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Second Language Learning and Identity:
Cracking Metaphors in Ideological and Poetic Discourse

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**SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNING AND IDENTITY: CRACKING
METAPHORS IN IDEOLOGICAL AND POETIC DISCOURSE IN THE
THIRD SPACE**

**Mika Yoshimoto
Faculty of Education
University of Ottawa**

**A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research
In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the
Degree of Doctor of Philosophy
In Education**

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As much as flesh and blood, we are composed of and by words. If Homo sapiens is a species defined by language, then switching the language entails transforming the self. While it can be liberating, discarding one's native tongue is also profoundly unsettling; it means constructing a new identity syllable by syllable. (Kellman, 2003, p.xiv)

ABSTRACT

This research study examines second language learning and identity construction through a hybrid design of case study and autoethnography. It argues for an elaborated understanding of the way that second language learners of English participate in the learning process in multiple contexts, in multiple discourses. From this perspective it considers the interdependence of language and identity in order to understand the experiences and difficulties of many second language learners.

This research focuses on the identity struggles of Japanese women learning English as a second language from the perspective of sociocultural theory and critical theory in a postmodern stance. This framework allows me to consider how social identities are created discursively, how our conceptual metaphors function in Japanese and English, and how the process of participating in a new language and a new culture results in our living in neither culture but in hybrid spaces.

Using autoethnography, I draw on my experiences as a Japanese woman learning English as a second language to understand what it means for a Japanese woman to be an English language learner as well as how English affects the identities of Japanese women. At the same time, the study also involves additional participants, namely three female Japanese students learning English in a Canadian University in Ontario. This hybrid design allows for a broader understanding of our everyday lives, languages, metaphors, and known and un-known selves as they take shape and transform. Using diary research, interviews and conversational group meetings, I examine how our individual and collective stories emerge.

To do this I turn to four different discourse genres; narrative, haiku, metaphor and academic discourse. I choose to write narrative discourse to express our stories poetically. My decision to create was inspired by haiku, a genre that expresses my

changing values and never-ending painful transformations. The untranslatable nature of language and this journey of women inspire haiku that emerges in a third space of the said and the unsaid. Finally, I turn to academic discourse to compose the meta-story of what I am doing and why, and to situate my identity and my research in a theoretical framework.

The stories from the four of us contribute to a portrait of the tremendous ideological transformations involved in learning a second language. From the language of the research participants, we see how our conceptual system varies across cultures, implying multiple realities. This suggests that to promote cross-cultural understanding, we need to engage deeply with our experiences as they evoke the curriculum as lived.

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Finally I wish to thank my parents for instilling within me, a desire to become more than I am, and a passion for living and experiencing each of life's moments with humility, selflessness and grace. Their experiences have become a part of me; my motivation for change, my love for writing, and my compassion for others. I give my heartfelt thanks to my children who gave me continuing encouragement.

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A POETIC PRELUDE

A Transmuting Sea Star

God released one star from the sky
Now, an aged sea star residing in the graveyard of the ocean
Listening to the cadence of the waves, washing on and off the shore
Soft, but violent
Here, beauty changes from moment to moment
I sing a song of golden-silence, Haiku
Vast emptiness, vast fullness
Drinking Japanese, both bitter and sweet
Breathing English, both polluted and pristine
Dancing without legs
With ghosts, with the beams of Sun that pierce the depths of the sea
To the floor of the mutable ocean desert
Unfamiliar difference; tears so potent they drive me to laugh
Dreaming of the sky; in which I shone before I was born
But I no longer share the panorama of the Moon
While it looks down, sailing over the clouds
It's muted light refracted through the surface gateway of this watery realm
I am a woman, a sea star waiting in the desert, in the graveyard of the ocean
Dwelling in a space that pauses and reflects
Waiting for memories to emerge that seed a moment
A metonymic moment in Discourse that frees me from the ocean floor
To finally float shoreward
To again bask in the radiance of the Sun and the Moon, my friends from the sky
Not leaving behind the ocean that tempered my spirit and opened my eyes
What she was and what she is; memories uttered in harmony
A transmuting sea star
Caught on a watery coil
In uncharted waters

Mika Yoshimoto, 2007

我が星は
どこに旅寝や
天の川
(wagahoshi wa doko ni tabine ya amanogawa)
The Milky Way, the roof of my home without walls
Wandering through nature's austere cradle
Flickering candle of the hazy night sky,
Where is that light that shines like me?
Alone beside the stream

小林一茶 (Kobayashi Issa, 1763-1828)
(English interpretation by Michael Blakely, 2007)

PREFACE/POSTSCRIPT

By writing I put order in the world, give it a handle so I can grasp it. I write because life does not appease my appetites and hunger. I write to record what others erase when I speak, to rewrite the stories others have miswritten about me, about you. To become more intimate with myself and you. To discover myself, to preserve myself, to make myself, to achieve self-autonomy. (Anzaldúa, 1983, p.169)

越えられぬ 橋に住みつき 星となる
Dwelling on the bridge
In exile between kingdoms
With the stars at night

This thesis is written and organized in my third space (Aoki, 2000; Bhabha, 1990; Trinh, 1992; Nishizawa, 2002; Pinar, 2006; Smith, 1999; Wang, 2004). I am questing for the call from a stranger, as Wang (2004) describes,

A third space emerges. Dwelling in and stretching out. A conflicting hybrid interplay of positioning and displacement. A third space is ineffable. It does not belong to the realm of logic or rationality. What cannot be reasoned becomes the other. It is a space of multiple others interacting through different times and places. What is straight becomes curved, what is bright becomes shadowed, and what is filled becomes empty. The third space is produced by the other in me, which keeps occluding the direct route to the destination. (p.147)

I have striven to embrace the contradictions that are road signs of the performative text. This is the site that Aoki (in a personal communication with Kumari Beck et al., September, 1996, cited 2007) describes as not being, “here or there” but “here and there” and also not “this or that”, but “this and that”. This is “tensioned space of both ‘and/not-and’, a space of conjoining and disrupting, indeed, a generative space of possibilities, a space wherein in tensioned ambiguity newness emerges” (Aoki, cited by Pinar, 2005, p.53). This is a space of Zen that as Smith (1999) describes, “In spite of everything, the whole remains whole, teeming with fluid ambiguity, but never without integrity” (p.465). This is an interactive site for untranslatable texts whereas Nishizawa (2002) articulates, “the author becomes a function of discourse” (p.15). When I began to write this thesis, I

expected that I would write in a new and somewhat unique narrative style “which enables other positions to emerge” (Bhabha, 1990, p.211), neither Western nor Japanese, while both Western and Japanese. This is a very messy and doubling text in the style of other texts that Low & Palulis (2004) have described as being, “a living pedagogy that is always already in-between movements of translation and transformation” (p.1). My location is especially close to that of Trinh T. Minh-ha and Wang as we share a similar Asian social identity. At the same time, however, I reject ethnocentric labeling. I also find myself engaging in the philosophy of postmodern thinkers such as Derrida and Foucault, because I believe that this world is contextually and discursively constructed. Trinh T. Minh-ha (1999 b) talks with Bhabha about the culture:

The sense also that the more one looks into one’s own culture, the more one sees there is no such thing as a place that one can just return to safely...It’s a reality that cannot be contained, that always escapes, but that one cannot escape. (p.22)

During the process of writing this thesis I have been forced to realize that my translations are not innocent (Bassnett & Trivedi, 1999). This work of writing is a creation that has come to be as a result of a very subjective, interpretive and generative space that acknowledges Aoki’s (2000) notion of the impossibility of “absolute translation” (p.8).

I feel that I was changed and transformed through the process of writing; being both writer and written, not knowing my destination in this third space. I found the drive to seek out this destination in the heart of a woman who lived for fifty years in Japan in realizing how, emotionally, body and mind have come together in a postmodern stance. I am overwhelmed by the avalanche of meanings caused by my question: What does it mean for a Japanese woman to study English? My third space is laden with ambiguity,

metaphors and scattered hints; thus this thesis is more reader-responsible than writer-responsible. In this way, I disrupt Western, colonial, objective, logical, explicit and unemotional academic style. To this end, I have taken the Japanese Ki-shou-ten-ketsu (beginning, develop, change, conclude) writing style to heart and made it a part of this text, because my thinking is deeply rooted in this style. “Ten” (changing focus) will be Ivanic’s academic frame that I required in order to stretch out in my unfamiliar place, distancing myself, being critical about my familiar space. Ivanic states that through writing, “possibilities of selfhood” emerge. Pinar (2005) explains Aoki’s conception about selfhood:

In this passage Aoki seems to have moved past the phenomenology of the early papers: the conception of “selfhood” as “authentic being” who is “grounded” in “lived experience” has become movements of self-constitution within spaces of difference. Who we are, this view suggests, is not some anterior or essential “soul”. Rather, who we are is produced by the effects of our movements among layers of differences. (Pinar, 2005, p. 24)

Therefore, I interpreted and developed further, Ivanic’s “possibilities of selfhood” as my third space, although she did not describe this site as the third space.

Wang (2004) questions, “How can I speak about the unspeakable third space especially in a language not my own?” (p.146). My way of thinking is circular so I cannot simply follow a traditional, linear Western academic style, while I am being displaced from my own culture as I experience “transnational living” (Gough, 2004). Gough addresses the provocative notion of estrangement and removing ourselves from our self in the following:

An important function of art is estrangement, defamiliarisation or ‘making strange’ (ostranenie), that is, reviewing and renewing our understanding of everyday things and events which are so familiar that our perception of them has become routinised. Defamiliarisation is based on the assumption that the tactic of surprise may serve to diminish distortions and help us to recognize our own preconceptions. (Gough, 2004, p.9)

This study concerns the experiences of four Japanese women students in Canada as they try to negotiate Canadian sociocultural values and learn English. The struggles that my participants and I experienced often dealt with issues of estrangement from hegemonic Canadian values and it is my hope that my thesis inspires compassion for difference and dialogue between people from different cultural backgrounds.

Members of dominant groups have always defined their subjectivity as mobile, changing, flexible, complex, and problematic—in other words, “safe for democracy”. Whereas the subjectivity of their Others remains uncomplicated, unsophisticated, unproblematic, verifiable, and knowable—that is, incapable or undeserving of “democracy”. (Trinh, 1999 b. p.48)

I am an ever-changing statue, formed and reformed in part by these experiences that disrupt Western academic discourse as the dominant culture that ‘accommodates’ others only within the scope of its fixed values. I would like members of these dominant groups to reflect on their preconceptions of marginalized, silenced voices who exist in a location that is, “connected yet apart” (Wang, 2004, p.183). I ask for all those who speak with outsider voices to come forth as well in order to share their stories of silence, so that everyone can reflect together on this culture of silence.

CHAPTER 1: AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL SELF

“Memory is the homeland from which you are always in exile. It is the one place you can never go home to but must always remember, because while the past is forever gone it is also present” (Chambers, 2003, p.109).

胸の中 無数の顔が 見つめてる
Deep within my heart
Countless faces of myself
Staring back at me
(Yoshimoto, 2005, p.34)

This is a research study of second language learning and identity construction. Using autoethnography, I draw on my experiences learning English as a second language to understand what it means for a Japanese woman to be an English language learner. I am interested in understanding our everyday lives, our languages, our metaphors, and known and unknown selves as they take shape and transform. This research comes from a woman's heart, looking back on my past and questioning patriarchal power structures in both Japanese and Canadian cultures.

戦争の 怖さも知らず 乳房かむ
Knowing not the dread
Harshly drinking mother's milk
While war rages on

Two years before the end of WWII, on October 1st, 1943 in Tokyo at 3.3kg I became my parents' firstborn child. I was breastfed early on and I was said to have sucked so strongly that I caused my mother a lot of pain. My mother's mother gave my mother "waribashi" (half-split wooden chopsticks) to bite into so that she would not make loud noises because it is considered shameful to express pain. My mother said that her lips turned purple and swollen from the experience.

弟は 泣き声立てず むずからず
He just smiles softly
Never crying for mother
My little brother
(Yoshimoto, 2005, p.36)

The war became more intense and my father was stationed at the training camp near Odawara. He was severely beaten every day, because his commander hated rich, educated men. My father represented everything that his commander did not have and I guess that his commander felt he could alleviate his stress and worries about the war by bullying my father. When the war ended, my father came home much thinner than when he left. Soon my brother was born and he had the beauty of my mother and my father's good looks. He looked like a female baby with white skin and big beautiful eyes and cute features. On the other hand, people said that I was a very ugly child and wondered why I wasn't born a boy and my brother, a girl. In any event, my father was delighted that he finally had a son. He slept beside my brother and I slept beside my mother. At that time in Japan, it was common to sleep side by side with children like the character meaning river "川". My brother did not cry much at night; he always smiled and slept soundly.

喀血の 赤さがしみる 畳跡
Suddenly spit blood,
Redness permeates the floors
Staining it for life
(Yoshimoto, 2005, p.36)

In 1946, my father was diagnosed with tuberculosis and was quarantined in a sanatorium. My younger brother also contracted tuberculosis and died at the age of two, shortly after my father was put in medical isolation.

ガラス越し 微笑む父に 強がって
Divided by glass
I return my father's smile
Projecting my strength

My mother and I were used to visiting hospitals together at that point. Every month we'd go to the sanatorium in Hatano to see my father who was still in quarantine there. I'd bring him my diary to read, in which I wrote about how I was doing at school and my activities such as ballet and piano. I wrote most about ballet I suppose. It was what I enjoyed doing at that time. During my visits, my father would ask to see me dance. While he watched me through the glass, I would oblige him, even though I wasn't wearing ballet slippers.

My father was something of an amateur philatelist. He would order stamps and every month he would give me a few to take home. I particularly liked the stamps, which depicted wildlife, and so he would give me those. He also gave me a monthly allowance that I saved in my piggy bank. Despite the fact that we were separated by glass, for one day every month it seemed like we were still a regular family. Once we left the sanatorium however, the reality would set back in and I would become drowned with sorrow for my father's isolation from us. I received many letters that were filled with haiku written by him.

Much of my primary and high school life in my young world was spent enduring hardships. With my father in the hospital, the pressure of achieving well in school, and the rebirth of Japan after World War II, it was not a simple existence. My mother worked hard to be independent, running a kindergarten. She encouraged me to get an education, and early on I had the goal of becoming as independent as she. After graduating from

high school, I wrote the entrance exam for Sophia University and was accepted. I was fortunate because only 7 of the 50 students selected that year were women.

指振るえ 感謝の文字に 母すごし
With trembling fingers
She penned a sign – “gratitude”
And drifted away
(Yoshimoto, 2005, p.37)

During my last years at Sophia, my mother was diagnosed with cancer. I visited her hospital room daily and often slept there to keep her company and take care of her needs. I was able to graduate, despite the extra responsibilities, and one month after graduation I married. I did this so quickly after graduation because my mother wanted to see me married. She worried about me becoming “unsold merchandise”. In Japan at that time, the common metaphor for women who were not married by age 25 was Urenokori 売れ残り which means unsold merchandise. After graduation I applied to the Asahi Newspaper for a job as a journalist. That year, however, they only hired men, and I felt disheartened by this gender discrimination. Of all the women in my graduating class, none of us was awarded jobs with any newspaper in Japan. The practice at the time was to not hire female journalists, and so I was not so much surprised when I was not given a job, as much as I was discouraged. Given this explicit disapproval of my gender, I grudgingly accepted becoming a housewife.

One year into my marriage, my mother died of cancer. During that awful year, she did not complain even once about the pain. On her deathbed, even though she could not speak and her hands were trembling, she asked me to give her a pencil and paper. She wrote the word 感謝, “kansha” which means appreciation or thankfulness. The word itself is composed of the characters meaning feeling and apology. I feel as though there

was a subtext to the message she wrote, apologizing to me for having to take care of her. In Japanese culture, the concept of apologizing is deeply rooted in the concept of humility and modesty. Even when thanking someone we often say “sumimasen” (I’m sorry). The social expectation placed upon Japanese women at that time was that she should place the needs of her family above her own.

子供得て 母の愛知る 夜明け鳥
My child cries for help
I grasp my mother’s ordeal
At the crack of dawn
(Yoshimoto, 2005, p.37)

During the course of my marriage, I had the pleasure of raising four children. The marriage, however, began to crumble after 8 years. When I reached the age my mother was when she died, fifty years old, I began to wonder whether I, like her, could write “kansha” (appreciation) when I passed away. I felt as though, to accomplish what she had, I would have to be independent like she had always encouraged me to be. During my university career, because it was a catholic university, many of my courses were taught in English. I had a decent understanding of English so I decided to teach part-time at an English-language conversation school. I had been reading a book by Shinoda & Shinzaki (1992); “Eigo wa onna wo kaeru” (trans. English changes a woman) and I felt deeply influenced by what it had to say. Looking back, I feel as though encountering this book was a very ironic, once in a lifetime opportunity for me. The authors were simultaneous interpreters at conferences. They said that learning another language unveils another culture’s ideology. Having read this book several times and working part-time at an English school, exposed me to the cultural ideology associated with English and it began to influence how I thought. The prospect of earning my own money, being exposed to an

ideology in which women have freedom, and recalling the encouragement of my mother all helped to nurture my independence.

羽もがれ 鳥かごの鷹 死に化粧
Majestic eagle
In gilded cage, her wings clipped
Her spirit sundered

One summer evening in Japan, my second daughter, who was twenty-two years old, and I were sitting side-by-side watching a beautiful sunset. Feeling the soft sea breeze and witnessing the sky become tinged with an orange hue, I was moved to reflect on my life. In expressing myself, I told her that I had sacrificed my life for the sake of my children. Following the announcement I expected her to console me. But she said that because I didn't have the courage to be independent, I chose to endure an unhappy marriage. I began to cry as my daughter had cut all my excuses in two with a single stroke of her sword 一刀両断に (ittouryoudanni). Once I had finished crying, I began to consider the ways in which my daughter had cut away all my burdens, obligations and socially constructed excuses by criticizing me. I felt as though I was trapped, suffocating in my marriage, an unspeakable ordeal in that patriarchal society in which I was unable to feel that I existed.

Now it happens that in this country (Japan) the empire of signifiers is so immense, so in excess of speech, that the exchange of signs remains of a fascinating richness, mobility, and subtlety, despite the opacity of the language, sometimes even as a consequence of that opacity. The reason for this is that in Japan the body exists, acts, shows itself, gives itself, without hysteria, without narcissism, but according to a pure—though subtly discontinuous – erotic project. (Roland Barthes, 1970, p.10)

Barthes describes the implicit and ambiguous Japan beautifully. But when I lived in Japan, I felt as though this empire of signifiers explicitly coerced women into silence, into discarding the words with which to voice objection with the role into which they were and still are subjugated. I struggled to find women's words in a male-centered society. As Sartre sees the human condition as "condemned to be free" (1956, p. 439), English became my wings with which to fly.

By denying my life, I finally decided that I needed to change my life. Ted Aoki & Doug Aoki (2005) say that metaphor grounds the subject: metonymy lets it take flight (p. 446) and that they seek a metonymic moment. I interpreted his metonymic moment as the moment of cracking open that which is light/dark, a moment of newness that emerges, obfuscating the boundary between opposing binary differences. I think that this space is similar in nature to Bhabha's notion of the third space. My daughter's words generated freedom within me; freedom from my circumstances; was this my metonymic moment? Learning in life is unpredictable. Life is full of surprises if I open my heart to the countless faces within me.

谷底に パズル落とせば 虹たちぬ
Into the ravine
Cast the fragments of my life
A fleeting rainbow

I came to Canada at the age of fifty, enrolling in the ESL program at the university. Soon thereafter, I completed the CTESL (Certificate for Teachers of English as a Second Language) course they offered, and began work on my Master's degree in applied linguistics. In 1998 I earned my Master's degree and was hired as a Japanese instructor at the university. In 2000 I began my PhD studies in Education at the University of Ottawa.

What kind of life would I have if I were not interested in English? What kind of life would I have if I were in Japan? Would I have been happy chasing my grandchildren around my garden? Or would I have passed away already, feeling overwhelmed by frustration? Although I don't know the answers to these questions, I am not the Mika that I was before. Identity is always in flux and never becomes resolved. How do I reconnect with my history, my memories and my past selves? Why is the experience, without understanding, never enough? Why, as a woman, did I feel inferior in Japan?

チューリップ 夢をつむいで 過去に幕
Tulip Festival
Weaving a dream of friendship
Discarding the past
(Yoshimoto, 2005, p.39)

I remember the day I decided to come to Ottawa to do graduate work in linguistics. In my search for a Canadian university, I had identified four possible Canadian cities for my studies. These were Ottawa, Montreal, Toronto and Vancouver. I had no reliable way to choose among them. They all seemed welcoming and frightening. To decide, I simply rolled a pair of dice and the number that appeared corresponded to Ottawa. It seemed like my destiny at the time. I tried to imagine myself surrounded by tulips in the spring, in a strange city with no friends, no money; an invisible presence. I hesitated; I was very scared about my decision to leave Japan. Yet, deep inside something insisted that I go. In Kyoto, Kiyomizu is a famous theater with a stage that is set high above the audience. The expression, Kiyomizuno butaikara tobioriru: 清水の舞台から飛び降りる (Literally leaping off Kiyomizu stage) refers to the courage required before leaping into a new stage of life.

In 2004, the Tulip Festival in Ottawa was held from May 5th to 23rd and the theme was, “A celebration of peace and friendship”. I remember that same picture of the tulips that I examined intently in the travel magazine before I came to Ottawa. Every spring I see many Japanese tourists with their cameras, standing near me at the Tulip Festival, but at the same time, standing so distant. I walk along Dow’s Lake with my friend and see the same things that I saw in the travel guide, but differently now, because I have a story behind the tulips.

蜘蛛の糸 吐き出せなくて 異邦人
Unlike the spider
Tangled in the web I spin
Foreign arachnid
(Yoshimoto, 2005, p.39)

After settling in Ottawa I enrolled in a Canadian University’s ESL program in Ontario. I found myself, in this class, surrounded by people much younger than me from many different cultural backgrounds. In Japan, I was very confident about my English, however when I moved to Canada, suddenly my confidence began to wane and I found myself having more and more difficulties writing. What I thought was good quality writing in Japan was not up to par here in Canada. That which is valued as good writing in Japan, ambiguity, passive sentence structures and subject omission is often frowned upon in Western-style essays. I would frequently, in an attempt to be ambiguous, scatter hints about the subject in my English essays, but my teachers would always mention that they were not able to fully grasp what I was referring to in several different contexts. This difference in approach to writing truly reflects the Western tendency to be direct and the Japanese style of being indirect – the language itself holds up the cultural ideology of the culture to which it belongs.

しなやかに ハードル越えて 現代論
Like a bamboo tree
Willing to be flexible
The postmodern me

As a student at a Canadian University, I had many problems passing my courses. I molded myself to fit into the Western academic world a change from ambiguity to clarity. Many teachers said, “Clarify, articulate, spell it out...” I was paralyzed by a tsunami of words. I vividly remember going to a writing tutorial center and a young woman corrected my sentence, “I understand this” to “I fully understand this”. She said that this was an academic sentence and it did not matter whether you fully understood this or not. This was the way of passing courses, at least at the ESL level – the Western academic ideology that I had to accept at that time as an international student in order to survive. I felt like I was coerced to be more positive, aggressive and assertive.

受動態 女のをを 秘めたくて
Using passive tense
Shows my concealed female voice
Feeling alien

In essay writing, I felt especially troubled. My English writing was noticeably aggressive and direct, by Japanese standards, and I felt as though my essays were much like propaganda essays. So to ensure that my essays did not offend anyone, and to reflect the fact that I was a Japanese woman, I changed most of my essays into a passive tense. When I write in Japanese, I have a set of vocabulary that is uniquely feminine, and so it makes it easier for me to reflect my identity. In English, this task was actually challenging, and so I had to resort to the passive tense every time I wrote. This was more suitable to a Japanese audience and so it suited me. However, when I handed in my essays, my teachers would remark how unusual some of my writing was. I believe they felt that my writing was overly passive, and it did not suit the Western essay style that aims to

convince the reader to believe or to act something. I kept trying to dress as a Japanese woman was expected to. While other women around me in Canada wore jeans or slacks, I would always be wearing a skirt and high-heels. Now, because I ride a bike to school, I no longer wear skirts but jeans, and my style has also changed from suits to casual shirts. In Japan, teachers are expected to dress in business attire; however I am now straying further and further from that social expectation by wearing casual clothes in bright colours.

屁理屈を 言いたくなくて 鬼ごっこ
Reluctant dispute
Better dodged than met head on
Game of Hide and Seek

Arguments in general are not encouraged in Japan and this goes doubly so for women. In Japanese we say, “言わぬが花” (iwanu ga hana, lit. a flower shouldn’t talk) meaning that a woman should be both beautiful and quiet. As a woman, my preference towards illogicality and contempt for arguments forced my writing to become more and more ambiguous. I believe that the application of scientific method of logical thinking for practical purposes is considered superficial by Japanese people. Uno Chiyo, a Japanese novelist and kimono designer who lived to be 98 years of age, declared that the secret to living a long life is “こだわらない”(kodawaranai), being illogically optimistic. In fact, Japanese culture embraces the illogical: illogical metaphors, Zen philosophy, ambiguous and passive styles of speech, but all with a purpose. One might even say it is logically illogical. These ideologies maintain a culture of politeness, collectivity and hierarchy.

ヒント出し わからぬ人と 霧の中
Giving many clues
We walk in the thick, dense mist
Remaining e'er lost.

Among other problems I encountered when writing in English, was my tendency to be overly brief when developing my ideas on paper. I would expect my teacher to understand the main idea from the “clues” I had scattered in my essay. My teacher however would repeatedly ask me to be clearer and fully write out my ideas, as not to leave any room for misinterpretation. In Japanese writing, this method of expression, scattering clues, is prevalent in all good writing. Minami & McCabe (1991) say, “In American culture, brevity too often has been mistaken for cognitive deficiency” (p. 595). They also point out that Japanese children’s narratives should be understood as “*omoiyari*” or empathy training and this empathy training leads to the appreciation of ambiguous discourse. They discuss Japanese ambiguous discourse, focusing on the side of empathy training that encourages illocutionary sensitivity.

真実は 一つしかない 学术界
Japan’s academe
To each question there exists
But one right answer

When Japanese students take Japanese language tests in Japan, the tests are mostly multiple-choice and the student is expected to circle the “correct” answer. Taking tests in Canada however revealed to me that there is a big difference in how Japanese and Canadian teachers interpret literature. In Japan, the teacher will explain the one correct answer to the question, 正解 (*seikai*, trans. the correct answer). The writer of a novel has one intention in his writing. In Canada, however, I slowly found that there are many different ways of answering these questions. After handing in a literature assignment for

example, I would question my teacher as to the truth of my answer, and they would regularly say that there are many ways of looking at the text and interpreting it. In Japan, teachers would never appear to not know the answer because it would cause them to lose face, and experience shame in front of the students that they are supposed to be leading. Even during my PhD comprehensive examination, I was attempting to search for the correct answer to the questions even though there were many ways to respond. While in school there is only one correct answer, in daily life the lines between answers are blurred and among the blurs we find the ambiguity that maintains the politeness culture and empathy training that are a part of Japanese culture.

謙遜の 衣を脱いで 肌寒し
Gown of modesty
Reluctantly cast away
Unpleasantly cold

I encountered further difficulty when writing in English when I was expressing humility and modesty. Writing English compositions I would often add at the end a note to the teacher that expressed my modesty saying, “I do not know this topic very well, I need to study more” to which the teacher would reply “Then, you should study!” I quickly found that my modesty was not being understood, as it would normally be by everyone in Japan. Another incident occurred during my CTESL training during which I had to write a critical review of a teacher who was teaching English that left me in an ideological dilemma. In Japan, criticizing professors is inappropriate and so when I was asked to write critically about a professor’s teaching performance I found that I just could not go through with it. My mind was so stuck in my Japanese values that the deadline for the assignment passed. I had to talk to my professor about my problem. She mentioned that honesty was more important than politeness. Eventually, I was persuaded to write the

assignment, but it still unnerved me. Respect for humility is deeply ingrained by metaphors such as 実るほど頭を垂れる稲穂かな (minoruhodo koubewo tareru inahokana, lit. the good rice stalk bends low), which directs Japanese people to be humble. During my PhD studies, one of my professors asked that we all write a composition, highlighting our contributions to the class. Because I value modesty, I consciously refused to highlight my contributions. From my point of view, everyone was a valuable contributor.

びっくり箱 開けても誰も 拍手せず
Ki-shou-ten-ketsu
Jack-in-the-box style of prose
Leave it in Japan

In Japan we have a method for well-organized expression called, “kishoutenketsu”. Kishoutenketsu 起承転結 consists of four parts — ki, the introduction, shou, the development, ten, a deviation from the topic, and ten, the conclusion. This style of articulation is highly valued among Japanese writers. Hinds (1987, 1990), examined how the kishoutenketsu style was used in various aspects of not only what was culturally accepted as being appropriate writing in Japanese culture, but also its proliferation in Chinese and Korean culture as well. I think that the “ten” part, the unexpected and seemingly irrelevant change of topic seems strange to Westerners where it is natural to the Japanese reader. Japanese people love detective stories, because they employ kishoutenketsu. I was taught in school that good writing expects readers to interpret for themselves while bad writing is markedly explicit. This difference creates problems for Japanese writers of English as kishoutenketsu and the inductive strategies related to this style of writing are relied upon by Japanese students when writing in English (Mulvey, 1997). Asuka, one of the participants in my Master’s research (Yoshimoto, 1999), wrote an argumentative essay saying that going abroad to study is a good thing. Before her

conclusion she brought up new information, previously not introduced or even hinted at, which constitutes a very odd transition from a Western point of view. Her teacher noticed these elements and mentioned that new information shouldn't be introduced near the end of the essay. In Canada the ambiguous change of topic so close to the conclusion is not valued. My own personal experience is that my writing style has shifted from kishoutenketsu towards the Western style of writing ever since one ESL teacher wrote on an essay that I submitted, "Don't surprise me at the end!" However, I am really inclined to see "Ten" as the space to look at myself from another person's perspective, distancing myself from myself, a space in which I have room to move around, not having to worry about deadlines. While my writing style has changed, I still feel a strong need to express myself in the Kishoutenketsu style in this thesis, as I mentioned in my Preface/Postscript. One of the most important reasons for this is that I feel very personally invested in this research and as it is very close to my heart and mind, I want the space from which I express myself to be the in-between place in which I feel best enables me to describe the transformation of being marginalized. However, while my thesis adopts a Kishoutenketsu style, I cannot be detached from the effect that thirteen years of participating in Canadian academic culture of university and living in this ever-new context has had on my identity and this is reflected in the mélange of logical/illogical; the dropping of hints mixed with explicit argument.

丁寧に 順番待つて 無言の日
Waiting politely
My turn to speak will soon come
Voiceless days persist.

Writing, facial expressions, taking turns in discussions, group work and politeness were all difficult culturally-rooted practices for me because of the values beneath the surface of Western culture. In particular I find it difficult to interrupt people during conversations

even though it's a socially accepted practice. In Japanese the metaphor 沈黙は金 (chinmoku wa kin, trans. silence is golden) is taken seriously, but in Canada my silence was defeated, and I felt like I was waving a white flag whenever I was in the presence of a conversation. Being polite is a deeply embedded value and I still don't know where its boundary lies. Doing group work was a particularly difficult experience because cultural values are different in the heterogeneous ESL classroom. In my previous research, one participant, Michiko, complained about a time when her ESL class was doing an "Information Exchange" exercise. The other students would come to her for information, and she obliged everyone who asked her. However, she was too busy ensuring that everyone who asked was getting her information that she did not ask for any herself. As a result, at the end of the class her paper was blank, and she felt negatively about the experience (Yoshimoto, 1999). My own experiences doing group work were similarly difficult.

Every year, when I return to Japan, I feel the presence of a different self who sees Japan with different eyes and interpretations. On May 21, 2007, the Asahi newspaper had an article about a sixteen year-old girl who was fired from her part-time job for refusing to dye her hair back to black, from dark brown. The attitude of her former employer shocks me. Is our outer appearance more important than who we are on the inside? Must we all, as Japanese people have the same hair colour?

In 2004, I returned to Japan to attend my elementary school reunion and I wrote a summer diary, focusing on my emerging different self. At the reunion, I again felt the young "me" who was so eager to make my parents proud when I was a child. I also felt that my former classmates seemed so reluctant to meet new challenges, accepting retirement as a part of their life. Nola Ochs, a ninety-five year old woman is poised to earn a college degree, the oldest person in the world to do so. In Japan, it is expected that

the elderly accept becoming old as being the time for which they are to step aside and retire. I feel a kinship with Nola Ochs as I pursue my goals in the realm of higher education.

I am beginning to understand Western ideology better with each passing year, observing it through critical eyes. Why in education, is the modernist stance so prevalent with authoritative voices calling for “accountability”? Why do they require everything to be so logical, explicit and direct? “Straight to the point” is a metaphor here in Canada, which means to explain something directly. In this culture, people also say, “honestly speaking”, which means that speaking directly is honest and good. However, in Japan, when we speak directly, we say the metaphor, 単刀直入に (tantouchokunyu ni, lit. entering directly with a sword in one shot). So, whenever I use these words, I feel that I am actually killing the person that I am talking to. This metaphor shows the social expectations in Japan, which is to behave indirectly. The metaphor, 婉曲に (enkyoku ni) is an expression which means to speak indirectly. This literally means softly curved beauty like a woman’s arm. On the contrary, in Canada when people speak indirectly they use the metaphor, “beating around the bush”, which indicates that what they’re saying is just wasting time. These metaphors and language structure clearly indicate the connection between language and thought.

日常の言葉を切って 探す自我
Cracking Metaphors
Like Alice through the mirror
In a hybrid realm

My introspection is complicated, because of the nature of “outside of the inside”, “the part in the whole”; these are tangled double voices.

Giddens' (1991) claim that "[t]he reflexive project of the self ... consists in the sustaining of coherent, yet continuously revised, biographical narratives" is a powerful way of conceptualizing continuity and change in a person's identity over time. It locates identity in events and experience, rather than reifying it as a quality or attribute. Further, the self consists not of a person's life history, but of the interpretation they are currently putting on their life history. The self is in this way doubly socially constructed: both by the socially constrained nature of the life experience itself, and by the social shaping of the interpretation (Ivanic, 1998, p. 16).

I have adopted new clothes and discarded the old over the past thirteen years. Whenever I feel "unhomeliness", the world in which I feel comfortable shrinks and then expands slightly. I am living in an in-between space of hybridity that Bhabha (1994) calls the third space.

It is that Third Space, though unrepresentable in itself, which constitutes the discursive conditions of enunciation that ensure that the meaning and symbols of culture have no primordial unity or fixity; that even the same signs can be appropriated, translated, rehistoricized and read anew. (p.37)

This space has a hope for educational enunciation, the negotiating of double voices within in-between spaces, "based not on the exoticism of multiculturalism or the diversity of cultures, but on the inscription and articulation of culture's hybridity" (Bhabha, 1994, p.38). In this space, we can move from the familiar to the unfamiliar and from the unfamiliar to the familiar; from the known to the unknown and from the unknown to the known; from rejection to acceptance and from acceptance to rejection; this bidirectional interplay occurs within ourselves in a place that is neither native nor foreign soil. If the

aim of education is to promote the idea that we can be better human beings who are free from prejudices then this is the space in which we walk in another's shoes. No matter how different we are, we cannot stop dreaming of understanding each other in a deeper sense. However, there can be no utopia in a realistic sense, so we must dwell with tensions that emerge from this in-between space.

Both with the world and beyond the world, free as a bird, the self searches for a third space, singing, dancing, nesting, and flying, sometimes with companions, sometimes alone, always already attending to the call of the stranger. (Wang, 2004, p. 138)

My haiku is my third space in which to sing, dance and fly dwelling somewhere between ambiguity and clarity, unable to reach both, while searching for the voice of women.

I came to Canada in 1994. Since then I have never regretted my decision to come alone at the age of fifty. In the first two years during which I suffered considerably, for example, having my root canal dental work become damaged and fall out; I was extremely miserable. For the first two years I lived in a dark, prison-like dormitory in which I shared a bathroom with a younger girl who left her hair all over the bathroom, and I did not know how to voice my complaints. I do not know why I ended up in such accommodations, but it was what was offered to me so I took it, again, without complaint. I did not fit into the ESL program easily, due to my writing style and inability to comprehend the teacher's expectations.

During my first two years in Canada, the Kobe earthquake occurred on January 17th, 1995 and 5500 people lost their lives. I frantically called back to Japan to find out if my children were safe. Through all of these trials, I did not regret coming to Canada, because for the first time in my life, I could feel my existence again—the existence that I

had lost in my marriage. However, these years were a constant struggle to find not only the way in which to fit myself into the Western academic world, but also how to survive day-to-day life in a different culture.

