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**CONSTRUCTING A HYPHENATED JAPANESE FEMININE  
IDENTITY IN AN AMERICAN AND CANADIAN CONTEXT**

**- SUMMARY -**

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## **Key Words**

Japanese-American, Japanese-Canadian, Diaspora, Hyphenated Feminine Identity, Internment, Silence, Non-Verbal Communication, Language, Strategies to Belong, Intergenerational Transmission, Hybridization of Cultural Elements.

## **Argument**

The primary desideratum of this research<sup>1</sup> is to analyse how the way in which the Japanese women in North America construct their Weltanschauung and sense of self under the incidence of cultural secessionism and pan-generational conflict. This thesis serves as an examination of the tangency and departures from the stereotypes and normatives regarding the construct of the Japanese diaspora woman.

My key findings strongly indicate that previous sylloges of this category aimed at minimalizing difference. They ignored vertical interactions, and, to a certain degree, horizontal variations within the segment. This, in turn, unwittingly consigned the Japanese woman to mercurial stereotypical practices. The comingling of this perspective with the already circumscribing practices of a hierarchically-driven and patriarchal-centric society prescribed a state of effacement and silence which were incongruous with the social environment offered in North American context. It is at the point of junction of the two cultural systems that behavioural hybridizations occur, extending the purview of a fragmented and protean construct of Japanese women.

My research serves to be a counterpoint to homogenizing or difference minimizing studies that subsume the Japanese to the racial category of Asian. These either allow generalizations on Japanese men to phagocyte or cast aside those of Japanese women, or

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<sup>1</sup> I corroborate my knowledge of English and Japanese, as well as contextually relevant history and cultural elements, as starting points for this research. The previous study of these aspects during my academic years was of immense aid. Above all, the past three years during which I taught Japanese as an Assistant professor at the Department of Asian Languages offered me ample opportunity to further my understanding of the Japanese language, history, behavioural specificities, and culture.

promote the assumption that the category of Japanese femininity is a monolithic and finite construct.

Whether following assimilationist tendencies or focusing on signalling cultural difference, the literature of the Japanese diaspora in North America is indicative of its active participation in the social discourse. These discourses are either affirmations of pre-existing models and stereotypes or represent renegotiations of social status. Together they highlight the presence of heterogeneous elements within the homogenizing mainstream cultural discourse, without aiming to be subversive. The different renegotiations of citizenship within the text are illustrative of the aspirations of each generation of Japanese immigrants.

I insisted on the manner in which the shift from a melting-pot to a multi-cultural mentality, also influenced Japanese women writers' representation of the self and the redefinition of the *Uchi* and the *Soto*. I looked at their feminine personages as symptomatic for their own investigation of what was appropriate for multi-cultural femininity at the time. I showed how their choice to record their experiences, however similar to, or dissonant from *Ojosan/ Onnarashii/ Yamato Nadeshiko/ Ryousai Kenbou*, is a statement of their challenge to difference-minimizing and effacing patriarchal normatives. The acknowledgement of difference, as opposed to the much previously lauded notion of homogeneity, is what ultimately summarizes my key findings and binds my thesis together.

## The Selection of the Bibliography

In compiling the bibliography for my research I corroborated the most accurate and relevant works detailing aspects of history, culture, social science, fiction, and non-fiction on the experience of the Japanese diaspora in North America, from the beginning of the twentieth century up to the present. I did not limit my analysis to literary representations and anthropological, social, and political studies of the theme, but I also looked at legal documents, media representations, and other forms of discourse that signal policies of exclusion and regulation, and had an impact on the multifaceted construct of the Japanese woman. Awareness of the limitations of existing research as well as of the need for amply recurring instances to disprove the factor of circumstantiality were determining factors in the selection of the body of texts subjected to analysis. I applied my research questions texts which signal the Japanese diaspora women's adherence to and divergences from communicational conventions and elements of interactional synergy. I also extrapolated the conclusions from working with these texts and verified their applicability to other discourses by less known diaspora writers. In the selection of my corpus of texts, I have by no means attempted to be exhaustive. I singled-out authors that I conceded would best illustrate and get across the ideas I wish to elaborate on. There remain several writers that I had to leave out, however, the selected texts suffice in ensuring the transmission of my analytical intent.

