, dense forest and soaring ancient trees. It runs behind Hongu Taisha and past the river. The remains of an old teahouse and a traditional cemetery are found along the way. As the next landmark on this trail was 21 km away, we hiked north for a few hours, then back.

Much of the trails are, thankfully, very undeveloped and remote. We

expected in Japan.

Kumano Hongu Taisha

Emerging from the forest, the giant torii gate can be seen from kilometers around. It’s the largest in the world, an imposing gateway to the sacred area of the shrine. Except now, this 33.9 metre torii guards, well, nothing. Wandering the grounds, we looked





for the famous Hongu Taisha shrine, not realizing we were at the wrong spot.

In 1889, a flood destroyed the original site and it was moved up a mountain into the forest. From the torii, walk north to the information centre and cross the road. From here, many stone steps will take you to the shrine. Unfortunately, most of the shrine is currently under renovation so there wasn't too much to see.

To plan your trip to the Kumano Kodo area, visit the Tanabe City Kumano Tourism Bureau website. It has a wealth of information on the region and what there is to do. The Kumano Tourism Bureau website has tons of information, including bus schedules and maps, how to ride a local bus and a map of Yunomine.

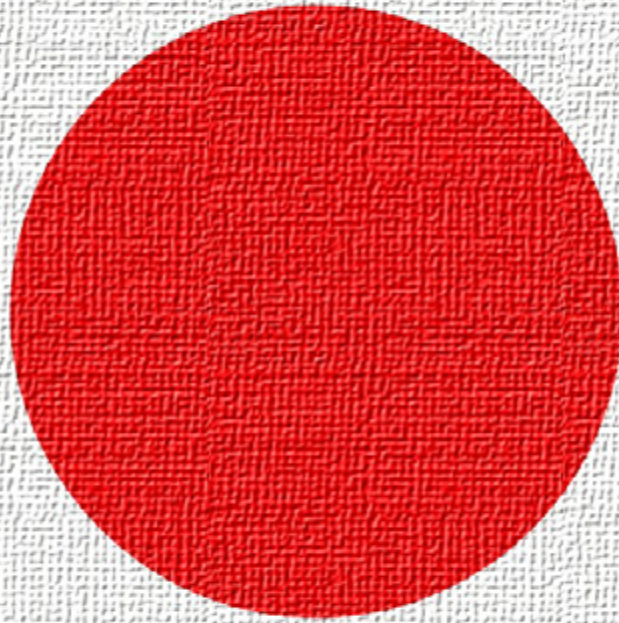
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Japanese Collective Self-Defence

By Craig Mark

Following the launch of the 2013 National Security Strategy, Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe announced that Japan intended to pursue a policy of 'proactive pacifism', maintaining Article 9 of the constitution, but allowing Japan to make a greater contribution to global peace and stability. Abe also warned that Japan was not prepared to accept any challenge to the territorial status quo in the region by the use of forces, implicitly criticizing China's 'aggressive' activities in the East China Sea.

To confirm this direction, in July 2014, Abe's Cabinet announced a historic reinterpretation of the constitution, overturning a position held by Japanese governments since its introduction, that Japan does have the right to participate in collective self-

defence with other allies or friendly states, as permitted by Article 51 of the UN Charter. This declaration, long claimed as part of the Liberal Democratic Party's (LDP) manifesto, being necessary to secure Japan in a more unstable region, was finally achieved after extensive negotiations with the LDP's governing coalition partners, the New Komeito Party (NKP), who have traditionally strongly upheld the pacifism assumed to be inherent in Article 9 of the constitution.

Following these negotiations, various restrictions were imposed on the reinterpretation, at the insistence of the NKP; the right of collective self-defence will only be exercised if the country's existence is threatened, and there are clear dangers that the 'people's right to life, liberty, and

the pursuit of happiness' would be overturned, due to an armed attack on Japan, or on countries with which Japan has close ties. Also, collective self-defence will only be exercised if there is a 'lack of other appropriate means', and the use of the Self-Defense Forces (SDF) will be limited to 'the minimum required', in order to guarantee Japan's security. It will also require the consent of the other country (or countries) involved in the collective self-defence operations, plus approval of the Cabinet and Diet for each instance.

The range of scenarios proposed by the Abe government that could potentially be covered by the right to collective self-defence, as well as coming to the assistance of other states, include wider rules of engagement for the SDF in UN peacekeeping operations,

potentially allowing participation in more robust Chapter 7 UN military interventions; and so-called 'grey zone' scenarios, short of open armed conflict. In particular, occupation of islands by covert 'non-military' forces has been referred to as an implicit reference to the potential occupation of the Senkakus by Chinese paramilitary forces. Taking action against hostile submarines infiltrating Japanese waters, and minesweeping operations, could be other scenarios.

To confirm this Cabinet decision into law, up to 18 bills may be required to be passed in the Diet in order to meet all the legal and constitutional requirements to allow the right of collective self-defence to be exercised. Abe is expected to soon complete his first Cabinet reshuffle, which is likely to include the creation of a new ministerial position dedicated to securing the passage of this package of security-related bills through the Diet, ideally by April 2015, in the next spring session of the Diet. While the LDP is likely to be easily able to secure enough support for such bills in the Diet, with its comfortable majority in the lower house, backed by support from the NKP, the nationalistic Japan Restoration Party and the Party for Future Generations, public opinion remains strongly divided.

Opinion polls have consistently shown that a majority of the public (ranging up to 58 to 67%) remain opposed to the constitutional reinterpretation, and that the Abe cabinet has not sufficiently explained or justified the changes, despite suspicions over the recent activities and potential future hegemonic aims of China (Haggard & Stahler, 2014). In the wake of the reinterpretation, the Abe cabinet's approval ratings have fallen to 43.5%, the lowest level since coming to office in 2012 (an economic slump following an increase in the consumption tax rate has also had an impact). However, the most recent opinion poll support

rates for the LDP of 23.9%, and 3.8% for its ruling partner the NKP, continue to far outstrip those of the opposition minor parties: 5.3% for the DPJ, 1.5% for the Japanese Communist Party, 1.2% for the Japan Restoration Party, 0.4% for the Social Democratic Party, 0.4 for Your Party, 0.2% for the People's Life Party, 0.2% for the Party for Future Generations, 0.1% for the Unity Party, and 0.1% for the New Renaissance Party; 61.6% of Japanese do not express support for any political party.