I am interested in understanding our everyday lives, our languages, our metaphors, and known and unknown selves as they take shape and transform. In order to develop this thesis I have turned to four different discourse genres. These are narrative, haiku, metaphor and academic discourse.

御話を 蚕が紡ぎ 解く過去
Silkworms spin stories
Unraveled thread of the past
Tangled memories

Narrative

Writing narratives, I can write more easily, using words that come from my heart and in doing so, my writing appears more natural. In narrative writing, I find it easier to cite theorists and their ideas and relate them. In narrative writing, I feel the language is mine. Narrative discourse is about telling a story. In narrative discourse, I want to convey the ideas and experiences of a person in such a way that it invites the reader to re-experience and revisit the moments that compose that person's life. Narrative allows me to consider the often-assumed inconsequential events and practices as both central and influential in human experience (de Certeau, 1984, p.xi). My research is about three female Japanese students and myself as English language learners. By employing narrative we can express our personal stories, both creatively and poetically. Finally, narrative discourse allows me to satisfy my need to explain my own past that is present, and provide me with an expressive means to contextualize my motivation for doing this research.

泣きたくて 泣けない国で 俳句する
Though I want to cry
English tears come painfully
So I cry haiku
(Yoshimoto, 2005, p.36)

Haiku

Haiku is a popular form of Japanese poetry that employs a 5-7-5-syllable structure and often draws on themes of seasons, nature, feelings, and life experiences. Haiku also draws heavily on the Japanese speech style, which is very ambiguous and requires the listener to have the necessary cultural knowledge to interpret the speaker's intended meaning. Because of my Japanese background, I have much experience expressing myself using haiku and find it a comfortable method to express what I cannot say otherwise. However, my use of haiku is different than the traditional method. Following the example of Tawara Machi (1987), a Japanese poet who disrupted the established constraints of poetic form, I have taken the liberty to create haiku that reflect my changing values both Canadian and Japanese and to express this transformation into a new set of ideals. I rely on haiku to voice a silent cry, a cry that I cannot express in conventional language in either Japanese or English.

We begin to engage with not knowing: with not being competent and with not being skilled at dealing with new situations. This uncertainty, this not knowing awakens unexpected connections. It can help us to uncover a creative space in which we may encounter new awareness. As we open to not knowing, we pay attention to unexpected occurrences, incongruities, and connections. In this space, new and challenging situations draw open abilities and unfamiliar capacities. (Linds, 2004)

In the poetic discourse of haiku, I am able to go from the space of ambiguity into momentary clarity, back and forth. This back and forth generates another space akin to Bhabha's third space (1990), "which enables other positions to emerge" (Bhabha, 1990, p. 211). Haiku thus allows me to feel and express the contradictory emotions that accompany my story. Contradiction of identity may create new spaces for haiku. According to Kristeva, the signifying process of language is composed of two parts, the semiotic that is feminine in nature, and the symbolic that is paternal (Kristeva, 1980, p. 239). Poetic language is revolutionary because it is a conduit in which the structure of the symbolic and the semiotic, where the social and the body meet, where the unconscious and conscious intersect, become one and convey the sum of human creativity through poetic discourse (Kristeva, 1984, p.81). I want my haiku to invite the symbolic and the semiotic to intermix, to become an expression of human feeling.

まな板の 鯉はもがいて 慈悲を請う
Like a helpless fish
Wriggling on the cutting board
Begging for mercy

Metaphors

During my previous Master's degree research, my participants wrote many metaphors in their diaries. Since then, I have been very curious about the metaphors that I use to describe my own situations.

At the center of language is metaphor, and the primary power of the linguistic imagination may be found in its ability to produce metaphors. One meaning of metaphorical discourse or language is to be found in whatever transformation it brings about in a persona's orientation (Greene, 1994, p.457).

According to Lakoff & Johnson (1980), metaphors hold root in our unconscious mind, as culturally-situated conceptual maps. How then do I translate my Japanese metaphors into English?

Todome とどめ (the final attack used to kill a fish).

Michiko, an exchange student from a Japanese University who was placed in an ESL class at the university, was a particularly diligent student who put much effort into improving her language skills. However, her hard work did not translate into improvements on her tests. After receiving a low mark on a test, feeling frustrated about her failure, she wrote in her diary, "Today's class was todome" (Yoshimoto, 1999. p. 51). I immediately understood how painful the class must have been. The meaning of *todome* is actually more than just painful. It is as if she, as a fish, is awaiting death as the end to some sort of lingering suffering. This experience leads me to think that we should examine social identities through metaphors, the reflection of a culture's identities. Drawing on this perspective, a number of researchers have begun to study the ways in which metaphors and conceptual understanding are related (Lightfoot, 2001; Robertson, 2003; Sfard, 1998). Robertson's study (2003) investigated metaphors that shape academic thought and practice. Her examination focused on the ways in which metaphors enable us to recognize and challenge the familiar while becoming aware of other ways of thinking. Sfard (1998) investigated how our thinking about learning is metaphorically structured. She provided a close analysis of the dominant metaphors that underpin learning. These include learning as acquisition and learning as participation. By understanding how these different conceptual metaphors constitute our thinking, she was able to show how this affects our practices in education. In a study of second language learners, Lightfoot (2001) investigated the effect of culturally constructed metaphorical

understanding of immigrants. She says that the matter of success or failure among second-language students was not simply a matter of the individual, but also a matter of the perception of the culture of the individual by the predominant social culture. To date there is little research which specifically studies the relationship between identity construction and metaphor. I am interested in learning how conceptual metaphors function in Japanese and English in order to understand the meanings constructed by Japanese students who learn English in Canada. Through the analysis of their metaphors, I hope to deepen my understanding of their experiences as second language learners.

偽言葉 ちりばめながら 足が浮く
Words that aren't my own
Language foreign to my mind
I'm spinning my wheels.

Academic discourse

When I write academic discourse, I feel like 足が地に付かない (ashi ga chi ni tsukanai, lit. one's feet aren't touching the ground, trans. to have one's head in the clouds, being unrealistic, impractical). How to write in this academic style is still unclear to me, after all, this is not my language. When I cite the words of an authority figure, I feel frustrated because I know that it is not only the scholars who make a difference in the world, but also ordinary people. I need academic discourse, however to make the meta-story of what I am doing and why. I also need academic discourse to locate my research in the context of previous work that has concerned itself with second language learning from the experience of Japanese women. Academic discourse helps me situate my identity and my research in a theoretical framework. While I will be using narrative to describe the past lives and present experiences of my participants and myself, I also feel the need to theorize about the meanings which are attributed by each of us.

CHAPTER 2: SITUATING THE RESEARCH

One of the main characteristics of an autoethnographic perspective is that the autoethnographer is a boundary-crosser and the role can be characterized as that of a dual identity. (Reed-Danahay, 1997, p.3)

北極星 見上げて登る 獣道
Polaris, my guide
Shining on the thorny path
Painfully traversed

This selected review of the literature focuses on research in two areas relevant to my study. The first reviews learner identities in second language learning in order to situate myself in the context of second language learning research. The second area examines autoethnography in order to illustrate the complex relationship between language learning and identity. In this way, my personal and reflexive voice can be represented in an act of self-revelation, connected with the cultural, social and political text of my everyday life in which second language learning occurs.

A Focus on Language

Over the past 50 years, there has been a great deal of research on second language learning with a focus on the features of language. Many of these studies gathered quantitative data such as the order in which morphemes are acquired, error correction, interlanguage, fossilization, foreigner talk (Brown and Hanlon, 1970; Burt, Dulay and Hernandez, 1975; Corder, 1981; Ferguson, 1975; Hakuta, 1974; Selinker, 1972; Young, 1996). In these cases, the research examines the learner's cognitive processes, isolating them from other contributing factors to learning such as the learner's social background. In many cases, language is considered a system of arbitrary signs or symbols and learners of the language system are considered as a unitary group in which individual differences are ignored and social backgrounds are considered to be external. This research also ignored students' historical background, culture, discourse and the power structures of their environment and thus was not critically framed. These approaches have separated the notion of language learning and identity, insisting that they are unrelated. Some

researchers have looked at Japanese students via a quantitative approach, but the focus was limited to the linguistic aspects of language (Allaway, 1997; Bedford, 1974; Clancy, 1990; De Vos, 1985; Gillis and Weber, 1976; Hyland, 1993; Klein, 1995; Oishi, 1985; Sato, 1982; Spezzini, 2002; Trent, 1997).

Other previous approaches to the study of ESL and academic programs have relied on concepts of language and identity as separate (Canale & Swain, 1980; Cazden, 1988; Cumming, 2005; Gass, 1997; Deci, 1975; Gardner & Lambert, 1972; Krashen, 1981, 1982; van Lier, 1991; Long, 2003). Many ESL teachers focus on the importance of “motivation”, (Carroll, 1995; Giles & Byrne, 1982; Schmidt, 1981; Schumann, 1978; Dörnyei, 1994, 2001) but dismiss the dynamic of motivational factors. Some researchers believe that second language learners should immerse themselves in the culture of the target language, and that they should regard that culture in a favorable, uncritical light (Schmann, 1978; Gardner, 1985; Berry & Trimble and Olmeda, 1986). This assumes that participating in target culture brings learner’s motivation to study language and eventually assimilate and acculturate to the target culture but that is not the case of most language learners.

A Focus on Identity

Many researchers in second language learning expand the narrow view of applied linguistics that is focused on psycholinguistics and cognitive processes (Block, 2003; Lantolf, 2000; Mantero, 2007; Norton & Toohey, 2004; Pennycook, 1998; Rampton, 1997; Savignon, 1991; Spack, 1997; Spolsky, 2000). Much of this research is situated within a sociocultural framework drawing primarily on the work of Vygotsky and within critical theory addressed by Marx and Foucault (1991), which concerns itself with issues of power and subject positions.

Sociocultural Theory

From the perspective of sociocultural theory (Bakhtin, 1978, 1981, 1986, 1993; Cole, 1996; Vygotsky, 1978, 1987, 1997, 1999; Wertsch, 1991), an understanding of the self develops through human interactions and that these interactions are mediated by meaning making resources. These include all aspects of symbolic resources such as language as well as cultural and material artifacts. Vygotsky's understanding that human development occurs on two planes—beginning with social interaction which in turn becomes internal and psychological, leads to the view that the individual and social selves are mutually constituted (1978). Therefore, it becomes impossible to consider language as independent from identity. Vygotsky's concept of the connection between the individual and the social has been further developed by Wertsch (1991) who drew on Bakhtin's dialogism, genre theory, multiple voices, and heteroglossia, to further articulate the ways in which language mediates the development of self. Focusing on the constructs of speech genres, Bakhtin (1986) theorized identities as multiple and dynamic. He also referred to such identities as speaking personalities that emerge as we appropriate different aspects of language. All utterances are dialogic and multivoiced. These views surface in the work of Lemke (1995) as "the social individual" and in Ivancic's (1998) work as "discursive self". According to Kramsch (2000), "linguistic signs and psychological processes do not precede their use in social context; on the contrary, it is social activity, and its material forms of social and cultural mediation, that precedes the emergence of individual forms of consciousness" (p.133). Vygotsky's "social plane" is the place of individual psycholinguistic reconstruction where linguistic signs are contextually mediated. Many sociocultural theorists agree with this conceptualization (Carruthers & Boucher, 1998; Hawkins, 2004; Kramsch, 2000; McGroarty, 1998; McKay & Wong, 1996; Miller, 2004; Wenger, 1998; Verity, 2000).

To break the dialectic unity between speech and thought is to forego any possibility of understanding human mental capacities, much in the same way, as Vygotsky observed, that independent analysis of oxygen and hydrogen fails to generate an explanation of water's capacity to extinguish fire. What is needed, then, is a unit of analysis that preserves the dialectic unity of the elements (thinking and speaking) (Lantolf, 2000, p.7).

This unit of analysis would therefore consider identity, social contexts and language as dynamic and interrelated and not concepts to be treated separately.

Critical Theory

Another perspective that has challenged the previous separation of language and identity comes from the work of critical theorists who see learning as the negotiation of identities within multiple discourses of gender, race, ethnicity and their relation to power and status (Auerbach, 1995; Canagarajha, 1999; Fairclough, 2003; Freire, 1970; Lather, 1995; Norton, 1997; Pennycook, 2000, 2004; Simon, 1992; Spivak, 1993; Thesen, 1997).

Critical theorists focus on perceptions of injustice and representations of difference in the site of education with respect to conflicting social, cultural and political ideologies, gender, race, age, sexual orientation and ethnicity in relation to power and status that must be disrupted. This leads one to wonder, how does the Japanese language have a particular effect on Japanese women and how does learning English affect their identity construction and these social status and their subjectivity?

It has been acknowledged that a variety of "Englishes" exist as we try to communicate with each other (Pennycook, 1994). Much of the work in this area draws our attention to the very political nature of language.

Rather than according some a priori ontological status to English in the world, English as an International Language can be understood as a discursive construct rather than being some objective descriptive category, it is a whole system of power/knowledge relationships which produce very particular understandings of English and English language teaching. (Pennycook, 1994, p. 36)

Inevitably, via discourse in English, Western colonialism, Western imperialism and Western ideology are propagated. However, Pennycook (1998) also declares, “sadly, there seems to be a loud absence about such connections in applied linguistics and TESOL, showing, I think, the strange isolation of much thinking in applied linguistics from academic and political work going on outside it” (p.19).

So we must inquire, how do we connect the realm of teaching English to speakers of other languages with the social and political dimensions of English through the notion of living pedagogy? Pennycook (2004) reflects on the notion of relevant connections between English and learners of English within their contexts and within their locations of social and political difference:

So the challenge was to make it critical in that moment. Underlying this question of language form is a range of issues to do with what forms we model as teachers, how and in whose interests standard varieties are constructed and maintained, what language varieties our students may need, what forms of what varieties may be used in what communities, how language forms may be related to local configurations of power, and how notions of correctness may need to be put on hold. (p. 342)

Looking at the classroom situation, Pennycook (2001) voices concern about the void between practice and theory:

There is a problematic tendency to engage in applied linguistic research and theorizing and then to suggest pedagogical or other applications that are not grounded in particular contexts of practice ... There is also, on the other hand, a tendency to dismiss applied linguistic theory as not about the real world. (p. 3)

Thus, the pedagogy of theory and practice becomes a crucial element of critical theory. Pennycook (2001) talks about looking at applied linguistics in all its forms, “as a constant reciprocal relationship between theory and practice” (p. 3) further clarifying this connection by quoting critical theorist Simon (1992) who described this as, “that continuous reflexive integration of thought, desire and action sometimes referred to as “praxis” ” (p.49). Pennycook draws on the work of Freire (1970) and Foucault (1980) in order to understand the notion of Power/Knowledge, social transformation and Marxist emancipation that “does not cling dogmatically to its own doctrinal assumptions” (Giroux, 1983, p. 8). A theme that runs in the work of these theorists is that connecting theory and practice in a postmodern posture will support the transformation of social perceptions and representations in education. Critical theorists consider post-colonial and feminist discourses as contributors to the discourse of critical theory. Freire (1983), in the forward of Giroux’s *Theory and Resistance in Education*, describes Giroux, “Giroux knows very well that to be in the world and with the world means exactly to continuously experience the dialectics between subjectivity and objectivity” (forward, p.x). Freire further articulates critical theory as being the recognition of the important role power plays in social transformation, the realization that subjectivity plays a role in the relevance of education and being necessary historical and political tasks, and the awareness that education has limitations.

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Second Language Learning and Identity

Recent research in both sociocultural and critical perspectives has investigated many interrelated topics such as: identity and ideology, identity and race, identity and gender, identity and writing. Thesen (1997) stresses the need to expand identity categories; “Learners are categorized according to a limited set of identity markers, which results in a deterministic view of identity in terms of the researcher’s imposed categories” (p.488). Because my research focuses to a large extent on identity, the studies I have chosen to include in this review of the literature draws on sociocultural approach or critical studies to situate my research within the context of these theoretical approaches. If we try to see the individual as a whole rather than just as a linguistic subject, we inevitably face the complexity of identity formation. I want to highlight researchers that have made important contributions to our understanding of identity and second language learning. In my discussion I am focusing on identity and ideology both cultural and as it relates to gender. I have also included research on identity and writing in second language learning.

Identity and Cultural Ideology

Language is not neutral and carries cultural ideology. We are all trapped in the cultural wisdom of our ancestors that consciously and unconsciously constitutes a part of the cultural identity that impacts our individual identity. Investigations about Western ideology that influence language learning have been overlooked in previous second language acquisition research. According to Roudiez (1980), “In most cases ‘ideology’ is transmitted on a preconscious level, since it is usually taken for granted, considered as ‘natural’, hence neither repressed (unconscious) nor intentionally propounded (conscious)” (p. 15). Therefore we need to look at research that examines this

relationship. Cultural studies and ideology provides textual analysis of identity and its relationships to societal beliefs and values from the perspective of cultural practices. Eagleton (1991) defines the study of ideology as an examination of “the process of legitimation” that can be explained by six different strategies.

A dominant power may legitimate itself by *promoting* beliefs and values congenial to it; *naturalizing* and *universalizing* such beliefs so as to render them self-evident and apparently inevitable; *denigrating* ideas which might challenge it; *excluding* rival forms of thought, perhaps by some unspoken but systematic logic; and *obscuring* social reality in ways convenient to itself. (Eagleton, 1991, pp. 5-6, italicized words were not bolded in the source)

The obfuscation of ideology often arises as an eruption of political or social discord and because of that, some view ideology as an illusory solution to strife. The strategies that Eagleton describes as being a part of the process of legitimation will come-to-be via complex interactions among themselves.

Ideology inevitably implies the notion of gender, as we are physical beings in this world. Butler (2001) outlines Foucault’s (1997) important contribution to feminist theory with regards to knowledge and power.

If we consider this relation of knowledge and power in relation to gender, it seems we are compelled to ask how gender is organized such that it comes to function as a presupposition about how the world is structured...On the contrary, the ways in which women are said to “know” or to “be known” are already orchestrated by power precisely at that

moment in which the terms of “acceptable” categorization are instituted.

(Butler, 2001, p. 12)

Thus, I think we should look toward being able to discern instances of Butler’s “gender trouble” and expelling these firmly established patriarchal mechanisms from society. I think that ideology and gender both affect one’s identity and English language learning.

Norton (2000) in a study of identity and language examined the second language learning of five immigrant women who had recently arrived in Canada in relation to their social context through individual diaries, interviews, questionnaires and observation. Norton found that these five women in the ESL classroom either invested their money and attended the class or actively refused to invest their money and quit the class to change courses in order to preserve their identity.

My position is that the identities and lived experiences of language learners are already part of the language learning/language teaching experience, whether or not this is formally recognized in the second language curriculum. What the language teacher needs to understand is how the identities of learners are engaged in the formal language classroom, and how this knowledge can help teachers facilitate the language learner’s interaction with target language speakers in the wider community. (Norton, 2000, p. 140)

Norton’s research on identity and language learning sees individual subjectivity as “diverse, contradictory, dynamic and changing over historical time and social space” (p. 125). Influenced by Bourdieu (1977), Norton uses the word “investment” instead of “motivation” to explain the relationship between identity and language learners. “The notion of investment views the language learner, not as ahistorical and unidimensional,

but as having a complex social history and multiple desires” (Peirce, 1995, p.9). Norton’s sensitivity to the second language learners’ struggles that are connected to social environments influenced her to name motivation as a form of investment. One of her participants was angry with her ESL teacher and as a result, never returned to the class because the teacher neglected to value her home country Peru by stating that Peru was not a major country in terms of their work. Her teacher’s opinion was indicative of the Western ideological perspective that reflects Western media representations of countries that are perhaps not considered on par status with the West.

In another study, Morita (2004) examined the academic discourse and socialization experiences of six female L2 Japanese graduate students in a Canadian university. She drew on several theories including perspective from “community of practice” (Wenger, 1998), language socialization (Duff & Uchida, 1997; Ochs, 1988), neo-Vygotskian research (Lantolf, 2000), and critical discourse research (Canagarajah, 1999; Pennycook, 2001). Morita found that identity and participation in the class are co-constructed and participants resisted being categorized as a “relatively silent group”, “non-native speakers”, and “students with deficit” by the instructor and actively sought to have their presence respected.

A commonly held stereotype that Asians in general, and Asian women in particular, tend to be quiet, passive, timid, or indirect, did not always apply to the focal women (see also Cheng, 2000; Takano, 2000); as the case study examples have shown, they were often very creative, proactive, and critical about dealing with the challenges they faced in the classroom. (Morita, 2004, p. 597)

I think that the value of making inquiries into a learner's perspective is a key factor in developing strong ties of relevance to their own context because stereotypical cultural identity is the subject of illusion and needs deconstruction.

In a study of ESL teacher's identity (Buendia & Gitlin, 2003) examined the case of one Senegalese-American middle school ESL teacher in the United States. The students in his class wanted to maintain their identity within a school that possessed a pervasive assimilation pedagogy. This teacher could speak the students' language and wanted to bring cultural materials into the classroom from the students' home countries. However, the teacher was forced to be situated within the institutional pedagogy that promotes assimilation. This ESL teacher voiced his dilemma: "The problem is that you are trying to live between two contradictory worlds. What is necessary for ESL kids is contradictory for the others. As a teacher, I am between the school system and the ESL student" (p. 310). Buendia & Gitlin suggest that educators think critically about borderland pedagogy and oppose assimilation pedagogy. They stress the importance of a post-colonial pedagogy that values and is inclusive of a culturally relevant pedagogy. This ESL teacher's struggle is located in the realm of the dominant assimilation ideology in America, revealing the imperialist nature of the ideology of English.

Ibrahim (1999) investigated the impact of becoming Black on ESL learning, that is, the interrelation between identity and learning. Ibrahim examined hip-hop culture among a group of French-speaking immigrants and refugee from continental African youth attending an urban Franco-Ontarian high school in southwestern Ontario, Canada. Ibrahim found that the group of continental African youths was becoming Black, which meant learning BSE (Black-stylized English) and proposed rap and hip-hop as curriculum sites where learning took place and where identities were invested. Ibrahim questions:

That is, whose knowledge is being valorized and legitimated and thus assumed to be worthy of study, and whose knowledge and identity are left in the corridors of our schools? To identify rap and hip-hop as curriculum sites in this context is to legitimize otherwise illegitimate forms of knowledge. (Ibrahim, 1999, p. 366)

When I walk on the busy streets of Tokyo, I invariably see crowds of Japanese youths seeking to be perceived as a typical American. By listening to jazz and pop music, dyeing their hair blond, wearing popular and alternative American fashion, dining regularly on hamburgers at McDonald's, having their arms tattooed and noses and ears pierced, and speaking broken English as though it were an affectation for their plain Japanese parlance by which they demonstrate their desire to be like the Other. They may be engaging in this form of resistance to express their opposition to hegemonic Japanese values that strive to form what is considered to be a harmonious and homogeneous society of resemblance. However, resistance is a temporal engagement and after these youths cease to find American culture as a site for resistance within their own culture, they might perhaps return to "being Japanese" by singing "Enka" (Japanese soul music) at the karaoke bar.

Duff & Uchida (1997) explored the sociocultural identities and teaching practices of one American male teacher, one female American teacher and one female Japanese teacher. In this six-month ethnographic study taken place in Japan they found that some teachers were more likely to embrace the grammar-translation method while others were more likely to espouse the communicative approach, based on their respective backgrounds. They found that the teachers' perceptions of their role as teachers come from their biographical beliefs and experiences and that they negotiate teaching

philosophies, methods, and resources with the students in their context. They pose the question:

How do their preexisting (established) beliefs about culture, foreign languages, teaching, and learning interact with their fixed experiences (Aoki, 1993) of teaching in that cultural milieu? These questions are very significant in light of the phenomenal political, economic, and sociocultural underpinnings and ramifications of the EFL industry in Japan. (Duff & Uchida, 1997, p. 457)

Duff & Uchida clarify: “The quest for relative control over one’s life and professional activities is rooted in the local culture of teaching, TEFL, ideologies, and then teacher’s experiences, beliefs, and needs” (p. 475). Matters of beliefs and individual history should not be separated from second language teaching because it relates to individual and social identity that is specific and local. As Hall (1996) states: “Precisely because identities are constructed within, not outside, discourse, we need to understand them as produced in specific historical and institutional sites within specific discursive formations and practices, by specific enunciative strategies”(p. 4). It appears that identity must not be looked on as a subject for social surgery where elements that the dominant social culture deems incompatible with their own beliefs and values can be removed and discarded through a process of painful marginalization. It should be seen as a cultural artifact, to be celebrated and for others to be enhanced with via elements of their own identity and experience.

Lee & Simon-Maeda (2006) examined racialized identity through the personal narratives of two ESL/EFL researchers. They utilized critical theory and the theory of legitimate speakers and legitimate listeners (Bourdieu, 1977, 1990). Simon-Maeda found

that her Philippine participant experienced discrimination in Japan while Lee revealed that her participant Lisa, a fellow Asian ESL teacher, suffered through discrimination from both colleagues and students. Both researchers recommended considering “catalytic validity” (Lather, 1991, p. 68; Scheurich, 1997, p. 83). A number of researchers (Chaudhry, 2001; Zurita, 2001) agree that the notion of catalytic validity is the extent to which research motivates its participants to understand the world in order to change it. Catalytic validity is “the degree to which the research process reorients, focuses, and energizes participants toward knowing reality in order to transform it” (Lather, 1986, p. 272). I think that catalytic validity speaks to the idea of arousing self-awareness, self-understanding, and self-direction through the implementation of research, in its participants. It seems that it describes a transformative process that gives “the researched” a drive to seek a broader perspective and comprehension. Lee & Simon-Maeda propose critical analysis toward racialized identity as well as the relationship between researcher and participants. They say that aiming at social change is “a prerequisite for bridging the gulf between emancipatory intentions and actual steps toward progressive reform in the ESL/EFL field” (p. 590).

Spack (1997) in a study of second language learning and shifting identity investigated a female Japanese student who entered an American university undergraduate program with a TOEFL score of 640, but who still struggled with the expectations of her professors. Spack focused on Yuko’s reading and writing strategies and tried to contextualize Yuko’s linguistic and cognitive learning, previous educational experience and cultural background as well as her interactions with instructors and course-related texts. This 3-year longitudinal study included interviews, text materials, observation and comments from Yuko’s instructors. Spack found that Yuko constantly changed in order to adapt herself in the academic discourse practices by switching her

major from International Relations to Economics, but again changing her major back to International Relations later on. Spack indicates:

She was attracted to what she perceived to be the “American style” because, in the American way, “I can have my own point of view”. In Japan, “You don’t have to think”. Still, Yuko had what she called a “Japanese style” in her background, which she said she did not like (at least as it was played out by teachers in the classroom), and which she had occasionally resisted in Japan, but which was so ingrained that she could not cross over comfortably to the American style (partly because she was not convinced the American way was superior). This inability to make the crossover, she believed, affected her integration to remain silent rather than to express her every thought in what she perceived to be the “superficial” way that most American students typically did. (Spack, 1997, p. 16)

I think that there is nothing necessarily superior about American style or Japanese style, but international students must negotiate these differences when they enter hegemonic Western academic institutions that require everything to be laid out explicitly. I believe that our identity is dynamic and multi-layered. Identities are contextual and situated, shifting as we face a new sun in every different situation.

Macpherson (2005) examined the identity struggles of Tibetan refugee women in the Indian Himalayas whose educational program combines a traditional Buddhist philosophical curriculum alongside a modern, secular bilingual curriculum in English and Tibetan. This study lasted seven years and included observations and interviews of five nuns in their English class. Macpherson uncovered five different identity shifts: rejection,

assimilation, marginality, bicultural accommodation and intercultural creativity. Macpherson recommended a curriculum that included “intercultural awareness and negotiation” (p. 603) into language teaching.

Such intercurricular cross-fertilizations are evidence in Rinchen (a participant’s name) of developing critical reasoning capacity required to negotiate and resist, in Canagarajah’s (1993, 1999) sense, the assimilative pressure of English in classrooms, media, and other contact sites. Such intercultural creativity involves the capacity to step outside of culture and identity and look back: what I call metacultural awareness. (Macpherson, 2005, p. 602)

Macpherson’s realization that shifting identity might include intercultural creativity and developing metacultural awareness is provocative.

In a study of power, gender and discourses of identity in a Japanese workplace, Kondo (1990) describes selves that are inseparable from context. Kondo articulates:

Above all, my Japanese friends, co-workers, and neighbours helped me to see and to appreciate the complicated tangle of ironies and ambiguities we create for ourselves, and that are created for us, as we craft our selves and our lives within shifting fields of power. (Kondo, 1990, p. 308)

This research reminds me of Hall’s (1996) insistence that identity is “endlessly performative self” (p. 1) and constructed through discourse.

In another study of identity and second language learning, Li’s (2007) article, “Identity puzzles: Am I a course instructor or a nonnative speaker?” describes his “spiritual loneliness” (p. 32) as non-White and nonnative speaker:

It is not only me, or people like me, who need ideological changes to reposition myself not as a deficit-ridden nonnative speaker, but as a competent bilingual instructor. The wider profession as a whole and the mainstream of society need to acknowledge the competence and contributions of the multilingual person who is a composite not simply of different linguistic groupings, but also of multiple sociocultural identities that form an enriched self far greater than the sum of its parts. (Li, 2007, p. 41)

Li's position suggests a third place in which a great deal of change occurs when we study second language learning. Li's loneliness and struggle shed light on the area of the second language learning.

In a study of nine EFL female teachers in higher education in Japan, Simon-Maeda (2004) investigated female teachers' identities and discourses. The findings revealed that their identities are inscribed by gendered and sociocultural inequities. One of the participants (Mariko) provided evidence of what this means, by talking about being "bullied" by male professors.

Mariko: Getting the doctorate was a way to establish myself, an indirect way of fighting against those guys (her male superiors in her department). Because those teachers who taught before me, they were the ones who taught communicative English; that was their territory. So looking at me talking better than they could with native speakers, they felt jealous. (Simon-Maeda, 2004, p. 427)

This research shows "the complex interaction of hegemonic ideologies" (p. 430) and how these teachers encouraged their students to "expand their self-image beyond the confines

of conservative cultural values and practices” (p. 430). I believe that ideological and gender-related problems work mainly to maintain the status quo and the status of patriarchal values in society and the ulterior motive of creating an inclusion-exclusion mechanism. Mariko’s way of dealing with exclusion on the part of her male coworkers was to attain a higher academic status, and gain the power that comes with that status.

Gordon (2004) in a study of identity investigated and interviewed two working-class Lao women in the United States over a two years period while they were enrolled in an ESL program. Gordon found that Lao women in the U.S. resist the traditional practice of polygamy not only through their awareness of American laws, but also through U.S. culture’s less restrictive gender identities. Gordon notes: “Language learning both influences and is influenced by these changing identities” (p. 437). Like Lao women, when Japanese women speak English I find that it is often the case that it is difficult to remain the “ideal, obedient Japanese woman” that we are expected to be in Japan. About the research of gender, Ehrlich (1997) has stated that, “More recent conceptions of gender characterize it as something individuals do as opposed to something individuals are or have” (p. 422). Thus, in this article, a Lao wife asks her husband to clean and cook.

Kubota (1999) investigated literature of applied linguistics in ESL that includes a cultural dichotomy between the East and West. Kubota sees the West-East dichotomy of cultural representation as being constructed by a colonial discourse that seeks to isolate a specific definition of the Other as Japanese. “Although cultural similarities, diversities, and individual factors as well as cultural differences are worth exploring, instead I attempt a critique of cultural representations from the concepts of discourse and power/knowledge” (p. 15). Kubota’s warning regarding “Japaneseness” is an important critique of cultural representation. Kubota (2003) also articulates, “These (gender)

differences, however, should not be conceptualized as fixed traits, but as phenomena contingent on context and power” (p. 38).

Pavlenko (2001) analysed sixteen full-length language memoirs and seven literary essays in order to understand cross-cultural lifewriting in the study of discursively constructed second language acquisition and socialization and gender. Pavlenko found that male narrators described themselves mostly as neutral while female narrators were very aware of being gendered language learners and speakers.

Female voices are constructed as relational selves through metaphors which emphasize voice, connectedness, and friendships, while male narrators are positioned as individuals who conquer the language, oftentimes through a painful quest but not through internalization of others’ voices. (Pavlenko, 2001, p. 232)

Pavlenko also invokes the words of Smith (1987), “Smith points out that every woman who writes autobiography ends up interrogating the prevailing ideology of gender, if only implicitly” (p. 233). My own research will inevitably convey the prevailing ideology of gender through the words of women themselves.

Pavlenko & Lantolf (2000) talk about the role that personal narratives play as one goes about reforming one’s identity. They cite Mori (1997) who says of her experience with a Japanese colleague: “I never speak Japanese with the Japanese man who teaches physics at the college where I teach English. We are colleagues, meant to be equals. The language I use should not automatically define me as second best” (p. 12). Because the Japanese language perpetuates honorific forms of address which subjugate women to the lower and men to the upper, Japanese language itself is a patriarchal tool that defines

women as being second best by virtue of the ideology of the culture from which Japanese originates.

To summarize, I recognize identity, cultural ideology, values and beliefs, and gender as being intricately intertwined and thus a complex phenomena. Thus, we must consider language learning as also being a complex phenomenon with respect to power as well as realizing identity as being multiple, in flux and dynamic.

Identity and Writing

In Japanese, we have the expression 文は人なり (bun wa hitonari, trans. writing expresses personality). I think that this metaphor describes the connection between writing and self very well, because through writing we can find fragments of our identity. As Cixous & Calle-Gruber (1997) state:

In writing there is also a function of raising up what is forgotten, what is scorned. Not only the great things that have been forgotten—not only women—but the little things that have been scorned, seen as detritus. And which are nonetheless part of our lives. There is not only the well-dressed, the noble in writing. (Cixous & Calle-Gruber, 1997, p. 98)

Writing, we remember small details, sometimes experience rehabilitation or find old wounds that we have forgotten how to feel. As language conveys ideology, writing is a representation of language, another ideological discourse that reflects our individual voice and identity. When we look at our writing, we realize the whole world of our identity constructed by society.

Specifically in second language writing, Ivanič (1997) developed a dynamic model of identity construction aspects as well as an identity theory that was stimulated by

Goffman's (1969) drama metaphor. These included the autobiographical self, which is associated with the writer's sense of self-history and socially constructed identity. Another aspect is the discursal self, which emerges from the way we appropriate language to reflect our voices—our identities. The discursal self can consist of multiple conflicting voices that knowingly or not, convey themselves through writing in its social context. Ivanic also refers to the authorial self to acknowledge the stance that authors take in their writing as well as referring to “possibilities for selfhood” or the emerging self. For Ivanic, it is through writing that we are able to understand our own identities, as ideas are situated in relation to a theoretical posture, assumptions, beliefs, morals, and cultural ideology. Increasingly researchers see the importance of this theorizing to understand the experiences and difficulties of many second language learners (Cummins, 1994, 1996; Ivanic, 1997; Kress, 1989; Lantolf, 2000; Norton & Toohey, 2004; Rampton, 1997; Spack, 1997).

Maguire & Graves (2001) in a study of three 8-year-old Muslim girls' writing in Montreal, Canada reveal how identity is related to “ideology of knowledge making and positioning within conflictual discourses” (p. 567). In this sense, I believe that they made it clear that writing is also discursive practices.

These children present an affirmed sense of self. Their different rhetorical posturing, sometimes marked by their use of pronouns, are impressive: They may use *I* to describe an action, feeling, or point of view (e.g., “I love school”); *we* to describe a shared value, membership in a group activity, a member of a community, or their shifts to third person; and *she*, *he*, and *they* to adopt a more distant stance or persona. (Maguire & Graves, 2001, p. 588)

Even though they are young, children quickly learn how to position themselves in a socially acceptable way. This article reminds me of my granddaughter who is perfectly bilingual in English and Japanese. When she was 5 years old, she said to me in Japanese, “買いたいような気がする” (kитай you na ki ga suru, trans. I feel like I might want to buy that book) which is a somewhat indirect expression of desire. Another time in Vancouver also when still 5 years old she asked me, “Please buy me this book!” which is a much more direct and emphatic mode of expression. I was very surprised by the way in which she switched from indirect to direct between languages. Similarly when I receive e-mails from her, depending on what language she chooses to write in, I notice these same differences in direct/indirectness. Writing expresses the notion of multiple identities and highlights the ways in which these are privileged or not in different social contexts. This research examines how mainstream forms of representation and power have marginalized those who are outside the dominant discourses.