The deciding factor in their inclusion was their ability to illustrate the plurality of identity constructs extant in the literature of Japanese diaspora women writers. I use four Japanese-American and four Japanese-Canadian writers to construct my argument. I analyse them in the order in which they were published.

In the United States section of my research, I use three short stories from Hisaye Yamamoto's *Seventeen Syllables* (1988). In the short story that gives the title to the anthology, *Seventeen Syllables* (1949), I look at Mrs Hayashi, the Japanese woman artist, and Rosie the daughter who is desensitized to the Japanese culture. In *The Legend of Miss*

*Sasagawara* (1950) I look at the eponymous character who is a *Hinganai* Japanese woman. The third short story is *Yoneko's Earthquake* (1951) in which Mrs Hosoume is an adulteress and Yoneko, her daughter, discovers her budding feminine identity and the (in)compatibility of ethnic nuances.

Monica Sone's *Nisei Daughter* (1953) looks at Kazuko, the *Ojosan* who rejects heritage and the immolation of Japanese feminine identity through decontextualized or racist practices.

I include Wakako Yamauchi's play *And the Soul shall Dance* (1974) for the antithetic construction of Emily Oka, the *Akusai*, and Hana the *Ryousai Kenbou*. The two illustrate the influence of Japanese mothering on the development of the next generations' perception of the self and heritage.

Lastly, I focus on Janice Mirikitani's collection, *Shedding Silences* (1987), which looks at Japanese women, who either subject to, or revolt against, gendered practices, and the consequences of their choices.

In Canada, Shizuye Takashima's *A Child in Prison Camp* (1972) shows child narrator Shichan's compelling perspective of the Internment and on the shifting role of the Japanese woman in diaspora context.

Joy Nozomi Kogawa's *Obasan* (1983) focuses on Ayako, the defeated *Yamato Nadeshiko*, Kato, the *Yasashii* mother and Naomi, the silent daughter. In *Itsuka* (1992) Emily is the outspoken Spinster and adult Naomi who is now able to "roar" (327). In *Naomi's Road*, Naomi is the *Ojousan* narrator who teaches other children about the Japanese diaspora.

Hiromi Goto's *Chorus of Mushrooms* (1997) focuses on three generations of Japanese women: Naoe, the "immigrant [with a] story with a happy ending" (159), Keiko, the *Nisei* artificial conformist, and Muriel/ Murasaki, the *Sansei* cultural amphibian. *The Kappa Child* (2001) explores the assimilation of the misfit Japanese woman through fantastic intervention and immaculate conception.

Darcy Tamayose's *Odori* (2007) looks at Chiru, the *Kataribe*/ storyteller and the difficulties of inter-generational transmission of tradition, particularly when geographic displacement (*i. e.* immigration) occurs. Twin *Kibei* sisters Emiko and Miyako's experiences and re-inclusion in the Japanese social environment illustrate another facet of Japanese femininity.



## **The Structure and Content of the Thesis**

The thesis is 633 pages long. It is divided into three chapters which are preceded by an Introduction and followed by Conclusions and a dictionary of Japanese Terminology, which serves to help the reader better understand the mentality of the Japanese diaspora.

Historical Overview contains four subchapters which present a short overview of the events relevant to defining the Japanese diaspora experience in North America. I identify the socio-economic factors that challenged the settlement of the Japanese and the political motivations behind restrictions aimed solely at people of Asian descent. I argue that the experience of conflicting expectations of identity development led to the adoption of alternative/ deviant from the norm modes of viewing the self in the fragmented cultural context. As a result, the Japanese diaspora in North America provides an unambiguously distinct case study on how cross-cultural references are internalized in a heterogeneous context. I also show how the Internment acted as a wedge in the continuation of ethnic transmission, causing a heightened sense of displacement, particularly in the later generations of Japanese immigrants. While this affected the *Nisei* and the *Sansei* as entire generational segments, it is important to note the impact that cultural confusion had on women, in particular. In their case, the adherence to patriarchal gender constructs went hand in hand with cultural prerequisites of social behaviour. The dissolution of the singly-oriented mentality of the Japanese diaspora offered them alternatives to the imposition of *Nadeshiko* behaviour. This is evident in the plurality of representations of feminine behaviour in representative literary texts.