Reflecting this lack of public support, critics claim the reinterpretation is unnecessary, given that the well-equipped and highly trained SDF is highly capable of defending Japan's territorial integrity, further backed up by the US alliance, not least by the powerful US forces permanently based in Japan itself. The nationalistic revisionism occasionally displayed by LDP and other politicians also concerns critics of the changes, not least Abe's visit to the controversial Yasukuni shrine in December 2013, and revisionist statements by nationalistic politicians and commentators seeming to undermine the Kono and Murayama Statements. Such rhetoric accompanying the constitutional reinterpretation not only has caused public doubt and suspicion within Japan, but has inflamed regional tensions, principally with China and Korea, reinforcing aggressive nationalistic rhetoric stemming from opportunistic political figures in those countries.

Opponents of the reinterpretation also fear it could be the intermediary step towards eventually abolishing the pacifist Article 9 clause of the constitution altogether. Concerns have also arisen among lawyers and academics about the potential effect of re-interpreting the constitution on weakening Japanese democracy. The precedent of the Cabinet reinterpreting the constitution, against the majority

will of the public, could potentially be applied to eroding the integrity of other areas of the constitution, including broader protections for civil and political rights, such as freedoms of speech and assembly. While the reinterpretation is expected to gain Diet approval, the question remains of whether the subsequent laws will be constitutionally valid and challenges in the Supreme Court, although the traditionally conservative-leaning Court would probably uphold the new interpretation.

With only limited diplomatic mechanisms in the region aimed at reducing such tensions between the neighbouring states of Northeast Asia, any shifts in defence policy need to be carefully managed, in order to reassure against rising tensions. So far, this has not successfully eventuated, although there are signs that low-level efforts to improve Sino-Japanese relations are gradually making limited progress. The upcoming October APEC and East Asia Summit leaders' meetings (in China and Myanmar respectively), and the G20 leader's summit in November in Australia provide opportunities for the potential diplomatic breakthrough of the first leaders' meeting between Abe and Chinese President Xi Jinping.

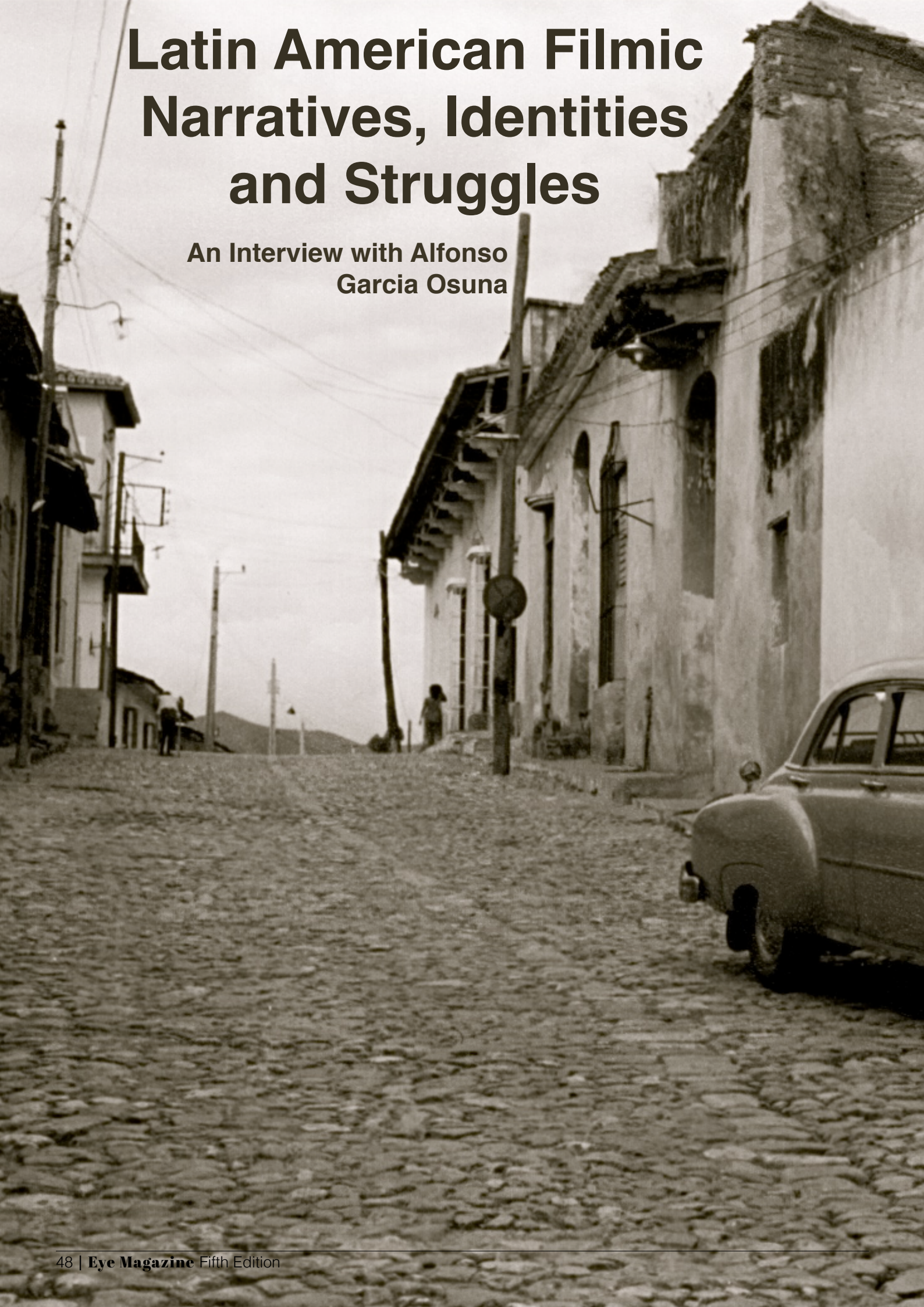
The Abe LDP government thus claims exercising the right of collective self-defence will allow Japan to make a greater contribution to international security; however, there are concerns this will only threaten to worsen geostrategic tensions in the region.