According to Halliday (1985), “identity” is one aspect of interpersonal function. However, Ivanic & Camps (2001), through the examination of the writings and voices of six graduate students over the period of one year, argue that identity formation is a property of all three macrofunctions: “Ideational Function”, “Interpersonal Function” and “Textual Function”. They define these three functions (positionings): ideational positioning (locating oneself within a community by the use of specialized vocabulary), interpersonal positioning (locating oneself in a position relative to others in how one expresses oneself), and textual positioning (the way in which the writer constructs sentences, phrasing and formatting of the text in order to connect with the reader in a certain way and express a specific meaning). These positionings are a function of the multiple voices that each of us possess. They are interested in how writers are positioned by the discourse they draw on in their actual writing. “Those learning to write in a second

language need the opportunity to weigh both the risks associated with resisting dominant conventions and patterns of privileging and the risks associated with accommodating to them uncritically” (p. 31). For me, writing always demanded a double burden that is risky and unknown. First, recognizing that my voice type is acceptable or unacceptable in Canadian culture and second, recognizing my voice type is acceptable or alien in academic discourse. I am still struggling with positioning in my writing.

Prior (1995) studied the writing of three students in graduate seminars through interviews, observations and an examination of their writing. Prior found that tasks are shaped by the multiple histories, activities and goals that participants bring to and create within seminars. One of the professors of the graduate students involved in this research complains about the student’s writing:

One of the problems with Far Eastern students and to a certain extent some European students who come here is they have trouble with prepositions, and they leave them out, so you don’t know essentially what the referent is, so you think you’re on the right track halfway through the sentence and then the predicate comes and you begin to wonder, “Is that what they really meant?” they haven’t specified this, that, the, a, so you’re not exactly sure that the thought is carried through, my only help was, tell her to keep on writing. (Prior, 1995, p. 69)

There is also a matter of where Asian ambiguity, derived from cultural values, and English clarity meet but more importantly where they do not meet. Prior’s research unfolds a specific academic context that generates academic writing tasks as speech genres that shape academic activity and discourse that is situated and interactional.

Schneider & Fujishima (1995) investigated the academic writing problems facing one Chinese graduate student in the United States via journal entries, interviews and observation. He was unable to express himself proficiently in English, lacked interest in U.S. culture, lacked socialization outside of class and lacked compensatory strategies. All of these factors contributed to his failure. However, he was a remarkably diligent student who attended every class, completed his readings and exercises on time. Schneider & Fujishima comment that: "It appears, then, that ESL instructors, administrators, and course developers have a responsibility to resist the isolationist tendencies of some academic departments in higher education" (p. 21). This Chinese student's culturally derived "diligence makes difference" strategy of attending every class is more valued in China than in the United States.

In a study of Asian students' writing, Zamel (1997) proposes helping teachers develop transcultural understanding so that they can avoid judging other culture's students as problematic. In Zamel's paper, one Vietnamese student writes in her journal:

Writing in English gives me a chance to step out and review my mother tongue. My progress in English has miraculously and simultaneously improved my Vietnamese. During my last term I can see changes in my attitudes toward writing. Journal writing and sharing help me to find out I'm not alone in my struggle with writing, with establishing my own voice... Writing can be liberating and joyful... (Zamel, 1997, p. 349)

Zamel also quotes Fox who mentions the following about Japanese: "Fox (1994) slips into a discussion of the problematic nature of the "Japanese" approach to thinking, which places value on subtlety and strategies of indirection" (p. 342).

Contrastive rhetoric also offers some tools towards understanding the ESL classroom. Ramanathan & Kaplan (1996) stress the importance of listening to students' L1 voices in order to understand their composition and of being critical of Western concepts so that we do not "assume that the linear thesis-driven model is a universal rhetorical structure" (p. 25). Ethnographic study (Bloch & Chi, 1995; Chiseri-Strater, 1991; Connor, 1996; Kubota, 1999) is recognizing the interwoven complexity of language and identity. Connor (1996) explains:

Kubota found that the Japanese students indeed tended to place the main idea at the end of paragraphs (i.e. Hinds's inductive style), but when asked to evaluate styles, they claimed to prefer the deductive style. About half of the Japanese students, when asked about their perceptions about differences between English and Japanese, pointed out a difference between Japanese and English and offered judgments such as the following: "Japanese text is indirect, ambiguous, roundabout, illogical, digressive, has the main idea at the end, and contains a long introductory remark and long, complex sentences; English is direct, clear, logical, has the main idea stated at the beginning and has unity in the paragraph and little digression. (Connor, 1996, p. 44)

When Japanese students write, their temporal patterns and social identity are reflected in their work.

De Costa (2007) investigated 35 first year GP (General Paper) students of Chinese ethnicity in Singapore. Writing samples from each of the students were collected and analyzed in order to understand personal identity and collective identity. He found that the students more often used "I" as representative (eg. we, us, our) than "I" as originator

(eg. I, me, my), suggesting that these Chinese students referred to their identity more often in a collective manner. De Costa raises the point of differences in writing styles:

Third, dialogue sensitizes us to the need to exercise prudence while emphasizing the Western model of writing in our classrooms. This is because in teaching this Western model, we need to be careful not to run down the writing style of Chinese. Instead of putting down or ignoring the existence of a collective identity, we should use our knowledge of this type of identity as an effective point of contrast to highlight the differences between the two writing cultures and to underline how adopting a personal identity would be most appropriate for argumentative writing. (De Costa, 2007, p. 229)

I would mirror De Costa's notion of not running down the Chinese writing style, but say that Japanese learners of English should not run down their own writing styles or those prevalent in the English language but rather to embrace where the differences exist and use these differences as a starting point for investigating and negotiating one's own personal identity.

In summary, writing illustrates an individual's social, cultural and historical background, showcasing rhetorical differences, differences in positioning, voice, cultural values, beliefs and attitudes that negotiate meaning constructed through dominant discourses. Therefore, to research second language writing, we need to be sensitive to this complexity and address as completely as we can these multiple facets.

Autoethnography

苦しみを 光に変えて 蛍飛ぶ
Life becomes cruel
Each pain turns into bright light
Fireflies at night

Ellis & Bochner (2000) say, “Autoethnography is an autobiographical genre of writing and research that displays multiple layers of consciousness, connecting the personal to the cultural” (p. 739). Autoethnography stands at the intersection of three genres. Firstly, that the insider has access to the innately understood cultural mannerisms, commonly called “insider autoethnography”. Secondly, that the outsider who is a member of the minority in a culture has a unique view that isn’t quite insider, but yet isn’t quite outsider, and this is commonly called “ethnic autobiography”. Thirdly, where anthropologists insert their own personal experiences into their ethnographic writing and discuss their interactions and self-actions in the context of the culture in which they are the outsiders, we have “autobiographical ethnography” (Reed-Danahay, 1997, p. 2). My personal situation is most suited to insider autoethnography and autobiographical ethnography.

Autoethnography is a research approach that draws on life stories and testimonials. It emerged from ethnographic research and includes an insider emphasis through the lens of writing and self-reflection (Reed-Danahay, 1997). These life stories are complex and always include “intricate mixture of witness accounts, confessions, and self-justifications [which] never simply stand for the protagonists but rather (re-)invent them” (Driessen, 1998, p. 10). One’s autobiography shares an inseparable link with one’s surroundings and to write autobiography is the way to find one’s personal ethnography, a story of identity that is rooted in a specific situation (Driessen, 1998; Ellis, 2004; Ellis & Flaherty, 1992; Kolker, 1996; Lather & Smithies, 1997; Ogulnick, 1998; Richardson,

2000; Russel, 1998; Spry, 2001; Tierney, 1998; Wang, 2004; Wright, 2003). When we think of our past as inseparable from our culture of origin, our autobiographies become autoethnographies. According to Pratt (1992) autoethnography is an effective way for subordinate people to express themselves against a dominant culture. It invites the collaboration of mixed values from both cultures, their own and the other.

The social sciences came to realize the interpretive turn (Bruner, 1990) and to display an identity to understand self, because in real life we cannot control everything that happens around us. Denzin & Lincoln (2000) talk about “the crisis of representation” and state, “There can be no value-free ethnography, no objective, dispassionate, value-neutral account of a culture and its ways” (p. 1054). This rejection of objective “truth” is becoming more accepted in postmodern circles of the academic world. Ellis (2000) views reliability and validity differently from traditional ethnography. “To me validity means that our work seeks verisimilitude: it evokes in readers a feeling that the experience described is lifelike, believable, and possible” (p. 751). This understanding of justification is well suited for the search of meaning rather than the search for objective truth. The narrative self as a research focus has been documented in the educational field (Bell, 2002; Clandinin & Connelly, 1995; Harklau, 2000; Liddle & Nakajima, 2000; Mori, 1997; Ochs & Capps, 2001; Simon-Maeda, 2004; Tamboukou, 2000). Clandinin & Connelly (1994), who established narrative theory, state, “The telling and retelling are reflexively related to living and reliving a story, and provide opportunities for growth, change, and resistance to our culture’s canonical narratives” (p. 418). Ellis (1997) says, “The ethnographic impulse has been characterized by “the gaze outward”, as Neumann (1996) says, “at worlds beyond own, as means of marking the social coordinates of a self” (Ellis, 1997, p. 132). The autobiographical impulse “gazes inward for a story of self, but ultimately retrieves a vantage point for interpreting culture”(Ellis, 1997, p. 173). The

boundary-crosser is given the privilege of having both an inward and outward gaze.

Mori's (1997) autobiography reveals her experience in Japan:

I did not learn how to write in Japanese because even at the private school I attended after seventh grade, Japanese language classes were taught by older men who had studied classical Japanese literature or Chinese poetry at the national universities before the war. They were the most conservative and traditional of all our teachers. In their classes, we read the works of famous authors and wrote essays to answer the questions like: "What is the theme?" "When does the main character realize the importance of morality?" "What important Buddhist philosophy is expressed in this passage?" All the writing we did for our extracurricular activities – for skits or school newspapers and magazines – was supervised by younger teachers who did not teach Japanese. (Mori, 1997, p. 168)

Like Mori, I too never learned how to write in Japanese in my academic environments. Therefore, Mori's personal autobiography is also social and cultural, because it depicts Japanese society and "Ethnographic I" (Ellis, 2004).

Ogulnick (1998) in her study of Japanese language acquisition processes writes in a narrative diary format that she calls autoethnography. Her book, "Onna rashiku" (like a woman) speaks of Japanese societal expectations toward women. This book is in many ways, 反面教師 (hanmen kyoushi, trans. a person by whose example we realize what not to do) and served as a motivation to me to do insider ethnography. Kubota (2005) criticizes inaccuracies in factual information in Ogulnick's writing such as things mentioned about the Tokugawa Period lasting until 1912, Fumiko Hayashi being referred to as "Fumiko Kobayashi" and a misrepresentation of burakumin. However, her insight

into Japanese ambiguous discourse made me think about my own understanding of Western discourse.

An understanding of the structure of the language gave me more room to negotiate and get out of uncomfortable situations, by accepting without really accepting, saying no without saying no, saying yes without meaning yes. We see this in the way I handled myself in response to Mr. Horikawa's constant invitations, which I perceived as both flirtatious and intrusive: although I was reluctant to say "no" directly, I was able to put him off indirectly, and thus say "no" in Japanese. My reading of his wife's reaction and questions also shows the beginnings of an awareness of the dynamic of others' feelings and nuances. More so than in earlier interactions, my grasp of what was going on was not just based on verbal understanding. "Subtle" forms of communication—intonation, hesitations, silence, facial expressions, ambiguous stock expressions—became more salient. (Ogulnick, 1998, p. 113)

The reason that I am reviewing her article is because it is clear that language learning goes beyond grammar and I am still not completely cognizant of Western cultural expectations. There are still many unspoken layered texts that Ogulnick did not gain an understanding of in Japan and in the same way there are many mysterious texts in Western culture that I am still unable to read.

In a recent autoethnography, Wang (2004) describes her intellectual and emotional struggles to find her “self” and her “identity”. Her journey between China and the United States allowed her to drift into the liminal space between those two cultures. Wang says, “A journey for a woman is first of all a journey within, in search of lost

voices and invisible traces. To some extent, this is a journey home for the return of what is repressed, excluded, and alienated” (p. 5). Wang’s paper is a very compelling autoethnography, which helped me realize I wanted to do a similar kind of autoethnography focusing on my self-journey. Wang (2004) explains her position as the third space: “Finally I am home, in a third space. Dancing home, through the body, down to the psyche, in the boats traveling along the river, the river of memory, the river across borders, the river flowing to unfamiliar shore” (p. 151).

Regarding the nature of autobiography, Neumann (1996) clarifies the autobiographical impulse as “gazes inward for a story of self, but ultimately retrieves a vantage point for interpreting culture” (p. 173). Autoethnography is often called both a method and a text. Wang’s inward and outward gaze that Neumann refers to is the method of autobiography and represents the insider/outsider view in the realm of autoethnography.

Lather & Smithies (1997) wrote, “Troubling the angels: Women living with HIV/AIDS” involving true stories about women who were diagnosed with AIDS and the stories of their personal growth, strength, courage, empowerment and the tribulations they encounter as they make inquiries about life while they wait for their lives to end.

Of course I’m mad as hell! And some days I’m scared to death. I’m not afraid of death. I’m afraid of the end. It’s a hideous way to die. I must stress that I won’t beat myself for being in this position. I didn’t do anything wrong to get this. I don’t think that God is punishing me. I’m not a lesbian as some people think. I’m not a slut. I am not an IV drug user. Simply stated, I am only guilty of being human and falling in love

with someone who unknowingly was sick or got sick. And then he died,
leaving me alone. (Lather & Smithies, 1997, p. 98)

In reading this book, I found that Lather and Smithies wrote in an emotional, sincere and compassionate manner that preserved the dignity of the women who contracted AIDS. I too felt compassion for these women who were entering this unwritten final chapter of their lives knowing how the story would end, but who still fought against futility, embracing the spirit of life.

思いやり 悲哀の川に 立ち昇る
On a lake of tears
Morning mist arises as
A shield of mercy

Moving between Japan and Canada, inward and outward, I gained a sense of the bigger picture as I relived, and refigured my situation from gaze inward and from gaze outward. In this sense, my diary is the text and the method of social construction connecting my past with the present. It involves recalling the story, as I presently interpret it, as a reflection of society and myself. All of my struggles and suffering in my quest for self-identification have meaning for me and perhaps for others. Hofstadter (2007) describes in his recent book “I Am a Strange Loop”, that being human means having a sense of other selves, and possessing compassion. “Another appealing etymology is that of “compassion”, which comes from Latin roots meaning “suffering along with”. These hidden messages echoing down the millennia stimulated me to explore this further” (Hofstadter, 2007, p. 345).

Being without suffering is to be without compassion and so I believe that my suffering has meaning; that of engendering compassion within me for the suffering of others; to

relate to others through suffering as a practice of living. I specifically chose autoethnography as the method and text for this research, because I want to “encourage compassion and promote dialogue” (Ellis & Bochner, 2000, p. 748). By writing emotionally and critically, I hope to invoke empathy in the reader and to give voice to marginalized discourses. As a boundary-crosser, by learning English, by speaking English, I become someone else. Kellman (2003) describes:

As much as flesh and blood, we are composed of and by words. If Homo sapiens is a species defined by language, then switching the language entails transforming the self. While it can be liberating, discarding one’s native tongue is also profoundly unsettling; it means constructing a new identity syllable by syllable. (Kellman, 2003, p. xiv)

This process cannot be described without emotional attachment. The text is represented through narrative discourse that represents insider/outsider views that reflect socially constructed identity. I think that this method/text of autoethnography is a way for marginalized persons express suffering, giving them a voice, and raising their plights to the eyes of others so that they can share compassion with those who live between or in the periphery of social spaces. According to Tierney (1998), “Autoethnography confronts dominant forms of representation and power in an attempt to reclaim, through self-reflective response, representational spaces that have marginalized those of us at the borders” (p. 66).

For all of these reasons I have chosen autoethnography as an important aspect of this research study. However, since I want to intersect my autoethnography from a Japanese woman’s point of view with the stories of other Japanese female students of a similar cultural background and language, I have included three additional female

participants. Therefore, this research has a hybrid design. I want to recognize female Japanese student's representational voices that are not mainstream voices. As a woman, I struggle in a patriarchy. I also experience painful learning struggles as an ambiguous, illogical Japanese student studying at Canadian University. As an autoethnographer, I want to examine both my ethnic identity and female identity in a larger context. I want to connect my own experiences to both Canadian and Japanese culture, examining my interactions with others in a self-reflexive manner through multiple layers of consciousness. "One of the main characteristics of an autoethnographic perspective is that the autoethnographer is a boundary-crosser and the role can be characterized as that of a dual identity" (Reed-Danahay, 1997, p. 3). As the boundary-crosser, I make strides to be the insider/outsider, the sufferer/alleviator of suffering, the autoethnographer/autoethnographee, and the silenced/voiced.

Rationale for the Study

今、全て 未完のパズル 落ち葉掻く
Unfinished puzzle
Contemporary embrace
Like leaves in autumn

I have a strong urge to theorize my lived experience about second language learning. Linguistic theory as compartmentalization of knowledge does not speak to my experiences and struggles learning English in Canada. While there is no theory that completely captures the nature of my struggles, theory and practice in concert serve as a basis for examining the events of my life and taking into account the nature of identity as it weaves and shifts through the fabric of life. However there is a great rift between theory and practice in second language learning and so part of the rationale is to bring both sides closer together. Leggo (1997) states, "Practice and theory need to ride in tandem, each supporting and complementing the other" (p. 11).

Trinh T. Minh-ha (2005) warns, "For the mainstream, theory and practice can only stand in mutual exclusion or submission: either your practice illustrates your theory, or your theory illustrates your practice. No independence" (p. 35). Trinh T. Minh-ha also gives more meaning to the notion of independence in saying, "independence is not separation. It means to stand on one's own, independently, and yet related" (p. 35). Second language theory must expand to include social, cultural, political and emotional dimensions in order to understand human practice that is inseparable from theories that are mutually affected phenomena.

Denzin (1992) explains the approach of the postmodern as not being about fixed representation and that meanings are changing from moment to moment and from context

to context. Moreover, Denzin describes the relationship between the postmodern and cultural studies:

A cultural studies that makes a difference builds on this second model of interpretation. It treats the personal as political. It works to connect personal troubles to public issues within a radical and plural democracy that regards personal troubles as the site of struggle. It seeks to give a voice to the voiceless, as it deconstructs those popular culture texts that reproduce stereotypes about the powerless. (Denzin, 1992, p. 23)

By turning to autoethnography, I reveal relationships between my personal self and culture that give a voice to that which does not dwell in plain sight of the dominant members of society; social, political, cultural and ideological values that affect the lives of the marginalized minority; connecting the realms of theory and practice through reflexive voices. Living in the moment with questions about the social and political dimensions that accompany language, dwelling on them, silently seeking meaning; not unlike Japanese women who encounter difference in all dimensions of language and identity, struggling silently to find/make meaning.

My research, done through an autoethnographic lens, speaks to the issue of a connection between theory in second language learning and identity construction and practice as everyday living as represented through one's own voice as both an act of reflection and an act of compassion; of giving a platform for my multiple voices to be heard. Similarly, Pennycook (2001) talks about looking at applied linguistics in all its forms, "as a constant reciprocal relationship between theory and practice" (p. 3) further clarifying this connection by quoting critical theorist Simon (1992) who described this as,

“that continuous reflexive integration of thought, desire, and action sometimes referred to as ‘praxis’ ” (p. 49).

Ellis & Flaherty (1992) state, “subjectivity is situated such that the voices in our heads and the feelings in our bodies are linked to political, cultural, and historical contexts” (p. 4). While traditional academic standards value unemotional writing observed through an objective eye in pursuit of objective truth, when I speak of attempting to gain an understanding of the connection between language, and human identity, emotion, as an inseparable notion, must also be considered and discussed. Also, objectivity is not a component of postmodern philosophy and so we cannot simply seek out “truth” but instead we inquire about differences, and the multiplicity of being. Therefore in my research, praxis represents the interconnectedness of theory, language, emotion, gender, ideology, culture, the social, the political and identity.

Trinh T. Minh-ha (1992) says, “For a long time our ethnicity and our femininity have made us the objects of contempt; now the situation is turned around: we are supposed to search for them and recover them as lost properties” (p. 240). I have a sense of margins that come from the experience being a woman in Japan. Japanese language is full of gender discriminative expressions toward women. In Japan’s male-centered society, my female identity cannot be free from patriarchal values, feeling inferior and negative. I want to find my female identity and face the female struggles that are embedded in my ethnic identity, because if I were a man, I might not have studied English. Butler (2001) acknowledges Foucault’s (1997) contribution to feminist theory, “According to Foucault, one of the first tasks of critique is to discern the relation ‘between mechanisms of coercion and elements of knowledge’ ” (p. 11). My woman’s voice, Japanese ideology, my ethnic identity and my past history are all intertwined. This

is also a case study about four Japanese women whose identities change in the “eternal present that contains both past and future” (Trinh, 2005, p. 35).

The reason why I designed this hybrid autoethnography and case study is because identity has two opposing meanings; one pertaining to identifying as being similar, and the other pertaining to being distinct. Grossberg (1994) discusses these notions of identity: “The first assumes that there is some intrinsic and essential content to any particular identity which can be traced back to some authentic common origin or structure of experience” (p. 12). Grossberg continues on,

The second emphasizes the impossibility of such fully constituted, separate and distinct identities. It denies the existence of authentic and originary content based in a universally shared origin or experience. Struggles over identity no longer involve questions of adequacy or distortion but, rather, of the politics of difference and representation. (Grossberg, 1994, p. 13)

Therefore, to investigate the first notion of social identity I had to find women who shared a similar cultural background; voices like my own. This research is an autoethnography in which I have examined my own and my participants’ transformational self-discovery to illustrate the second notion of unstable identity. I invited three female Japanese students who had come to study at a Canadian University, taking either ESL, undergraduate, or graduate courses at the same time, in order to learn about them and myself. However, I am not only looking at the matter of my identity and how I change, I am determined to examine how we grow during the course of this research while raising our awareness socially, politically and culturally. I also believe that the coming-to-realize that this awareness engenders will spark “catalytic validity” (Lather, 1991) among my participants.

From the perspective of Sartre's existentialism, self and other are both mutually affected and constructed.

In summary, this thesis is about discourse that extends beyond grammar, sentence, morpheme and syntax. This discourse goes beyond the classroom in which these students practice and learn making meaningful use of English. It dictates in what way we choose to go about doing things. It is a house of mirrors in which we see our many distorted selves, doubled and redoubled, negotiating each self and investing time as we search for meaning that falls within the percepts of our social discourse. I do not concur with Saussure's (1966) concept of the signifier and the signified and the concept of the linguistic system that he claims guarantees the meaning of these signs within each system. Language is not something that we think of as being a neutral method of communication but is something that we understand with respect to its socially and culturally derived meaning (Heller, 1987, 1999). Foucault (1979, 1994) and Derrida (1976, 1988) contributed greatly towards the understanding of the philosophy of language, knowledge, science and the world. "In any discursive formation, one finds a specific relation between science and knowledge-----in that space of interplay, that the relations of ideology to the sciences are established" (Foucault, 1994, p. 185).

Cultural theorist, Stuart Hall (1996) states:

I agree with Foucault that what we require here is not a theory of the knowing subject, but rather a theory of discursive practice. However, I believe that what this decentering requires—as the evolution of Foucault's work clearly shows—is not abandonment or abolition of 'the subject', but a reconceptualization—thinking it in its new, displaced or decentered position within the paradigm. (Hall, 1996, p. 2)

Because I am taking a postmodern theoretical stance that is different than much traditional SLA research I consider ethnicity, power, status, gender, language and class as factors in the continued development of their identity as they learn English. Motivation is a very complex and socially constructed factor so I have chosen instead to consider Norton's (2000) concept of investment of my participant's pursuit of the study of English. Norton focused on factors of power and investment in her research of the identity construction of immigrant students. I choose to focus on the Japanese language, which conceals cultural values and beliefs, and dictates how they invest time and money as Japanese students studying English in Canada.

At the moment, in the area of second language learning, there is little research that includes learner's autoethnography and so I find that for the reasons I stated with regards to the importance of autoethnography, that this is of pivotal importance toward studying learners' identities and their language learning.

My three main research questions are:

What does it mean for a Japanese woman to study English?

What stories of Japanese students emerge in in-between spaces?

How do Japanese metaphors relate to Japanese women's identity construction?

From my point of view, these questions are not simple to answer and so in order to find meaningful responses I must delve deeply within the contexts of my participants and my own life to learn from our stories so that I might bear witness to the tapestry that is our existence.

CHAPTER 3: MY RESEARCH JOURNEY: CONNECTING OUR VOICES

A journey for a woman is first of all a journey within, in search of lost voices and invisible traces. To some extent, this is a journey home for the return of what is repressed, excluded, and alienated. (Wang, 2004, p.5).

What we are calling a hybrid construction is an utterance that belongs, by its grammatical and compositional markers, to a single speaker, but that actually contains mixed within it two utterances, two speech manners, two styles, two languages, two semantic and axiological belief systems. (Bakhtin, 1981, p.304)

故郷の 味分けながら 夢を織る
Coming together
Breaking bread with my daughters
Delving into dreams

Rie, Yoko and Aya: Three Female Research Participants

As described earlier, this research study combines an autoethnography in which I examine my own experiences as a Japanese woman studying and teaching in Canada, with a case study approach of three other Japanese women who study English in a Canadian university. I will begin this section by describing these research participants. I planned to research Japanese female students who studied for more than one year, rather than for just a short period. I was able to recruit these students with the help of some of my colleagues who teach in the ESL program. They described my study to their female Japanese students who were attending ESL classes and following that, three Japanese women came to my office individually, asking if they might participate in my research. The three women who came to my office have the pseudonyms, Rie, Yoko, and Aya. They were the only women who came to my office in response to my request for participants.

Rie was a graduate student in applied linguistics as well as a high school teacher of English in Japan, Yoko was an undergraduate student in political science, and Aya was an ESL student who was attempting to enroll in an undergraduate biology program. They all wanted to talk with me in Japanese about themselves and about their experiences in Canada, each looking somewhat lonely in the cold, bleak and unfamiliar Canadian winter. So the participants in this research include me, a researcher, Japanese instructor at a university, and PhD student as well as these three students.

書くたびに 未知の風景 汽車の窓
From the train window
Writing my life's scenery
Unknown countryside

Diaries: Hearing Stories

In order to read their stories, to begin to engage with their (and my) stories, I invited my participants to keep diaries, writing in Japanese, regarding their day-to-day experiences as they negotiated the multiple contexts of Canadian life on and off campus. At the same time I also wrote a diary. The participants were encouraged to write in their diaries, entries of any length but were also asked to make at least three entries per week. Since diary writing tends to evoke writing about daily activities in an informal style and encourages one to express feelings, I believe that diary research is suited to help me engage with the personal feelings of my participants. Learning English has changed me so much, but many aspects of my social identity are unconscious and remain unclear. Through diary writing, I can find parts of my voice among my multiple voices, as my diary writing evokes relationally intertwined past, present and future.

Trinh T. Minh-ha (1989) declares, "Writing weaves into language the complex relations of a subject caught between the problems of race and gender and the practice of literature as the very place where social alienation is thwarted differently according to each specific context" (p. 6). In a diary that critically and reflexively unearths the personal memories of a teacher, while working with children in her class, Hankins (1998) provides an evocative and powerful expression of her diary research. The personal and teaching diaries that Hankins kept throughout the time during which she interacted with three special students forced her to deal with her prejudices. Impressionistic, subjective and emotional interpretations make up much of the context in diaries and allow researchers to interpret them from multiple perspectives. Diary research can be rich

resources for both the teacher/researcher and student to develop a mutual self-understanding (Peirce, 1994). All of the diaries were written primarily in Japanese because my participants felt most comfortable expressing their feelings and thoughts in their native language. However, there are still portions of their diaries that they wrote in English. Whenever they write in English I use (WIE) and underline the passage written in English. I translated their diaries from Japanese into English myself. This process involved the creation of a new text from an original text that reflects my own experiences and biases. Nishizawa (2002) clearly warns us that translation is neither neutral nor a straightforward process and indeed this process is very layered. After I performed my own initial translation, Michael Blakely, my renderer, polished it towards a natural style of English in a Canadian context, because sometimes my English is not what might be considered by many to be the type of English expected by people in a Canadian context. I would also say that in the same way Bakhtin speaks of multiple voices, these translations reflect multiple biases. Not only the bias of the original writer, but of myself as a translator, and that of my editor, and of all those voices/biases, which have influenced our own.

Rendering

Michael Blakely is a Canadian and native speaker of English who has been studying Japanese as a second language since 1999. Michael earned his undergraduate degree in mathematics with a minor in Japanese from Carleton University in 2006 and is currently studying as a pre-service mathematics and computer science secondary school teacher in the Teacher Education program (B.Ed.) at the University of Ottawa. I met Michael Blakely in September 2003 as a student in my Intermediate (second year) Japanese class. At the time I was looking for a teaching assistant who had a competent understanding of how to operate computers to draw charts using a word processor, produce electronic

markbooks as well as to proofread some of my written work. He was an undergraduate mathematics student and was very enthusiastic about studying Japanese language and culture and interested in the work I was doing. As we worked together, I noticed that Michael was able to understand what I wanted to express in colloquial English. I have always been frustrated by the gap between what I am thinking and what I am able to say in English and so his ability to bridge that gap made it possible for me to be more expressive. He was able to transform my translations of the original Japanese texts of the multiple data sources into a style in English that was more representative of the participants' colloquial Japanese expressions. When he would read my translations, he would often ask, "What do you mean by this?" Such questions helped me to refine the meaning of what I was trying to convey. His sensitivity to my thinking has contributed a great deal to this thesis. When he initially started working with me, he was a modernist, with a very logical, Western way of thinking. However, over time he has come to embrace a more postmodern philosophy, and his discourse has become more ambiguous in many ways. Moreover he says that his previous understanding of English has become somewhat compromised and influenced by Japanese social and cultural values, as well as the countless instances of the negotiation of meaning in my discourse. In this way, we both live in an in-between space.

Along with my own diary entries I wrote haiku to go along with each one as well as an English interpretation of the haiku. I invited my participants to write haiku if they felt inspired to do so but I did not make it a requirement in their diaries. I believe that they were afraid to engage in writing haiku, perhaps because it holds a somewhat authoritative nuance in Japanese culture, even though I chose to disrupt the traditional rules associated with haiku.

Rie's diary was the longest, perhaps reflecting her status as a Japanese high school English teacher. She wrote in great detail about her daily events. Yoko's diary reflected her creativity and demonstrated confidence in her English by employing many colloquial and slang terms that she has learned in Canada. Aya's diary was very sensitive and emotional. She often wrote about painful and distressing experiences that were going on in her academic or personal life.

Conversations: Talking Together

In addition to the diaries, my participants and I met together to share our second language learning experiences in Canada. These discussions, during which we shared food and stories, took place at the convenience of the participants, a total of four times over the course of approximately one year. The diary entries served to motivate our collective discussions. I collected their diaries before we met in the discussion groups, in order to make copies of them and so that I could read them prior to our discussion, returning their diaries during the meetings. Our group discussions lasted between four and seven hours in length. I made audio recordings of our conversations and these recordings were transcribed. During group discussions our conversations touched on many wide ranging topics including second language learning, current events, our current lives as well as other personal topics. Because of the length of our group discussions the transcriptions are rather long.

The group discussion meetings took place on the following dates:

First meeting: February 26, 2006

Second meeting: October 22, 2006

Third meeting: December 23, 2006

Fourth meeting: May 26, 2007

In depth interviews: Autobiographical selves

I also conducted in-depth interviews with each of my participants. In my office, the first interview, which focused on their autobiographical selves (Ivanic, 1997), occurred at the beginning of my research. I met Yoko on January 15, 2006, Rie on January 20, 2006 and Aya on January 29, 2006. Each interview lasted approximately one hour. I felt a sense of synchronicity of 縁 (en, trans. fate) with them. I will discuss this concept further in my discussion section. One reason for the early interviews was to begin to establish a relationship with the participants. The interviews were not a series of planned questions but rather evolved as conversations. Our topics of conversation were mainly our experiences as English language learners both in Japan and in Canada as well as current events in our personal lives.

A second individual interview was conducted near the end of the study after the third group meeting. The purpose and expectation of this second individual interview was to confirm our understandings and share our opinions about emergent topics. The second individual interviews were held with Rie, Aya and Yoko on December 23, 2006, January 7, 2007 and January 27, 2007 respectively. I also acted as a counselor for them by arranging individual meetings, usually at a coffee shop or my house, in order to talk about subjects that my participants needed to discuss immediately. We also exchanged many e-mail messages, talking about various issues that had come up in their personal and academic lives. The formats for diary, dialogue, e-mail and quotes are included in page 81 and also in appendix A.

Presenting our voices: Engaging with the data

In working with diaries, the transcripts of the group meetings and the interviews I am drawing on multiple identities, culture, pedagogy and activities that are embedded in personal and social identity. Analyzing their diaries, Ivanic's writing theory is helpful to understand the autobiographical, discursal and authorial selves of my participants as well as myself. In particular with respect to the discursal self, I am focusing on the conceptual metaphors that my participants wrote about in their diaries. Their authorial selves are evidenced in the stances that they have taken and the attitudes that they have developed. There have been many other points of interest that have emerged from our engagements and together we have re-visited aspects of the diaries and group discussions to further share our interpretations and understandings. Our social constructions and personal selves have changed having intersected with each other. In order to understand these emergent identities I have drawn on Bhabha's (1990) notion of hybridity as he expresses it:

But for me the importance of hybridity is not to be able to trace two original moments from which the third emerges, rather hybridity to me is the 'third space' which enables other positions to emerge. This third space displaces the histories that constitute it, and sets up new structures of authority, new political initiatives, which are inadequately understood through received wisdom. (Bhabha, 1990, p. 211)

Through my research, I am hoping to understand the social identities as well as the individually created hybrid voices of female Japanese students who are struggling in a different land. Through negotiation of meanings, through consciously recognizing previously unconscious metaphors, through allowing space for the intermingling of our

stories, lives and voices, these students and I have experienced unexpected meaning in this autoethnographic study. I hope that my research contributes to an understanding of the ways in which we are transformed in the process of learning English.

Given the fact that when I present my research data in the next chapter I will be using data from interviews, from our group discussions, from our diaries, and e-mail, I have chosen to denote each data source with its own font and style as I define it now.

Discursive genre and presentation style

Interview

Interviews are written in a dialogic style, single-spaced, in Times New Roman (12 pt) font with a left margin indentation of 1.02 centimeters.

Example:

Yoko: Yes. I feel safer and mentally stable feeling that I have some place to return to. We call everyday and my sex life is so much better than before. He tries to satisfy me and he wants to enjoy it together. Before him, the boys that I was with were very self-centered to satisfy their own needs. But, Ken wants us to both enjoy things equally. I am entering a new stage of an exciting sex life.

Group Conversations

Conversations are written in a dialogic style, single-spaced, in Times New Roman (12 pt) font with a left margin indentation of 1.02 centimeters.

Example:

Yoko: Why are Japanese men so cold?

Rie: They might be kind but they might be very frustrated with things like the ranking of the school they are working at and so it ends up that they take out their frustration on the weakest people there, which usually ends up some new young female teacher.

Yoko: Japanese men are childish. 50 to 65-year old men are the worst. Don't you think so? They (マザコン) are spoiled by society, their parents and don't suffer as much as women.

Diary

Diary entries are written in Times New Roman (12 pt) font and single-spaced.

Example:

Aya's diary, March 11th, 2006

This second language proficiency test is the worst! I'm giving the finger to the test!!(WIE) The topic (WIE) was cities. My goal (WIE) this time was to get 50% overall but I couldn't get even 40%. My essay was terrible. My writing was really bad and I don't think it makes sense at all. (WIE) This summer I want to take the 1300 course for credit. But I no way, I suck. Why am I so bad at writing? This is perhaps not because of English but perhaps because of my lack of ability in Japanese. Even though I have improved my English a lot, it has been impossible for me to get a good score on the second language proficiency test. I don't like myself; I'm irritated with myself. To take ESL 1300 means that I will be able to be a regular student next September. This also means I will graduate when I am 25-years old. My parents pay for my education so I don't want to go that long. Tomorrow I have a speaking class but I'm not enthusiastic about it. I hate this second language proficiency test!!!

E-mail

E-mail is double-spaced and written in Arial (12 pt) font.

Example:

What is the definition of femininity?

"I don't think that it has a negative connotation. Both inwardly and outwardly, a woman should know how to wear clothes, how to act, how to behave and walk; it all needs to be feminine. I think that smart women should use their gender effectively. My image of femininity is elegant, peaceful, harmonious and quiet. On the outside she should appear harmonious, but on the inside she should know how to deal with men and be able to seize power from them without causing a fuss."