The Japanese Diaspora: A Psychological and Cultural Portrait contains seven subchapters which offer an overview of the defining cultural and behavioural elements for the Japanese diaspora woman's development and interactional templates. I start from the

hypothesis that this construct hybridized in a multi-cultural context. I track down some attitude shifts with far-reaching vertical transmission.

In The Japanese Diasporic Psychology, I elaborate on aspects that were generally neglected or merely brushed by in previous studies on the evolution of the Japanese family nucleus in minority context and on the group psychology of the diaspora as it diverges from behavioural staples characteristic in Japan. I analyse the Japanese diaspora's representations of itself as a group and of the mainstream from an interdisciplinary perspective. I illustrate the expanding rifts between different generations of Japanese immigrants and the need to re-evaluate the construct of the traditional Japanese family at the point of conflation between what Lisa Lowe distinguishes as the "heterogeneity, hybridity, and multiplicity" (67) of identity. These processes suggest adaption to the non-equivalent cultural circumstances they are confronted with. This prevents alienation from one's Uchi group and conserves the functionality of the minority family nucleus, but it also generates conflict. The effacement of the Outsider-Within complex can only occur after the removal of stereotypical labelling and subsequent shifts in the mainstream perception of culture, nation, and ethnicity.

In Silence and the Japanese Non-Verbal Communication, I show how Japanese communication is constituted by relying on phatic communication almost as much as they do on the semantic element. I focus on the conceptual significance of a series of key terms relevant to Japanese communication. I review the pertinent literature on various aspects of Japanese communication. I show how the latter was influenced by its cross-cultural circumstances in North America. I construct profiles of the different generations of Japanese communicators, underlining the differences which occur in inter and intra-group communication as a result of influences from the North-American mainstream.

In The Japanese Language and Its Impact on Diasporic Writing, I explore the mutual influence between Japanese and English in the literary discourse of the Japanese diaspora in

North America. I show that this is the result of an interpenetration of mentalities and that it signals the different degrees of assimilation of the authors. My approach focuses on the recognition of characteristics of Japanese in the texts. Because I am tracking language shift in a cross-cultural context, I also underline aspects of the Eurocentric discourse incorporated in the interactional patterns of *Nisei* and *Sansei* women.

In Strategies to Belong I analyse the strategies used by Japanese diaspora women writers to signal the relative difference, rather than the complete identification of the protagonists with either of the socio-cultural groups they are a part of. The choice to use native words emphasizes the desire to challenge norms and canonical textual prerequisites. Socio-contextually adapted transplantations of conventionally Japanese constructs and their subsequent cultural acclimatization illustrate mobility and the wish to obtain assimilation. The minority text strives for inclusion, not necessarily into the canon, but into mainstream mentality as an element of alterity. Similarly, Japanese women wish to belong to groups which have perceptions of the individual and of the multicultural that differ from rigid traditional structures. Their inclusion is made difficult by intersecting gendered, ageist, and racialized practices. I show how they adapt to the contrastive stringencies of their socio-cultural environment and “learn” to belong by using *Kejime* to adapt their levels of *Onnarashii*, *Yasashii*, and *Otonashii* both in daily interaction and in the construction of their protagonists.

