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Book Reviews

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own pace, and inviting them to re-enact the experiences of their ancestors with passion and humour. He also used intertitles, voice-over narration and scientific information to promote their cause. His collaborations with the village communities, the subjects of his films, are not unlike Rolf de Heer's collaboration with the aboriginal community in the production of his film, *Ten Canoes* (2006), in which the community co-authored the script, narrated the story in their own language (which was sub-titled) and re-enacted the experiences of their ancestors. Both Ogawa and de Heer patiently and respectfully spent time getting to know the community and acquiring their friendship before any footage was shot.

Although Nornes devotes the bulk of his book to the history and productions of Ogawa Pro, he begins and ends the book with discussions of earlier and later documentary filmmakers and their practice, situating Ogawa Pro in the ongoing history of Japanese documentary (Ogawa died of cancer early in 1992). He also narrates the story of the founding and development of the Yamagata Film Festival. But here too Ogawa has a central role – in founding the festival, in promoting it on film and in encouraging emerging documentary filmmakers in other parts of East Asia.

Nornes celebrates Ogawa's passionate commitment to documentary practice and bemoans the waning of interest in his work – and the younger generation's turn to personal documentary and apparent abandonment of politically engaged filmmaking. You could say that the book is suffused with a kind of left pessimism. But to his credit Nornes tries not to succumb and notes some signs of hope in recent practice.

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Note

1. See my lengthy review of this book in *Senses of Cinema*, no. 30, 2004. *Senses of Cinema* is an online film journal, and can be accessed at sensesofcinema.com

EVE ZIMMERMAN. *Out of the Alleyway: Nakagami Kenji and the Poetics of Outcaste Fiction*. Cambridge: Harvard University Asia Center, 2007. x, 275 pp. 15 photographs. US\$39.95, hardcover.

This book, the first English-language monograph on novelist Nakagami Kenji (1946–92), has two main goals. The first, quite simply, is to rectify the near-complete absence of serious academic work on Nakagami, and this is to be applauded. The second, equally laudable goal is to develop an approach toward Nakagami that neither marginalises nor essentialises his status as a minority writer, but rather holds his status as *burakumin* in productive tension with his works. To this end, the author adopts what she calls an “ethnographic” approach that combines more conventional scholarship with data gleaned from a series of long interviews with various people involved in Nakagami's life and works (including, of course, Nakagami himself).

Each of the six chapters takes up a key theme in Nakagami's fiction, poetry or criticism and relates that theme back to the question of *burakumin* and the triangular relationship linking author, works and society. Following an overview of Nakagami's life and intellectual development the author takes up in turn the themes of "expendable males", brother-sister love, Nakagami's attempts to redefine genre, his experimentation with the language of the Kumano *buraku*, and the theme of violence against women in his works. The book ends with a brief discussion of Nakagami's legacy in Japan today.

While the author draws heavily (and to great effect) on her interviews in the earlier part of the book, as it progresses she increasingly centres on close readings of Nakagami's most prominent works: the "Akiyuki trilogy" consisting of *Misaki* (The Cape, 1975), *Karekinada* (Withered Tree Straits, 1977), and *Chi no hate shijô no toki* (The Sublime Time at the Ends of the Earth, 1983); *Sennen no yuraku* (A Thousand Years of Pleasure, 1982), *Kishû ki no ne no kuni monogatari* (Tales of Kishû: Land of Trees, Land of Roots, 1986); *Ja'in* (Snake Lust, 1975); and several other short stories. Despite devoting considerable attention to analysis of the individual stories, the author nonetheless keeps the overarching question of Nakagami's *burakumin* identity clearly in focus. She reads the individual texts in the light of Nakagami's ongoing quest to create a space for himself (and his art) that is neither completely inside nor completely outside the ideological sphere of the centre (though she frames the problem with considerably more sophistication than I do here). It is to the author's credit that she does not try to resolve the problem of how Nakagami's work ought to be positioned but focuses instead on how Nakagami grapples with this problem. This approach results in an intellectually engaging and satisfying text that gives the reader a much fuller picture of Nakagami's complex, sundered world.