CHAPTER 4: HAIKU / EMERGING SELF

A poem can't free us from the struggle for existence, but it can uncover desires and appetites buried under the accumulating emergencies of our lives, the fabricated wants and needs we have had urged on us, have accepted as our own. It's not a philosophical or psychological blueprint; it's an instrument for embodied experiences. (Rich, 1993, p.12-13)

In my poetry I seek to dispel silence by disclosing possibilities for presence. (Leggo, 2005, p.111)

生と死の 輪廻歌って 泣く俳句
Transient nothingness
Consigned to isolation
So he cries haiku

Haiku is a popular form of Japanese poetry that employs a 5-7-5-syllable structure and often draws on themes of seasons, nature, feelings, and life experiences. Haiku also draws heavily on the Japanese speech style, which is very ambiguous and requires the listener to have the necessary cultural knowledge to interpret the speaker's intended meaning. Because of my Japanese background, I have much experience expressing myself using haiku and find it a comfortable method to express what I cannot say otherwise. When I was three years old, my father was committed to a sanatorium because of his contagious tuberculosis. He remained in isolation for twenty-three years, including most of my life at that time, until he died at the age of fifty-four. During the long period of physical isolation and loneliness, he pursued a few intellectual and artistic interests as well as common hobbies. He played Go (Japanese chess) with other patients, he collected stamps, and he began to write haiku on a regular basis under a penname. He would often write me letters with interesting stamps on them, and would always include a haiku that expressed his pride in my accomplishments, which encouraged me. In particular, I remember when I brought my first boyfriend to see him; after that he struggled for an entire week to write an appropriate haiku for me. In his haiku, he described how beautiful I looked among the falling cherry blossoms. It was very touching.

However, my use of haiku is different from the traditional usage. Following the example of Tawara Machi (1987), a Japanese poet who disrupted the established constraints of poetic form, I have taken the liberty to create haiku that reflect my changing values both Canadian and Japanese and to express this transformation into a

new set of ideals. Senryuu takes the same form as haiku, but doesn't need "kigo" (seasonal words) and is considered to be lower than haiku in poetic value, because it expresses the feelings of ordinary people, their humor, current affairs and politics. Haiku is thought of as dealing with deeper truths; at least truths as they are seen from a Japanese perspective. From my postmodern stance, the traditional posture does not make sense to me, because all poetic expression has the same meaningful status. I refuse to follow the traditional categorization. Therefore I call all my poems haiku, even though some of my haiku are missing the seasonal words, commonly associated with haiku. For me, hope can be spring, sadness can be autumn, joy can be summer and pain and endurance can be winter. Usually haiku prefers literal accuracy, allowing the mind to sense what is happening while avoiding adjectives and adverbs. The desire to see the nature of what is beyond our control and the desire for brevity is deeply rooted in Japanese culture. Masao Abe (1995) describes the traditional Japanese view of truth as "As-It-Isness":

Buddhism, which has nourished Japanese spirituality since the sixth century, deepened this original view of truth. Buddhism clearly denies the existence of something universal, rational, or transcendental behind or beyond facts. It realizes the "nothingness" as the basis of facts. This means an individual fact is completely and definitely realized as it is---irreducible to anything---through the realization of "nothingness". (Abe, 1995, p. 309)

I understand now, the reason why my father found consolation in creating haiku in his isolated hospital room, because his misery as an individual is equal to human suffering in its as-it-is-ness.

Haiku adapts to experimentation with various devices---while Zen-inspired simplicity continues to inform and instruct us that a poem that is too extravagant with words may risk putting an over-played description between the reader and the lived experience the poet hopes to capture and convey. (Russell, 2003, p. 94)

When I was young, I went to an elementary school summer camp. There, our gymnastics teacher taught us the haiku, 夏草や兵どもが夢の跡 (natsukusaya tsuwamonodomoga yumenoato, trans. summer grasses, traces of dreams, of ancient warriors) by a famous poet, Matsuo Basho (1644-94). I liked this haiku very much and thought it was very appealing. This expression depicts the scene of what was once a battlefield where many courageous samurai fought, centuries ago. Today, the field is covered in tall summer weeds, with no sign of the great battle that took place centuries ago. One of the activities was to play a war game of sorts, pretending that we were all samurai, fighting in that grand battle. We would hide among the tall summer weeds, only to pop out and hit our opponent with a small stick and say 切り捨てごめん (kirisutegomen, lit. I'm sorry for cutting and throwing you away). We felt as though we were experiencing the samurai's dream of defeating all enemies as well as the feeling of sadness of the temporal life of not only the samurai, but of all living things. It seems to me that this haiku possesses the vertical axis of the past as well as horizontal axis of the present. From childhood, Japanese people learn about haiku on many occasions.

However, an exact translation from Japanese haiku to English haiku is almost impossible, because of the differences in cultural backgrounds between the West and Japan. It was a constant struggle to find a way to make sense and convey meaning suitably in both Japanese and English. Spivak (1992) expresses her thoughts about the

notion of translation, “Rhetoric must work in the silence between and around words in order to see what works and how much” (p. 179). I would suggest that the relationship between rhetoric and logic should be performed in an ethical way, with love and respect for the original work. In the poetic discourse of haiku, I am able to go from the space of ambiguity into momentary clarity, back and forth. This back and forth generates another space akin to Bhabha’s (1990) third space, “which enables other positions to emerge” (p. 211).

If we are born in a place where Christianity is the dominant religion, then we may believe in original sin and that we are innately evil.

This is what the despair which wills desperately to be itself is not willing to hope. It has convinced itself that this thorn in the flesh gnaws so profoundly that he cannot abstract it—no matter whether this is actually so or his passion makes it true for him, and so he is willing to accept it as it were eternally”. (Kierkegaard, 1954, p. 204)

Alternatively, consider being born in a dominantly Buddhist region. A few years ago, I watched an interview with the famous Japanese author Minakami Tsutomu. I remember very clearly when the interviewer asked him what his life was like, he replied, “この世は煉獄” (kono yo wa rengoku, trans. this world is purgatory/hell). His life was truly full of pain. He was born into a poor family, and so he could not go to school unless he became an apprentice at a shrine. He did not last long there; his jobs mostly ended in failure; his company ended in failure; he married and divorced; he suffered tragedy in so many different parts of his life. After WWII, he found a mentor who was an author, who helped him become a writer; finally he had found his calling. His books were met with much praise, and he wrote mostly about social issues that criticized Japanese society.

Minakami Tsutomu's mentor made a huge difference in his life and gave him a reason to be—to write about and bring to the surface, the pain and troubles of others. From pain, comes a contradiction, a life of bringing to light, the pain and suffering of others, and the life in which one ends the lives of others. This contradictory nature is an important facet of the nature of Zen.

Thus, in Zen, the attitude of compassion is liberated by ridding one of one's confidence in the ability of reason to aid in obtaining enlightenment, the fruit of which is compassion itself. In this light, it is taught that rational striving is of no avail. And in fact keeps one from transformation. Thus, true love and community are possible only after the will of controlling reason has been abandoned. (Donkel, 1992, p. 192)

The way in which Minakami suffered in the context of Zen might have led him to promote compassion for others, having abandoned reason. According to Kristeva (1984), "The logic is one from which the subject is absent and it is through this very absence that the subject reveals himself" (p. 214). Where Kierkegaard was explicit in viewing the meaning of life being as suffering Western theology, Minakami implicitly wrote about this concept through his books. Kierkegaard described suffering as being a state of escaping from one's self or being one's self.

However, how can I stay in myself? To know myself well is the most difficult task, full of mystery, conflicts of desires and contradiction. Also, myself shifts constantly in relation to my environment and my experiences and time. I only try to know my momentary self. The implicit theme of my haiku might be the human suffering that Minakami Tsutomu had described as knowing no borders. As human beings, we all suffer through the life/death process equally in a way that is beyond our control. Haiku

thus allows me to feel and express the contradictory emotions that accompany my story.
Contradiction of identity may create new spaces for haiku.

So within this saturated if not already closed socio-symbolic order, poetry—more precisely, poetic language—reminds us of its eternal function: to introduce through the symbolic that which works on, moves through, and threatens it. The theory of the unconscious seeks the very thing that poetic language practices within and against the social order: the ultimate means of its transformation or subversion, the precondition for its survival and revolution. (Kristeva, 1984, p. 81)

I want my haiku to invite the symbolic and the semiotic to intermix, to become an expression of human feeling. As a woman in a largely paternally-dominant world, when I use symbolic language I find myself cornered by words that are not my own. Haiku may allow me to escape from this structure, letting me fly above the abundance of symbolic language, prevalent in both Japanese and Western culture.

The following haiku expresses the challenge placed upon women to become attached to a man before it is considered, “too late” to marry. I disagree strongly with the notion that women may be called defeated dogs for simply not marrying before some arbitrarily chosen age. Symbolic language does not convey the pain and agony that women experience accurately enough. An aesthetic and creative space helps the semiotic voice of women bubble to the surface so that it may be heard clearly.

捨て犬に 落ちなきやなれぬ 自由人
If like a stray dog,
I could do what'er I please,
Then I could be free
(Yoshimoto, 2005, p. 28)

This next haiku is about human suffering and misunderstandings. In 2005 I wrote a winter diary, keeping track of my every day experiences and thoughts. This particular haiku was written for a diary entry in which I talked about the cruelty of inflicting an atomic bomb on any population of people. I also mentioned a memory I had of a former friend who believed that the atomic bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki were good things because they prevented more people from dying. I was desperate not to be misunderstood by him, desperate to communicate with him what I really felt about those incidents. In the end, we could not see eye-to-eye and so we went our separate ways. It had been that day that we talked, that it snowed very much, and I thought of each snowflake as a life lost to the bombs dropped, an endless swirl of white falling to the ground, each one unique and beautiful in its own way.

さよならの 視野一杯に 光る雪
A farewell address
A snowflake for each lost life
Western episteme

In 2004, I wrote a haiku about the suffering of Japanese soldiers who had to die, like cherry blossoms falling to the ground.

桜菊 兵士を糧に 咲き誇る
Cherry blossoms and
Chrysanthemums, nurtured by
Fallen soldier's blood
(Yoshimoto, 2004, p. 26)

The following set of haiku is an expression of the suffering of various women in various roles, in various ways. The use of semiotics in these haiku expresses the varied but low positions of women in Japanese society.

棘の海 藻屑となって 女ゆえ
Ocean of language
Perilous whirlpools abound
Graveyard of women

母鎖 鍵はあるのに 眼閉じ
My dear mother chained
Refusing to be set free
Toils about the house

奥様は 埃まみれの 骨董品
Woman of the house
Relic, antique, on display
Covered, thick, in dust

雑巾は 絞れないほど 危機はらむ
A worn-out floor cloth
Being wrung day after day
Pushed to her wits' end

According to Barthes (1975), the pleasure of the text “is not the clarity of messages, the theater of emotions” (p. 66). I try to write my haiku sensitively and aesthetically, connecting symbolic language and semiotic language as mind and body. My haiku is generative of my third space that is full of pain and bliss.

CHAPTER 5: NARRATIVE SELF: WHAT STORIES OF JAPANESE STUDENTS EMERGE IN THE IN-BETWEEN SPACES?

The study of narrative is the study of the ways humans experience the world. This general concept is refined into the view that education and educational research is the construction and reconstruction of personal and social stories; learners, teachers, and researchers are storytellers and characters in their own and other's stories. (Clandinin & Connelly, 1990, p.2)

Because writing is always both a personal and a social act, then autobiographical writing is especially connected to lively relationships of family and kin and community and culture. Language is the spirit that animates conversation so that competing and contested beliefs and perspectives and values can be negotiated in an ongoing process of making meaning of experience. Because we are constituted in language, because we know ourselves in language, because we constantly write ourselves, and rewrite ourselves, and write our relations to others, and seek to understand the loneliness, alienation, and separateness we know always, we need frequent opportunities to engage in discursive practices, and an environment that nurtures desire, insatiable desire, to know, to quest/ion, to seek. (Leggo, 2005, p. 111)

Rie

ゴム鞠は 変貌自在 強さ秘め
Morphing rubber ball
Moves anywhere gracefully
A secret mission

Rie was born in Sendai, 2 hours northeast of Tokyo by bullet train. Sendai has a special dialect with expressions such as “oban desu” (Good evening) and “izui” (uncomfortable). Sendai is the capital of Miyagi prefecture and is well known as the “City of Trees”. Rie is the middle child of three children, with an older sister and a younger brother. She describes her personality in her diary and during our third meeting.

Besides, I am the middle child and I prefer to have a balance when examining circumstances. My personality was developed over the last 32 years and so I cannot change and it is impossible for me to have a decisive attitude and speak strongly. In general, sometimes I must speak clearly but I don’t because it’s not my way (Rie’s diary, October 23rd, 2006).

Rie: Because I am the middle child among my siblings, I find that I am capable of negotiating among my family without offending anyone. At school the expression of “nagaimono niwa makarero” (give in to those in power), comes in handy very often where I give into those with authority in order to get what I want (the third meeting, December 23rd, 2006).

I described her as being as flexible as a bamboo tree that bounces back from beneath the heavy snow.

Mika: Looking at Rie, I am reminded of the flexible bamboo tree. In the dead of winter, when the snow falls from the sky, it gathers on the back of the bamboo tree and causes it to bow down. It almost appears as though it would snap if one more snowflake were to fall on it, but it most often resiliently survives the winter and stand tall again in the spring (the third meeting, December 23rd, 2006).

Rie described herself as a rubber ball that changes shape to fit into tight spots when we celebrated the completion of her Master’s studies on April 27th, 2007. I guess that she

learned this way of living by dealing with being bullied by male teachers and the patriarchal structure of the Japanese educational system.

When she was a child, her mother gave her an electronic toy that reads children's stories and songs in English. She only distinctly remembers Humpty Dumpty, however. Since then she has been interested in English. In grade 8, one teacher was very different from the other teachers and on the first day she asked everybody, "May I have your name?" and nobody was able to answer because "What is your name?" is the phrase all Japanese students of English are taught to remember. At that time, the teacher became very cross with all the students, asking what they had been learning. This teacher used dialogues and pair work and brought many native speakers into the classroom to give the students many opportunities to be able to speak English. When she was able to use the phrase "I am fond of ..." she remembers being so happy. In the summer of her grade 3 program, she took the 3rd grade English Language Proficiency Test because her teacher encouraged the class to attempt it.

In high school, she found first year English to be very boring. Upon progressing on to second year English, a well-known Japanese teacher of English who learned to speak English in England was her classroom teacher. His class was a translation-style one, but the teacher handed out a printed-copy of the translation to all the students. He said he wanted them to be able to comprehend the content of the translation in English rather than trying to translate it into Japanese, word for word.

Upon entering university, she met another good teacher who had learned English in England and she took an English Literature class. They read Dickens and Shakespeare to get an idea of the nature of literature produced in England. She also did a one-month homestay in San Diego at Heritage College. Her host family was very kind and the last

day before she returned to Japan, her family took her bowling and to many other fun places. She wanted to express her appreciation but all she was able to say was, "Thank you for everything" and she was very dismayed at her lack of useful communication skills. During the summer of her third year, she went to Australia to brush up on her English skills and took scuba diving lessons as well. Among the instructors was a Japanese instructor. Even though her English wasn't up to par, it wasn't a problem. During the last week she went to Ayer's Rock to rock climb and to the Great Barrier Reef to scuba dive. She paid for all of this with money that she earned herself at her part-time job. After graduation she went on to teach at a high school. She wanted to be financially independent and she thought that she might become an English teacher.

Now she is thirty-one years old and working in Sendai at a woman's high school, in preparatory studies for University. Her father owns a company that produces integrated-circuit chips. Her mother is a housewife. Although her father's company was very profitable when she was a child, when in junior high school, companies in China began making the same chips for less and so her father's company was less profitable. She describes her feeling to be independent in her second interview.

Rie: I think that the woman should be financially independent because my father founded a semiconductor company and we became rich but eventually the company failed and we became poor again and so if my mother had some financial independence, like held a job for instance, we wouldn't have been in as bad a position. My elder sister and I are very independent financially but my brother isn't. He has been spoiled because he is the only son. My brother married, and then he asked my parents to borrow money to build a house. My sister and I would never have thought of doing such a thing. In particular, I think that woman who are especially able, should contribute to society (Rie's second interview, December 23rd, 2006).

At her first school workplace, older male teachers bullied her and other female teachers during staff meetings and during many other occasions.

Rie: Now I understand Mika says because my feelings in my previous workplace and my current workplace are totally different. At my previous workplace, when that male

teacher bullied me, not only myself, but also other female teachers were devastated by his actions and we felt unsafe. Once, one student in my class conceived a child and I didn't find out until she was ten months¹ pregnant to which I was scolded by a male teacher, a peer of mine, because in his opinion, I wasn't being attentive enough to realize my students' situation. However, I have never dealt with the issue of having a pregnant student in my class so having never thought about it before, naturally I didn't focus attention on that sort of matter. The students soon after dropped out of school. Before they dropped out, I went to discuss their situation with their parents but I just ended up being bullied by teachers at the school, despite my efforts. It came to the point where I couldn't trust anyone (the first meeting, February 26th, 2006)

Rie was told that because she was a newcomer and a woman that she should not speak during meetings. She was told that she was not good enough, compared to the male teachers. At this school, students were not very serious about learning, and so after having served her term of employment, she was transferred to a new high school. At the new school, where she now works, teachers are encouraged to speak up at meetings. Among 80 teachers only three could speak out in English and so she quickly gained confidence.

The Japanese government decided to institute a vacation system for teachers and soon thereafter she chose to take advantage of this and took a two-year vacation, which she is currently on. Because the tuition for graduate studies in applied linguistics at universities in the United States and England is relatively high, she decided to come to Canada to study, as it was less expensive to do so. At 28 years old her parents began to bother her about getting married. Her mother is very concerned about how she is perceived by others. She is still unmarried.

Rie's Diary, May 16th, 2006

A TV program was broadcast on NHK about Japanese women who had earned a high academic status and high income that wanted to become married to foreign men. The TV program was about women whose yearly income started from 4,000,000 yen per year. As their careers would go on however, their yearly income would exceed that of their male counterparts. Men in their 30's and 40's are men who were raised by a mother who was a housewife who stayed home so if they were to marry these women, they would want to be in charge. Therefore these Japanese men want to marry women who have a lower income and educational background. However, foreign men are very cooperative with housework and raising children and so these Japanese women are interested in marrying with them.

¹ In Japan, the months of pregnancy are counted from the woman's last menstruation before conceiving the child. Thus in Japan, women are considered pregnant for ten months rather than nine months.

This program showed a blind date between one of these women and a man from a foreign country. The woman paid 4500 yen to participate and the man paid 1000 yen. The woman whom they featured, graduated with a Master's degree from Columbia University, and is now a Division Manager. This woman had a boyfriend before who proposed to her with the condition that she quit her job if she were to marry with him, which she promptly refused. The women were told to not lie on their applications about their income and educational background. Many women were interviewed for this program, and many of the women echoed the sentiment, "How can Japanese society call us career women makeinu onna (a woman like a defeated dog)? I can't believe how society would do that". I totally agree with this. Thinking about myself, even though my salary is greater than my male friends, if I complete my Master's degree I'll have a much greater educational background. I have the job of a high school English teacher so the bossy kinds of guys want to keep a distance from me. Of those guys that remain, all that is left are men who are very honest and supportive, and foreign men.

Recently, marriages between older women and younger men have increased. I feel like I understand why this is happening. Because, if they are the same age and the woman has a higher status, the men feel threatened by it. However, from a male point of view, perhaps younger men can more easily accept a woman with a higher status than them. Another choice is foreigners. This is my present situation. Right now I am returning to Japan to see him and he doesn't care that I have a higher educational background than him. I guess he has a higher income. He is very supportive of my personality and from my point of view he is trying to let me experience various experiences. Recently we became closer and he is beginning to talk more personally. However my mother's actions and what she says are making me a little nervous. Because he only has Mondays off from work, my mother says, "Well you're the only person that can date him!" My boyfriend asks me, "Why don't Japanese buses and taxis don't idle stop while parking? It's bad for the environment to not do that." I was talking to my mother about what he had said and my mother said, "Some people agree that there is an environmental problem but others don't." I felt as though the issue of the environment is one of common sense, not a matter of agreeing that a problem exists, and so I think that my parents are not very conscious about the issue. I believe that my mother is helping to create this concept of a makeinu onna society. Also, the other day I said that I want to continue my job so it is impossible to marry a man who cannot cook to which my mother said, "It is difficulty to find a man who can cook, so you can take a long time to find someone to marry." I can interpret her response in many ways but I feel as though her answer was meant with a negative connotation.

I really want to stop thinking in a Japanese way. Japanese women are trying to contribute and work in Japanese society, so why are we constantly being criticized? Perhaps this comes from jealousy and the proverb, 出る杭はうたれる (deru kui wa utareru, the nail that sticks out is hammered down). From my point of view, for someone to rely on the man's salary completely is unnatural. Last winter before my brother became married, he brought his fiancée over to meet our parents and so my parents asked me why I don't bring my boyfriend to meet them. This time when I arrived in Japan, my boyfriend came to pick me up at the station and he took me to my parents' house and when we arrived there, my parents invited us in to have tea with them. We went there and talked for about 40 minutes. I didn't introduce him as my boyfriend because I felt that they were trying to avoid accepting that he is my boyfriend. I don't understand my mother's feelings. Either I can't understand the way that my mother expresses herself, or I am too sensitive to understand her. However, her tone sounds somewhat negative. So naturally I did not

tell her about him being my boyfriend, but next time perhaps it would be better to ask her why she has a problem accepting him as my boyfriend.

Rie's older sister is also an English teacher and married at the age of 25. Her younger brother is also married and also happens to run a cram school with his wife. Rie says that she is more suited for an independent life as a career woman. Compared to her older sister, she was always more adventurous. When she decided to come to Canada, she quarrelled with her mother about her decision. She now believes that she wants to work until retirement age being confident and financially independent all the while enjoying traveling. She seems to have a desire to marry, have children, continue her work and be more accepting of the fact that she is unmarried at thirty-one years of age. Since she turned twenty-five years old, she has had two boyfriends and those relationships did not work out. A three-year relationship with a man was difficult to cut off, because of the sense of familiarity that they shared with one another. She thought that studying abroad for two years might be an excellent way to sever that connection.

Before coming to Canada, she became very close to an American man who opened a private English conversation school in Japan. He encouraged her to study abroad and now she is happy, even with an American boyfriend living in Japan. She describes her feelings towards her boyfriend as like a magnet.

Rie's diary, January 17th, 2007

Relationship

Magnet. If you feel comfortable with somebody, then you can almost feel a certain force bringing you together. It's like a magnetic force; if someone is far away from me but the force they exert on me is strong, before I know it, we've become closer. However if I make an effort to be closer with someone who is living very close to me, if they do not exert a magnetic force upon me, then it is impossible for us to truly shorten the distance between us.

According to psychologists, we tend to like people whom we have things in common with. Thinking about my boyfriend, I have many things in common with him. First, he came from Los Angeles and I went to Los Angeles ten years ago. Second, six years ago he was living near my house and working at an English school in a department

store that I often went to. Third, my grandfather had a second house in the mountains and when I was a child I often went there. Near that house there was a really great restaurant and my boyfriend also went to that restaurant to play the guitar. Los Angeles and Sendai are totally different places but before we knew each other, we had so much in common already. When I met him for the first time, I was sitting in the front row, on the right for five days in a row at a seminar. The presenter, who is now my boyfriend, called on me to answer questions and give opinions so much. He told me afterwards that the reason he did so was because I seemed to voice my thoughts whereas other attendees did not seem so enthusiastic about sharing their thoughts. Other teachers, because of alphabetical order, each time, the seat arrangement would change but I would still be in generally the same spot somehow.

After she enrolled in the Master's program, she had problems with listening as well as speaking up. She had a certain amount of pride as a Japanese high school English teacher, but felt it was difficult to speak up in the competitive classroom environment.

Rie's diary, February 27th, 2006.

I had a class today at 5:30 for which I did the readings ahead of time. It was a discussion-style class, and during it, two older women dominated much of the conversation with their constant talking, and laughing loudly. I felt deflated by their domination of the discussion and I lost interest in engaging in the discussion. The content of the discussion was difficult and my listening skills couldn't keep up with the conversation so I ended up in a bad mood. This is a discussion style class, but these women only speak English so I don't think they have sensitivity to second-language learners. After I came home I was still feeling down. Because I am Japanese and quiet and rarely speak up, they were probably thinking that I didn't understand anything. Because of this, once I came home I just started crying without thinking about it. Even though I had a very positive conversation about how to change the Japanese style of teaching, in English, with a friend earlier in the day, this discussion group ruined my mood. Will an individualistic Canadian woman defeat me? You L1 women must understand that it is challenging and difficult to get a word in edge-wise in a second language!

According to her next diary entry, she cried at night and learned the word, "be mortified with". There were many emotional outbursts during the course. However, she found herself to be comfortable in Professor White's course because he values her lived experience and identity.

Rie's diary, November 7th, 2006

Today in the class the professor asked everybody, "Do you think you have ever changed your identity as a result of having become a teacher?" Because nobody answered I said, "I don't know if I changed my identity or not but when I decided to study abroad, having

taken a holiday, I felt so bad and shameful because I have forced them to take on my responsibilities in my absence.” When I had first decided to come to Canada to study during this working holiday, I felt guilty because of my cultural background, which focuses on feelings of guilt and certain Japanese metaphors such as “the protruding nail gets hammered down.” I realized these feelings were as a result of my cultural background and so if I returned to Japan now, I would respect my peers but I wouldn’t feel as guilty as I felt before, with respect to my peers. I asked the professor, “Is this a form of identity change?” The professor said something in answer to my question, but I could not understand what he said, although his facial expressions seemed to indicate a genuine interest in my question and the thoughts that it provoked. He is a very understanding but from a Canadian point of view, this kind of thinking might be very foreign and strange.

Norton (2000) discusses identity and language learning and the problem with relating them to certain psychological factors.

In addition many have assumed that learners can be defined unproblematically as motivated or unmotivated, introverted or extroverted, inhibited or uninhibited, without considering that such affective factors are frequently socially constructed in inequitable relations of power, changing over time and space, and possibly coexisting in contradictory ways in a single individual. (Norton, 2000, p. 5)

In the Canadian classroom, Rie has a certain amount of pride because she is a high school teacher who is a little older than most of the other students in her class. For her, it was very important to be seen as contributing something valuable to the class.

In Rie’s day-to-day life, she was having difficulty getting along with her Chinese-Canadian roommate she described as self-centered.

Rie’s diary, November 22nd, 2006

I have really had it with my roommate; I’m really at my wit’s end. (堪忍袋の緒が切れる, lit. the knot on the bag of patience has been cut, trans. the last straw; the straw that broke the camel’s back) I am avoiding my roommate and eating in my room because I don’t want to talk with her anymore. I told her that I would be moving so she is making flyers to find a new roommate. On the flyer she writes, “If you are mature, clean, quiet & easy-going please get contact with me... (WIE)” even though she is totally the opposite,

strictly speaking. She doesn't see herself truthfully but sees faults in others so readily and is so demanding (WIE) of others. (自分の事を棚にあげる, lit. to put one's own matters on the shelf, trans. to be blind to one's own faults; similar: Physician, heal Thyself). She said to me, "If you move out, please give me your drawers" to which I said, "No, because my friend gave me that set of drawers." She snapped back saying, "I can give you my drawers but I'd like yours because yours are better than mine." Moreover, there are many Japanese magazines, which my friends left in my room, and I said that I want to give them to my friend who is studying Japanese. My roommate said no and said that because they contain the memories of my friends and have many nice designs that I cannot take them with me. So I said, "I will only take the magazines that you don't want" but she said that she wanted all the magazines. She is really annoying (WIE) and selfish (WIE); she really thinks that she is the center of the universe. Aside from that she's wantonly fond of men (男好き, otokozuki, lit. liking guys, trans. a woman who is wantonly fond of men), and she has no standards; always with a different guy, she's not such a great person. A few days ago after I returned home, she was watching a movie, sitting on her boyfriend's lap, but I think he's been cheated on because he looks like a very serious type of guy and I think he doesn't have a lot of experience with women. I pity him. Today I hung up a kimono that I borrowed from Mika and my roommate realized the smell of mothballs. Usually when she enters my room, I can't get rid of her but this smell worked very well. She closed my door and returned to her room. Next time when I have a problem, I will spread mothballs all over my room!

Finally, Rie moved in to a new apartment to gain peace of mind and better concentrate in her studies. Her supervisor was a very sympathetic professor who guided her until she finally finished her research essay on April 27th, 2007. We celebrated the completion of her research entitled, "Practical task-based methodology in Japanese high school classrooms" on April 27th, and she said,

Rie: At the beginning, I always tried to change my personality to fit to this environment in order to succeed, but I now realize that I did not need to change my self unwillingly. Initially I thought that I must be assertive like Canadians in order to succeed but now I think that it is more important for me to be confident about my culture and environment in order to be able to express myself. Since I began in 2005 I have been afraid to even scratch my head in case my teacher were to think that I was raising my hand. Recently however, I attended an ESL conference and I have been so surprised at myself with how I am raising my hand with my index finger extended so that I can be called upon and heard. As an international student, even though I am not very skilled, I have begun to realize that expressing my opinion is a very important thing. We are different in many ways. If I accept my differences as a Japanese person, such as my Japanese accent, Japanese ways of expression and behaviour, things become easier and now, I am more confident than when I started this program (Rie, April 27th, 2007).

Now she is trying to apply the communicative method into the Japanese English classroom, believing that she can teach other teachers who do not know how to teach English in a way other than the grammar-translation method.

Rie's biggest change over the course of this research is that she has become aware of the importance of making her own needs and wishes a priority instead of being constantly preoccupied with those of others.

Transgression of the social order in Japan means that one must deal with the judgement of all others. Shame, or more precisely the threat of shame, therefore becomes the primary social sanction. This is in contrast to guilt culture, which uses individual guilt as a primary means of maintaining social order. In guilt cultures, one is expected to answer to oneself, whereas in shame cultures one is expected to answer to others.
(Matsumoto, 1996, p. 10)

The shame she once felt for "abandoning" her colleagues by taking a one year leave of absence from her duties as a teacher is gone, replaced by the realization that the shame she felt is a socially constructed phenomenon.

Yoko

過去の傷 政治の翼 飛ぶ異国
A migrating bird
With political wings flies,
From scars of the past

Yoko comes from Ibaragi prefecture, Mito City; a 90-minute express-train-ride from Tokyo. This city is famous for Mito Koumon, cherry blossoms, jizake (the local sake), and nattou. Her father is a high school English teacher. Her mother was a high school Japanese teacher but after marrying, she retired. Her father is 56 years old and her mother is 50 years old. Now, Yoko is 21 years old and her older brother is 23. When she was in elementary school she didn't want to stand out in the crowd. Before enrolling in elementary school, she would follow her mother around wherever she went. She describes her childhood during the second interview, on January 27th, 2007.

Yoko: When I was a child, sometimes, they looked happy. I asked them a question once; about why they didn't kiss like other couples. My mother kissed him on the cheek gently and I was so happy that I remember the scene very well. Other memory is that I drew a picture describing my family, there were two eggs for my brother and I, my mother was a chick and my father was the rooster. Because my father was always scolding my mother, I assumed that she was imperfect. In my memory, she always apologized to my father saying how sorry she was. So I had the impression that she always made mistakes.

When Yoko was in junior high school she became a delinquent. She would go to the park to drink sake with her friends and stay out all night. Her father was a Protestant Christian who happened to teach Yoko's friends at the high school level. Her friends envied Yoko for having what they thought was such a wonderful father. She hated the comments of her friends because the images that her father portrayed inside and outside of the home were totally different. He was very demanding of her mother and her brother and would sometimes drink and commit acts of domestic violence. Her father would also hit her

older brother and so their relationship degenerated to the point at which they no longer talked to one another. Her brother was very smart and now he is studying in Los Angeles at Pasadena City College towards a degree in architecture. For a while she acted as a go-between for her father and her brother and mother. The stress, however, overcame her when her father continued to be unreasonable. One example of her father's unreasonable behavior was when one time her brother pointed out that there was rotten milk in the fridge. He brought it to everyone's attention at which point her father remarked that he should have noticed that more quickly. His ritualistic bouts of over-expectation caused a lot of tension, stress and strain on the family relations. It seemed to her that her father's personality and behaviour were influenced by his childhood experiences. At the moment, her father is not being controlled directly by his side of the family but in the past, his grandfather was very strict towards him and his grandmother, surely one source of his personality traits and behaviour.

After she entered high school, Yoko found him so unbearable she wished he were dead.

The third meeting, December 23rd, 2006

Yoko: My father's drinking problem has become very serious and he drinks after he returns home at around 7pm until he falls asleep and often he cannot remember what he said the previous day and furthermore would in the future deny that he had ever forgotten details of events that occurred while he was intoxicated. I truly pity him. But, there were many times when I wanted to kill him for abusing my mother. When I witnessed this abuse my anger exploded. I wished his for him to die in a traffic accident. In my imagination, I killed him many times. His violence is mainly words, throwing many things at her, and raping her. It did not cause physical damage or draw blood, but I felt terrible because of the mental scars it caused her. When my mother was lying on the sofa, catching cold, my father hovered directly over her, abusing her while she cried; while I begged him to stop. Despite my futile efforts to intervene, he would continue to abuse her, often increasing the level of torment. Because of this, I would often stand out of the way, watching in fear as my father destroyed my mother's happiness. In my dreams, the dark silhouette of my father's hands would creep up to me to strangle me; this caused me to wake up screaming many times. I recognize the dark shadowy

outlines of my father's hands well; I experienced this horrendous nightmare more times than I wish to recall. Although I have left Japan, this dream has followed me to Canada; it scares me no matter where I go, I cannot escape this fear.

She also stopped believing in Christianity at this point as well.

On May 25th, 2007, Yoko responded to my e-mail regarding what metaphors she would describe herself, Japan, school and her parents.

Yoko's e-mail of May 25th, 2007:

I would describe myself as a fire truck. I do put in significant effort into solving problems concerning social justice, even though I wouldn't consider myself a "fire truck" all the time. As for school, I'd describe it as being a church. It's a sacred place to escape from conflict and to gain knowledge. I would describe my mother as being a sponge. For as long as I can remember, she has absorbed everything thrown at her and it seems to make her more and more exhausted. My father is like a volcano in that he can't stop getting angry but when we see the mountain from afar, it gives us a feeling of comfort. Because my father loved and raised me, I remember the good times for what they were, good times.

The second interview, January 27th, 2007.

Yoko: Until junior high school second year, I was a Christian and I prayed to God to make my parents get along. But when I was in high school, I stopped being a Christian and stopped wanting to be a bridge between my father and mother and recommended to my mother that she divorce him, because I saw a wall too big for her to overcome. But I think that my mother will not divorce, because my mother's mother would feel shame if she divorced and she is very ill right now. For my grandmother's generation, divorce is such a shameful thing and she does not want it even though her real daughter is not happy in her marriage.

When she decided to come to Canada as an international student, one of the motivating factors was that she would be able to have some distance from her father and mother.

Coincidentally, when Yoko came to Canada, her mother found a job and separated from her father. They both call this, their "Independence Day". She is now majoring in political science at university. Because she struggled psychologically so much, she wanted to see the nature of human beings from a political perspective. She was also influenced by her mother's active engagement in politics.

The second interview, January 27th, 2007

Yoko: My interest in political science is the influence of my mother. My mother's status in my family was very weak, but she was very active socially. Seven years ago in 1999, there was a big accident at a nuclear power station in Tokai village in Ibaraki prefecture and three people died from being exposed to radiation. My village was very close and it was a serious accident that damaged the crops and affected many people. My mother studied all about nuclear power station and made a scrapbook of all the articles regarding these accidents and visited the location of the Chernobyl disaster that happened in 1986 to check the effect of the accident. My mother worried about the next generation of children and collected signature for a campaign against nuclear power stations and wrote many documents to oppose it as well. She appeared in T.V. interviews and also received harassment from the people who were working in nuclear power stations. My mother deplored that Japan was not a democratic country. I am very proud of my mother's leadership and it is one of my reasons that I am interested in Political Science.

She couldn't have a happy family back in Japan so she wants to make a happy family of her own. However, she has had a fear of marriage in the past, up until she met Ken. She has had six boyfriends so far in Canada.

The second interview, January 27th, 2007

Yoko: The first one was a Korean who returned to Korea after one month. The second one was a Brazilian-Canadian (second generation) and that continued for five months. He was a very nice guy and I appreciate all the things he helped me with, especially English. The third guy was a Chinese-Canadian (second generation) and it lasted for only one month. The other two boys were only one-night stands; one was a Canadian and the other was a Korean-Canadian (second generation). Until I met Ken, my sex life was not so busy. While I dated the Brazilian-Canadian guy for five months, we only actually had sex no more than 10 times. Haha.

Mika: What influences have these experiences had on you?

Yoko: Well, I was hurt very much. The first Korean guy had a girlfriend back in Korea but cheated on her with me. He looked like a very pure Christian and said that he just wanted a spiritual relationship but I later found out that he was hitting on my best friend as well. He had a fiancé in Korea and I was just there to tide him over

until her returned to Korea. The most painful fact was that all of my Korean female friends knew that he had a fiancé in Korea and they did not tell me about it.

Mika: Why?