In Expectations and Delivery of Japanese Immigrant Women’s Behaviour, I focus on the Japanese diaspora woman. I show how referring to her as a single identity denies the variability promoted by cultural hybridity and by social heterogeneity which shift considerably from generation to generation. An attempt at a vertical organization of difference is similarly reductionist and risks committing universalizing fallacies. While I do identify a series of intra-generational elements of isomorphism, there always remains an element of difference. My analysis also touched on the redistribution of authority among

members of different generations of the same *Kazoku*. I indicated the differences which occur vertically in the construct of the Japanese woman. The choice of which values to uphold and their changes are indicative of the intersecting influences of landscape identity and mother culture. The differences in women's behaviour and the minority's overall standing and attitude were not considered only concerning their cultural divergence, but through considerations of conformity to Eurocentric standards of behaviour. This resulted in the reductionist horizontal perspective that the Japanese diaspora in North America is a singular and non-variable construct. To refer to its literary production as a circumscribed construct means to reduce it, much like other forms of social and political discourse, to the formulations of difference-minimizing discourses. It is this limiting assumption that I challenged through this research which details aspects of difference from assumptions regarding Japanese women's behaviour.

In Japanese (M)Othering, I indicate the different forms of inter-generational diaspora communication in its multiple instantiations on the axis of mother-daughter interaction. I explore the impact different types of motherhood have on protagonists' development of a cross-cultural identity. I identify and elaborate on the various degrees of subjection to and deviation from the idea construct of the Ryou sai Kenbou, as they coalesce into one of the following categories of mothering: absent, traditionally Japanese, mainstream oriented, fictional, and conflictual. I also look on the effect of Othering different strategies of mothering practices have on children. Whether the institution of Japanese Mothering is represented in traditional fashion or it is adapted to answer challenges particular to the multicultural environment, it is significant to note points of departure from what has generally been defined as a unitary construct through assimilation of cultural variation. I presented the relationship patterns of Japanese mothers and their children as influenced by the multicultural context and individual attitudes more than by objective references to gender and related social constructs. Similarly to the manner in which, referring to a single construct of the

Japanese woman is limiting and guilty of confining tendencies, indiscriminately attributing the epithet of *Ryousai Kenbou* to the Japanese mother is evident of reductionist and homogenizing tendencies. This subchapter aimed to underline difference within this construct, signalling the multiple hybridizations of the construct in a multi-cultural context.

In Narratives of Japanese Ageing, I analyse how the image of the old Japanese immigrant woman is constituted in the literature of the Japanese diaspora in North America. I focus on the way in which narratives of ageing and narratives of diaspora co-mingle to offer multiple instances of characters which either conform to, or challenge preconceived stereotypes regarding Japanese women. Shifts inherent to the dynamic nature of inter-generational communication, augmented by the cross-cultural environment, led to the reconfiguration of intergenerational relations. The different generations of Japanese immigrants faced different types of stereotype and were forced to develop contextually-specific coping mechanisms. My focus in this chapter is on the *Issei*, who share the strongest connection with their Japanese heritage within their multi-generational families, making it difficult for them to assimilate into mainstream society. I show how, in spite of their similar circumstances, they develop different, even contrastive attitudes towards ancestral and mainstream language and culture, towards the Nisei and the Sansei, and, more importantly, towards themselves and their role in a multicultural social context.

Endorsing the Hyphen in the Japanese Diaspora Women Writers' Works is divided into two subsections, the United States and Canada. Each subsection centres on four relevant Japanese-North American women writers. This section serves to further the arguments developed in Chapter Two, through the analysis of a collage of representations of Japanese diaspora women who either submit to patriarchy and racialized-derived injunctions or underline the hyphen in their identities.

Starting from these texts I engaged in an analysis of several important recurring themes, among which, the construction of Japanese femininity and the manner in which

prejudice, sexuality, and the figure of the mother enforce the distinctiveness of the *Nisei* and the *Sansei*. I also looked at the role of inter-textual and cross-cultural references in defining the fictional universe, the role played by the physical and the cultural landscape in construing identity, the use of silence as an active form of resistance, and the status of the ancestral and the mainstream language in a polyglossic environment. These led to the transformation of the immigrant families across several generations.