The book does have some weaknesses but, for the most part, they are little more than annoyances. In Chapter 2, where the author is examining Nakagami's poetry, and in Chapter 5, where she discusses his experimentation with language, we encounter the baffling decision to print only the translations of the relevant passages and omit the Japanese originals. Normally this would not be a significant issue but in this case the lack of an original makes it impossible for the reader to get the most out of her comparison of Nakagami's poetry with, for example, Rimbaud's (for whom she *does* provide the original French). In Chapter 5, the central point is to show how Nakagami "adopts a new tongue" in order to resist the "trap of words" contained in standardised Japanese. While the author goes to great lengths to explain how Nakagami attempts this, it would have been simpler and more effective by far to show us as well. What is more, the translations of the poems, perhaps due to space limitations, do not always reproduce the rhythm and lyricism of the originals. The partial translation of 'Rirekisho', for example, ignores the original lineation and compresses twenty-three lines into nine. As it is unlikely that Nakagami's poetry will soon be translated again this is something of a lost opportunity.

However, these shortcomings are truly minor in comparison to the book's numerous accomplishments, of which I have only been able to touch on a very few. The author's stated goal of recasting the relationship between the "imaginary topos" that Nakagami creates and the "actual *buraku* ... not as opposites but as mutually

determining elements of an equation that lies at the heart of Nakagami's creative process" (p. 9) is highly productive. Through it she is able to excavate layers of (oftentimes contradictory) meaning to reveal Nakagami's larger and much more complex project, or problem, of identity. What does it mean to write, to be a writer, when you come from a community where illiteracy is rife and a university education unheard of? What does it mean to write when you are, as Nakagami has asserted, the *only burakumin* writer? The author embraces these questions and pursues them relentlessly through Nakagami's turbulent life, not so much to find an answer, but to see how these questions informed and influenced Nakagami's novels and his development as an individual and as a writer (the two are, in Nakagami's case, inseparable). What is more, the author does this in a lucid, often elegant, jargon-free prose that makes her book a pleasure to read. The book is accessible and relevant to scholars in related fields (world literatures, minority literatures, cultural studies), as well as specialists and advanced undergraduate students in contemporary Japanese literature.

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JOHN KNIGHT. *Waiting for Wolves in Japan: An Anthropological Study of People-Wildlife Relations*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2006. xii, 296 pp. Figures, appendix, notes, biography, index. US\$21.00, paper.

Wolves were last seen in Japan more than a hundred years ago, but some people still do not accept that they are extinct. In 1993 the Japan Wolf Association launched a campaign for wolves to be reintroduced to Japan. The proposal promised a solution to the wildlife problem in the form of the return to the Japanese forest of its foremost natural predator to control various animal pests, and this forms the backdrop for the book.

This book, with a contemporary woodcut print of a wolf on its cover, is based on an anthropological study of a mountain village, Hongû-chô, in Wakayama Prefecture in the Kii Peninsula on the main island of Japan. It is about the author's observation of the relationships between villagers and wildlife in the region. There are six chapters and an Introduction and Conclusion: Chapter 1 presents the social context of Japan's wildlife problem; Chapters 2 to 6 each present issues in relation to a specific animal – wild boar, monkey, deer and serow, bear and wolf, respectively. All of these animals have been symbolic figures throughout Japan's history. The contrast between the traditional images of these animals and the problems that they cause for farming, conservation and tourism industries is fascinating, as most Japanese people living outside the region have little knowledge of the actual situation surrounding these animals. Chapter 6, 'Wolves', returns to the proposal, introduced in the Introduction, to reintroduce wolves to the region, which reflects the title of the book.

This book was originally published in hardcover by Oxford University Press in 2003. It is based on the author's PhD thesis, for which the data was collected in the