Yoko: Just after I came to Canada, I made some very good Korean girlfriends and I trusted them very much. Therefore, when I found out that they already knew that he had a fiancé and had not told me about it, I felt very excluded from their group. I was very angry at them for ostracizing me. I thought that they were my friends and so I felt betrayed. Besides, my boyfriend spread the rumor among our mutual friend that I was a slut. So many people believed that I was like this. I learned a very painful and emotionally expensive lesson because of this experience. With the second guy, I learned a lot of English expressions, North American culture, and attitude. Before I met him, I was a very submissive girl who always cared for men's needs first. My second boyfriend taught me to be independent in this culture. He eventually went to Japan to teach English and we had to part ways. The third guy, the Chinese-Canadian, ditched me. He was my language exchange partner and I knew him well, but one day he said, "You know, our way of thinking is different". So I pointed out that we knew this from the beginning and he said, "I just wanted to see if this would be worth it or not". I was completely mad at what he had said; looking at me as only a sex object and I was also mad at myself for becoming such a victim of this playboy. I was mad at the fact that he didn't come to like me in the end, dumping me. But, now I understand what kind of girl he was looking for. The person he was looking for was more "Canadian" in that she would have a stronger personality and be funnier. This event caused me to explore turning the tables on men to use them like I was used by them by having two one-night stands mostly because it felt nice to have guys who were attracted to me. After Chinese-Canadian boy turned me down, I felt as though I would never be able to find a nice guy and so I stayed single for almost one year and then I met Ken. Ken had a Japanese girlfriend who he dated three years but she returned to Japan and he could not find an apartment to move in to for one month. I talked to my landlord and he allowed him to live with me for only one month. Because he became my roommate, I would be able to find out all about him in great detail. If not for this, we never would have become close, I think. I have been going out with Ken for five months now.

In Japan she had a boyfriend and their relationship lasted no more than 10 months. She broke up with him because they were still both young and Yoko decided to come to Canada.

When she came to Canada she decided not to pursue romantic relationships with Japanese boys. Yoko desires a family in which both the man and woman have an equal stake in matters. She wants to have children, have a happy family and to get a job in Japan. Once she enrolled in political science, she struggled to be able to grasp the

knowledge that her peers possessed as a matter of a common sense.

The first meeting, February 26th, 2006

Yoko: The problem that I have now is completely different to the one that I had when I was in ESL. During lectures I am ok but it's after the lectures, when I have to write essays, that I worry about. For example, I am very lucky, the professor speaks very clearly and his lectures are very organized. I read the textbook before I go to class so I am familiar with what is going to be lectured about that day. But there is a lot of specialist terminology involved with political science, and because the class is about Canadian politics, I have no idea what is going on sometimes. There is a wide gap between what many of my Canadian peers know about Canadian politics and what I know since I am starting from *carte blanche*. Most of my peers studied much of this in high school. No matter how hard I try, I cannot catch up to them in that respect.

As far as majors for international students, political science is considered to be particularly difficult; perhaps because of the large number of essays and knowledge that is specific to the country in which they are taking their degree. She also works as a waitress at a restaurant as a part-time employee and she likes partying and drinking, so she is very busy, balancing her responsibilities and extracurricular activities. Her professor gives the class a research topic two weeks in advance of the deadline, so she must finish her essays as quickly as she can so that her friend may edit them. It was difficult for her to find a friend who was a native speaker to edit her essays for her because she felt like she was imposing on her friends too much by asking them to do this for her. However, her English skills in general are improving as she learns more and more about speaking English in the workplace.

Yoko's diary, March 2nd, 2006

Recently the place I've learned the most English, aside from school, is work or where I live. Because I am a waitress, I talk to the customers cheerfully, "How are you today?" (WIE). Often the customers ask me about the menu. Because I repeatedly answer these questions, I can answer them fairly well. Sometimes I eavesdrop on conversations between customers. I am sure this is contributing to my skills as an English learner, even if I am not picking up the details of the conversation consciously. Recently I think my attitude at work has become a little haughty. So far because I know of the Japanese service system where the customer is God, I have been obedient and quiet towards customers. Of course I am still respectful and friendly (WIE) towards customers however

I am now much more informal than I was before. In English we would say, "Take it easy at work." (WIE) Recently I have stood up to the boss's strong-arming. Recently, not only at the workplace but with my roommates, with Canadians I don't know, and during discussion groups, my attitude has become more confident. Perhaps my character is changing. Before, I was very shy but now in class even if I am expressing an inappropriate point of view the words come to my mind I don't care because these words are crossing my mind and I am able to express them. "It's ok, happens" (WIE).

At the workplace, she was invited by older male customers to go out on a date and she felt uncomfortable with the aggressive attitude of Western men and her inability to refuse in English.

Yoko's diary, June 12th, 2006

This isn't really related to your research but I find it interesting so I want to write about it. I don't understand men who are older than 30 who invite me to go on dates; and especially ESL girls who are not so good at English. I think this is related to your research in a way. These men in their 30's and 40's go for these younger ESL girls. Last week where I work, I was invited out on a date by a 40-something looking Asian man who is good at English. Why would he invite a 20-year-old girl like me? Does he think I'm an easy girl who says OK quickly? Does he feel comfortable because I look kind? Am I sexy like that? Does he not feel any guilt inviting such a young girl out on a date? Does he think he can get along with a young girl like me even though he can't have a decent conversation? I bet he just wants to fool around. I have had many experiences like this, receiving telephone numbers from guys who want to go out on dates. I find myself unintentionally asking them why they ask out younger girls.

Since Yoko has become close to Ken who is Korean and studying for his PhD in Economics, Yoko has been very satisfied with their equal relationship and sex life.

Second interview, January 27th, 2007

Mika: Have you felt any changes since Ken has become your boyfriend?

Yoko: Yes. I feel safer and mentally stable feeling that I have some place to return to. We call everyday and my sex life is so much better than before. He tries to satisfy me and he wants to enjoy it together. Before him, the boys that I was with were very self-centered to satisfy their own needs. But, Ken wants us to both enjoy things equally. I am entering a new stage of an exciting sex life.

Yoko's traumatic past made her mother fantasize, because her mother sacrificed herself for her children by accepting the unreasonable domestic violence inflicted upon her by

her husband. Yoko now tries to see her parent's struggle from a different perspective.

The second interview, January 27th, 2007

Yoko: When I came to Canada, I thought that my mother was special in that she struggled in her unhappy marriage, yet still loved me so much and idolized her as a special person. But now, looking at her from a distance, I think that my mother and father are nothing special like others; they just have an unhappy marriage and I can see them very objectively. Reflecting on my relationships with other boyfriends, now I understand their feeling, because I was always complaining to them about my parents and they might have become tired of listening. I am trying not to complain about my parents too much to Ken, because he has a happy family and this will be beyond his imagination.

Now, Yoko believes that Japanese women are more aware of women's rights.

The second interview, January 27th, 2007

Yoko: I want a Japanese woman to be able to lead men, having a broad perspective rather than living in a small well. There are many things that are allowed in Japan and not allowed in other countries. Violence is one. We must be more aware about the rights of women. When I returned to Japan, one of my friends was always at the beck and call of her boyfriend and I realized the big difference between Canadian women and Japanese women. Japanese men are enjoying their privilege and are spoiled by society and by women; they are very childish and useless when we organize a party, for example. Japanese men are considered having three mothers, their real mother, their wife, and their lover. Let's stop being mothers to Japanese men.

When I hear about this, I think about the metaphor “母源病” (bogenbyou, lit: the disease originated by mother). A Japanese mother spoils her son and her son becomes very dependent upon his mother. This becomes a vicious circle and they never truly grow up. There are so many Japanese men who stick to their mother's apron. Given Yoko's record of brief relationships with boyfriends, as well as the effect that witnessing her parent's relationship had on her, she has developed a somewhat distrustful attitude towards men. But now, Yoko and Ken seem happy and trusting of one another.

Yoko's email, January 29th, 2007.

Learning English (being like a migrating bird)

A migrating bird yearns to find a place that is very comfortable for them by traveling wherever they have to. Therefore, their existence is known worldwide. If I were only ever in Japan, and if my life depended on the information that came only from the government, for example, we cannot find the place that is most suitable for us. The migrating bird has the choice of where it wishes to go. If I can speak English, I can go by myself and I can increase the chance of being able to communicate directly with people in order to find a place to live. Learning English means having open access to information and it makes my knowledge more balanced. Learning English gives me the sense of flying around the world like a migrating bird, freely. Therefore, in the future we who fly by learning English can deliver messages to other people.

Yoko describes learning English as being like a migrating bird and she respects women who have a message to deliver to the world.

The third meeting, December 23rd, 2006

Yoko: I also want to have a happy family of my own. Not because of society's expectations, but because I truly want that. I want to have some kind of job in which I can utilize my skills but I don't know what that is at this point in time. Like Rie said, I also want to be flexible with others because self-centered so I find it difficult to get along with people around me. I want to be creative and I want to be a person who contributes to society, for example helping out children in Africa. I want to be like Yoko Ono in having something constructive to say to the world.

I think that Yoko's message to her mother might be that divorce is not a shame if there is no respect between both people.

Following our fourth group conversation, Yoko sent me an e-mail on June 5th, 2007 where she described more changes that she felt that she had undergone recently that might be related to her continued English language learning.

Yoko's e-mail to me on June 5th, 2007:

The greatest change I've undergone has been confidence. When I was in Japan, because I am particularly tall I wasn't very confident about how I looked and I was taller than many men so I didn't have confidence as it related to my looks. Men would tell me in a very frank way about my looks and especially how tall I was and so I felt unconfident. But, in Canada, I see many different types of women who are leading an active life that reflects a great inner beauty. I have come to admire the women in my classes at school who harbour strong opinions and have attractive intangible characteristics.

My standard of beauty has changed since I have come to Canada, from that of outer beauty to inner beauty. To this end, I have become more confident. Being in this culture, I am expected to confidently express my ideas and opinions. Recently, when people have said something unkind about me, because I have more confidence, I have not been upset by these words.

Generally speaking, Japanese women tend to think that women should be patient, not wear their hearts on their sleeves, and be gentle. However, now I still respect these women but moreover I feel an attraction to women who can spontaneously express their opinions and thoughts in a rational and logical way without hesitation. I want for Japanese women to know that it is okay to feel as though they can think logically and rationally. I hope that Japanese women can learn to speak their minds confidently without thinking of it as being unfeminine. Women with strong opinions are looked on by society as being weird and even though society does not often believe that these kinds of women are absolutely necessary, I don't want

women to lose interest in thinking critically and logically. I am certainly not the only one who thinks that these kinds of women are beautiful. I hope that more and more people adopt this way of thinking, both men and women.

Another thing I liked about the Miss Universe Pageant was the director of Miss Universe Japan, Ines Lignon, a French woman who is trying to change the concept of Japanese beauty. I have a strong feeling of admiration towards her. In 2006 Chibana Kurara won runner-up at the Miss Universe competition. She was a very international woman who had strong opinions. In 2007 Mori Riyo won first place in the Miss Universe competition. She said that being confident was the secret to her success. Behind the success of both of these women was Ines Lignon. But, at the same time, I found many negative comments about Mori Riyo made by Japanese men who claimed that she was not the Japanese ideal of womanliness but that she was more of the Western ideal of Asian beauty. From looking at Japanese men's magazines, it seems as though the ideal Japanese women for Japanese men is something that resembles a pet.

I think that Mori Riyo's background is very international. I found out that she studied ballet in Canada as well as graduated from Centennial Secondary School in Belleville, Ontario, Canada. I myself, and now Yoko too have found, that when we go abroad, we find that the Japanese ideal of beauty is not equivalent to the ideal of beauty in other places. Yoko is finding that Japanese men are resisting Mori Riyo because of her more Western attitude and looks, a clear indication of the difference in what is considered beautiful between cultures. After reading about Mori Riyo at Yoko's behest, I retrieved an article about the pageant, Mori Riyo and Ines Lignon. In particular, I found one quote

by Sekiguchi (2007) attributed to Ligron in a *Time* Magazine online article to be of interest.

Japanese men want infantile anorexic kawaii [cute] women in their 20s who act like they're 12. Now girls are beginning to find role models in women with real talent, careers, confidence.

(<http://www.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,1631932,00.html>,

retrieved June 13, 2007.)

As Yoko noticed, Japanese women themselves must transform the concept of beauty. This one French woman, Ines Ligron, has given Japanese women an opportunity to take charge of their femininity and strike real change for how women act, and are treated in Japan. However if we think deeply about gender, we should ignore these beauty pageants because as long as we participate, we are supporters of this patriarchal structure and the arbitrary, subjective evaluation of women.

When Yoko was in Japan, she was very close to her mother, and so she became Yoko's role model. Her mother was kind, self-sacrificing, intellectual and considerate, and as a result, these values came to be valued by Yoko. However, these values did not serve her as well when she first came to Canada. Yoko mentioned that young men whom she was interested in were looking for funny, active, strong women, and this was not Yoko. She noticed that women who were strictly obedient weren't in demand as much as women who were strong, had a mind of their own, and were confident. Gardner (1989) supports this notion that self-confidence comes from positive experiences in the realm of the second language, but I argue that it comes about because of social contexts that support this notion.

Aya

棘梨の 豊かな味に 痛む愛
Like a prickly pear
Bountifully flavorful
Unpleasant heartburn

Aya comes from Kawasaki. Kawasaki is well known for horse racing and Kawasaki Temple. Very beautiful cherry blossoms bloom in the spring. By train, Kawasaki is only 15 minutes away from Tokyo, and 30 minutes away from Shinjuku. The air in Kawasaki is rather polluted.

Aya's father works at a ward office in the Welfare Service division. Her mother is a part-time kindergarten teacher. She is the youngest of three daughters. Aya's mother is a sociable woman who enjoys singing French songs, commonly referred to as "chanson" in Japan. She, like her daughter, studies English, in moderation. On one occasion, Aya's mother invited a man over to their home to help her study English, but Aya's father became very angry and jealous of the situation. According to her older sister, if her mother had gained financial independence, they would have likely divorced. However, now things have smoothed over and relations are better once again. Aya describes herself as being a penguin, territorial and working together with her husband. I think that my haiku about her reflects her territorial nature.

The second interview, January 7th, 2007

Mika: How is your mother?

Aya: My mother has been working as a kindergarten teacher ever since I was a child, but she only gets paid 800 dollars per month, so she is financially supported by my father. However, she enjoys her part time job, so she says that it is okay. When I was a child, I hated her and I thought that I would not be like her, but now, being apart from her, I think that she is great. When she was young, her family was poor and she was unable to attend university. However, now she has begun to study

counseling and sing chanson, and as a result is really beginning to enjoy her life. I think that she would be better off, if she went to university in order to become a more independent, self-reliant woman. I am living my mother's dream right now and her pride in what I've accomplished makes me happier. At the moment, my elder sister's husband has his mother living alone in Nagano, so she will eventually move to Nagano so that she can take care of his mother. My eldest sister is not the kind of person to take care of our parents as they become older, so I will likely be the one to take care of them. My mother took care of my grandfather who had contracted cancer and died two months later, when I was in the fourth grade. My grandfather was an alcoholic and my mother hated him very much because he committed a lot of domestic violence such as overturning tables and so on (Note: overturning tables is a common way for Japanese men to express anger). My mother had a terrible childhood having witnessed this behaviour and was unable to find a way to discuss it with anyone. For nearly her entire life her father never praised my mother, but just before he died he praised her for her kind care so she thought that she could forgive him. My mother wrote these reflections in a letter to me. My grandfather was a rich young man whose family owned a factory and my grandmother was the daughter of a Yakuza member and they wound up becoming eloped. At the time they eloped, my grandmother already had two children and my grandfather accepted them as his own children. Soon thereafter they had another child, my mother. When it became time for my mother to consider marriage, she decided on a man, based on only the criteria that he neither smoke nor drank. But from the point of view of my sisters, and me we believe that our mother could have easily attracted a more interesting man. My father loves my mother so much that he becomes jealous whenever she goes out.

Aya is living her mother's dream, so her mother supports her financially while she studies abroad. When Aya's husband, John, came to my house, he told me that Aya's mother has more influence than her father.

Aya's eldest sister was once a career woman at Tokyo Gas, a major company.

When she married, her husband wanted her to quit her job so she did so and concentrated on becoming a housewife. After four years of this however, her husband asked her why she quit her job, to which the answer was obvious. They soon thereafter divorced. After that she earned a license to do architecture and is now an interior designer. Because Aya's eldest sister had been divorced, her father realized that he could not ensure that his daughters would remain married, and so he decided that if Aya could be married and she was happy, that he would support the marriage. Her next eldest sister is married as well

and teaching at an elementary school. Her sister's husband works as a cameraman at a local television station.

The second interview, January 7th, 2006

Mika: When you are in trouble, do you talk to your eldest sister?

Aya: No, she is the smartest person in the family and recently divorced. When I need advice I talk to my second-oldest sister whose husband is similar to John, so her advice is very heartfelt and relevant. My sister's husband came from Nagano prefecture and entered Okayama TV as a cameraman and then joined NTT's (Japanese telephone company) commercial advertising division as a cameraman and went to Africa with the company last year. Right now he is looking for job. He has a very keen artistic sense and lots of vitality, even though he seems to have occupational wanderlust.

When Aya was in kindergarten, she was a very sociable girl. In elementary school she struggled in maintaining relationships with friends. In junior high school she continued to struggle with girls her own age and the rumors teenage girls sometime overindulge in. She was also the leader of the Kendo club. She was very self-conscious about what other people thought about how she looked. When I asked her why she liked English, she replied with the following answer.

The second interview, January 7th, 2007

Aya: I liked movies and had admiration for Western culture. I liked my English teacher and my Canadian ALT (assistant language teacher) was good-looking and cool.

She was motivated to learn English because of her desire to communicate with an American English teacher that she had been taught by and was fond of. As well, she had also seen the movie "Titanic" and she became so interested in it and the actor, Leonardo DiCaprio. My own first motivation to learn English was sparked by the movie, "Casablanca" and Humphrey Bogart, so Aya and I have a similar background in that respect.

When she was in her second year of high school she went to Vancouver for a month-long homestay. During July and August between her second and third years of high school, she enrolled in Michigan's ESL program. In her third year of high school, she went on an exchange program to a catholic high school in Timmins, Ontario. Her parents paid for all of her homestays and trips. During her stay in Timmins, she went on a high school trip to Europe. In Timmins, she also met John, a Canadian boy who was interested in Japan. Her friend told her that John was crazy, and so she thought that he was actually mentally ill. However, during her trip to Europe she realized that this was not the case. She liked him so she asked him if he would like to date, so their relationship began during their trip in Europe. When the time came for her to return to Japan, John said that he would visit her in Japan. Although she didn't believe him, once September came, John arrived in Japan. He stayed at her house until he was able to find an apartment. Eventually he found a job washing dishes at a ramen shop for about 860 yen per hour (approx. 8.50 CA). After seven months they married in Japan, Aya was 20 years old and John was 19.

The second interview, January 7th, 2007

Mika: Is your generation more open to sexual contact?

Aya: No, my girlfriend is very cute like a model, but her mother says that she must not do anything before marriage. In my case, John was the first person I was ever with and I married him. My elder sister met her husband, who was the first man she was ever with, when she was 19 years old and they married, so this would seem to be my family's tendency. Before John and I were married, John was in Japan, and he was unable to return to his apartment one night and so he slept at my house in my room. That next morning, I found a letter from my mother saying, "I don't allow you to sleep in the same bed before marriage".

They didn't have a formal wedding but instead were wed via a legal ceremony.

The second interview, January 7th, 2006

Mika: Did you fall in love with John at first sight?

Aya: He was different from other men. Perhaps being a foreigner and being lonely in Timmins made me want someone I could depend on and I didn't want a man who was interested in always having a perfect hairstyle and fashionable clothes. I found John to be very much like me and so I found that cute. I enjoyed my conversations with John, as he was so interested in me. So it was not love at first sight, but I cannot think of any other men who I ever thought of. Before I met him, I had some vague ideal man, but this was just an idea. I felt it was my destiny, meeting him in Timmins, although I am not really a fatalist. For me, marriage is the "turning point" at which it is my time to face the real me, and I thank John for that. I learned so much about myself, and came to see the world differently, through John. I use to play the role of Aya, but now I don't need to play my role and have become myself spontaneously.

That following September, they moved back to Canada and rented an apartment. Their parents split the responsibility for paying rent. She found John to be very reliable and found that he always provided precise answers to questions and worries that she had. However she found that John had ADHD. Because of this, he registered at the university as a special student. John is in fact an adopted child. His adopted mother had twin daughters when she was thirty-years old and one of the twins died of leukemia when they were four-years old. Since then, she was unable to have a child. The reason his mother adopted him was when she was seventeen she had a child but could not take care of it so she gave it up for adoption. She eventually decided to adopt one herself. John struggled in this familial situation because at heart they are very different types of people. John had a difficult childhood, because his mother did not understand his way of living and was very strict on him to be a good boy like his sister. When John and Aya visited Timmins during Christmas one year, he found out that his parents only kept his sister's childhood drawings and schoolwork and had thrown his away. He became angered by this and decided to stay in a hotel with Aya instead of with their family that night. The next day he also refused to be driven home by his family and instead took the bus with Aya back to Ottawa. It was a very difficult time for him and Aya.

When I met Aya, she was in the ESL program and was struggling to pass the second language proficiency test in order to be admitted to regular studies at the university. It took two years for her to be admitted as a regular student in September 2007.

During the first meeting, Aya expressed her dreams for the future.

The first meeting, February 27th, 2006

Aya: I want to be an Environmental Consultant and so I want to study the environment like David Suzuki, whose book I am reading right now. It doesn't matter what country it is, as long as I can study the environment there. After I graduate, I want to go somewhere else other than Japan and Canada like Africa and volunteer to help build wells. I don't want to stay in one place forever; I want to go to as many places as I can. As for being an Environmental Consultant, when a government undertakes a public development project, I can suggest to them how they might make improvements to their plans by examining the problem, on-site. I don't like office work. By going to the place where the development is happening, I can give useful suggestions based on live observations.

To pursue her dreams, she had to first pass the second language proficiency test but she had much difficulty and was unsuccessful.

Aya's diary, March 11th, 2006

This language test is the worst! I'm giving the finger to the language test!!(WIE) The topic (WIE) was cities. My goal (WIE) this time was to get 50% overall but I couldn't get even 40%. My essay was terrible. My writing was really bad and I don't think it makes sense at all (WIE). This summer I want to take the 1300 course for credit. But no way, I suck. Why am I so bad at writing? This is perhaps not because of English but perhaps because of my lack of ability in Japanese. Even though I have improved my English a lot, It has been impossible for me to get a good score on the language test. I don't like myself; I'm irritated with myself. To take ESL 1300 means that I will be able to be a regular student next September. This also means I will graduate when I am 25-years old. My parents pay for my education so I don't want to go that long. Tomorrow I have a speaking class but I'm not enthusiastic about it. I hate the language test!!!

Aya hated the ESL program and she also had difficulty dealing with John's ADHD.

Aya's e-mail, September 13th, 2006

I really wanna talk to you... So many thing have been going on in my mind. I feel like im a "sick" person. Im actually planning to see a doctor. Anyways, I

will go to your house around 12:00 on Saturday if it's ok with you. Can I have your address and phone number please?

Thanks (WIE)

Aya's e-mail, September 19th, 2006

Hi, I personally want to know the side effects of the medication he is taking, which is "Adderall". (WIE)

Initially Aya started to question the necessity of going to university, and eventually John halted his university studies while Aya continued.

Aya's diary, November 15th, 2006

Today is the ESL library research oral presentation day. However, yesterday night I had many problems and I didn't go to school today. I have never been absent from ESL but suddenly on a very important presentation I have my very first absence so the teacher worried and sent me an email. I explained that I was having some personal problems right now and that I was unable to attend. In fact, what happened yesterday was I had become so emotional and unstable and started hating everything. Last week I was very busy and I had hoped that this week I could relax but suddenly I realized that I had an in-class assignment in ESL and a stats assignment to do and so my stress piled up again. So, yesterday night all that stress came out in one shot. Everything seemed negative. Would any good come of going to school like this? Is this my will or the social expectation on me to attend school? Or perhaps it is not my will and it is just satisfying the social expectation that I go to university. I can't find a reason why I must be in such pain. I see this society as evil (WIE). After all, university is teaching us how to be a member of society and how to succeed by obtaining employment. If this is the reason, perhaps it would be better if I did not go. However, after quitting university, what would I do? I wish somebody would tell me that they are going to university of their own free will so I could calm down. I'm envious of this kind of person. I want to believe in myself and I want to live in the way I want but I can't help but keep in mind how the people around me perceive me. I think I have a persecution complex. I hate the majority of people. I just want to live in my own way.

Aya's diary, November 26th, 2006

This past week, I have been crying every day. John is also unstable. He speaks unclearly non-stop and my irritation has reached the end of its rope. This term is almost over and I am very busy. However, John is trying to persuade me to quit university and I can't concentrate on what I want to do. Since September I have been doing my best, even though I have been crying all the while, but it has been fruitless. Why must I go through this?? I don't know the meaning of going to university, but my parents are paying for my tuition and I have a responsibility to finish this term. So, I am really troubled by John's

behaviour. It was the first time I called my parents, crying. Right now, John is very strange and I am also becoming crazy. I keep thinking about the worst scenario, divorce. John says I am always trying to escape from my problems and so he says that we have to talk immediately about it. I wish he would wait until I finished my work but John doesn't understand my feelings. After all, it seems like John will quit university, seeing as he doesn't go anymore. He seems so self-centered and out of control. John says that I am hurting him but he is also hurting me and he does not understand this. If we were in Japan I could go somewhere but I can't go anywhere in stupid Canada. This makes it worse for sure (WIE). John please go somewhere, I want to be alone and calm down.

Eventually John stopped going to school but Aya continued her studies. When I last met John and Aya, John had become a garbageman.

Mika's diary, April 15th, 2007

Today, we celebrated Aya's completion of her ESL 1900 course. I knew that she wanted to graduate from the ESL courses as quickly as possible, so I am glad. Yesterday, I went to the Rideau Center and bought cake for Aya and just happened to meet Rie, so Rie also came to celebrate with us. Rie said that her professor corrected her sentence, "I describe the task-based approach" into "I describe the background of the task-based approach", saying the first one is too direct, but she said that she has no idea why the first one is direct. I think her professor wanted for her to simply be very precise in her choice of words and avoid overstating the scope of her description. Rie said that she is still worried about the organization of her essay, because her structure is still in the Kishoutenketsu style and John offered to edit Rie's paper for her. When we were talking about the different writing styles, Aya suddenly said that she did not know about the Japanese Kishoutenketsu style and this surprised both Rie and I because we thought all Japanese students knew this. I then remembered comments she made in her diary to the effect that she did not like Japanese class and that she did not like to read Japanese books.

Aya showed us the tattoo on her ankle and she said that it was really painful. In Japan, tattoos are considered the symbol of the Yakuza, so her parents strongly disagreed with her decision to get one. She felt that because in Western culture there is no such stigma surrounding tattoos that they are beautiful and so she wanted to have one. She had a fight over the phone with her parents and now she has decided not to return to Japan this summer. Aya accused her mother's generation of being too stubborn and conservative about certain issues and being stuck in tradition.

John proudly announced that he found a job as a garbageman. Aya seems happy about it because she can now concentrate on her studies without worrying about him, and without having to be interrupted by him.

I asked John what kind of metaphor describes Aya best and he answered, "Aya's like a prickly pear, touch the outside and get hurt, but eat the inside and she's soft and sweet". He also described her in another way. "A rose grows on a stalk of thorns, the stalk is always there; always stopping people from getting close, but every now and again a beautiful flower appears and attracts passersby to its scent". I thought of Aya as being a hedgehog or a porcupine, but of course, John describes her nature more romantically, if not similarly.

Aya wrote about her lack of confidence, many times in her diary. She had a lot of pride as the top student in her class in Japan, but even after having an abroad homestay experience, there was no guarantee that she would pass the language test. Her frustration with the belief that she should not be an ESL student caused many problems, wanting to be “free from other people’s evaluation”.

Aya’s diary, January 22nd, 2007

Recently, I have begun to develop confidence as I continue my life in Canada. When I was in Japan I was aware that the population of Canada consisted of many races like a “salad bowl”. But living here, I realize that Japanese culture, which has a particularly homogenous way of thinking, consists of basically just one race. Canadian people seem to be fairly accustomed to different cultures, people, and accents. However, I have been looking at myself from a very Japanese perspective that we must be perfect in many ways. When I communicate with native speakers of English, I have very negative feelings about myself because I cannot speak English fluently. But recently I have begun to be able to detach this filter of negativity from my self-perception. Rather I feel proud about myself, as a young Japanese woman who is struggling to succeed in Canada and I don’t care that my accent reflects my cultural origin. I am proud to be Japanese. Above all else, I like that I am able to speak English.

Compared to other children during my youth, I managed to learn a lot. I started to play piano and do gymnastics at the age of four. At the age of five, I joined the swimming club and switched from gymnastics to swimming. At the age of seven, I studied calligraphy and when I entered the fourth grade my friend’s mother established a local ECC (English conversation school) and I entered into my study of English. I was very good in swimming, so I was recommended to be athlete when I was elementary school. When I was in junior high school, I became interested in kendo (Japanese martial art of fencing) and quit swimming. I quit playing piano when I became interested in English and I quit calligraphy when I was the fifth grade. It might sound immodest to say this about myself, but I think that I am the kind of person who can be fairly skilled at a large number of activities if I concentrate my energy on them. Sometimes I regret not continuing with my piano and swimming. During my junior high school years, I was crazy about kendo and won tournaments in Tanaka City and took “nidan” (a graded level of mastery). If I could have continued in kendo, I could have probably opened a kendo school in Ottawa. In any event, despite my regrets, I am still continuing to study English which holds an important meaning to me. English is special. I cannot quit English and I don’t want to quit studying English. Before, I cared about being fashionable by speaking English fluently, but now English has become a part of me. I love the person who I have become as a result of learning English.

Aya has a flower tattoo on her ankle and she says that she has a little bit more confidence than before.

James Paul Gee (2004) stresses teaching social language over language because social language inherently conveys cultural models, and possesses situated meaning. Aya's ESL teacher once mentioned that Aya's essays often required no correcting, and because Aya did not do any writing in the classroom, she suspected Aya of plagiarism. But, Aya insists this was not the case, that it was just perfectionism. I agree with it being a matter of perfectionism and not plagiarism with regards to the exceptional nature of her essays. She has now come to see that Canada does not share this social language and cultural model.

Mika

海峡の 渦巻く底の 海の星
Transmuting sea star
Caught on a watery coil
Uncharted waters

I describe myself as a sea star (starfish) that lives at the bottom of a deep ocean. I feel that the most mysterious and unknown creature is myself because of the extent to which I have changed throughout my life. Sea stars come in a variety of colours, have a delicate internal balance, while some are luminescent and others can regenerate lost limbs. I feel that I have characteristics that are parallel to those of the sea star. Another reason I chose the sea star is that Awaji Island is where I spent my summer vacations as a child and so many of my fondest childhood memories are of that place. Surrounded by the ocean, I can remember so much about how it looked, how the waves would creep up onto the beach, the sea life living in the ocean, and the smell of the sea air as it blew swiftly. Jane Fonda's daughter once described her mother as a chameleon who changed from an actress to a political activist. I feel a sense of solidarity with her because I have also had to change my colours in order to fit into Canadian society ever since I have started to live in Canada. At one time I was a obedient child, wanting to make my parents proud, at other times I was, a rebellious teenager, a passionate lover, a battered wife, a mother who focused on the educational growth of her children, a skilled tennis player, a painter, a manager and liaison at an English conversation school, an aged PhD student and a Japanese instructor at a university. When I was a child, I was a devout Christian but when I became a teenager, I stopped believing in Christianity. I once believed that I would be happy forever and that life would be a bowl full of cherries. Now I believe that life is full of necessary suffering, pain and tears that we must endure for the sake of personal growth. This year, in particular, I struggled a lot in my work place and in my studies. My in-

between space is a very painful place in which my identity shifts and my cultural values change. The following diary entries are excerpts from parts of my life over the last year.

性を売り 子を殺め堕つ 無限沼
Her daughter murdered
While she is consumed like cake
Morally bankrupt

Mika's diary, July 5th, 2006

Since I have come back to Japan, every day in the news and on TV they have been talking about one woman, Suzuka Hatakeyama, 33-years-old, who is accused of first killing her 9-year-old daughter Ayaka and her neighbor's 7-year-old son Gouken. At first, the police concluded that Ayaka's death was accidental; that she had slid off slippery stones near the river and drowned. Hatakeyama vehemently insisted that she believed that her daughter was in fact murdered, and so the police continued with their investigation.

One month later, Hatakeyama's neighbor's child Gouken was found dead near the riverbank, choked to death. Hatakeyama was considered a suspect in the murder of Gouken because many witnesses saw her leave the house that night by car. On June 5th, Suzuka Hatakeyama was arrested in the murder of Gouken, and her house was searched for evidence. Police found blood belonging to Gouken and a confession letter that she had started to write about Gouken's murder. At this point, Akita Prefecture Police took over the investigation from the local authorities, and they believed that Hatakeyama might have also killed her daughter Ayaka as well. The police performed tests to investigate the likelihood of this possibility, and during this investigation Hatakeyama confessed to the murder of Ayaka.

This story received a lot of media attention and some journalists were less than professional in their reporting. One commentator insisted that Hatakeyama should kill herself; others said that she was a feeble-minded moron 低脳 (teinou, trans. a very strong word denoting a weak mind). The media eventually got a hold of a collection of compositions by high school students from the year that Hatakeyama graduated. The compositions are generally comments about the times they shared together, comments about all the other students; an anthology of their experiences in high school, similar to a yearbook. Many students wrote many terrible things about Hatakeyama like, "If you ever come back to Akita, I will kill you", "I hope you leave Akita forever", "I'm so happy you're leaving", and "You should thank us for making you stronger through our bullying".

The teachers at her school knew about what was being said because they were the ones that arranged it. If that weren't enough, during Hatakeyama's childhood, she was violently abused by her father.

My feelings, after reading about the situation, were of sadness, and anger towards the people who used her. While she was doing 援助交際 (enjo kousai, trans. compensated dating; a euphemism for prostitution) she would have her daughter go outside of the house. Her neighbors would see Hatakeyama's daughter standing out in the cold while Hatakeyama would be inside the house with a man. I think that the town where they lived is a very closed society with no concern for the welfare of one another. Is anyone else guilty for what happened? The teachers of the high school? The principal of the school? The townspeople? The divorced husband? The men who used Hatakeyama for sexual favors? Hatakeyama's parents, particularly her father? The mass media?

Hatakeyama's exact motives for the murders are not clear. She is clearly a frustrated person, having endured financial difficulty, social castration, and abuse from her father.

To me, the proverb, 人生は小説より奇なり (jinsei wa shousetsu yori kinari) or in the words of Mark Twain, "Truth is stranger than fiction, but it is because Fiction is obliged to stick to possibilities, Truth isn't".

These tragic events reminded me of the movie "Dogville". In this film a young woman is the victim of persecution and finds refuge in the town of Dogville. The townspeople accept the young woman into their town but eventually give in to cruelty by abusing her in countless ways such as being chained up like a dog. The townspeople accept the cruel treatment of the young woman by considering it socially acceptable and turning a blind eye. The people of Hatakeyama's town remind me of the people of Dogville who turned a blind eye to the cruel treatment of a young woman. Abuse of power isn't a phenomenon that is exclusive to any particular region but a state of mind which human, when they ignore the need of humanity to be free, fall into.

This entire ordeal causes me to consider a question Yoko brought up during our meeting; how Yoko said that we are born with naturally evil tendencies. I didn't realize it, but the more I think about it, the more I think that it is a profoundly philosophical question.

Some people, who are abused and subjected to cruelty like Suzuka Hatakeyama, live through it all and have a fairly decent life. We have countless opportunities to be cruel but at the same time we have countless opportunities to be good. Perhaps if only one more person had been kind to Suzuka, she would not have chosen to be cruel those times when she murdered Ayaka and Gouken.

We are all connected in many ways; we cannot live apart from society, apart from one another. As a result of the existentialist property of only existing in relation to one another, we find that we can only relate when we treat one another in a manner that we too would like to be treated. Given the difficult unraveling of her life, should Hatakeyama be forgiven as we all might wish to be in her position?

Kristeva (2002) declares, with regards to forgiveness, "caught in forgiveness, guilt emerges against the grain as an incompleteness, a lack of love, and it is only in the bond of love to the other that this lack can be demonstrated and modified" (Kristeva, 2002, p. 16). It is through love that we find compassion, and while some academic perspectives lack this notion of love, autoethnography provides a context in which we can find within ourselves, love and from that love we can promote compassion, situating ourselves within its space and with that, come to forgive one another.