The authors' contextualized appraisal and use of ancestral and mainstream language in a polyglossic environment corroborates to signal difference and to construct a manifesto of authentic experience. Metatextual references and the incorporation of cultural elements indicate adherence to authenticity, be it as a mechanism for demonstrating the presence of difference or as an attempt to correct misguided effigies of *Nihonjiron*. I analysed the manner in which communicational patterns divergent from the Eurocentric standard – of encoding and decoding, as opposed to the Japanese wrapping and unwrapping – create a contradistinctive interactional template which coalesces silence and the principle of non-verbal communication as staples of dialogism and synergy.

By providing cross rather than mono-cultural definitions to the underlying nonverbal strategies of Japanese communication I underline the allocentric mentality of the group but I also aim to correct its erroneous misrepresentations as amenableness contextualized examples, inscribing the research on both of the primary axes of debate in the area. Reference to literary discourses varying both in terms of time of production and narrative chronology serves to show that these departures from totalizing and finite assumptions, far from being isolated contingencies, vividly signal the evolution of a hyphenated identity. I argue that these discourses offer an enriching Outsider-Within perspective, providing representations of *Uchi* and *Soto* interactions which challenge both stereotypes and pretences at singular development. My experience with both American and Japanese cultural practices offered me a vantage point over previous research conducted from a mono-cultural perspective.

By underlining divergence from previous related research and highlighting omissions, my thesis offers the possibility of alternative interpretation of the Japanese cultural metatext and of the diaspora character's development in literature. It also provides an imperative instrument for annotating and interpreting the Japanese minority text which resists a Eurocentric decoding. I employed a strategy of unwrapping, aiming at reading Japanese women characters as close as possible to authenticity.

I showed how the Japanese discourse is constructed through the employment of both the verbal and the non-verbal corroborated with the contextual. The latter, coupled with intrinsic awareness of integral notions of Japanese interaction, act as instruments of laminating the communicational act to ensure saving face both of self and of the interlocutor. Previous research is incomplete because it overlooks the purpose of these fundamental assumptions in the Japanese behaviour and communicative acts. Cultural specificity was ignored, and Eurocentric instruments of interpretation were employed instead. Trying to decode, rather than unwrap the Japanese, is what led to the stereotyping of the diaspora, and, in the academia, to the emergence of difference minimalizing totalities which my research aimed to disarticulate.

This research also focuses on the authors' very specific treatment of cultural landscape, identity, experience and recollection, history and memory against the background of growing racial tensions. The attempt to distinguish a personal geopolitical identity is present to a certain extent in all these discourses. As members of a diaspora, Japanese women could not easily territorialize their development because of a double form of ostracism rooted in discriminative racialized and gendered practices. Their assimilation illustrates a process of selective mimicry. The literary representations of Japanese diaspora women evince different attitudes towards the cultural background and indiscriminate patterns of multicultural selection. This leads to either a mixture of Japanese and mainstream influences or to the rejection of one of the sources of cultural influence. The attempt to define identity occurs

alongside a conscious participatory effort which implies active processes of selection, interpretation, and deconstruction of cultural signifiers.

The Japanese became a highly-visible minority especially after the incident at Pearl Harbour. They strove to blend into the socio-economic framework of North America, but unwillingly became circumstantial Others. *Ergo*, the Japanese had to solve the polemic of identity while dissociating from their constitutive culture's policies of exclusion. They were afforded a unique perspective and the possibility to actively recontextualize relevant cultural signifiers *i. e.*, those which mark "the limits of a specific ideological consciousness [denominating] the conceptual points beyond which that consciousness cannot go, and between which it is condemned to oscillate" (Jameson *The Political* 47). As a minority, the Japanese were deemed adventitious and unfit for naturalization. From the margins, they contributed to the construction of the heterogeneous nature of the United States and Canadian social aggregate.