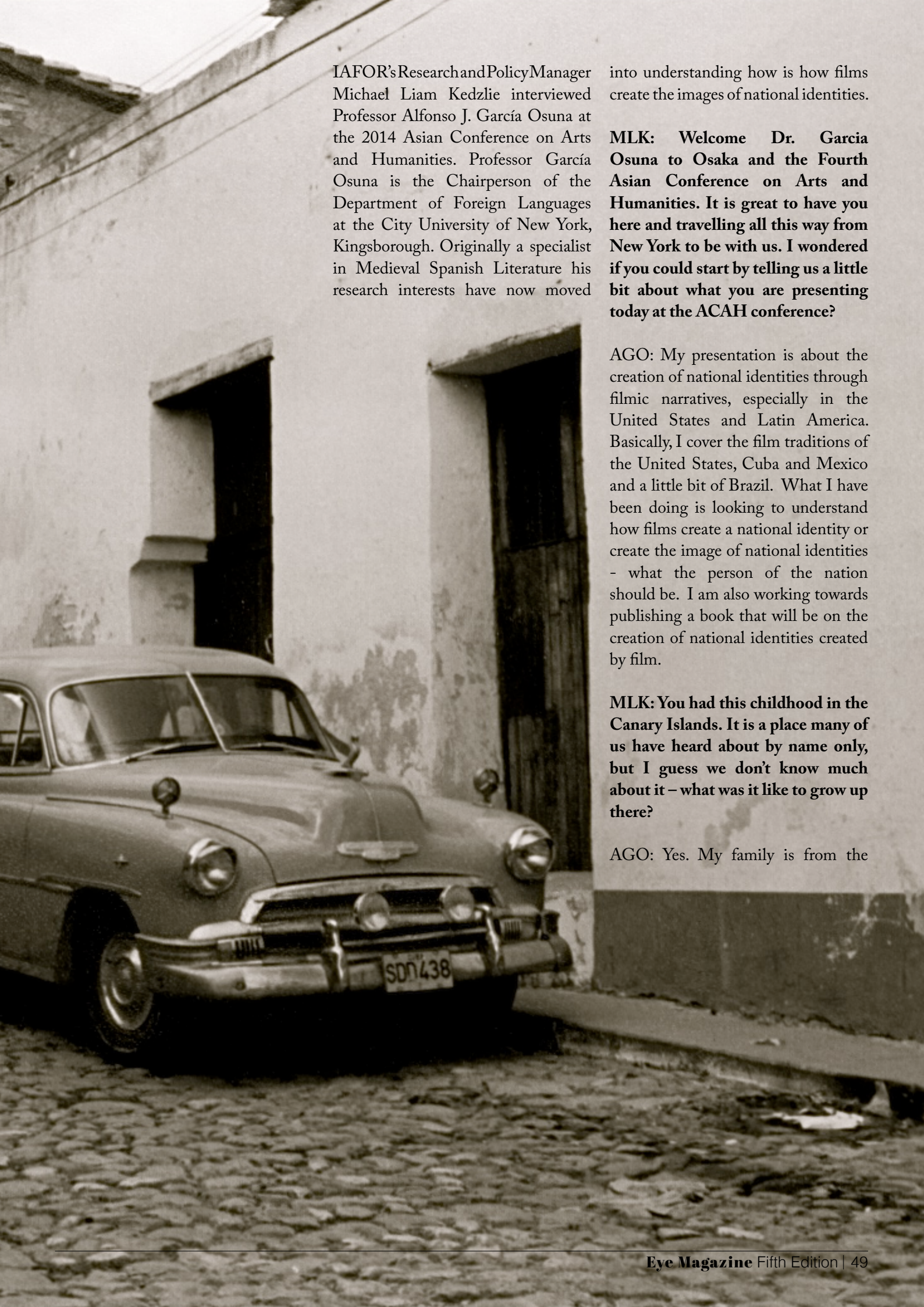
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A fully referenced version of this article is available on request. Contact: publications@iafor.org

Latin American Filmic Narratives, Identities and Struggles

An Interview with Alfonso
Garcia Osuna





IAFOR's Research and Policy Manager Michael Liam Kedzlie interviewed Professor Alfonso J. García Osuna at the 2014 Asian Conference on Arts and Humanities. Professor García Osuna is the Chairperson of the Department of Foreign Languages at the City University of New York, Kingsborough. Originally a specialist in Medieval Spanish Literature his research interests have now moved

into understanding how is how films create the images of national identities.

MLK: Welcome Dr. Garcia Osuna to Osaka and the Fourth Asian Conference on Arts and Humanities. It is great to have you here and travelling all this way from New York to be with us. I wondered if you could start by telling us a little bit about what you are presenting today at the ACAH conference?

AGO: My presentation is about the creation of national identities through filmic narratives, especially in the United States and Latin America. Basically, I cover the film traditions of the United States, Cuba and Mexico and a little bit of Brazil. What I have been doing is looking to understand how films create a national identity or create the image of national identities - what the person of the nation should be. I am also working towards publishing a book that will be on the creation of national identities created by film.

MLK: You had this childhood in the Canary Islands. It is a place many of us have heard about by name only, but I guess we don't know much about it - what was it like to grow up there?

AGO: Yes. My family is from the

“What I have been doing is looking to understand how films create a national identity or create the image of national identities — what the person of the nation should be.”

Canary Islands, Spain. They migrated to Havana, Cuba where I was born. When I was six years old my parents decided to go back to the Canaries, so they took me of course with them. However, Castro came in and imposed a very rigid system of government. He started nationalizing a number of things, my parents had worked very hard, and when nationalization came in they lost everything. My family was almost literally in the street. The Canaries are off the coast of Northern Africa in the Atlantic Ocean and they consist of seven islands, all part of Spain. I was brought up on Grand Canary, in the city of Las Palmas. It was a wonderful time growing up there. Later, we went to live in Madrid for a little bit, and then my family and I went to the United States when I was a teenager, around 16 years old or so. I attended college there, a Masters and then a PhD, all at the City University of New York where I now teach. I have stayed in New York ever since.