はみ出され 信念曲げず 針千本
Ostracized teacher
Principles are etched in stone
Waiting for the storm

Mika's diary, December 12th, 2006

In this diary entry, I reflect on the problems that I am having as a Japanese teacher with the disagreements I am having with my colleagues with respect to teaching philosophy and pedagogy that we discuss during this meeting.

During the meeting, my colleagues asked me to say "yes" with regards to changing the textbook that we use in our classes. While my colleagues felt that one particular book would be preferable, I disagreed with their point of view and gave my reasons for my

objection. One of my main points was that the book I was using had more space introducing cultural context. Agar (1994) uses the word “languaculture”, meaning that to learn a language one must learn the culture. He also mentions, “Culture is in language, and language is loaded with culture” (p.28). I believe that a focus on culture is an important factor in the development of communicative competence in second languages. Miller (2004) also mentions,

A number of researchers working in language-related fields, including Gee (1996), Firth & Wagner (1997), Lippi-Green (1997), Norton (1997), Rampton (1995), Leung et al. (1997) and Toohey (1998), have suggested a reconceptualization of second language acquisition research, which would incorporate newer understandings of language as socially and culturally constituted. (Miller, 2004, p. 114)

I prefer a teaching philosophy that recognizes each student’s identity, socioculturally constructed, and to teach with this in mind rather than assuming that each student comes to my class with the same background. It should not be the case that we choose to ignore this matter, we must think of each student as being individually unique, active participants in the learning process and teach matters of culture to help each student acquire an understanding of why Japanese is ambiguous, polite, brief and possesses expressions that promote group harmony; something which I was suddenly turning away from in favour of my own principles and philosophy.

My colleagues requested that I cooperate with them as a member of the team but I still had strong feelings about my point of view and continued to object to the idea of colluding with the groupthink, very much unlike a Japanese person would do.

Last year the president of the university Animation Club was a student in my class so I introduced Japanese animation into my classes and used it as a tool for listening and comprehension. They became very enthusiastic learners with this approach and began to spend more time studying. Now they are in my second year class and their skill has bloomed. I believe that showing anime (Japanese animation) serves as a method of introducing culture while at the same time appealing to many students interest in Japanese entertainment. The anime is also not subtitled so it serves as a listening exercise, and I encourage students to actively listen for familiar words and phrases so that we can talk about them afterward. I want to hold classes based on cultural guidance, speaking and other stimuli.

The textbook that my colleagues are proposing we use is, in my opinion, heavily grammar and structure oriented, lacking certain cultural content that I believe is important for being a resource that promotes cultural guidance and is therefore incompatible with my teaching philosophy.

During the meeting, Kitsuko mentioned that I might be abusing the notion of Academic Freedom with my dissonance but isn’t Academic Freedom a very important matter? If the university doesn’t work to foster freedom, then where else can we look for it? I recall the words of bell hooks (1990, 1994) that suggested that thinking of education

as the practice of freedom against racial, sexual, and cultural boundaries. I feel that it would be strange to not be allowed to use a textbook that is congruent with my philosophy. As I left the meeting room today I said, I would really like to cooperate however I can't educate as a member of a team, I have 100% of the responsibility for my class.

Taking a principled stand is not easy. That night I thought to myself that if I were in Japan I surely would have been fired for what I did today. I must be ready for whatever repercussions come of my refusal to comply with the wishes of my colleagues.

What is most interesting is that while I mention wanting to cooperate with them as a cohesive unit, I just cannot go through with that decision because now my identity is no longer like that of the stereotypical Japanese who values group harmony and consensus; I am an outsider to my own culture in this way.

包み解き 飛び立つ羽を 持つ強さ
From within its shell
A feminine chrysalis
Finally breaks free

Mika's diary, December 17th 2006

Today I went to see the movie, "The U.S. vs. John Lennon". From looking at pictures, I did not think Yoko Ono was so beautiful, but having seen this movie, I found her to be quite beautiful and attractive so I have become a fan of hers. Even though John Lennon was killed, the message that he left behind is simple and direct she said. Her attitude was very resolute and does not seem fragile like I would expect a Japanese woman to be, but I still feel that she lived a very wonderful life with John Lennon.

In Japan I was very influenced by the mass communication and propaganda regarding how Yoko Ono's opening of her "bed in" to the public was very shameful, however I feel that I now understand her intentions. Taking a principled stand is a very difficult thing to do and I think she is a great person for doing so. Through the movie, I understood how difficult it was to go up against someone who had power (Nixon). Yoko Ono had John Lennon to help her but I have only myself to go up against the powers around me in my struggle. When I consider the matter of my students, I cannot compromise my principles. I feel as though having seen certain movies helps me negotiate the problems in my own life. It gives me something of an outsider's perspective of my own struggle. I was wondering how old Yoko Ono is, and I found out that she is now seventy-two years old; 10 years older than me! I am very proud that she is Japanese.

When I was in Japan, Yoko had a very bad reputation of being an enchantress; a bad woman who broke up The Beatles. Japanese, in particular, don't support women who are successful while abroad. I checked the Internet and found that the opinion of many Japanese men could be summed up in their words, some women have the face of a girl and a mother but she does not have even the face of a woman.

I guess that if a woman has their own opinion, Japanese men do not see them as a woman. This reflects Japan's closed nature and prejudice against women. I think that the way in which Yoko Ono went against Nixon to try and stop the Vietnam War was great.

In the same way, I admire the Dixie Chicks who spoke out against President Bush regarding the current war going on in Iraq. The pressure on women who have a political opinion is stronger on women in Japan than it is in America or Canada. This is a large part of the reason why Yoko Ono is disliked in Japan. I wish Japanese women would

stand up more often and speak out against those in power for things they believe in. When I thought about Yoko Ono's art I remembered Joy Hendry's book "wrapping culture".

The basic premises is that wrapping is 'an important and pervasive ordering principle' among the Japanese, whether they are wrapping their bodies in twelve layers of clothing, their conversation with politeness formulate, their priceless pots with wooden boxes, or even five eggs with straw. (Hendry, 1993, p.2)

I think her "Cut piece" shows a resistance to the Japanese wrapping of everything, not saying what one truly feels; wrapping it up in politeness for example, and is really an eye-opening moment that challenges Japanese culture to examine itself.

贖いの 職も果たさず 陛下逝く
Forgotten soldier
The Emperor turns away
Sacrifice for naught

Mika's diary, January 1st 2007

Today I was invited to Catherine's house for New Year's dinner. Catherine is a Japanese woman who speaks no Japanese. I enjoyed the meal very much and Catherine introduced me to a thick book about Emperor Hirohito during World War II. Before I read this book, I did not know whether or not he was directly responsible for any of the things that went on during that war. After reading this book, I am convinced that he had his hands all over the war.

At the end of war as at its beginning, and through every stage of its unfolding, Emperor Hirohito played a highly active role in supporting the actions carried out in his name. Bix (2000) writes, "When he is properly restored in the overall picture as supreme commander, the facts become abundantly clear." (p.519-520). He collected many of the details of the war together, and interviewed many people who were close to the Emperor at the time. Even though many ministers strongly opposed the decision to go to war, Hirohito eagerly supported the idea. These kinds of books that criticize the Emperor never appear in Japanese bookstores. I think this type of censorship opposes the concept of free speech. Japanese people are aware that if they criticize the Emperor that they might be at risk of being threatened or otherwise, by right-wing fanatics. I am afraid to write in Japanese, criticisms of the Emperor, but I don't feel the same fear writing about it in English. Sumiko Nishizawa (2002) also expressed the same feeling with me:

I have met young Chinese students who told me that they learned in their history class that the Japanese are their enemy because of what the

Japanese soldiers did to their people. Korean students told me that their grandparents were fluent in Japanese because they were forced to be educated in Japanese. I was struck by the fact that history was not just about the past but about the present and future; history continues to frame relationships among those who share the same practice and time. I also felt deeply embarrassed, realizing that I had never been taught nor fully reflected on a significant part of Japanese history, and that I had never read literature of other Asian countries. Translated texts allowed me to believe that I knew about the world well, but these texts, deliberately chosen (by educators, librarians, publishers), in fact gave me only limited access to the world as well as selected views presented as though they are universal.

(Nishizawa, 2002, p. 10)

The Japanese people did not clarify who was responsible for the war, and this attitude of not looking to the person in charge for answers when things go wrong is pervasive in Japanese culture. Like Nishizawa, I learned Japanese history through translation; so, this is, as Noel Gough (2003) describes, one “blind spot” (p.63) of many that I have.

理を尽くし 言ったり来たり 影法師
Methodically
Correspondence to and fro
Screen-door submarine

Mika's diary, January 10th, 2007

Following the meeting I had with Katsuko, Shizuko and Kitsuko in December with regards to the textbooks, I decided to organize my thoughts with respect to what I thought. To that end, Kate, Katsuko, Shizuko and Kitsuko and I sent e-mails back and forth but to no avail, as we were unable to come to a consensus. I am very sad tonight.

Over the last few days I have been trying to find more information about this textbook as I am especially concerned about this textbook and what it implicitly supports. Hosokawa Hideo (2006), a professor at Waseda University, mentions in his blog:

Language education and education research is strongly influenced by social structure and framework which is constant flux. The political

framework of a society is constantly asking its institutions to serve its interests, and language education is not excluded from this influence. Japanese language educators in Japan that are unaware of the existence of this influence on language education are lead about by the government and society, doing what they are told to do without thinking critically about why. To become aware of this framework, teachers must overcome uncreative, standardized educational practices that possess no notion of individual thought. We must develop independent arguments with regards to education and research.

(http://hosokawa.at.webry.info/200603/article_1.html, posted: March 22, 2006, retrieved: January 10, 2007)

This textbook is produced with the Japanese Language Proficiency Test in mind, and less with helping students develop key communication skills. Because this textbook is said to be great because of it's "scaffolding" of grammar structures, one on top of another. However, Hosokawa Hideo, an applied linguist at Waseda University claims that "Minna no Nihongo" has been accepted so well because of its pre-packaged nature that removes much of the work from the shoulders of the instructor. He calls the widespread use and acclaim of this textbook as being "Minna no Nihongo Syndrome", the blind acceptance of this textbook as the gospel of Japanese language education.

Hosokawa says that language education is always supported from within the structure of society, such as The Japan Foundation and Japanese Language Proficiency Test (JLPT), so when we use these textbooks, we must critically examine the background of social needs. He also criticizes the ready-made materials, for example, flash cards, grammar translations and many sub-textbooks. He says that language teachers follow these structures from one another without creative devices.

As an instructor of Japanese language to students in a Canadian university, I believe that creativity is a crucial factor in teaching language because each class is different, and so I must speak to their interests, adjusting my style to suit the needs of that class, in order to create a fun and enjoyable environment for learning. The semiotic notion of intertextuality (Kristeva, 1986), gives educators the opportunity to step into the other place, from book, to classroom, to community; expanding the notion of the text to horizontal and vertical axes that connect author and reader and text to other texts, respectively.

We encourage them to feel that the end and aim of all they do in school is nothing more than to get a good mark on a test or to impress someone with

what they seem to know. We kill, not only their curiosity, but their feeling that it is a good and admirable thing to be curious, so that by the age of ten most of them will not ask questions, and will show a good deal of scorn for the few who do. (Holt, 1964, p. 275)

I think that Holt's claim about schools is an important realization of what they have become. Leggo (1997) similarly questions, "Why are schools so often places without joy, laughter, fun?" (p. 75).

In addition to this, this book mimics the style of the Japanese Language Proficiency Test, sponsored by JEES (Japan Educational Exchanges and Services) and co-sponsored by the Japan Foundation, abroad. The test is a multiple choice, standardized test that is administered once a year, worldwide. This test involves no testing of an individual's ability to speak Japanese whatsoever. Being a multiple-choice test, it supports the "one correct answer" philosophy in Japanese education. Elana Shohamy (2004) has researched the political and social bias in testing:

There is also a need to understand the politics of testing (the real intentions) and to reject situations in which testers are being used to carry out the orders of central agencies, which always attempt to perpetuate the existing dominant views. (Shohamy, 2004, p. 80)

Education should be a space free of political sway. I am aware that we cannot prevent social and political influence entirely, but for it to directly affect what and how we teach to the point where a teacher's style is co-opted by political coercion is a violation of academic freedom.

操られ 登った椅子に 億画鋏
Manipulated
Walked into the lion's den
Left to feed the beast

Mika's diary, January 25th 2007

This year, nobody wanted to be the Chairman for the speech contest. The rule was to alternate the role of the Chairman between the participating institutions. In the past I had declined the role citing a busy professional schedule and I felt guilty about not being able to contribute in this way, so this year I decided to accept the role of Chairman. Initially, colleagues indicated their support for me in this role but I found that their support had somewhat dwindled over my term as Chairman and I felt like a paper tiger.

Today I talked to Katsuko and told her that I raised money by sending out letters to local companies in order to hold a reception but she suddenly informed me that she would be unable to help me by bringing food for the reception in her car.

While we were talking, the telephone rang; it was Tomoko from the embassy calling. Katsuko began to talk with Tomoko about canceling the reception because of the unavailability of transportation on my part. Through listening to Katsuko's side of the conversation I realized that I have no way of insisting on doing the reception because I do not have a car. I then returned to my office and I received an email from the Japanese Embassy that said that every year, the chairman brings the food for the reception and that if I wanted a reception I would need the help of other teachers. Today, I am so downhearted and I am worried about what will happen next.

苛められ 波のまにまに 掴む藁
Malevolent spite
Thrust into crashing waves
Sudden lifejacket

Mika's diary, February 7th, 2007

Yesterday, I received an email from Yoshiko Tanaka, a retired Japanese language teacher who taught at a Canadian high school. She says that she received so many letters that weren't additionally addressed to me and so she was worried about what was going on. In her email she suggested that I inform everybody of what was going on and what my decisions are. So, I called her and she said that she struggled with people who were unable to work toward a common goal, and she offered to help me.

Today I sent everyone an accounting of how I planned to spend the money. Immediately, Tanaka replied to everyone saying that she had no objection to my plan for using the funds. I appreciated her support very much and I feel as though I've gained an ally. I felt very happy so I went skating and saw the movie, "Babel". This movie is about how communication is difficult. A Japanese actress who played a deaf teenage girl reminds me of me, in how she had a difficult time expressing her anger in difficult situations. I felt that I was invisible to the volunteer committee, but at the same time, being bullied by them. I empathized with the deaf girl who was frustrated about her circumstances.

This movie, in a very strange way, appealed to me. Because this movie is showing how difficult communication is, but at the same time it is showing how we are connected in very subtle ways. In the movie, one event triggers another, and as subtle as the events appear to be, they continue to cause ripples in the pond of the lives of many people. In the same way, Tanaka was able to empathize with me because she had been through similar situations in her career and felt the same way as I did.

崖っぷち つかんだ縁に 雪の下
Critical moment
Treacherous mountain terrain
Hanging precipice

Mika's diary, February 27th, 2007

This morning I went to listen to a presentation delivered by a McGill University professor. His presentation was a gold mine of interesting material and the question period afterward was stimulating and thought provoking. He has been doing research about the

professional relationships and interactions between PhD students and their supervisors. James Paul Gee writes about a Korean student who failed in the PhD program because she was unable to recruit a supervisor, there is a difference between little-d discourse and big-D Discourse. I guess there is no guidance for PhD students who explicitly describe these socially expected Discourses.

He mentions that the PhD program is a very situated, inter-disciplinary and political community. This morning's question was, how do supervisors mentor PhD students? The speaker said that there are implicit parts to the process and explicit parts as well. He also said that before the conversation started, that the discourse had already begun. There is political power at work, the political relation between professor and student. One interesting question was, how do we politely switch supervisors? He said that this manner is a very delicate issue that must be handled with much sensitivity.

Reflecting upon my experience, I think that my relationship with my supervisor has been very honest and frank. However, there are many students who don't like their own supervisor and they struggle in trying to switch to another supervisor. I have never thought of switching supervisors, myself. Through much writing, not only my own, but my supervisor and my committee members as well, I experienced a tremendous transformation from the initial stage.

When Barbara introduced me to Patricia Palulis I was particularly impressed by Patricia's philosophical stance taken in the "in-between place". So far, my relationship with my supervisor and my committee members has been very amicable and I have never experienced a serious conflict in these relationships. I realized, during my studies, that I had to show my self-motivation to accomplish what I wanted to do. I knew that I would be provided with guidance during my studies, but that finding my way was primarily my own responsibility. Had I not taken charge of my own learning in this way, my relationship with my supervisors might be more strained today as I might have relied on them excessively.

There was a critical moment during my studies, before I had returned to Japan one summer when Barbara asked me whether doing PhD studies was really worth it to me. Hearing this made me think that I really had to impress her and show her how serious I was about accomplishing this task. I explained to her that getting an important job after obtaining a PhD was not my real goal, but publishing my book was my goal. To talk about my experiences in academic papers was my aim, and I was motivated to do so. She felt it might be too difficult for me to teach at the university and be a PhD student. She said that there is always something else waiting for you in life, and that if I wanted something else, I could surely have it. However, doing my PhD studies was what I wanted, and I could not compromise on it.

After our conversation, for a week I thought about what she had said, and I would think about why I was putting myself through the hard work and stress of pursuing such a high goal. I woke up in the middle of the night one night and it was all that was on my mind. Soon thereafter, I returned to Japan for the summer and wrote my summer diary that was eventually published. This diary did indeed impress her and demonstrate to her that I was indeed up to the task of seeing it through to the end, and that it was worth it to me. There have been many critical moments during my PhD studies but this has been the most serious one. Looking back on everything, my studies have been a part of finding myself, and seeking my own destiny. I really feel as though it is a part of my purpose of having come to Canada.

ハイエナの 群れにむしられ 遊ばれる
Hyenas on stage
Ripping at my dignity
Putting on a show

Mika's diary, March 1st, 2007

There was a meeting today at the embassy at which I found myself being criticized for enrolling "too many" of my students in the contest; but I figure, the contest is for my students to participate in, so I cannot just filter some out to satisfy those who are organizing the contest. Needless to say, this went on for more than I thought was appropriate.

During the meeting, suddenly, Natsume Souseki's famous novel "Botchan" popped into my mind. There is a part in the novel where there is a teachers' meeting. All of the teachers except Botchan are trying so hard to flatter and be as sycophantic as they can be to the principal. In this scene of the novel, the teachers are acting only in their own best interests and disregarding their true roles as educators, except for Botchan of course, who does not lose his head. The only perspectives they seem interested in are those that favour them.

When I returned home after the meeting, I received an email from a student of mine, Jessica, who wrote a very poetic speech for me to look at and make suggestions for modification. From her attitude, I knew that there were issues with her parents and her life at home, casting a shadow over her thoughts, but I didn't know to what extent, her parent's divorce has injured her. She is a very smart young woman but at times was not interested in the details of class work. In her email, she was writing that she decided to be a teacher and that next year she wanted to help me in my first year classes.

I am surprised and I want to support her. She opened her heart up to me and I am thankful that we have this speech contest because it has given her a chance to share the thoughts in her mind with others. Jessica wrote about her struggles in life with her family and their problems with alcoholism and drugs during her "incarceration" at a Philadelphia airport for thirty hours while she was waiting for a flight to return to Canada.

Jessica spoke, "I lived in a home, where sadness runs deep, in which hurt echoes down the lonely hallways and into the empty rooms." Jessica also spoke of wanting to leave behind the psychological and traumatic baggage of her past, and fly away to a new place. I did not know she possessed a poetic side, so I was pleasantly surprised to find her very expressive and deep meditations.

Afternote: March 3rd

Tonight, Jessica was awarded one of the special prizes for her very moving speech that nearly brought one of the judges to tears.

束の間の 喜び囃んで 目台風
Transient reprieve
Soaking up the happiness
Eye of the typhoon

Mika's diary, March 4th 2007

Yesterday everything went well and I'm relieved. None of the participants needed to refer to their papers and they really worked hard delivering their speeches. I could not understand some of what the first year students were trying to say at times, but, they did truly give it their all. Ishida-sensei was a really wonderful person and did a great job as a judge. She made comments about the individual students and she really came across as caring about how the proceedings went. Her warm consideration for the students efforts made me want to become more like her, in how she acted as a caring educator and academic. While they were judging, Tanaka-sensei supported one student who delivered a speech about the Kobe earthquake, but Ishida-sensei commented that delivering information in that way did not truly constitute a speech. Her comment impressed me very much.

Hearing this made me think of how Katsuko had proposed years ago, that the topics of the speeches be limited to four or five categories such as: Japan, Family, Friends, Culture, etc; hardly thought-provoking and unique topics. Tara's speech about "Anime as Art to Influence Japanese Culture" and Lisa's speech about "Farscape" would never have happened under those limited, closed-minded circumstances. Tara's speech struck me as being particularly thought-provoking. Starting from the definition of art, she discussed how it has the power to touch hearts and minds and that how anime, as art, has that same power. Lisa's speech was also thought-provoking in that she spoke about how people who might at first be enemies may find the need to co-exist and work together else they may not be able to survive. While it was based in the context of science-fiction, the descriptive nature made me think of how this is an important message for us to listen to carefully.

The results of the contest were second and third prize in the intermediate, second and third place in advanced as well as 5 special prizes for a total of 9 of my students placing. I believe that the quality of this speech contest was very good. There were so many creative speeches. If I had only chose the "good" students, some of the speeches that we all remember may not have been heard.

弱者切り 捨て去る国に 未来無し
Deserting the weak
Ruthless search for perfection
Humanity lost

Mika's diary, March 6th 2007

At the end of some of their speeches, many students said "I love Mika-sensei!" and I was very moved by that. What I learned from this process and from helping the students, was an understanding of what they wanted, what they were interested in, what their concerns were, and a better feeling for their individual contexts. It felt like a class project, and there were so many unpredictable and unforeseen obstacles to overcome. After the speech contest was over, I was really glad that I did not give into Katsuko's demand that I have students removed from the stage, who were glancing at index cards to help them during

their speech. While the students were waiting, many were trembling nervously; I don't believe they needed any more reason to worry.

Katsuko said that the rule was to prevent the judges from becoming exhausted; as if to suggest that the judges were having a harder time than the students who had prepared their speeches in advance, and come to the embassy to deliver it in a foreign language, in front of an audience. Five years ago, one of my students talked about "My Hero, Sakuraba" a professional wrestler and won first prize. Katsuko was upset that his topic wasn't academic, so she wanted to restrict the speeches to 4 or 5 topics. That year, many students did not attend, and so they removed that rule. When Katsuko suggested this rule I said to myself, what a ridiculous rule!

I considered another student, in my fourth level class, Julie, who although she often stutters and stammer, wanted to participate in the contest as well. She came to my office saying, "You might think I'm insane, but I want to participate in the contest." I was worried that the audience might not treat her well, and I wondered if Katsuko would wonder why I would allow her to enter. The judges recognized her bravery and awarded her one of the special prizes.

This brings up an interesting difference between Japanese and Western culture. In Japanese culture, family members and students who possess a disability or handicap tend to be protected and kept out of sight of the public. In the West however, handicapped people are given the opportunity to live as full a life as others, as much as possible. In Japan it is often considered shameful to have a family member who is handicapped. As far as I know, in all my time in Japan, I never ever met a handicapped student in classrooms I saw.

I think this comes from the very competitive nature of Japanese culture, to weed out those people who are weaker. Whether one has a physical weakness, mental weakness or simply because one is average, that is to say, that there is someone who is physically or mentally stronger than oneself, in many ways, Japan's culture of competition excludes even the average people from striving for excellence by allowing only the best to participate.

Who are we to exclude the contributions of those we consider to be physically or mentally deficient? Should we omit the contributions of Professor Stephen Hawking? His contributions are legendary in the field of physics and while he has severe physical disabilities, his IQ is higher than the vast majority of people on this planet.

The only person in Japan with a disability that I can remember is the son of author Oe Kenzaburo, Oe Hikari. Oe Hikari's parents were urged by doctors to let him die. His parents however did not let him die and pursued surgery to help him live. He had limited vision and was developmentally delayed in addition to rarely talking. Oe Hikari wound up becoming a composer, and music became his voice. Are we also to omit his contributions to the arts?

奢られて 地雷の海に 沈められ
Baited and deceived
Boat cruise on a pirate ship
Made to walk the plank

Mika's diary, March 9th 2007

Today, by Suzuki's invitation, we had dinner at a Japanese restaurant, but the truth is that I really didn't want to go. The meeting started with Ishiguro-san saying, "Let's focus on the future!" So, I felt saved by Ishiguro-san's comments, and I managed to enjoy dinner. It was said, however, that my way of presenting the students with their certificates facing the wrong way was unfortunate. It was also claimed that I neglected to read the long proclamation that went along with the awarding of the certificates, but I chose not to read them in lieu of the fact that we were running short on time and people were interested in seeing the results as soon as possible. Then Tanaka-sensei criticized my first-year students that could not pronounce long-vowel sounds properly. She had been saying this for the last two years as well. Then, Katsuko criticized me for not making a closing statement, which I thought was unnecessary because of the time issue. Finally, Tanaka-sensei said that everything should have ended before 5:30. Katsuko said that starting the following year, I should be more selective in allowing first-year students to participate but in general, that I should not allow them to participate in the contest. I did not do this work for the sake of the judges; I did it for the sake of the students. Their criticisms of me, I can accept. However, for them to want to prevent first-year students from participating is fundamentally discarding "weak" students, and it is a very Japanese view of education. I told them that as an educator, I cannot be selective but if they really want to limit the number of participants they can do it on a first-come first-serve. Suzuki said that we couldn't do it this way because then the quality might possibly drop. Is this not binary thinking? I believe we can have both quantity and quality in speeches.

Tanaka-sensei also said that the special prizes were unnecessary, because it takes more time for the judges to arrange such things, but I think that really ignores the feelings of the students. Katsuko suddenly proposed that for the sake of developing the skills of the younger teachers to help the speech contest that we pay them to participate. However, this is volunteer work for people who are motivated, and are teaching Japanese, so I find her proposal extremely strange. I believe that the speech contest should be part serious and part encouraging for students. Because this event is a good opportunity to connect the Japanese Embassy and the local community, and because in some ways Japan is isolated from the world, I believe that we should take this opportunity to keep the doors open to nurture cross-cultural understanding and support the students who are studying Japanese as a part of their academic life. At the university where I teach we have over 150 students studying Japanese and so if we divided the event in to two days, the first day for high school students and beginners and the second day for intermediate and advanced students, I think it would be better for all involved. Every year, students who have graduated come to my office and say hello after not seeing them for so long. They often remind me that they had won a special prize at the speech contest, and so even the small recognition of effort can go a long way to encouraging learning.

裏切りが 胸にくい込む 鯨の牙
Traitorous ally
Icy water, sun sets soon
Sharks draw near by night

Mika's diary, March 14th 2007

I am so surprised today because everything that we talked about informally at the restaurant was forged into a written document and e-mailed to the Speech Contest committee members. All of Katsuko's suggestions were reported as ideas that would establish the direction for the contest in upcoming years.

I replied to this by saying that I didn't think eating while drinking sake was really a forum for a serious meeting and so I had thought that the ideas and thoughts brought up at that meeting were no more than just that, ideas and thoughts. Ishiguro-san replied to me saying, that this was a matter of setting a course for "progress" in the coming year. In turn I said that I don't think we can call it a course for progress if we don't all agree with it. So evidently, some have decided to make the speech contest smaller, more "prestigious" and authoritative. The main points they made were underlined as a matter of planning for the future direction of how things would be.

They said that the participation of first-year students is fundamentally unacceptable and that a Japanese instructor should prescreen potential candidates among all categories in order to limit the number of entrants. It was also mentioned that the requirement that speeches be entirely memorized be strictly enforced. Because of the large number of special category prizes this year, it was decided that for next year, they should be reduced in number.

Also it was strongly suggested that instead of having individual instructors go to visit restaurants etc. in person to seek donations for the contest, that we should request them by mail. There was also an idea that would see some of the money being donated, used to entice younger teachers into volunteering their time, helping with the contest.

I really don't understand why they would come up with these kinds of ideas. This is a volunteer committee, and I have been helping with the speech contest for nine years, and I have been willing to go to ask for donations in person and I never complained. I enjoyed seeing the pleased faces of the students as they gave their speeches and succeeded. Some committee members seem to be ignoring the student's feelings; they don't seem to realize how even a special category prize can raise a student's confidence. On one hand they want to raise the profile of the Japanese language in our city, but they want to be able to do less work to do so. I don't think you can have your cake and eat it too.

嵐過ぎ 暗夜の光 禅思想
Tempest of the night
Fortitude in shadow hides
Zen-like tolerance

Mika's diary, March 16th 2007

Kate Aniston, the Director of our school, asked us to think about the draft Constitution for our faculty and I sent e-mail to Kate. I expressed to her that our university has had the goal of helping students acquire communicative skills via the notion that language is

socially constructed. I felt that it would be important to clarify what our goals would be under a new departmental director. I felt that we needed a level of coordination at the level above our modern languages unit so that we could be united in solidarity. Even though our languages are different, the theory of language teaching is still fairly wide reaching.

The meeting started at exactly 9:30 a.m. and it was just a statement and an announcement made by Kate Aniston. Following the meeting, during which more questions were raised than answers, many of the language teachers were frustrated and disappointed and we don't know how to deal with things now.

Right now it seems as though there is no way to fight back at the storm my silence and my acceptance doesn't mean that I don't have strength. In a Zen-like way, every ordeal is a source of strength.

蜃気楼 追いかけてながら 終わる日々
Pursuing one's dream
Miragesque reality
Life-long reverie

Mika's diary, March 20th, 2007

This morning I was reading Time magazine (March 26, 2007), specifically Lev Grossman's article entitled, "The Year of Mathematical Thinking" about Douglas Hofstadter. Because Hofstadter's younger sister had neurological problems and was unable to learn or speak language, he became interested in how the brain determines who the person is. Recently he published the book, "I am a Strange Loop" that describes his feelings after his wife passed away. After I read Joan Didion's book, "The Year of Magical Thinking" I was very moved by her deep sorrow. So today, I ordered, "I am a Strange Loop" so that I could see what Hofstadter had to say; what feelings he had to express; what thoughts he had on the subject. Grossman says in his article, "Gödel discovered there are mathematical statements that, while true, can never be proved. How can something be both true and unprovable?" (p.49). He goes on to say, "It turns out that mathematics isn't a neat straight line, it's a loop, and a deeply strange one at that" (p. 49). It appears as though it is not only mathematics that is "deeply strange". Grossman says, "Just like Gödel's mathematics, the mind is a strange, self-referential loop—it's a mirage" (p. 50).

After Hofstadter's wife passed away, he still felt the sense that she was still a part of him, as though a faint echo of her still resonated within him. I feel the same way about my mother who passed away forty years ago when I was twenty-two years old. I feel as though I can still talk to her in some way. When I feel like I need advice, it is almost as though I can sense that she is giving me a direction. In some ways, I believe that as human beings, we are all connected, but at the same time, I think that is one of those unprovable arguments. The reason I want to perform my own autoethnography is because sorrow and sadness; these kinds of emotions, unite us and resonate within us; raising feelings of compassion. I feel as though Hofstadter is writing about life and death; our soul, that which contains the unspeakable and unprovable parts of human nature.

虚栄心 くすぐる花は 毒を秘め
Vanity and pride
A colonial flower
With pistil poisoned

Mika's diary, April 5th, 2007

Today we had a meeting for teachers in the Modern Languages unit. Even though our voices have been shut down, we still feel a sense of unity and feel that we have something to say to the new director. We had been thinking of drawing up a document that we could all sign to voice our thoughts but suddenly one of the EAP (English for Academic Purposes) teachers objected to signing a document, stating that generally, documents written by Modern Languages teachers had many grammar mistakes in them and that since this document would be seen by the Vice-President of our unit, that she could not have her name on a document that might potentially be full of grammatical errors. I really object to her attitude that suggests that English is only spoken and written properly by native speakers of English; I find this to be a very colonial attitude. Even native speakers make grammatical errors and nobody blinks an eye. My friend whispered to me that even the Dean of our faculty occasionally makes grammar mistakes. What is even more ridiculous is to suggest that any document could not be simply proofread and corrected for the purpose of correcting any errors. How many times must our voices be silenced in the name of perfect English grammar and style?

パスケ花 消えても涙 湧き続く
Pasque born of tears
Although the flowers vanish
The cries continue

Mika's diary, May 29th, 2007

After I left Barbara's office, I had no idea how to do my thesis. Suddenly, Aya's diary and the word she used, 手探りで (tesaguride, trans. fumbling, groping, as in to feel one's way clumsily through darkness) came to mind. One day, Barbara said that my writing style seemed like I was just parachuting ideas in without cohesion or development, "just plunk, plunk and plunk".

How can I put my words and thoughts in a suitable order? How can I put my heart into my words while I maintain a high level of organization? What is acceptable and what is not acceptable? Am I trapped in a cage of ambiguity? I have no idea how to answer these questions. Besides, I am engaging in a somewhat unseen style with a combination of haiku and autoethnography together that I don't believe has been done before so I have no example to look to for inspiration or guidance. Perhaps this work is too adventurous and risky.

Today I woke up at three o'clock in the morning and had no idea how to write. The only thing that I really understand and know is my painful experience of learning English and this has meaning to me, or does it? I know nothing. I did gardening, digging up the violets that grow in my front yard and transplanting them to the back garden, because they are too overbearing on the other flowers in the front. Violets look like strong Canadians, but at the same time they are killing off the vulnerable flowers, which isn't so Canadian. At first, I thought that they were very pretty and whenever I saw them,

I would move them to another place where I thought they would grow more easily. But, I don't want my garden to be covered exclusively in violets. I want a variety of many different kinds of flowers, many colours, different heights and shapes. I cannot find one of my Pasque flowers that I planted last year. I planted this flower, because of the Greek legend that says that Pasque sprang from the tear of Venus. Maybe violets killed this flower.

Whenever I get writer's block, I go to the market downtown to see the many flowers I have never seen before and to absorb the energy of the downtown area like a sponge. The farmers who sell goods in the market all look so active but stand so firmly all day.

I reread my research proposal again and I have become more confused. What I thought that I would be able to do now seems far out of reach. I will ask Barbara for guidance again, because she is the only rope that I have at the bottom of this dark cave. All of my classmates are graduating this spring and I feel as though I am dumb and stupid. I think that this comparison is motivated by the characteristic of many Japanese people to keep up with the Jones'.

This morning, I received a call from CIBC that someone had used my credit card number and bought something from Canadian Tire. How does this happen? Was this my mistake? I don't know how to guard myself against being taken advantage of in that way. I trimmed the trees in my garden but they weren't picked up by the garbage men this morning; perhaps because I did not bundle them appropriately. How am I supposed to know about these rules?

Last summer I rented my house out while I was away in Japan and the people I rented my house to, did not pay me at all. In fact, they made my house so dirty and then just disappeared. So I have decided not to rent my house out this summer in order to protect myself. But, if I had known how to handle this kind of thing before, they would not have been able to use me like they did.

What are the rules to follow in the PhD program? These rules seem implicit and I just don't get understand them so well. How can I come to understand them better? Should I not send my draft at midnight the day before I meet with my supervisor? Have I been rude towards her? I am sitting in front of my computer and have no idea how to organize my thinking.

On May 26th, my participants seemed so confident about everything regarding their personality, Japanese culture and femininity. They said that they felt proud that they are Japanese. The more I know about things, the more that I feel that I am not sure. I am going against all ways of thinking that I had gained before in Japan and moving into another place that is unfamiliar to me. At every moment, I am destroying the self that was in a comfortable position before. Once, the world was so simple for me to understand and now it is so complicated, as I speak about it in a double voice.

My participants said that they don't need to change their selves to adjust to this culture, but my change has been more than just adjusting. My values have changed and continue to change. Even a concept such as femininity, which I was intimately familiar with in Japan, along with all the other concepts that I was comfortable with are completely meaningless to me now. I want women to become strong rather than gentle.

All of the attributes that Japanese people desire in men seem to fit to me now. I remember reading hardboiled detective stories written by Raymond Chandler, when I was young. The kind of detectives he would write about were the kind of men I wanted to be with. Chandler mentioned once that the man must be strong in order to be kind. I think that this is a very insightful thought. Did I abandon my femininity? Am I more close to being like a man?

My friend says that I chose the road less traveled, choosing the hard way of living but I disagree with her. Did I have the choice of picking the easy way? Happiness seems like a relative concept and I can't imagine living my life any other way. Ursula K Le Guin (2003) describes an imaginary place in which people,

...experience reincarnation, remembering more and more of their previous lives as they grow older, until at death they rejoin an innumerable multitude of former selves, and are then reborn bringing this immaterial trail or train of old lives into a new life. (Le Guin, 2003, p. 40)

I imagine also that in each life I have learned something important that I carry over to my next life and that knowing these things helps me understand who I am, more clearly. In Le Guin's story, the protagonist insists that she does not know who she is. I interpreted her statement as meaning that even though she has lived many lives, each moment is different than the last and so being able to pin down "who she is" is an impossibility.