Idiosyncrasies also materialized within the diaspora itself. Primarily due to the linguistic barrier, the Nisei were not able to assimilate into the cultural system brought by their Issei parents as is. What resulted was a double "disidentification effect" (Pécheux 112) which led to the emergence of a distinct perspective in the literary output of the Japanese diaspora. This emerges in characters who attempt to reinscribe the hegemonic discourse so as to include their marginal voices and who contrast a heterogenic alterity to the mainstream monologist tendencies of the time. Cultural hybridity offers Japanese diaspora writers what Martin Krygier identifies as "a vantage point, a perspective, and a quite peculiar place to stand. That metaphorical space is simultaneously inside and outside the cultures in which they are raised, in which they live, of which they are parts and which are parts of them" (22). From this position, they choose to either expedite or hinder the conveyance of the multi-cultural element.



The authors who withhold ease of access to their work employ linguistic and cultural markers of difference for which they do not always offer elucidative indications. The choice to refuse adherence to a stereotypically pre-inscribed ipseity empowers the Japanese diaspora woman to define her distinctiveness. By refusing to be the Outsider in a pre-constructed social system to which she was artificially transplanted, she challenges patriarchal and racist practices aimed to efface and to silence her. These authors “continue to be a term of outsidersness” (R. Miki “Can Asian” 74) because they do not mitigate “[t]he commodification of difference [which] promotes paradigms of consumption wherein whatever difference the Other inhabits is eradicated, via exchange, by a consumer cannibalism that not only displaces the Other but denies the significance of that Other’s history through a process of decontextualization” (hooks 31). The Japanese diaspora writers’ *mélange* of attitudes towards their hyphenated identities, femininity, and multi-cultural development is contextualized in discourses which evince the proclivity to question nationalistic, racialized, and gendered presuppositions.

## Conclusions

The results of the research successfully confirm the hypotheses formulated at its beginning, i. e., that the specific socio-political and cultural environment the *Issei*, the *Nisei* and the *Sansei* in North America experienced contributed to the emergence of feminine and communicative idiosyncrasies that challenge stereotypes and normatives.

In addition, my research also compensates for the lack of pellucid definitions and explicit equivalents in English linguistics for constitutive elements of Japanese dialogism and synergy. I related these to relevant literary exponents. Additionally, I examined how these items evolved in multi-cultural context, determining the emergence of patterns of interactions on the borderline between assertiveness and amenability. Their corroboration to different degrees circumscribed significant behavioural idiosyncrasies both intra and inter-generationally. In turn, this vanguarded new interactional patterns and the further reconsideration of the appositeness of aspects such as *Enryou*, *Gaman*, *Giri*, *On*, and *OyaKoukou* in multicultural context. By analysing these elements in relevant literary discourse, I underlined their fluidity and contextual-dependency. I also pinpointed how the dismissal of the latter can transform Japanese cultural specificity into a source of disempowerment. I showed how adaptability, both in terms of protagonists and in the construction of the diaspora literary text can counteract both intrinsic cultural limitations and their deriving extrinsic stereotypical misappropriations. In order to do so I explored the specificities of the linguistic and thematic propensities of some significant women writers in the Japanese diaspora.

I inspected relevant elements of the Japanese literary discourse and illustrated how they are employed to deal with the legacy of racism and its derivative trauma. I demonstrated how, coupled with specific narrative strategies, characters are empowered or otherwise shown as resisting, to different degrees, confinement to the periphery. I expatiated on the

particulars of authors' particularized linguistic choices and on their inter-textual and cross-cultural differences which signal distinctiveness. I argued that the corroboration of these factors prompted the development of a was a distinct perspective in the literary output of the Japanese diaspora which is closely knit to the idiosyncrasies of the *Nisei* and the *Sansei*. I asserted its specifics through reference to relevant texts and synthesized its particularities into a framework applicable to the wider body of texts written by the Japanese diaspora in North America.

I answered the questions of the cross-cultural significance and implications of *Uchi* behavioural prescriptions and *Soto* stereotypical encroachments to identity building and identified their subsequent reflections in the diaspora's discourse. This answered the question of the roles of the physical and the cultural landscape in constructing multicultural identity. It also strongly pointed out to the difference-signalling intendment of these texts against the background of intersecting difference-minimalizing tendencies. Furthermore, I contradicted previous hypotheses on the invariable tendency towards silence and invisibility of Japanese behaviour and discourse.