MLK: You said you went across to the US in your teenage years. That would have been an interesting adjustment going from the Canaries to what was the biggest, fastest city in the world at the time, if not the center of the Universe?

AGO: It was beyond interesting. It was also terrible. The problem was that although in the Spanish education system right from kindergarten you had to learn a second language, and I spoke English fairly well, I did not understand the American mentality that went along with it. When I got to New York I thought that everybody

was rude, everybody was nasty, and I just did not understand it. So to be honest, I was an outcast for a while because they did not understand me either. Anyway, it motivated me to get into college as fast as possible. When I entered CUNY I must have been one of the youngest people in college as I was only 17. I worked very hard to get there and during my study as a young undergrad. When I first entered City University of New York (CUNY) they gave me a battery of tests to see where to place me. The educational system back in Spain at the time was pretty good so I tested well beyond where I was in the American educational system. I had gone to high school in the US for just one year and graduated very early, and then went straight to college. We had just come in from Spain and we had left Cuba with nothing, so everybody had to work. I had to work and also go to school. Oh, and the cold weather in New York! That cold rain coming in especially in the winter! So there I was in the Canaries - it was sunny, a nice breeze coming off the Ocean, so then coming to NY was a great adjustment. I had my life planned in the Canaries so it was a shock when my father announced that we were going to the US, oh my goodness. But I adjusted.

MLK: Of course you went through CUNY and graduated as a young man at 20 to 21 years old. What did you do next?

AGO: Well I then got my Masters very quickly and got married and we had kids right away. Even before I finished my PhD I wanted to stay in

New York. I had learned to love the State of New York and we were living out on Long Island. Long Island was close enough to the city anyway, and my parents were there, my wife and her family were there. I wondered if CUNY had a place for me and they did. I started off as a Lecturer, actually before I finished my PhD, and fortunately when I finished it I became an Assistant Professor. Five years later I became an Associate, and another five years after that, a full Professor. Now I chair one of the colleges at the University, Kingsborough.

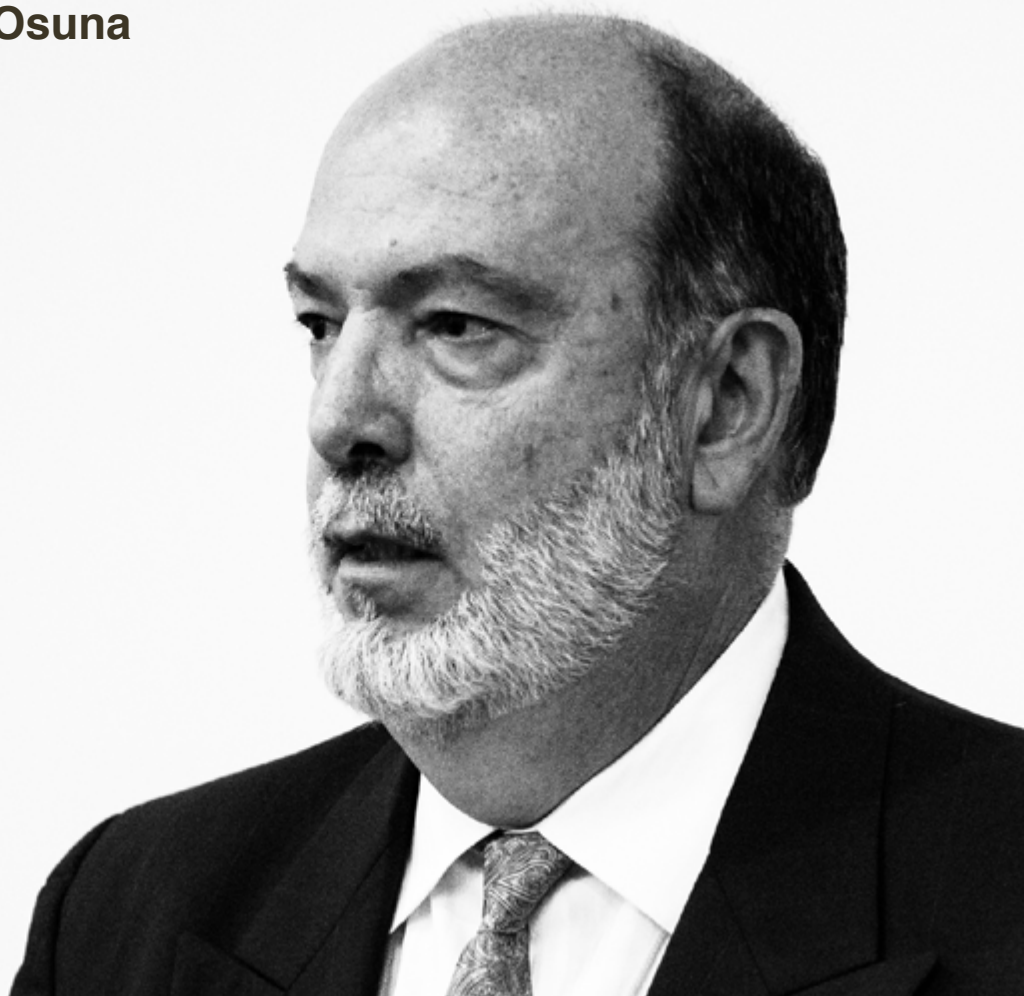
MLK: You have stayed with the University all these years - you must be part of the furniture at CUNY!

AGO: Oh, absolutely. Not just a part of the furniture, I am one of the sofas! It is a good place to be. It is not just the one campus of course. CUNY has 24 different colleges spread throughout the state of New York. All of these colleges have different make-ups to them. The one I am in is in Brooklyn. Brooklyn is very well known for movies and it is next to the sea, which is great and makes it a very nice place.