偏見は 自信を餌の 寄生虫
Racist parasite
Feeding on one's confidence
Twisted and malformed

Mika's diary, June 18th, 2007

On June 15th, I attended Rie's graduation ceremony, bringing flowers and a card to congratulate her. She looked so proud of herself. When I was her age, my youngest son was two years old and I had never thought about the possibility of doing anything besides being a full-time mother, so I believe that she is wiser than I was at her age. Against the mainstream pressure that women have to marry before 25 years, she planned ten years ago, to be independent; this is truly amazing.

On June 11th, I met with Yoko to correct some portions of her interview, and narrative story that I may have misinterpreted due to the ambiguous nature of Japanese. She desired to express more about how she had changed as well as to make changes to her narrative and she handed me something that she had written about the Miss Universe Pageant. She was happy that a confident, strong as well as beautiful Japanese woman won the pageant. From my point of view, the Miss Universe contest is held under the watchful eye of patriarchal structure, so this tournament seems ridiculous. Why do we have to be judged by our beauty? Everybody has different beauty and I don't believe we can judge which is best. My thoughts differed from Yoko's on this subject, so I did not tell her how I really felt. She said that she is proud of being Japanese, so I asked her what part makes her so proud. At first, she said that it was Japanese economic success and I questioned this success as it is often based on people's hard labour, including death from hard work and suicides. She agreed with what I said and she promised that she would think about it more later on and would write down something about why she is proud to be Japanese. Of course we all want to be proud of the country that we grew up in, but for me this is not

so easy. Whenever people say that Japan is number one, I feel as though there is a tinge of racism in the statement. Sometimes, I feel that Japanese people are all racists and xenophobes, closing their minds to the outside world. It seems to me that Yoko is clearly influenced by this Japanese mind set.

On June 17th, I saw the movie, “La vie en rose” which is about the life of Edith Piaf. I was touched by the music and story, it made me believe I had really taken a trip back into the past, looking at her life and I cried. The movie theater was full and the person next to me told her friend that only the French could make such a wonderful film, when movie ended. I thought this not to be true. I do think that we, as human beings, feel good about excluding others. Are we all racists? Racism is like a parasite, feeding us confidence, but it takes away our respect for human dignity. How can we escape from this stigmatized thinking?

I think about Ted Aoki’s argument that both roses and chrysanthemum are beautiful. Every step towards gaining confidence seems like a trap of racism. During my conversations with my participants, every time they praised Japanese culture, I felt uncomfortable. How can we say that only Japanese women are sensitive, kind, considerate, delicate, polite and diligent? Of course they don’t say this explicitly, but sometimes I sense what they want to say it, without saying anything about our solidarity as Japanese women, I feel extremely guilty. I sense that they are thinking that all Japanese men are childish and that Japanese women are the best women in the world. Is this so? I am not sure. Japanese women are exoticized by the outside world and to criticize my own culture is painful, but this is the in-between space that one enters.

Derrida (2002) says, “the forces of the outside always having their allies or representatives on the inside” (p. 80). I know that my participants are young and have no suspicion about the traps within Japan. While they have very little difficulty believing that Japanese men are childish while they are with foreign men, to my knowledge, they have never openly questioned whether or not Japanese women are really “number one”.

Being a Japanese woman as well, my interpretation of myself is contaminated by Japanese social identity and it is difficult to escape from this social contamination of my personal identity.

Everything is “drawn” for me from the (living, daily, naïve or reflective, always thrown against the impossible) experience of this “preference” that I have at the same time to affirm and sacrifice. There is always for me, and I believe these must be more than one language, mine and the other (I am simplifying a lot), and I must try to write in such a way that the language of the other does not suffer in mine, suffers me to come without suffering from it, receives the hospitality of mine without getting lost or integrated there. And reciprocally, but reciprocity is not symmetry—and first of all because we have no neutral measure here, no common measure given by a third party. (Derrida, 1995, p. 363)

I find Derrida's words profound to the extent that they make me think about my "preference" that I have to affirm and sacrifice in my multiple voices. I confess, in my group conversation, that there were several moments when our words became nonsense, even though we were speaking the same language, thus revealing the nature of our language.

甦る 母のぬくもり 螢道
A moment relived
Mother's warm hand grasping mine
Safely through the dark

Mika's diary, October 6th, 2007

Yesterday, I suddenly received e-mail from one of my students whose major is film studies. She said that Trinh T. Minh-ha would be in Ottawa to screen the presentation of her film, "Night Passage" at 7 o'clock. It was fortunate that I had told her previously that I was interested in Trinh T. Minh-ha's work as otherwise she might not have forwarded this information to me!

I was excited, so I quickly informed Pat Palulis and decided to go. At the reception I saw Pat as well as some of my students. This film is based on the novel, "Milky Way Railroad" (1934) by Kenji Miyazawa. Miyazawa is my eldest daughter's hero and so on the wall in her room she posted his famous poem of "Be not defeated by the rain" (雨にも負けず).

My eldest daughter, Miwa, idolized Miyazawa Kenji as a person who selflessly gave and did for others. She loved the children's books that Miyazawa wrote, which were always very creative, imaginative and philosophical in nature. Today, Miwa volunteers her time to help the elderly on a very regular basis in the spirit of Miyazawa's philosophy.

After I saw the movie and returned home, I sent an following e-mail to Pat Palulis about the experience.

Dear Pat

I really enjoyed yesterday. Thanks introducing me Trinh-Min Ha. I was curious how Trinh interpret Kenji Miyazawa's "Night of the miliky way railway"(銀河鉄道の夜). My children all loved his book. Although he died young before 40, he was a Buddhist and social activist and was very sincere to help weaker people than him. All his work is wonderful and still meaningful in post-modern stance.

There were many insightful scenes in the movie and her lecture was so good.

The darkness is indeed metaphorical, because every colours in it and

culturally specific. I remembered the darkness of my childhood, sound of frog and river, smell of weed and tree and the sensitive touch of my mother's hand when we walk together in the dark rice field at night with fear. When I was kid, we still could see fireflies and night became darker. Also when I was watching the fire performers, suddenly dance became calligraphy, and time slowed down or fast forwarded depending on the ways Trinh put the images together.

I attach some pictures.

Mika

As I mentioned in my e-mail, Trinh T. Minh-ha's movie caused me to recall the memory of my mother. Memories seem so deeply rooted in the five senses. Walking between the rice fields with my mother's hand holding mine in the midst of the dark night, with the fireflies dancing, occasionally shedding light, emphasizing the darkness, with the scent of the trees and the weeds in the water wafting through the air; seeing this movie brought me back to that moment, in the darkness of the theatre, reliving that moment. Darkness, while it possesses metaphorical interpretations of fear and the unknown to many, to me, if I can travel back to the moment with my mother between the rice fields, it possesses a sense of safety and wonder. In the film the mother tells her child, "Don't be afraid of the darkness, just go forward".

I think my mother said those very same words while we were walking together that night. I am amazed by the richness of my childhood experiences and their effects on me, years after they took place, still being able to hear and feel my mother, through memories evoked by the darkness, unconsciously guided and molded by them. No matter how intimidating life becomes, we must go on through the darkness, life goes on, and the love people in one's life make a difference.

I feel that I understand Aoki's (2005) notion of "metaphors without metaphors" (p. 430), because looking on that childhood moment I found my darkness ebullient with colours, smells, tactile sensations, resonance and the flavour of a cool breeze as it brushed over us. The Zen notion of "emptiness is fullness", especially in this instance seems appropriate, in the same breath as Aoki's metonymic moment. I remember my favorite Kobayashi Issa's haiku.

闇より 闇に入るや 猫の恋
Out of the dark
Into the darkness they go
The loves of a Cat!

(Written by Issa Kobayashi, translated to English by Lewis Mackenzie)

Like the cat in Issa's haiku, I believe that human beings are born from the darkness into the darkness to live between being and not being, through love, both of others and by others.

CHAPTER 6: METAPHORICAL SELF

We live by metaphors. But most of the time we take our root metaphors for granted without realizing the assumptions we unconsciously hold. If we want to come to know the assumptions we make about humanity and world, we need to learn to stop our ongoing world, and to reflect upon how we make sense of our world by uncovering and thus discovering the root metaphor(s) to which we unconsciously subscribe. (Aoki, 2005, p. 346)

物言えば とどめ刺される 英語圏
Untranslated soul
An unseen scar cuts deeply
In this English world.

Examining the metaphors to which we are unconsciously subscribed might be very important when we study human thought and education. Culler (1981) explains metaphor and metonymy: “Metaphor, a comparison or substitution based on likeness ... Metonymy moves from one thing to another on the basis of contiguity and thus produces meaning and order by positing spatial or temporal series” (p. 216).

Regarding metaphor and metonymy, both Aoki (2005) and Bhabha's (1994) arguments about “in-between space” and “the third space” are about them being a two-way flow, a doubling place. Metaphorical self always tries to situate itself inside of social identity while metonymic self tries to re-enter the doubling space from which it is birthed.

Ivanic (1997) explains the notion of “the discursive self” as being a part of identity, but the discursive self is very broad and includes multiple discourses such as feminist discourse, lovers' discourse, students' discourse, family discourse, among others. In this section I focused on the metaphorical self because as Aoki has stated, metaphor grounds the subject and carries cultural ideology such as beliefs and values. I think that metaphorical self illuminates social identity that we unconsciously subscribe to.

According to Lakoff (1992), metaphors go well beyond poetic tropes and serve as the underpinning of much of our own conceptual understanding and categories.

“Metaphor is pervasive in everyday life, not just in language but in thought and action” (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, p. 3). Lakoff (1993) states that metaphor is “a cross domain mapping in the conceptual system” (p. 203). Therefore, self is realized through the linguistic expression of metaphor within the realm of discourse. From this perspective,

our conceptual system varies across cultures, implying that we have multiple realities. How then translate my Japanese metaphors into English? My experience leads me to think that we should examine social identities through metaphors, the reflection of a culture's identities. When one learns a language, one not only learns the language, but the cultural beliefs and values. Therefore, language reflects a culture's ideology, thus, the next logical step after changing how we think about minority groups is to change how we talk about minority groups. We cannot eliminate the metaphors that currently exist, but we can change how we use them. Drawing on this perspective, a number of researchers have begun to study the ways in which metaphors and conceptual understanding are related (Ho, 2005; Lightfoot, 2001; Robertson, 2003; Sfard, 1998).

Robertson's (2003) study investigated metaphors that shape academic thought and practice. Her examination focused on the ways in which metaphors enable us to recognize and challenge the familiar and becoming aware of other ways of thinking.

Sfard (1998) undertook an investigation to understand how our thinking about learning is metaphorically structured. She provided a close analysis of the dominant metaphors that underpin learning. These include learning as acquisition and learning as participation. By understanding how these different conceptual metaphors constitute our thinking, she was able to show how this affects our practices in education.

In a study of second language learners, Lightfoot (2001) investigated the effect of culturally constructed metaphorical understanding of immigrants. She says that the matter of success or failure among second-language students was not simply a matter of the individual, but also a matter of the perception of the culture of the individual by the predominant social culture. She also points out that "discourse and identity are inherently political and embedded in a network of unequal power relations" (p. 61).

Ho (2005) performed research about Hong Kong secondary school teachers' conceptual self-mappings via discourse. Ho describes the underlying principle of teacher's metaphors as being either positive or negative and concludes that their metaphors are paradoxical. For example, "teacher is kung fu fighter" (p. 365), "teacher is God" (p. 371), "teacher is triad member" (p. 369). Ho's research reveals how teachers' discourse is constructed through metaphors but it differs from my research in that mine is done from a postmodern philosophical perspective utilizing autoethnography and deals with cross-cultural identity shifts through metaphor.

Spack (1997) performed a three-year study of a Japanese girl, Yuko, who studied English at a university. Spack's study astonishingly finds that Yuko's identity is constantly shifting. Although, the focus of Spack's study is not metaphors, interestingly, Yuko uses one metaphor to describe her puzzlement: "pinched by a fox" similar in meaning to being spellbound or tricked, as a way to describe her confusion with academic learning.

According to Derrida (1982), Western paradigms are logocentric and need constant deconstruction and the possibilities of presence within any contextual language are ever changing, leaving only a "trace" of the subject/object. Derrida (1976) has also made it clear that there is "nothing beyond the text" (p.158) and that learning does not occur in a vacuum and is heavily influenced by social factors. Therefore in a "linguistic" universe, "reality" is only mediated as a result of a universe's ideology. So to understand Japanese metaphors requires an understanding of the Japanese ideology.

I am interested in learning how conceptual metaphors function in Japanese and English in order to understand the meanings constructed by Japanese students who learn

English in Canada. Through the analysis of their metaphors, I hope to deepen my understanding of their experiences as second language learners.

Gender Metaphors

棘の海 藻屑となって 女ゆえ
Ocean of language
Perilous whirlpools abound
Graveyard of women

強姦 (*goukan*, trans. rape)

As a Japanese woman, throughout my whole life, I have struggled with the abundant discriminatory language towards women in Japan. This kind of negative language that targets women is well described in the book “Womansword: What Japanese words say about women” by Kittredge Cherry (2002).

Rie discusses negative aspects of Japanese language during the second meeting of October 22nd, 2006.

Rie: All the disgusting words contain the symbol for woman(女) such as 嫉み(*netami*, trans: envy), 姦しい(*kashimashii*, trans: noisy), 嫉妬 (*shitto*, trans: jealousy), 強姦 (*goukan*, trans: rape).

The words Rie mentions only begin to scratch the surface of gender-discriminative language in Japan; Cherry (2002) describes 強姦 (*goukan*, trans. rape) as a powerful graphic image.

The word *goukan*, meaning rape, is itself an assault on women's sensibilities. The word consists of the ideogram for “coerce” followed by a character built of three women (*kan*). Meaning wickedness or seduction, *kan* is probably the character most widely recognized as discriminatory.

The composition of gokan calls to mind the twisted reasoning that rape victims are guilty of “asking for it”. (Cherry, 2002, p. 108)

Also, Wang (2004) states, “The interactive relationship between language and culture makes it almost impossible to separate the two and their respective influences on gender construction” (p. 117). This discriminatory language illustrates Japanese ideology that does not respect women. It places the burden of responsibility in rape on the woman for flaunting her sexuality to men. The way that Japanese connects women with language that has a negative connotation relates to Lakoff’s theory of the systematic nature of language.

可愛さを 売るマネキンは ガキ社会
Tainted, impure men
Infantile society
Addicted to “cute”

ぶりっこ (*burikko*, *trans. pretending to be a child*)

Yoko says in her September 12th, 2006 diary:

Westernized? (WIE)

I think that definitely becoming westernized. For example, soon after I came to Canada, I thought Japanese girls’ clothes were very cute compared to Canadian girls’. But now, I don’t feel that so much. There are many Japanese girls in the ESL program who come from a Japanese university to ours on the exchange program. I feel so much distance looking at those girls (*burikko*) who stress their feminine side, wearing cute fashionable clothes, and using a strong accent of Japanese English. I’ve decided that I will never want to be like them. I am even angry when I walk behind those girls who walk very slowly, with their toes pointed inward. Besides, compared to me, every girl seems small.

Yoko questions the concept of “cute” in her June 11th, 2006 diary:

Two days ago, I had a visitor come to my house who plans to stay for one week. She is a Japanese university student who studied for one year. She finished her program and before she returns to Japan, she went on a trip to New York and Toronto and asked to stay at my house. Interestingly, her Japaneseness is quite distinguished. On the other hand, I recognize that I may be disliked when I return to Japan for losing much of my Japaneseness. Her name is Nacchan, twenty-years-old and she’s about half my height. She’s very kind and warm-hearted and fun to talk to so I enjoy being around her. However, because she is not living alone she can’t cook; I’m not sure exactly why. She doesn’t know exactly how much money is left in her bank account (WIE) and doesn’t

understand exactly how much she is paying when she goes shopping. She lacks independence. Many Japanese girls are like this. I thought to myself, “what a truly Japanese girl she is”, when I see how obsessed (WIE) she is with cute things. If she thinks something is cute, she really wants it. She also wants to be really cute. Another thing about her is that she asks permission to do everything. Can I use the shower? Can I use the dishes? Can I use a towel? I already told her how things work around here, so why does she continue to ask for permission? She asks every time, and I say “ya sure” every time. If I had just come from Japan and started living here I would have been very polite answering her, saying “Oh please, go ahead. The towels aren’t so good, but please use it.” But now I find it to be more of a pain in the neck. Soon after I came here, I thought that Canadians are so self-centered. They don’t care about the things around them but I am slowly becoming used to this culture. If I want something, I have to request it. Offering (WIE) things to my friends in a polite way is something I find troublesome. Besides, I don’t hesitate to just ask for things I want.

Yoko described her distant feeling to Japanese girls who demonstrate the femininity that is expected in Japan. In Japan, Seiko Matsuda is a very popular singer who is considered “burikko”, wearing cute clothes, being flat-chested and acting like a young girl, even though she is forty now. This is in strong contrast to Canadian teenage girls, many of whom stress their feminine sexuality. Japanese girls tend to act like young girls, very naively and innocently in order to appeal to men who might have a “Lolita complex” (ロリコン).

Yoko is noticing the different concept about beauty.

Yoko’s diary, November 28th, 2006

Kurara came second place in the 2006 Miss Universe (WIE) competition. She is 172 cm tall, from Okinawa. She does not possess the characteristic Japanese body but still has a very Asian coiffure. She is an independent thinker and can speak some French, Spanish and English. She has a very reserved, Japanese smile that sometimes shows her shyness and humility. Because she is wearing very sexy clothes, it makes her appear as though she grew up in North America (WIE) and she is able to express herself as though she were a bitch (WIE).

If she had not won second place, her beauty would not have been recognized in Japan. However, because she trained herself by North American standards (WIE) and Miss Universe standards (WIE), she was able to come in second place. What I want to say is that even the standards of beauty are being North Americanized (WIE) and that there is a vast difference between this and the peculiar and unique standards of beauty for Japanese women.

As for what goes on in Japan, the person who is recognized as being “beautiful” is not necessarily beautiful in Canada (WIE). However, there are many young Japanese women

who imitate “beautiful” women who are considered beautiful in Japan. If you live in North America (WIE), then the standard of beauty from the North American point of view (WIE) is the majority (WIE) view; and the standard of beauty changes naturally. I am one of them and I think that Kurara is very beautiful. Therefore, to study Western culture and to study English changes the standard of beauty, and even the standard of behaviour... it’s no exaggeration.

I think that there is no question why Barbie dolls are not popular and cannot sell well in Japan. It must be because they are too glamorous and sexual for Japanese standards.

Yoko questions the concept of beauty that is culturally dependent.

可愛さの 媚薬が効かぬ この社会
Eastern women’s charms
Useless aphrodisiac
In the Western world

女らしさ (*femininity*)

Cherry (2002) mentions that dictionaries define “onnarashisa” (womanliness) “in terms of being kind, gentle polite, submissive and graceful” (p. 32). The appearance of the word “submissive” as a pivotal component of femininity seems to contrast starkly with the concept of femininity in Western culture. I feel that my participants have more quickly been able to gain a sense of femininity in the Western sense. In particular, Yoko has learned about the different aspects of Western femininity through her boyfriend experiences.

Yoko’s diary, January 27th, 2007

忠実な人 (mame na hito, trans. hardworking person)、奥床しい人 (okuyukashii hito, trans. modest and submissive person)、きめ細やかな配慮ができる人 (kimekomayaka na hairyo ga dekiru hito trans. someone capable of sensitive consideration). These are what are considered the ideal characteristics of the Japanese woman. Compared to this I am not very ideal because I am not very sensitive. Whenever I talk to my mother about this “ideal Japanese woman” she proudly says, “Because of this, since ancient days, if one wants to have a wife, a Japanese wife is the best choice.” She herself believes that she satisfies the conditions for being an ideal Japanese woman.

She also has a good educational background, has a good understanding of society, and is very generous so she is happy that she can be considered to be in the upper echelon of Japanese womanhood. But having left Japan, I now think that these conditions are just

for Japan. In Canada I think that being more diplomatic, voicing one's opinion, being a little selfish but at the same time being interesting, and being a woman who doesn't show sensitive consideration is more popular among men. In fact, I have learned from my mistakes. I have had two Canadian boyfriends in the past. The reason it didn't go well is because before I showed my real self, I considered what kind of woman he would like; wanting to impress him by showing him that I paid close attention to his likes and dislikes; I also pretended to be shy thinking that this would make me more attractive.

Unfortunately, these things all backfired on me. I realized that for Canadian boys, they want a girl who has a strong personality and leads them with an enjoyable attitude. I acted like a modest person but these attitudes are not evaluated or noticed and are just considered the trademarks of a shy and boring person. My boyfriends were very young so that is one reason, but I think that men who don't feel an attraction to a subservient woman are comparatively independent and that's a good thing, in my opinion.

All three participants in my research look very feminine like most Japanese girls. I asked them questions about femininity and what it means to them.

Yoko replies in her email of April 5, 2007:

[Femininity]

I don't think that it has a negative connotation. Both inwardly and outwardly, a woman should know how to wear clothes, how to act, how to behave and walk; it all needs to be feminine. I think that smart women should use their gender effectively. My image of femininity is elegant, peaceful, harmonious and quiet. On the outside she should appear harmonious, but on the inside she should know how to deal with men and be able to seize power from them without causing a fuss.

I am surprised by Yoko's response because even though she is aware that the notion of Japanese femininity that is peaceful, harmonious and quiet is a socially coerced notion, she still supports it.

Yoko also continues in this e-mail in response to my asking whether she, as a Japanese woman, deserves to be feminine.

I don't want to do things like serve tea to men and pour their sake. However, I still feel the sense that I should follow certain social rules when it comes to being feminine. For example, in Canada, female students often lay their legs across a nearby chair when they sit or lay down; in Japan, women never do this, and I don't want to either.

Yoko says that she believes that Canadian women are lacking a sense of femininity by taking a more relaxed attitude.

Rie also replies to my questions about femininity in her email of May 2nd, 2007.

Either way is okay, as long as it concerns motherhood, kindness, and gentleness. But in the case of the workplace where you are told to be quiet because you are a woman, I do not want the submissive and obedient components of the definition to apply.

When I asked what are the differences in terms of femininity between Canadian women and Japanese women, she replied in her email:

Canadian women get married and have their own way to live independently. They have a strong femininity to protect their family; they have a positive and strong feminine attitude. Japanese women come to expect that someone will take care of them as long as they appeal to men with their cuteness. There are many women who don't want to be independent. They appeal to men with the notion of weakness in women, eventually becoming married, helping their husbands, raising the children and protecting their family from within.

The difference between Rie's response and Yoko's is the notion of quietness/silence. Rie does not think that a woman should be made to be quiet in the workplace and doesn't want to be used in that way.

For me, this conflict between what I have been trained to be, and what I want to "become" causes a dilemma within me. I refuse to be coerced to be feminine, but at the same time I don't want to reject my inner desire to be feminine, even though these desires are diminishing as I become older. But certainly, I don't think that being quiet is a requisite aspect of femininity. I think that some women use the notion that women are cute, fragile, vulnerable, and weak to control men. Though, I think that these weapons only really work for the short period while they are young and attractive, and as they become older they lose all of their weapons. Moreover, the fact that they are no longer as cute as they once were when they were young is often something held against them when they become older. There are many Canadian women who are both strong and feminine so I think that we need to deconstruct the notion of femininity.

母鎖 鍵はあるのに 眼閉じ
My dear mother chained
Refusing to be set free
Toils about the house

砂嵐 (sand storm)

Yoko states her mother's unequal sexual life and the importance of gender equality during her second interview, on January 27th, 2007.

Mika: How is your parent's unequal relationship affecting you?

Yoko: I have always had a disgusted attitude towards the concept that women are weaker than man. My mother once confessed to me that when I was a high school student, my father once asked her for sex, but during it, my mother felt as though it was nothing more than the ebb and flow of coarse sand as it washed inside her body, callously. It's beyond my imagination, but she expressed her melancholic experience via a sand metaphor (砂嵐). My mother said to my father that she is not happy having sex with him and so my father said that he will not have sex with my

mother, because he does not want to rape her. I think that my father will not have an affair, because he is a Christian. I think that he loves my mother still.

Yoko questions the image of her father and mother in her diary.

Yoko's diary, October 22nd, 2006

Something has made me forget---the mental process of adjusting new ideas/ or being influenced by the new culture (WIE).

-not only by learning new thing like "English" (WIE)

-but by forgetting the strict social roles in Japan, the way I adjust myself to this new society (WIE).

-Examples (WIE)

-The images that I cultivated in Japan, such as "father" and "mother" are disappearing by studying here in Canada (WIE).

-For example, I can look at the role of "father and mother" objectively, less subjective feeling involved, but more realistic objective view applied (WIE).

-I am becoming more vulnerable to being influenced by different thinking.

-When I think of the role of "dad and mom" (WIE). I have a feeling of wrongness.

Yoko describes her parent's marriage as being a sandstorm because from her mother's perspective, there is no more love but they continue in their marriage in spite of it because divorce is considered to be shameful.

至らない 悪夫は傷を 化膿させ
The inept husband
Allows harm to meet his wife
Festering sickly

悪妻 (*akusai*, trans. bad wife)、不届き (*futodoki*, trans. rude)、至らない (*itaranai* trans. incompetent)

Yoko's diary, January 27th, 2007

My father used to use these words all the time to describe my mother. Is this supposed to mean that someone is an incomplete, damaged human being? Even so, being constantly told these things by my father, my mother endured the abuse... how could you put up with this, mother? But in the end, she realized that my father was making unreasonable criticisms so she was able to get through it. My mother's existence is a very strange one, because my mother has never been able to satisfy my father. Surely there is nobody that would be able to live up to his standards and satisfy him—except perhaps myself; his cute daughter who has led a somewhat sheltered life 箱入り娘 (*hakoirimusume* trans. girl who has led a sheltered life). My mother's life has been to be there for my father; loving him but at the same time, hating him; she has been a target for him to release his anger. I wish my mother would just leave him.

Many Japanese men intentionally choose bad words to describe their wives because they believe that their wives are a possession that belongs to them.

野火のよう 亭主関白 燃やしたい
Burning off the fields
King of the castle, adieu
New soil bares new men.

亭主関白(*teishukanpaku*, lit. *Shogun of the castle*, trans. *dominant man of the house type*)

When Rie returned to Japan for the holidays, she questioned the Japanese metaphor, “teishukanpaku”.

Rie’s diary, January 1st, 2007

The most impressive part of the year-end party I went to was my friend’s story. Twice a year, we, the members of the former tennis club, gather together in the winter and summer. Among the 21 members, only 4, including me, are still not married. One of the four of us who isn’t married had an odd story.

Her boyfriend has no job and he is not admitting to her that she is his girlfriend. Her younger brother married ahead of her so she wants to marry as soon as possible. During the summer last year, she visited her friend who lives in England and at the airport her belt got stuck to something. She tells the story to everybody as if it were an extraordinary experience. She said many times, “If I could speak English, that would be nice..” From my point of view her younger brother marrying ahead of her or her story about her belt getting stuck to something at the airport are not such extraordinary stories. What she said, however, was amazing. She said, “I am not attracted to men who are not 亭主関白 (*teishukanpaku*, lit. *Shogun of the castle*, trans. *dominant man of the house type*).” This, I found difficult to believe.

We are both the same age, both received a good education, and for a friend of mine to say something like this is absolutely strange. In my case, my boyfriend is considering the possibility of marriage seriously and taking on responsibilities. He understands, in many ways, about my goals and my personality. In the case of my friend however, her boyfriend has no job, no confidence, and does not admit that they have a relationship; and even they are in the process of dating, he is saying that he is still looking for a better girlfriend. The problem is his personality, and his lack of confidence and action. How can she be attracted to such a man? Why doesn’t she just get rid of this terrible guy? I wish she would go to English Conversation School to develop her English skills so that she can stop seeing him.

So, having listened to her story, I felt as though I am very lucky because even though my English is not perfect, I am able to go out into the world on my own. I can leap headfirst into new challenges with my confidence. I realize that there is a gap between the Japanese way of thinking and the Canadian way of thinking. My standard for men is

clearly different than my friend who says that teishukanpaku is good. I am different than the common Japanese woman because I am trying to pursue my goals.

After all, I think that it started with being able to speak English or not, and my life changed from there. Because in the beginning the difference between being able to speak or not was so small, but this difference becomes bigger and bigger and changes one's way of thinking, and one's values. What might I become in the future; the "me" that has different values and is different than common Japanese women. Objectively speaking, while I criticize Japanese culture and values, I will find my own way to traverse life. I hope I can find this path, along with my boyfriend.

Yoko, like Rie, thinks that Japanese men are not independent.

Yoko's diary, March 12th, 2006

Today I was talking with Amber about Japanese men.

"Too bad that they can't even cook by themselves." (WIE)

Amber was in Japan for 2 years so I think that she understands them fairly well. I learned that only men that live by themselves independently are any good.

I imprisoned myself within my own house in order to be 良妻賢母 (ryousai kenbo trans.

good wife and smart mother) and I was overwhelmed by the many responsibilities that I

had to deal with. However, since I have come to Canada, I have watched many men who

help wash the dishes after the dinner. In addition to that, there are many Canadian men

who also cook dinner for their families. It is a huge difference in how things are done

between the two cultures.

奥様は 埃まみれの 骨董品

Woman of the house

Relic, antique, on display

Covered, thick, in dust

主人 (shujin, lit. master)、家内 (kanai, lit. person who is inside the house)、奥様 (okusama lit. that person who resides at the back of the house)

Yoko discusses how her father addresses her mother (his wife) during the third meeting.

Third Meeting, December 23rd, 2006

Yoko: Judging from his words, he calls my mother, temee, omae, (both words are impolite and very informal ways to say "you") but my mother calls him shujin (master). Also when he talks to other people, he calls his wife kanai (literally, "person in the house") and other men's wives okusama (formal word to refer to

other men's wives, meaning women who stays at the back of the house). These words do not exist in another culture.

When Japanese women notice the powerful influence that this language has on women, we move away from these words.

最下位の 地位を恨んで 女国
Lowest of the low
Bitter hate for one's status
The land of women

女の癖に(onna no kuse ni, trans. in spite of being a woman)

When Rie was a child, she achieved higher grades in school than her male counterparts and because of this, she was implicitly made to believe, that as a girl she was inferior to boys. She might even have been called 男勝り (otoko masari, trans. male-surpasser).

Rie's personal interview, December 23rd, 2006

Rie: When I was a child, I was always one of the top students and was better than the male students and so I wasn't thought of as being a cute girl. I was a very confident girl.

Mika: I was also a very confident girl when I was young but once I married I lost all of my confidence because my husband always put me down saying "onna no kuse ni" (in spite of being a woman) and so I also became very critical of myself. I didn't receive any praise from other people so it was very difficult to maintain a level of confidence.

Also, 腐ったりんごのような女 (kusatta ringo no you na onna, lit. a woman like a rotten apple, trans. an unappealing woman) and 女以下 (onna ika, lit. less than a woman) are expressions that tread on women. Cherry (2002) says, "one way to show contempt for a man is to call him 'less than a woman' " (p. 33). For the expression that compares a woman to a rotten apple, there is no equivalent expression for men. Japanese metaphors nearly always support the standard that men are superior to women. Fu (1995) says, "It is an undeniable fact that the social status of Japanese woman remains far lower than that of

Chinese women today” (p. 114). I wonder if language has influenced the revitalization of the process of lowering the position and status of Japanese women.

痴漢され 何も言えずに なぜ恥じる？
Sexually harassed
Only silent cries come forth
Why do I feel shame?

痴漢 (chikan, lit. foolish men, trans. a molester of women)

The first meeting, February 26th, 2006

Yoko: I experienced many instances of sexual harassment by well-dressed businessmen on the train.

Mika: I have never experienced sexual harassment here in Canada, is that because women are more powerful here or am I just not attractive enough?

Yoko: If women experience sexual harassment here in Canada, they call the police.

Rie: When Japanese women experience sexual harassment and can't call the police because it wouldn't be cute to do so, or not reporting it is connected to being cute. At Kyoto University I saw in the newspaper, an article about 2 guys calling 4 women and offering them alcohol and later raping them. They called the police and they did an investigation and found out that these guys have done this many times before, but it was never reported.

Japanese women rarely complain about sexual harassment and seem as though they are accepting that they are sexual targets. When I returned to Japan during last summer, I wrote the following diary entry.

Mika's diary, August 26th, 2006

Miwa and I carried my trunks to the airport in Nagoya in preparation for my early departure the next morning back to Canada. Because it was an early flight, I decided to stay at the airport hotel with Miwa; so we left home around 12 p.m. for Nagoya station.

Today was Saturday and many Jr. High School girls wearing miniskirts rushed on to the train as a group. As soon as they sat down, they took their cosmetics bags out and began to put on their make up. They helped each other curl their eyelashes and apply their mascara. They seemed to be concentrating intently, examining their faces in the mirror, while talking on their cell phones in their left hand. They looked like monkeys cleaning and primping each other. Their legs were so wide open that I could see their panties. I remembered what Yoko and Rie had mentioned during our meeting and I was curious to see how the men would react. Looking over at the men, they seemed to be indifferent to the girls' behavior. Perhaps, these days, these girls' attitudes are becoming more prevalent and it no longer turns any heads.

The girls looked proud demonstrating their sexuality, or perhaps it was an expression of liberation against the expectation of men for women to be feminine, by not applying makeup in public. Their language was short and aggressive, and one of the girls undid many of the top buttons *on her* blouse so I could see her bra. I have also heard that Jr. High School girls sell their used undergarments to old men at a high price using both the Internet and their cell phones. It seems as though these girls only seem to believe in sexuality and monetary gain. When I was young, I was always troubled by sexual harassment, so I was very careful to not flaunt my sexuality, by hiding my body. Their rebellious nature might simply be a temporary phase and they might be someday become a conservative housewife, who knows. Miwa never used makeup, always saying that what is inside is more important, but this year I noticed that she changed, by putting on some lipstick. What a contrast to these girls!

~ Last year I read many Letters to the Editor complaining about how girls were always applying their makeup while riding on the train. This year, however, I have not heard or read anything about it. Maybe over the last year this habit has become more popular—has it become socially accepted or simply ignored?

How will Japan change because of the changes in how women act and are treated?

The third meeting, December 23rd, 2006

Rie: There are many men who do sexually harass women (痴漢) because they feel stress from society.

Yoko: What are they thinking about women, are we sexual targets? I feel that it is especially strange that there are many girls who experience sexual harassment on the train and do not say anything. Here in Canada, it never happens.

Cherry (2002) deplores,

Women's tendency to feel ashamed for being victimized continues to be reinforced. An example emerged at the 1985 Tsukuba Science Exposition, where the female guides, called "Companions" (konpanion) were trained to respond to chikan in the crowds. When a man's hand slithered toward her crotch, each guide was told to say "I'm so sorry!" as if she had accidentally bumped into his hand. (Cherry, 2002, p. 108)

While Japanese men treat women as sexual targets, Japanese girls sell their used underwear and engage in 援助交際 (enjo kousai, lit. compensated dating, trans.

prostitution) in order to satisfy their materialistic needs. Another part of the reason why some young girls engage in enjo kousai is because they are aware that they are sexual targets, and they are just trying to make the most of it while they can. For others it is a form of liberation, and rebellion. Enjo kousai is an act in which both the young girl and older man are both victims of each other. As Freire (1970) declares, “As the oppressors dehumanize others and violate their rights, they themselves also become dehumanized” (p. 42). In dehumanizing each other, reducing the Other to something to be exploited, one exploits oneself. The young girl does not truly care for the older man past his gift-giving to her and the older man does not care for her past the sexual favours she performs for him. The man feels contempt for women and so he has sought out a young vulnerable girl who he can control with gifts. The girl feels contempt for men so she has chosen to rebel, and take as much as she can get; giving her body in order to do so.

永遠の マザコン王子 いつ育つ？
Mother's little Prince
Umbilical cord uncut
When will he grow up?

マザコン (*mazakon*, *trans.* *Oedipus complex*)

My participants and I agreed that Japanese men are childish and have an Oedipus complex.

The first meeting, February 26th, 2006

Yoko: Why are Japanese men so cold?

Rie: They might be kind but they might be very frustrated with things like the ranking of the school they are working at and so it ends up that they take out their frustration on the weakest people there, which usually ends up some new young female teacher.

Yoko: Japanese men are childish. 50 to 65-year old men are the worst. Don't you think so? They (マザコン) are spoiled by society, their parents and don't suffer as much as women.

Rie: No wonder these old men always seem to lose their jobs during company restructuring and downsizing. I have no sympathy for them.

Yoko: Because Japanese men are childish, Japanese women become popular as a result. Asian women are very popular to men and I get the feeling that they tend to receive more compliments

This word is an abbreviation of mother complex and there are many men who are dependent upon their mother's advice. In this case, the mother is called お袋 (ofukuro), which means honorable bag that takes care of everything in her bag.