Silence was shown to represent simultaneously an instrument of resistance and a vehicle for community building, the internalization of prejudice and the *Gaman*-rooted reply to it. Its multiple instantiations and the behavioural characteristics from which it derives signal the empirically measurable desire to uphold the status of model minority. Its vertical variations indicate the protraction of an unequivocally contradistinctive mentality from the mainstream tendency, as well as its progression from similar models upheld in Japan and transplanted with the *Issei*. This provides further argument for the consideration of the Japanese diaspora minority discourse as a discussion and elaboration of difference and multi-perspectivism. The North American polyglossic status quo precipitated the transformation of immigrant families: it fostered the emergence of new forms of inter and intra-group affinity

and relational propinquity which were otherwise discouraged in the rigid hierarchical system coevally enforced in Japan.

I reconsidered previous theoretical approaches to more comprehensively and accurately understand the motivations behind the strategies of construction and the apperception of the Japanese diasporic literary text. The discourses of and about Japanese women have repeatedly been scrutinized as the derivative of tentative acknowledgement of trauma. I showed that appropriate unwrapping of the text reveals different degrees of active resistance to traditional behavioural prescriptions and idiosyncrasy-curtailling postulates. The accumulation of multiple perspectives positions my research in contradistinction to uniformizing and monolithic theoretical frameworks. The manifestos of Japanese female experience and their strategies for re-writing the self while writing-out trauma provide empiric evidence to their self-sufficiency in pinpointing heteroglossia and incorporating/adapting to difference. My review of inter-generational adjustment and character development suggested only the need to reassess homogeneity-totalizing methodologies.

It is starting from the awareness of the limitations of this type of mentality that I consider the following recommendations for future research for which this thesis is an initiatory *mise en scène*. I consider that it is necessary to construct a heterogeneous methodological approach which can provide the appropriate theoretical framework to decode and integrate Japanese multi-cultural discourse regardless of contingencies. Consequent to Japan's long-established isolationist policies, Japanese diaspora communities are relatively new. Regardless of geographic establishment, the limited number of issuing generations allows specific case-studies on multi-cultural integration and vertical evolution or dilution of diacritic mentalities. The construct of the Japanese woman experiences gradual contextual acculturation regardless of the crystallization of behavioural propensities. An analysis of the deriving idiosyncrasies, of their re-presentation by the *Soto*, as well as of their choice of

socio-cultural positioning further contributes to the demystification of stereotypical abbreviations on the unitary/ossified Japanese woman construct. I anticipate that in the absence of a culturally-contextualized methodological approach, the construct will invariably misrepresent or subject to difference-minimizing propensities indurated by universalizing practices. To counteract this, I aim to consider the hybridizations of the paradigm at the juncture with alternative cultural sites integrating Japanese diasporas.

I also integrated the Japanese specific use of native words and non-verbal communication in the wider context of literary mechanisms of disseminating difference. The agenda behind Japanese diaspora female writers' linguistic strategies of signalling difference made me realize that the Japanese linguistic elements are an indicator for cultural affiliation.

These considerations provide alternatives to reading minority texts outside the sphere of Japanese discourse. What is gained from this methodology is the construction of a distinct position which can dialogue and synergize with previous tangential research. It highlights the crucial nature of heterogeneity which must be considered in relation to the interpretative act. Acknowledging plurality cancels out previous theoretical frameworks which minimize difference and subsume wide segments of literary output to, and as the consequence of, marginality. Adherence to this mentality prompted me to reconsider and appropriately contextualize relevant elements of Japanese communicational practices into a framework which will prove instrumental when reading or expounding on other texts of the Japanese diaspora. Furthermore, I anticipate that the contributions of this thesis are long-term and affording ramifications in the interpretations of discourses by other allocentric minorities as well.

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