MLK: This current research that you are working on seems fascinating. Would you be able to tell us a little about it and also, if possible, some of the other research projects you have been working on or have worked on in the past?

AGO: Sure. I began my doctoral work on Medieval Spanish Literature into the Renaissance and you find more and more that there is little left to

Alfonso Garcia Osuna



explore in the field. Matter of fact, I was once at a conference and a group of people who were researching 19th century literature were in the same grouping as me. I said somebody must have made a mistake. They said you were the only entry in the medieval stream so I thought that maybe I should retool. About that time I had started looking more into film. The philosophy of film, reading film critics and film researchers and so forth. It was leading me to a place that I was getting very interested in. So I started writing, researching and getting published. So basically now I am writing more and more on film rather than my original expertise at this stage in my career. Film for a long time was not taken seriously as a viable academic subject especially in the United States. But in the last 25 to 30 years, it has become very important.

MLK: Is that because it is now

regarded as one of the more authentic ways to capture upon the cultural record of society or the cultures within the society?

AGO: Yes, indeed. As a visual medium it projects itself more as part of reality than just words on paper. Film has many more dimensions than, let's say, a novel. Film has sound, it has perspective, and is able to go beyond the printed letter.

When I started researching film, I actually started with American film with those early American filmmakers such as DW Griffiths for example. What I noticed was that in those aspects of early American filmic narrative, they were trying to portray what it is to be a real American. By doing this, they were in effect creating a national identity. Remember film began not long after the Civil War where the United States had just torn

itself apart. It did not know what it was yet. Who are we? What are we? So those early films began addressing this in many different ways, but one of the ways was in creating a national identity. However, when you start creating a national identity you start talking about who is in and who is left out. In these early films you can see who is left out right way. Of course those left out are the blacks, the aliens, the Mexicans from the southwest. Interestingly enough, that type of film-making mentality was exported to Latin America, so if you look at the early films from Cuba you do not see blacks anywhere. There was one mixed race woman who had a very beautiful voice whom they could not ignore, so in order to include her in a film, they whitewashed her face and had her sing. However in Mexico, that program of creating your national identity is a little different because most Mexicans are of native America descent and

they could not portray a white world as Mexican. So you see the heroes as Mexican and in a positive light and the bad guys of Spanish descent – the Europeans. It is very different how the next-door neighbor to the US, Mexico, is doing the same thing but it is very different in its objective. They have a different objective in explaining what national identity is.

The greatness of a country's culture used to be measured by its literature, yet more and more now that is being parlayed into film. Many of the Latin American countries have had active film industries for some time and with Latin America now coming into what they hope will be an economic boom, I am sure it will enhance the filmic productions in these countries. The Ecuadorian immigrants to Spain are now returning to Ecuador as they realized that they were going to have more possibilities to better their lives back in Ecuador. The Latin American economic boom is not quite there yet

but it is coming down the line.

MLK: What are some examples of Latin American films that show the creation of national identity?

AGO: In Cuba, films like “Manuel García, King of the Cuban Countryside” gave an initial account of the traits that characterize a Cuban (he was a real-life “Robin Hood” type that roamed the countryside helping the poor). After the Revolution of 1959, the emphasis was put on including Afro-Cubans in patterns of national identity with films like “The Other Francisco,” which focus on the real-life experiences of Afro-Cubans while filtering out those romanticized versions of slave life that had been the norm. “Cuba Dances” also attempts to delegitimize previous narratives on the true value of Cuban cultural systems. In Argentina, where in 1914 three out of four people in Buenos Aires had been born in Europe, the emphasis was on the inclusion of disparate

national backgrounds into the Argentine national identity fabric, with films like “Heritage,” which tells the story of an Italian immigrant that opens a restaurant, “Broken Embrace,” which is the story of a Jew who leaves Argentina for Israel and then only thinks of returning, and “Bolivia,” which puts the spotlight on the racism to which indigenous immigrants from other South American countries are exposed. A film like “The Tango Lesson” follows the life of an Argentine dance instructor that lives in Paris; Argentine national identity is personified in this one character, who lives and participates -literally and metaphorically- in both European and South American identity spaces. In Mexican film, especially during the first half of the 20th century, there was an evident emphasis on the construction of national identity and its articulation in film narratives; this was accomplished through a repertory of symbolic geographies: the life of indigenous people in the countryside,



Photograph by Alejandro Amador / Flickr and Brett Sayer / Flickr



their popular rites and customs, their communal beliefs and values and the exploits of indigenous heroes. This is evident in films like “María Candelaria,” “La perla,” “Janitzio,” “Allá en el Rancho Grande,” and “Vámonos con Pancho Villa.”

MLK: What are the differences in filmic narrative between countries in Latin America?

AGO: A country like Cuba began to use film as a medium for the creation of a national identity paradigm very early in the 20th century. This paradigm, though, was in line with neo-colonial attitudes and thus excluded the African element in Cuban society. After the 1959 revolution it became the task of Cuban filmmakers to include the African in the identity fabric of the nation. To a certain extent, Argentina grappled with the problem in a different way: its films show the mechanisms through which new immigrants “became” Argentines and the many problems and obstacles they faced in the process. Mexico, secure in the indigenous identity of the overwhelming majority of its population, produced filmic narratives that legitimized and gave prominence to a national identity firmly rooted

in the nation’s Native American credentials. The main hurdle was to overcome deeply-rooted notions of European cultural and racial ascendancy, notions that relegated the indigenous to second-class status in the minds of many moviegoers.

MLK: The Cuban American relationship has been fraught. I wondered how do you see the relationship between the United States and Cuba now in 2014? Where is it at because I know for a long time Cuba was persona non-gratia to the US and vice versa?

AGO: It is exactly at the same place it has been for the last 50 years. I cannot see any change. Both sides are in their trenches and they are not going to come out of them. Even Obama, who many people thought was going to change things, has kept things remaining in place. The foreign policy of the United States with respect to Cuba is where it has always been. Politicians are looking down the line thinking – “not only am I not going to be re-elected if I do something that is right but it may impact the next person in my political party who follows me.” Florida is also a swing state and the Cuban American community there is large and economically powerful

and important. They could swing an election and everybody knows that so, when they talk about Cuba, it’s let things remain in place, let sleeping dogs lie. Also, in Florida, we have a growing number of Venezuelans that have come into Florida due to what has happened in Venezuela – they are even more entrenched in their anti-Castro and anti-Charvis positions – because it is more recent. They are not a voting block yet, they are very recent and mostly not American citizens yet, but will become American citizens, and will vote for whoever is anti-socialistic.

MLK: So do these new Americans such as the Venezuelans see America as the place of capitalistic values, freedom values, the land of milk and honey that attracted the earlier wave of immigrants, the ethic that if you work hard enough you can go from being from a small island in the Atlantic and with your own sweat and hard work you can make it, make it to being a full professor?

AGO: Not only that – if you did not make it – it is because of a character flaw. They do not take into account the dynamics of an economy or any of the other factors that play into that –



“The main hurdle was to overcome deeply-rooted notions of European cultural and racial ascendancy, notions that relegated the indigenous to second-class status in the minds of many moviegoers.”

but they believe if you are poor, that poverty is a character flaw and many of them will tell you that. They look at us – we came, we had nothing and look at where we are. With the recession, the rise from being an immigrant with nothing and making it for the family in one generation, to come and be successful is not as easy as it used to be. Though it was never easy, or very quick but today it is a lot more difficult. The lack of jobs is a huge factor. However if you are coming with a good education, it is different. But if you are coming without an education, selling newspapers on the street, and moving over time to become the CEO of a great company, it is not impossible, but it is not feasible. When you live in a country that has low living standards, you are always going to get people who seek a life in a better country, which has possibilities and opportunities. Mexico has one of the most corrupt systems of government in the world. Even though it is a relatively rich country with petroleum and other natural resources, many people are abjectly poor. But I have also been to the parts of Mexico City where people live in almost palaces – the discrepancy is there. I think that Mexico is a powder keg, something is going to happen there very soon.

MLK: That is something that has fascinated me about Mexico – you get a small, wealthy, highly educated elite in some of the countries in the Americas, but you do not get the egalitarianism that exists elsewhere, with such a great disparity in the distribution of wealth and cultural capital in the society. Mexico is

a classic example – you get some of the richest people in the world, billionaires ...

AGO: Carlos Slim is the richest man in the world, and he is from Mexico...

MLK: Then again you have people absolutely poor. You have an economy that creates a lot of industry, creates a lot of wealth and agriculture, a rise in energy in the last few decades but somehow with all the educated, talented middle class, though a small number comparatively, the society has not been able to readjust. Why do you think that is the case in Latin America?

AGO: It is not just a Latin American phenomenon it is also a global phenomenon. But, in any case, in Latin American they don't have that tradition of giving back to the community such as in countries in Scandinavia, where they have been able to have a very socialistic system run right next to a capitalistic system. The Latin American difference goes back to what I said before – poverty is regarded as a character flaw – if you are poor you deserve to be poor – getting up the ranks is up to you.

MLK: Where does religion stand in all of this?

AGO: The view of the church is that even though you are poor now, think about what is going to happen in your next life. That in a way allows the status quo to survive, with people thinking - I do not have anything

now, but the priest said that the next life is going to be so wonderful. And it keeps the powder keg from blowing.

MLK: That is interesting because this is the area of the world where liberation theology was very much part of the socio-political narrative.

AGO: Ah ... But they were scolded by the pope.

MLK: Thank you very much for taking the time to talk with us at Eye Magazine. We wish you good luck with your future research and teaching programme at City University of New York, Kingsborough. We have covered a lot of material, from filmic narratives and how they create national identities, from Cuba through to US immigration policy and to the current problems and opportunities in Latin America. It has been a pleasure to talk to you today.

AGO: Indeed. Thank you for having me here.

Professor Alfonso J. García Osuna is the Chairperson of the Department of Foreign Languages at the City University of New York, Kingsborough. Originally a specialist in Medieval Spanish Literature, over the last decade his research interest has moved into understanding how films create the images of national identities, and what the person of that nation should be.

How VoiceThread impacts classroom engagement and learning

BY ALEXANDRA SALAS

Given the rise of online and hybrid education, as well as the use of search engines, smartphones, SIRI and other autodidactic options at every turn, the art of teaching is about challenging ways to create and sustain engaging learning environments. VoiceThread (VT), a cloud-based presentation tool that enables multimedia commenting, offers both students and faculty options that they can use to reinforce and inspire learning exchanges.

The VoiceThread technology provides a valuable communication opportunity that can support and complement instructional interactions, although it is clear, as should be the case with any e-tool, that its application should be purposeful in order for the instructional-engagement payoff to be

worthwhile.

For online teachers and instructors especially, simulating the spontaneity of classroom dialogue is a difficult goal to attain, but VoiceThread provides an asynchronous alternative. Instead of a traditional threaded discussion, VoiceThread brings new life to text-based conversations with the inclusion of multimedia commenting. Similarly, once a VoiceThread is created, viewers and users alike can choose how they would like to reply using text, audio, video or all three formats.

“Students are able to add their voices, and you can hear other students so you don’t feel like you are interfacing with a computer program. It is one attempt to bring a human aspect I think to an

otherwise sterile environment,” says one professor who participated in a focus group about the tool’s usefulness.

“With this tool you are having more interaction and more participation than in a discussion board,” noted another participant.

And if faculty are interested in having students reciprocate and use the tool in discussions or presentations, VoiceThread is an accessible technology.

While cost may preclude academic departments from purchasing some instructional technology tools, VoiceThread has a free basic account that allows users to create five VoiceThreads containing up to 50 slides each, and unlimited voice and text comments. Equally, students who struggle to purchase textbooks, don’t welcome that additional burden to invest in apps to get their work done. VT is an affordable option for both.

Furthermore, the idea that one can create an interactive and rich presentation with a minimal learning curve are characteristics that faculty find appealing. Comments from faculty at a two-year college who participated in a recent case study about VoiceThread found the tool to be useful, intuitive and engaging, which is critical to educators given the sentiment that the use of multimedia is not optional any more.

“We have to use it to connect with students’ worlds. All our students, including the non-traditional ones, interact with many kinds of media



Photograph by The Unquiet Library/ Flickr

on a regular basis.” Another faculty shared that the VoiceThread “gives a greater understanding of text - that narrative can be delivered in sound and in pictures.” Other positives about the tool include: the use of VoiceThread to explain or clarify. As a preemptive measure, VoiceThread can be used to expand on challenging content areas, or give additional input.

In addition, for educators, it facilitates the development of instructional activities that address diverse learning styles. Brunvand and Byrd (2011) also noted how VT can help faculty address and adapt to student learning needs, including students with disabilities. The dual benefit is extraordinary: the combination of text, audio, and visual integration meets a variety of student learning needs and complies with provisions of the American with Disabilities Act (ADA) that promote accessibility and equal opportunities for students with disabilities (ADA, 1990). Moreover, the commenting feature in the form of text, audio and video optimizes communication delivery for all learners.

VoiceThread facilitates classroom personalization, particularly in institutions where course sections are standardized and allow little modification. For instance, VoiceThread can be used as a student or instructor presentation tool, for group project presentations, to synthesize discussions, to invite and integrate guest speakers, to develop orientation modules, and to compose faculty lectures, discussions and course announcements.

An added bonus is convenience, as no download is necessary for use on a desktop or laptop, and there is an app for mobile devices that provides an intuitive interface for an uncomplicated user experience.

As with most instructional technology, ease of use is an important factor

that has catapulted VoiceThread in education settings. Keengwe, Kidd, and Kyei-Blankson (2009) found that faculty opinions concerning perceived usefulness are significant in determining curricular education technology decisions. Cloud-based applications, such as VT, that combine voice, images, video and text, are increasingly used in academic environments due to their user-friendly and diverse instructional applications that include discussions, demonstrations, surveys, and presentations.

As an e-learning tool, Atkinson and Burden (2008) discussed the pedagogical value of VT and how it offers diverse elements that can serve instruction. The versatility of this multimedia tool is extensive to facilitate the development of engaging and customizable learning experiences and interactions in many disciplines such as English, math, science and language acquisition. In an article about the use of various web 2.0 tools in German language classes, Lorenzen (2010) explained how VT was “useful for homework assignments, practicing listening and reading skills and using virtual realia” Consequently, applications like VT create a wide range of learning content and assessment development opportunities.

Another appeal is how VoiceThread can help instructors reinforce learning by leveraging auditory and visual learning with written activity. Its text component allows individuals to use text to support the visual and recorded elements. Similarly, faculty can use the same comment tool to provide students with meaningful feedback that students can read, view and listen. Heinrich, Milne, and Moore (2009) noted how this type of feedback “enabl[es] student learning”.

In addition, VoiceThread can be used to create enriched learning and sharing

communities. Nagakawa (2010) focused on how VT can facilitate engagement given distance and time restrictions noting, “The ease of use and intuitive nature of VoiceThread makes it easy.”

Applications like VT can be used to meet the demands of 21st century teaching objectives that aim “to devise deliberate techniques for assuring interaction among course participants, to promote purposeful peer dialogue, and to establish a sense of belonging where all participants [learners and faculty] perceive themselves as stakeholders” (LeBaron & McFadden, 2008). At a time when online instructional formats continue to trend up, establishing and maintaining a sense of community is instrumental to the viability of this academic alternative. While still asynchronous, its innovative design is a hallmark of communication. See VoiceThread examples: <https://voicethread.com/about/library/>

Despite the launch of new voice authoring tools, VoiceThread is holding its own by continuing to streamline and update its user interface that displays a welcoming site for new and seasoned cloud-based users.

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A fully referenced version of this article can be made by contacting publications@iafor.org



Manila's 'Big Little Spend Up'

The Philippines Defence Force Goes Shopping

by Michael Liam Kedzlie

In the immediate aftermath of the Cold War, the Philippines sought a more independent defence and foreign policy posture. They wanted to end the international perception of being America's lackey in Asia. Whether or not that perception was a reality is moot, nonetheless, the nation wanted a clear demonstration of Filipino sovereignty and national pride. They did so by requesting that the United States, who had for decades operated bases in the country, to leave. It was their message to the international community that the Filipino people were now in charge of their own

destiny. The American withdrawal was a symbolic 'feel good' gesture that galvanized the public and solidified the political discourse. However, for the cities around Subic Bay and Clark Air Force Base, already hit by the 1991 Pinatubo eruption, the economic cost of the US Forces withdrawal hit those communities hard.

Once the United States military left, the Philippine Armed Forces struggled for relevance and coherency. They also struggled with the true costs of defending the archipelago with microscopically small defence

budgets over the following years when compared to most of their East Asian neighbours. The country also began to retreat somewhat from staking out a meaningful international profile within defence and security circles, as their lack of inter-operability with other nations became pronounced. They focused more on various internal matters such as counter insurgency operations against disparate groups. Most prominently Abu Sayyaf in 2001 in which the American special force 'advisors' returned in small numbers to assist.



The military in this new era of post Marcos Philippine independence was not high on the list of spending priorities for the political elite in Manila. Pundits felt that the military's compliance in the previous long reign of Ferdinand Marcos hindered the opportunity for an open progressive society to evolve. The new elite did not entirely trust them. The army continued to get support for counter insurgency, but the maritime and aviation elements of their military force were markedly second fiddle. For an archipelago like the Philippines, possessing weak maritime and airborne defence capability was seemingly counterintuitive for most regional defence analysts. A further setback for the nation saw the economy struggling for some years in the wake of the 1997-1998 Asian financial crises. This saw defence spending cut and the combat capability of the Philippine's Defence Force significantly atrophied. Major capital items within the defence force were decommissioned including its

main frontline combat capability, the aging Northrop F-5 fighter, which was withdrawn in 2005 and never replaced.

That might be fine if the geo-politics and tension levels of the South China Sea region had stayed the same as they were in 1992 when the Americans left. They didn't and with the rise of China by the turn of the century in terms of being an assertive economic and military power, the balance changed. The pressure was put on, and with the Philippines no longer with an American ear as sympathetic to its woes as in the past, found itself in a quandary. Following 9/11, the Americans were only fully honed in on the North Korea issue with respect to Asia as they were distracted elsewhere. All the real action for them was in the Middle East. Meanwhile China was slowly muscling in on the vacuum created and contesting the maritime space around the Philippines home patch.

Over the last 10 years the Philippine economy has been improving; however its security situation has deteriorated. Though it had become economically stronger as a sovereign state and its democracy more mature, its ability to protect and enforce its own territorial sovereignty has come under constant challenge.

China has claimed sovereignty over almost 85 percent of waters in the South China Sea, much of which affects the Philippine archipelago on its eastern flank. The claim has challenged other neighbouring nations, such as Brunei, Malaysia, Taiwan and Vietnam. The underlying reasons for the Chinese claim is complex. However, a significant reason is simply that China has a very small EEZ for its size and status compared to other regional and global powers. Within this contested area lie hundreds of islands, reefs and atolls that the Philippine government have traditionally controlled and



administered. These territorial claims have both security and economic implications, because the country that controls those areas can access marine resources such as fisheries as well as lucrative offshore oil and gas deposits.

Rather than accept the inevitable capitulation by a thousand cuts, the Philippines has moved from its untenable position of “independence” to a more normative and realistic “interdependence” by seeking a collective defence response from regional partners. The notion of “independence” in defence and foreign policy has always been a parochial and ham-fisted form of nationalism mostly for domestic political consumption and usually expounded by centre-left progressives or populist rightist conservatives. Experience and pragmatism however leads to an eventual interdependence posture as like-minded countries, especially those limited by economic size, have to work together to meet security and diplomatic goals, however great the differences and disparities. The Philippines, due to the run-down condition of its military capability, has had to rebuild its defence capability with a certain haste, which they define as achieving credible a minimum of deterrence. The good fortune is that at last Manila has some ability to find the money to do that.

Over the last 5 years the Philippines had started to increase its defence spending and its regional military relationships, however in the last 2 years this has grown more pronounced. Particularly in the last 12 months which has seen funding levels rise to USD\$2.6 B for its armed services for the 2015 fiscal period, a jump of nearly 30% compared to 2 years ago.

What is also of significance is Manila’s rebuilding of strong military ties with the United States and other regional partners. Last April the United States signed the Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement (EDCA) after 8 months of negotiation in what is the most significant defense agreement that the Americans have concluded with the Philippines in decades. The

EDCA agreement will not mean that the USAF will return to Clark AFB or the USN to Subic Bay, but it will mean that US Pacific Forces will be invited by the Philippine Government to undertake more frequent visits and training exercises with the Philippine Defence Force. For the US there are advantages in this as it will help to consolidate its pivot back into the Asia-Pacific region, thus being able to provide the protective footprint for friendly nations and secure the heavily used and internationalised trade routes of the South China Sea.

With the Philippines not just wanting to spend more on defence, but also needing to spend more, the global defence industry is beating a path to Manila. This July a major defence expo was held in the city that attracted all the major industry players. The shopping list is quite extensive with US\$1.8 billion to be spent on new defense technology by 2017. Most of the new equipment is heading to the Air Force and Navy though the Army, Marine Corp and Coastguard are getting their slice of the fiscal pie as well.


Nevertheless, they are pursuing some fairly big-ticket defence items for the first time in many decades. The Navy, are to receive two new frigates and amphibious ships from South Korea, as well as two used Oliver Hazard Perry class frigates from the United States. Recently, a US\$420 million contract was signed to acquire twelve FA-50 light fighter jets built by Korea Aerospace Industries (KAI). These will allow the Philippine government to recover an air combat capability quickly and set the country up for a later purchase of more capable multi-role fighters. Moreover, American based aircraft manufacturer Beechcraft are to provide six Texan T-6 close-air-support aircraft for around USD \$114m. Also on the Philippine shopping list are twenty-one used ex-US Army Bell UH-1 helicopters and a further eight Bell 412 helicopters from Canada. The air mobility of troops and cargo is an important part of any modern military capability and thus two refurbished Hercules C-130T transport aircraft and an

operational support package from the United States have been ordered for US\$61m along with three new Airbus C-295 medium-lift aircraft from EADS of Europe, the makers of the Airbus range of passenger jets.

The Philippine land forces do not miss out on Manila’s spending spree with an order for the Israeli built Soltam ATHOS towed artillery pieces. Moreover, one hundred and fourteen M113A2 armored personnel carriers are on order from ex-US Army stocks, with an additional 63,000 new-built M4 carbines, 44,000 new body armor kits and around 400 rocket propelled grenades to follow. There are also numerous smaller projects that are still to be announced and one or two larger projects to come. One of these acquisition projects, the future maritime patrol aircraft, will be able to provide an improved ISR (intelligence surveillance and reconnaissance) capability to detect maritime territorial intrusions into the Philippine Exclusive Economic Zone by foreign vessels and aircraft.

There is a lot to do, but even though the economy is much stronger, the Philippine government does not have the deep pockets to buy the latest high-end military equipment. That kind of chequebook militarism is best left to the Singaporeans and the Australians. The Philippines have only a modest amount to do quite a lot with. Around US\$1.8 Billion may seem a lot to the average person, but that will only buy a single Hobart Class destroyer or a squadron of multi-role combat aircraft. Nevertheless by a mixture of buying fairly basic new equipment, second hand cast offs from the Americans, and remanufacturing their own older equipment, the Philippine government hopes to be able to achieve their goal of building a credible minimum defensive capability to protect their sovereign interests in this ‘big little spend up’ on defence.

Michael Liam Kedzlie is the IAFOR Research and Policy Manager

The background of the entire page is an impressionist-style painting. The upper portion is a vibrant, textured blue sky, while the lower portion shows a green field with some white and red accents in the foreground. The brushstrokes are thick and visible throughout.

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