Miller (2006) says that a feminist, autobiographical examination is a very useful tool to "explore feminist examinations of transnational flows and mobilities" (p. 31). She continues, "Such autobiographical inquiries might highlight how participants in that world-wide field now must move across, between, and with/in spatial and temporal as well as historical, social and cultural difference so as to "encounter a new possibility for collective exchange" (Butler 2001, p. 92, quoted by Miller)— but exchange not contingent on sameness" (p. 46).

When I was a university student, forty years ago, I read "The Second Sex" (1953) by Simone de Beauvoir that, "one is not born a woman, but, rather, becomes one" (p. 301). I was very shocked by that statement at that time. I was shocked, because I thought that I would never be able to become the kind of woman my society and culture demanded that I become. I had been told many times that I should act "like a woman" (onnarashiku); being quiet, obedient, cute, sexy, feminine, sensitive, vulnerable, thoughtful passive and that I should always be mindful of the needs of men. Butler (1990) says that gender signification in language has the inherent problem, for women, of being masculine and so women have no way to express their language. So according to what de Beauvoir wrote in "The Second Sex", are women becoming men now? Learning to talk back like men? I question the meaning of the term, "woman". While I lived in

Japan, I did not think so much about this term “woman”, because I figured that it was a clear matter of possessing a different anatomy than men. In Canada, I know and have known homosexual men and I have found them to be very sensitive and feminine. Similarly, I know and have known homosexual women and I have found them to be strong and assertive.

Butler (2001) warns, “To keep the term “gender” apart from both masculinity and femininity is to safeguard a theoretical perspective by which one might offer an account of how the binary of masculine and feminine comes to exhaust the semantic field of gender. Whether one refers to “gender trouble” or “gender blending”, “transgender” or “cross-gender”, one is already suggesting that gender has a way of moving beyond that naturalized binary (p. 19).

Since I have come from Japan, I’ve come to think that compared to Japanese women, Canadian women seem much stronger and assertive. The more I come to know about cultural differences among women, the more that I feel as though I have no idea what “woman” means. Is there a conspiracy in Japanese society that is attempting to maintain the consciously and historically constructed definitions of male and female behaviour and language? I believe that it makes more sense to think of this process of “becoming” and constructing our identity, as the process of becoming a better human being, beyond the categorization of gender that holds a deep socioculturally constructed bias. I want to develop egalitarian dialogue among Japanese women. However, at the same time I don’t want to lose my feminine side that is deeply embedded in my body, “the interstitial forms of hormonal, chromosomal, psychic, and performative embodiment which gender assumes” (Butler, 2001, p. 19).

The complexity of gender is a result of discourse in gender, according to Pringle & Watson (1992), “ ‘Men’ and ‘women’ and their ‘interest’ rest not on biological differences, reproductive relations or the sexual division of labour, but on the discursive practices that produce them” (Pringle & Watson, 1992, p. 66).

Looking back on the experiences that spanned my life before coming to Canada, there was always language, discursively practiced by men and society that both injured me and served to remind me that women were inferior to men in Japanese culture.

Sameshima (2007) introduces Simone de Beauvoir’s book, *The Ethics of Ambiguity*. Sameshima says, “Beauvoir says that people are ethically free only if they assume ambiguity” (p. 69).

Regardless of the staggering dimensions of the world about us, the density of our ignorance, the risks of catastrophes to come, and our individual weakness within the immense collectivity, the fact remains that we are absolutely free today if we choose to will our existence in its finiteness, a finiteness which is open on the infinite. And in fact, any man who has known real loves, real revolts, real desires, and real will knows quite well that he has no need of any outside guarantee to be sure of his goals; their certitude comes from his own drive. (de Beauvoir, 1968, p. 159)

Sameshima’s insightful interpretation echoes within my heart. Japanese women may be able to live within this in-between space, assuming subservient positions, while at the same time, holding on to the advantage that they have now; ambiguity as a means to be free from social pressure about how to act in Japanese society, allowing them to focus on individual and creative love for those within their own contexts.

However, the problem facing contemporary Japanese women stems from the fact that they are not exactly recognizing their own subserviency, becoming trapped in marriages that cordon them off from society. I believe that Japanese women are trained from birth, by society, by language and by culture, to be ambiguous. They do not possess a conscious awareness of their ambiguity in the same way Beauvoir (1968) alludes to in *The Ethics of Ambiguity*. I want to encourage Japanese women to make clear their contexts, and discard/hold ambiguity.

Age metaphors

捨て犬に 落ちなきやなれぬ 自由人
If like a stray dog,
I could do what'er I please,
Then I could be free
(Yoshimoto, 2005, p. 28)

負け犬女 (*makeinu onna*, lit. a woman like a defeated dog, trans. an unmarried woman, over 30 years old, with no children)

The following is an excerpt from my summer diary that was published in *Transnational Curriculum Inquiry* in 2005.

Mika's diary, July 17th, 2004

I read yesterday's newspaper, because I did not have time to read while driving. A full-page spread opinion piece about the phrase "makeinu onna" (a woman like a defeated dog) appeared in the Asahi newspaper. The opinions of Kitahara Minori (essayist) and Ushikubo Megumi (marketing writer), two 30+ women and Peter Frankle (mathematician), a man who was born in Hungary, and is now living in Japan were printed. It was funny that a Hungarian man's opinion appeared instead of a Japanese man's. Basically Minori suggested living like a stray dog, not being afraid of what people say, and Megumi proposed changing the phrase from "makeinu" to "ohitorisama" (honorable alone). Peter deplores drawing a line to distinguish women as being winners or losers. He also points out that binary thinking is influenced by the Japanese education system being completely standardized. To think about a postmodernist curriculum, we need to change these metaphors, such as "kachigumi" (the group of winners) and "makegumi" (the group of losers). (Yoshimoto, 2005)

In 2004, the expression "makeinu onna" was often used and brought into the spotlight due to its controversial nature as a discriminatory term for unmarried women.

Mika's diary of the first meeting, February 26th, 2006

In Japan we have so many words and expressions that criticize and chastise women where there are no equivalent expressions for men. For example, "Urenokori (unsold merchandise), and "kurisumasuke-ki" (Christmas cake) are expressions that describe unmarried women over the age of 25 and "makeinuonna" (woman like a defeated dog), for unmarried women over the age of 30, who people presume are unwanted by men. Unmarried men who are older than 30 years old are called "dokushin kizoku" (single aristocracy). After Japanese men retire, they are called "sodai gomi" (giant garbage) or "nure ochiba" (wet fallen leaves) depicting them as having outlived their usefulness or sticking to their wives, respectively. This expression also describes a childish dependency on their wives.

I am not without sympathy for the men who are called giant garbage and wet fallen leaves.

I should also add that sometimes men are called, ゴキブリ亭主 (gokiburi teishu, lit.

cockroach husband, trans. useless husband), which is certainly not flattering.

My Canadian-Japanese friend, who does not have strong ties to her Japanese heritage, thinks of Japanese women as being people who value politeness and indirectness, who may subtly hint that their husband is not as amazing as he used to be, but would never go so far as to directly insult him. However, what is most often the case is that some Japanese metaphors go beyond the indirect space of the veiled insult and very directly characterize Japanese men as being useless and awful. She says that while Canadian women may imply that their husbands are not as useful as used to be, they would never describe them as being "giant garbage", "wet-leaves" or cockroach husbands.

It seems to me that Japan manages to dwell in this contradictory space, the result of contemporary shifts in social perceptions and representations of men and women in Japan. Japan is a culture that lives with and in contradiction. Japanese people are very tolerant to outside religions and are considered a multireligious country, but very strict obedience to one's group through metaphors like "the protruding nail gets hammered down" exist. Historically, nature has been the focus of worship for the religion of Shinto which is prevalent in Japan, yet we destroy trees for chopsticks and wrapping paper.

While Japanese people consider the one correct answer at school, the Japanese language encourages ambiguity in order to maintain a level of politeness conducive to group harmony.

Rie's diary, June 14th, 2006

They want us to have more children without setting up facilities to accommodate us, and still they call career women *makeinu*. How shameful Japan is; even though I like much of it.

Rie's mother is worrying that Rie has become a *makeinu onna*, so she quarreled with her mother before she came to Canada. Many conservative and traditional authoritative voices stress the biological difficulty of having a child after 25 years old, even though it is clearly not true. More and more young Japanese women are beginning to realize that this age limit 適齡期 (*tekireiki*, trans. the appropriate age) is unreasonable. According to the Japanese Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare (2002) the average marriage age of women is 27.4 years of age, and for men it is 29.1 years of age (<http://kyupibekamu.blog.drecom.jp/archive/60>, retrieved July 9th, 2007). Since the 1950's, the average marriage age has generally increased by about three or four years. Clearly, Japanese women are choosing to marry later in life. The birth rate of Japan is 8.1 births /1000 population according to the CIA Factbook, the second lowest birth rate in the world (<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ja.html>, retrieved July 9th, 2007). Rie is now 31 years old and her 厄年 (*yakudoshi*, trans. unlucky year) is approaching (unlucky age for women: 33, men: 42).

お局は 満たされなくて 得た権威
Unsatisfied Queen
Burning with authority
Jealous and suppressed

お局様 (otsubonesama, lit. Otsubone is a historical title given to the authoritative lady-in-waiting who oversaw the many younger lovers of the Shogun in the castle, trans. Today it is used to describe unmarried loyal career women who bully younger female workers in the workplace.)

My participants also talk about the metaphor “Otsubone-san” during the first meeting on February 26th, 2006.

Rie: In the Japanese workplace co-operation and consideration are expected. I experienced bullying in the workplace there.

Yoko: Is that Otsubone-san?

During the first meeting, a metaphor that we laughed at was, “otsubonesama”. This metaphor refers to a generally unmarried 30-something female office worker who bosses around the younger female office workers. The origin of this metaphor comes from the Edo period and used to refer to a very dignified lady-in-waiting who had her own office in the Shogun’s castle. The otsubonesama’s life is very tragic, always suppressing her femininity and love for the Shogun, offering younger women to him, always controlling her jealousy. The metaphor is used to sarcastically refer to a woman like that who has a degree of power over younger women in the office. When Rie described her experience of being bullied at a high school she was working at, Yoko’s first reaction was to ask her if she was being bullied by the school’s “otsubonesama”.

The first meeting, February 26th, 2006

Rie: I was very good at dealing with Otsubonesama but I didn’t do so well with the male teachers who thought that he was better than everyone else. Even though I was a woman, and even though I was young, (onna no kuseni) I did not give in to him. When I started at that high school he intentionally withheld the answers to questions about school policy and other things that I asked about. Even though I asked him in a quiet voice, he would answer loudly and make it known that he was scolding me.

I can recall my second daughter Mio once saying that she was called Otsubonesama when she was teaching at an English conversation school in Japan. However she said that she thought she was a good Otsubonesama because she did not abuse her power. She thought it was unfair that there is no equivalent word for men in this position.

Mika's reflection to the first meeting, February 26th, 2006

If the unmarried woman has power like we mentioned before, she is called, "otsubonesama". If a woman does marry, and does not obey her husband, then she might be called, "akusai" (a bad wife). If a middle-aged woman tries to be controlling of someone, then she is called, "obatarian" (bossy middle-aged woman) and if she becomes an old woman with power she is called "onibabaa" (old-woman like a devil). Finally, a woman who for any reason might be undesirable, whether she be independent, have power, or have offended a man, might be referred to as, "kusatta ringo no you na onna" (a woman like a rotten apple). Also, "onna no chie wa hana no saki" (a woman's wisdom is short-sighted), and "onna wa sankai ni ie nashi" (before you marry obey your father, after you marry obey your husband, after you grow old obey your children, throughout a woman's life she has no freedom), are expressions which do not have an emasculating equivalent. In Japan whenever I did a good job of something like doing well on a test or finishing a presentation, I was criticized by men with the expression, "shinzou ni ke ga haeteiru" (hair is growing on her heart); an expression that is used in praise of men and only used to sarcastically ridicule women who try to be strong.

Lakoff & Johnson (1980) explains the systematic nature of metaphor when he talks about, "Time is money" (p. 7). "You're wasting my time", "Is that worth your while?" are other expressions which look to "Time is money" for ideological concept of time being equated to money, which we all consider valuable. Taking Lakoff's systematic nature of metaphor and overlaying it on the set of anti-matriarchal metaphors I have just mentioned, it might suggest, in the same way "Time is money" equates time as being important, women are weak and should be subordinate. The cute, young, obedient girl who does not question her place in society is the ideal Japanese woman, in this context.

Metaphors about Japan

この地位を 奪われまいと 親父達

Powerless thunder

Clinging to authority

Different, yet, the same

親父社会 (oyaji shakai, trans. Patriarchal society)

During my childhood, the scariest things were 地震、雷、火事、親父 (jishin, kaminari, kaji, oyaji, trans. earthquakes, thunder, fire, and father). I can't think of an equivalent translation for "oyaji" (father) although father is a relatively close one, but it lacks the context of "oyaji" in Japanese culture. These days, in homes, the power of oyaji is decreasing, but Japanese society is still structured in a way that favours them.

Rie returned to Japan during the summer and kept a diary. The following is one of her more powerful entries about the status of women in Japan.

Rie's diary, June 14th, 2006

At the school I am working at, there is a time to observe the others teacher's teachings. So I sent an email to an English teacher that I respect to see if I could watch her teach. I thought that she would respond favorably by inviting me. However she denied my request saying that at the moment the school is changing a lot and so now would not be a good time to visit. Our situation as teachers is tough but I wanted to improve our lessons even if the class were not ideal so I am rather disappointed. I told my boyfriend about this and he said that this was as he had expected. He said that he had asked to observe the classes of many English teachers before and was turned down for all of them. They just want to go along with the status quo. Then I realized that I knew what their problem was already, that they didn't want to change. Thus, I concluded that there was no need to observe their classes. Then my boyfriend seriously advised me that if I returned to my workplace, that I would feel a lot of stress from my peers because of my new perspective on teaching and because I was younger than them. Also because older men do not like younger women with a stronger educational background, I should watch out for that too, he mentioned. He said that if I were to, in the future, observe my peers teaching methods, that I should not be afraid to speak up and point out problems. He also said that I must be a leader in the area of teaching English in Japan. I'm not sure if I can do that, but we do need someone who will change our education system even if it's not me, someone must do it.

Japan; the country that pulls the buds off of flowers so that they can't flourish. Japan; the country that does not want women to have a high level of education (oyaji shakai). Japan; the country in which the protruding nail is hammered down. Japan; a country that is trying to increase its birth rate and the social participation of women but won't accommodate both. They want us to have more children without setting up

facilities to accommodate us, and still they call career women *makeinu* (a woman like a defeated dog). How shameful Japan is; even though I like much of it.

Rie's e-mail illustrates her frustration with *oyaji shakai*.

Rie's e-mail, January 20th, 2007

Happy New Year! How are you? Ottawa is probably quite cold now huh? I will go to my school and do my practicum next week. In order to make this happen, I had to meet with many of my superiors, principals, administrators, etc. It was very troublesome (ごちゃごちゃ) because Japan is a very hierarchical, patriarchal society (親父社会, *oyaji shakai*) but I just try and focus on my research without worrying about these matters. These days I've been doing nothing but preparing for this practicum.

The following are all proverbs that my participants and I discussed during our third meeting.

慎みの 窓を開けても 濁る空
Gasping for fresh air
Window opens to let in
Foul immodest smog

Modesty

出る杭は打たれる (*deru kui wa utareru*, lit. protruding nail gets hammered down)

実るほど頭を垂れる稲穂かな (*minoru hodo koube wo tareru inahokana*, lit. the good rice stalk bends low, trans. be modest). 能ある鷹は爪隠す (*nouaru takawa tsume wo kakusu*, lit. the hawk that has talent, hides its claws, trans. be modest with your ability)

Rie writes in her diary, March 9th, 2006

Today I had two lessons, in the morning and in the afternoon. During each class I spoke up once. I had another question but class time was almost up, so I decided not to ask my

question. I don't think this is a bad thing. On the contrary, Canadian students who are studying Japanese and who are working at a Japanese company learning something from Japanese behaviour, suppressing bad feelings, and other cultural manners. It's the opposite of what I'm doing so watching them is very interesting. Many times they say, "I still don't understand what Japanese people are feeling inside" (WIE). Modesty, I appreciate it, but It is not the colour of the sky here.

沈黙の 金下落に 自己喪失
Silence is golden
As the price of silence drops
So does my self-worth

Silence

沈黙は金 (*chimoku wa kin*, lit. *silence is golden*)

Rie expresses her disdain for a male classmate, in her diary.

Rie's diary, February 9th, 2006

Today's lesson was about Universal Grammar (WIE), and I didn't understand it. Looking at the puzzled look on my face, the professor slowly re-explained the idea but was interrupted by a Canadian man who had his hand up the whole time. I felt pressure, feeling as though I was holding the class back. As a Japanese person, I would not try to interrupt the professor while he is explaining an idea. Today he was more opinionated and talkative than usual and every time what he was talking about had nothing to do with what the professor was talking about. I don't speak up like that guy, but when I do happen to speak up, I always think about whether what I have to say is relevant to the topic at hand or not. Much of the time, while I am thinking about the relevancy of what I want to say, the topic moves on to something different and I lose my opportunity to say something. This concept is very typical of Japanese. When Professor White talked about the ambiguity of tolerance to ESL students, he said that if we use our own identity and Canadian identity then both identities become valuable to living in Canada. Because I am now living in Canada, I should aim for this. But when I teach Japanese students in Japan in a communicative lesson should I use only Japanese identity??

In her diary, Rie also mentions her frustration with not being able to speak up in the classroom.

Rie said during the first meeting; February 26th, 2006

Rie: I am not accustomed to expressing my opinion because we don't generally do that in Japan. However compared to other Japanese people, I think I'd be more likely to speak my mind in Japan. Uhhh.. as a general (WIE) Japanese person I am not used to expressing my opinion.

Mika: Do you feel pressure (in the classroom in Canada) during discussion groups to express your opinion?

Rie: Yes. If I don't speak up I feel that I am not valuable. However, on the contrary because of this, I feel tense and my heart beats faster and then I feel obligated to say something to feel valuable but then I feel tense and then my heart beats faster and it's a cycle of tension. <laughing> When I came it was impossible to speak up in the classroom but these days, because of the course I am taking now, I sometimes have a chance to say something. Silence is not golden here (in Canada)... uhhh, silence entices people to fight for the chance to speak. I think sometimes that I can voice a better opinion about some topics than other people. I want to speak up but often someone else will put his or her hand up first and voice a useless and foolish opinion and take up everybody's time with it. The atmosphere of the class changes from one of a more serious nature to a more foolish one quickly and I regret not speaking up because of it.

Is it possible to have good conversation without good listeners? If everyone spoke up, who would listen? I remember one class during my PhD studies during which the professor asked us to write about the contributions we had made to our class to which all except myself wrote what they spoke up in class. From my point of view, I contributed to the class by being an active listener, and so did not write about speaking up even though I did express my opinions. For the first time ever, I got an A- and so I asked her why. She said that I did not write my contribution to the class! Everyone contributed to the class! What an aggressive and competitive culture! Being humble is a cultural value that I cannot throw away.

Silence is golden in many ways. Silence is the place where thoughts ferment. Silence is the place that celebrates different thinking. Silence is the place from where new thought evolves and emerges. After the dropping of the atomic bomb, many people did not want to talk about being silent, and recently before they died, they began to talk about their stories, about their experiences, to the next generation.

Elie Wiesel, in an interview with Academy of Achievement (1996) said the following:

“There is so much in silence. There is an archeology of silence. There is a geography of silence. There is a theology of silence. There is a history of silence. Silence is universal and you can work within it, and its own context, and make that silence into a testimony. You see, silence itself can be testimony and I was waiting for ten years, really, but my intention simply was to be sure that the words I would use are the proper words. I was afraid of language.”

Everyone has a different reason for silence, mine is one of cultural values, which addresses humility. Rie also writes her cry in her diary:

Rie’s diary, February 27th, 2006.

I had a class today at 5:30 for which I did the readings ahead of time. It was a discussion-style class, and during it, two older women dominated much of the conversation with their constant talking, and laughing loudly. I felt deflated by their domination of the discussion and I lost interest in engaging in the discussion. The content of the discussion was difficult and my listening skills couldn’t keep up with the conversation so I ended up in a bad mood. This is a discussion style class, but these women only speak English so I don’t think they have sensitivity to second-language learners.

After I came home I was still feeling down. Because I am Japanese and quiet and don’t speak up, they were probably thinking that I didn’t understand anything. Because of this, once I came home I just started crying without thinking about it. Even though I had a very positive conversation about how to change the Japanese style of teaching, in English, with a friend earlier in the day, this discussion group ruined my mood. Will an individualistic Canadian woman defeat me? You L1 women must understand that it is challenging and difficult to get a word in edge-wise in a second language!

I think that Japanese people are trained to be polite listeners who understand other people’s feelings and try to be perfectly diligent in formulating a valuable and useful opinion.

Rie’s diary, February 28th, 2006

Because of yesterday’s crying I woke up earlier than usual today. I was studying at the library when thoughts regarding yesterday’s events popped up in my mind. Even though I am not good at classroom discussion, L2 students who came from Middle-Eastern

countries participate aggressively in native speaker's conversations. I guess their culture is an oral one. I am so sad that I was educated in Japan and cannot express my feeling verbally. Dragging behind me, the feelings from yesterday's unfortunate discussion class, I looked up the phrase "be mortified at" (WIE) in the dictionary.

What Rie mentions is the lack of sensibility of L1 students who do not show any consideration to L2 students in the class. Who has right to speak up? I remember these people's gestures and behaviors that implicitly say that you should be quiet. For ESL students to have native English speaking friends seemed extremely difficult for me. L1 students were very competitive and aggressive to express (show off) their opinion.

However, I don't think that this is a racial issue, as some people might say it is a conflict of cultural identity between Eastern and Western people. The power lies in language, and it matters whose language is deemed most "important", right now, English. Power always lies in this discursive construction.

Rie embraces "silence", that is culturally valued in Japan.

Rie's diary, November 26th, 2006

Today, I attended the "Japan Night" held at the university. Spending time with Mika I thought that her students behaved just like members of her own family and it produced a very nice atmosphere. They were very helpful, setting up the party and I realized that this is sort of like the teacher's reward, free of worry about profit or loss. Another thing I thought about was my silence and politeness such as 侘び (lit. the beauty found in poverty and simplicity) 寂 (lit. an antique look) which is essential in Japanese culture, while I watched both the Japanese Tea Ceremony and Japanese dancing. I am always advised by my friends who have lived in Canada for a while, "Rie, you are a little bit too Eastern so you must speak more like Western people."

However, my silence is my identity and I don't want to discard this important part of my cultural background because of living here. Therefore, during the summer holiday, I restudied how to wear a kimono, as well as calligraphy. My roommate is a very arrogant Chinese-Canadian who never understands my deep-rooted silence and politeness. Thus, it is better for me to move in order to be able to study. My father said, "馬鹿と鋏は使いよう。 (A fool, like scissors, is only as effective as you use them) " As far as my roommate goes, I will take my father's advice to heart.

Rie's anger towards her roommate's insensitivity to her silence reminds me of Anish Kapoor's comment:

The void is not silent. I have always thought of it more and more as a transitional space, an in-between space. It's very much to do with time. I have always been interested as an artist in how one can somehow look again for that very first moment of creativity where everything is possible and nothing has actually happened. It's a space of becoming...something that dwells in the presence of the work...that allows it or forces it not to be what it states it is in the first instance. (Bhabha & Tazzi & Kapoor, 1998, p. 36)

I too was a silent student, full of many thoughts that I was unable to express.

Group Harmony

長いものには巻かれろ (*nagai mono niwa makarero*, trans. *to give in to those in power*),
八方美人 (*happou bijin*, trans. *someone who tries to be everyone's friend*), へそ曲がり・つむじ曲がり・天邪鬼 (*hesomagari, tsumujimagari, amanojaku*, lit. *to have a twisted bellybutton, to have twisted hair on the back of the head, a devil in heaven*, trans. *an odd person*)

The third meeting, December 23rd, 2006

Mika: Now I want to ask your opinion about Japanese proverb. When I showed my perfect test to my mother, she used to say that *minoru hodo koube wo tareru inahokana* (the good rice stalk bends low, trans: be modest).

Yoko: That is similar to “*nou aru taka wa tsume wo kakusu*” (the hawk that has talent, hides its claws, trans. be modest with your ability). My boyfriend Ken is Korean, so he is practicing this proverb very faithfully. When my roommate asks him “what do you know about economics?” he replies, “I don’t know anything about economics”. So my roommate took his answer literally.

Mika: When I was invited to my Korean friend’s house, I saw *chisoku* (knowing one’s legs, trans. to understand one’s own reality) on the wall which means “to know oneself well”. I thought that the Korean proverb and Japanese proverb were similar.

Rie: Canadians seem stupid. Everyone expresses what he or she thinks, and so there is no modesty. If I return to Japan, I must show my modesty by saying that I only know a little bit about education even though I have experience at the graduate level. To show modesty is necessary in Japan but I want to change the Japanese educational system, specifically the English classroom in Japan so I must choose my words carefully and express them in an appropriate manner. The most important thing is to change these classrooms and so suppressing the pressure of my surroundings at school is important. I must be very careful to choose modest and soft-sounding expressions with which to express my thoughts. “*deru kui wa utareru*” (lit. the protruding nail gets hammered down) and so even though I might be a protruding nail I must protrude in such a way that nobody will be looking to hammer me down.

Yoko: In Canada everybody is a protruding nail and so nobody can tell who is protruding the most because nobody stands out the most!

Rie: In Canada, everybody thinks that they are a protruding nail and this seems stupid.

Yoko: In Canada because everyone has a different background they more easily accept each other’s differences, and in turn the differences are simply taken for granted. In Japan however, we think that everybody is the same so *juunintooiro* (ten people, ten colours, trans. different strokes for different folks) became a popular song. When I asked my boyfriend Ken where his bellybutton was he said, “What?!” and so I had to explain to him the expression *hesomagari* (a twisted bellybutton to have, trans. people who are odd are considered *hesomagari*).

Mika: I think that this is very interesting language in Japan. We have many expressions when we do something differently such as *hesomagari*, *tsumujimagari* (twisted hair on the back of the head, trans. an odd person), *amanojaku* (a devil in heaven, trans: someone who stands out). Because we assume everybody is the same, we describe

people who are different by criticizing them with these expressions. I was often called hesomagari.

Yoko: I was also called tsumujimagari by my father.

Rie: “Chinmoku wa kin” (silence is golden) is a really a part of my identity. I think it is a part of Asian wisdom.

Mika: “Chinmoku” is a process that precedes expression, where we consider what words we choose to use.

Rie: Because I am the middle child among my siblings, I find that I am capable of negotiating among my family without offending anyone. At school the expression of “nagaimono niwa makarero” (give in to those in power), comes in handy very often where I give into those with authority in order to get what I want.

Yoko: The interpretation of “happou bijin”(someone who tries to be everyone’s friend) is very negative in Japan. Here in Canada however, this kind of person has more of a positive connotation.

Rie: At my workplace, there was one older woman who is everybody’s friend but nobody believes what she says. I didn’t like her.

What Rie mentions is true, not only do Japanese people value modesty voluntarily, but Japanese people are also pressured to be modest and if we aren’t, we will be punished in some way by society. Rie’s comments about the lack of modesty may seem harsh to Canadians, but for Canadians, (of course Canadians are not stupid), the way of showing modesty may be not the same as how Japanese people demonstrate it.

The above-mentioned proverbs and metaphors are so ingrained in the subtext of our daily lives, so we are unconsciously influenced by the meaning behind these expressions to the extent that we strive to survive within the framework set up by them. For example, Rie struggled in the workplace as a protruding nail, so she is careful not to be hammered down by aligning herself with the expression, “nagaimono niwa makarero” (give in to those in power), but she also favours the proverb, “baka to hasami wa tsukaiyou” in her diary. That is to say, if those in authority lack intelligence or wisdom, she believes that she can deal with and manipulate them, as easily as she manipulates a pair of scissors, if the need arises.

Rie's diary, December 23rd, 2006

Today's meeting was disappointing because Aya didn't come. However, the content was a little deeper than usual, so that was nice. I'm afraid that I wasn't able to express my ideas well. When I answered the question regarding my ideal goal, I should have used the expression, 馬鹿と鋏は使い用 (baka to hasami wa tsukaiyou, trans. A fool, like scissors, is only as effective as you use them). Because, in my workplace there is a lot of bullying and jealousy so, to fight with them head-on is useless. If Yoko heard me say this, she would say that my comment is awfully sneaky and it is but this philosophy is necessary in order to survive in Japanese culture, for me, I find.

Yoko's father accused Yoko of having a twisted bellybutton (hesomagari), twisted hair (tsumujimagari) and of being a devil in heaven (amanojaku). I have also been the target of these metaphors, like Yoko, because in a group-oriented society, doing something different and embracing different ideas make you a target for criticism. For women in particular, there is the proverb 言わぬが花 (iwanuga hana, lit. it is better not to say anything, just like a beautiful flower). Thus, when Yoko argues with her father, she is punished by these metaphors. Yoko's boyfriend, Ken, also demonstrates an attitude that is reflected not only in Japanese culture, but many Asian cultures, "the hawk that has talent hides its claws". Many people not familiar with the practice of excessive humility often misunderstand this demonstration of modesty.

蔵要らぬ 社会の罪か アル中は
Social transgression
An alcoholic mandate
Unneeded warehouse

Drinking

下戸に蔵は建たない (geko ni kura wa tatanai, lit. a non-drinker doesn't build warehouses, trans. you must drink alcohol if you want to succeed)

While I was struggling in my marriage I went to my mother-in-law to ask for help and advice. She used the proverb, "geko ni kura wa tatanai" (a non-drinker doesn't build warehouses) which refers to being successful at business. She said that I should

encourage him and that would help him succeed. Drinking plays such a pivotal role in Japanese society that it has become a part of our “social semiotics” through metaphor.

Lemke (1995) declares: “I use the term social semiotics as a reminder that all meanings are made within communities and the analysis of meaning should not be separated from the social, historical, cultural and political dimensions of these communities” (p. 9).

I have been holding a grudge against this proverb for nearly three decades because of my mother-in-law. Another metaphor that describes Japan is, アル中天国 (aruchuu tengoku, lit. heaven for alcoholism). After work, many people go drinking with their peers in order to release the stress of work. Drinking is encouraged, supported and even sometimes forced upon employees; as social semiotics. If a man does not drink we say, 男のくせに (otoko no kuse ni, trans: in spite of being a man) as an insult. Every year during university graduation there are many students who do not drink, who are hospitalized because they are forced to drink so much alcohol, so quickly; in Japanese it is called 一気飲み (ikki nomi, trans. drinking one’s beer in a single shot). Yoko does not want to admit that her father is an alcoholic, even while the domestic abuse he commits against his wife demonstrates his continued dependence upon alcohol.

The third meeting, December 23rd, 2006

Mika: Have you ever thought about the possibility of his abuse being a result of alcoholism?

Yoko: No, his personality is unreasonable and the alcohol only amplifies his negative tendencies. When he used violence against my brother, he would not remember it happening in the morning. So, I have often considered the influence of alcohol on him. He is very healthy, because at midnight he would be shouting for more than three hours and would still go to school at 7 a.m. as per his usual routine. I am amazed by his energy. My mother escaped from the house and slept in the car many times. Outside of the walls of our house, he would be fine and act normally. My friends envied me for having a wonderful father, but I hated him and felt

unpleasant that I am a product of him. From his words, I think that he thinks of my mother as his belonging, a lower level partner. Sometimes, he calls my mother a monkey and I am disgusted.

Drunken people often say many ridiculous things, however, is this, as Yoko says, an amplification of his negative tendencies, and not just the effects of alcohol?

Metaphors about School

震えつつ 季節外れに 咲く桜
Tremulous blossom
Unseasonally blooming
A fragrance of fear

鉄は熱いうちに打て (*tetsu wa atsui uchi ni ute*, trans. *strike while the iron is hot!*)

Rie's personal interview, December 23rd, 2006

Rie: I really hope that Japanese women have more chances to become independent. I think that we shouldn't value ourselves from the point of view of how desired we are by men. I don't want to always have to be caring about what other people want of me; I want to make my own decisions and do the things that I want to do. When I was in my twenties, I was pressured to get married by those around me, but as a teacher I wasn't ready to do that yet. So, I want future Japanese women to value their own opinions and stick to their guns regardless of what other people say or think. I don't want to just be safe by doing what most other women are doing; I want to make my own path. If more strong and independent women appear, I believe that men's perception of women will change. I don't know which of these will occur first though. To be a little less vague, female Japanese students must study hard in junior high school and high school in order to find out both what they are skilled at and what they want to do. In order to be independent and deepen their self-understanding, these young women must communicate with others as much as possible.

Mika: That's why you said 鉄は熱いうちに打て (*tetsu wa atsui uchi ni ute*, trans. *strike while the iron is hot!*) right? To lay the foundation for being independent?

Rie: Now, looking at my female students, they are not exactly thinking for themselves; they are in high school because their parents want them to go to university, so they are just going through the motions of completing that objective. Once they enter university, they just play around and waste their time. Even if they are just wasting their time hanging out or playing, if they are learning something it's okay but most of these female students end up wasting their time in meaningless ways. When they grow up to be adults, they find out that they are generally not interested in anything. Also, it is society's responsibility to make them independent.

Mika: Do you think that your mother did what she really wanted to do?

Rie: Until she married, I think that she did what she wanted to do. After marrying, her goal became raising her children but I guess that she could have done more than just raise her children.

Mika: So from your point of view, do you have a nagging feeling that she could have accomplished more than just raising children?

Rie: I think she probably could have. The truth is that she really does enjoy getting out and participating in the community. She is doing volunteer work right now by helping senior citizens with dance lessons. When she was in high school she played table tennis and traveled around Japan playing against students from other schools. Regarding sexual contact, she was rather conservative, but in other matters, she was not so conservative and encouraged me to have a career. Compared to my father, she emphasized getting along with different kinds of people even though my father was more liberal than my mother so I think that they are totally different kinds of people.

Mika: I guess both were liberal at first, but once your mother married and became a housewife, she might have become more conservative because of her need to protect the household. Social pressure on the role of the woman from society may have also caused her to become more conservative as well.

Rie: While driving in the car with my father, we often enjoy talking about why my mother thinks the way she does. Talking with my father about my mother triggers so many other conversations and we never have a quiet moment. I really enjoy these conversations with my father. But, when I talk with my mother she possesses a very strict view of what a woman should be so I just stop talking about that and change the subject. Regarding studying abroad, before I came here I worried about my mother's idea that I should get married quickly. Ultimately I thought that this would be a good opportunity for me, thinking 鉄は熱いうちに打て (tetsu wa atsui uchi ni ute, trans. strike while the iron is hot!).

Mika: Because I didn't strike while the iron was hot I became bogged down in my marriage!

Rie: But now you are striking the iron very swiftly!

When I was in my marriage and I saw independent women who were achieving success, I thought to myself that I could do better than them but I had to suppress my enthusiasm and drive to excel, in order to be what I was expected to be. From a broader perspective, everything should be recycled so if you have certain abilities you must give back to society; in this sense we are all connected. Rie uses the "strike while the iron is hot" metaphor to imply that women should take advantage of their education while they are young in order to be independent, both financially as well as mentally from men.

輝けぬ 石よ転がれ 角ぶつけ
Unable to shine
Rolling swiftly, corners smooth
With time you will gleam

Working Hard

切磋琢磨 (*sessha takuma*, trans. *apply oneself closely to one's study*)

Interview with Aya on January 7th, 2007

Mika: What kind of proverb do you like?

Aya: I like 切磋琢磨. I don't care less important thing, but when it matters, I want to work hard.

I think that Aya really worked hard to pass her course despite her anxiety. She knew that she was a diamond on the inside, but nobody really noticed her brightness. This metaphor literally means cutting stones, polishing and becoming more and more like a valuable gem.

目隠しが とれずに進む 崖っぷち
Blindfolded stagger
Advancing through the darkness
T'wards the precipice

Getting a Knack

格闘・手探り・骨 (*kakutou, tesaguri, kotsu*, trans. *grappling and feeling one's way in the dark*)

Aya's diary, 2006

Looking back my summer (WIE)

I moved from non-credit ESL to credit ESL, but the contents are not so different. However I feel a lot of pressure being evaluated. I have no idea what the teacher is expecting and what exactly is acceptable, so for the time being I did everything too seriously feeling my way in the dark. (tesaguride 手探りで) As a result, I became crazy during the term. Because what we do in ESL is more about understanding language than language studies itself, I dislike it, but I have to do it, so it was a painful experience. I felt so much pressure that I almost gave up entering university. Besides, I did not like the teaching in ESL 1300. During the whole term, the teacher taught learning strategies (WIE) and the topic was how to be a successful learner at university (WIE). The teacher emphasized that the success and completion of the ESL program will lead to success in the university. (in order to make us work harder, maybe?, WIE). And that sucks. Through

the summer course, I realized that I am very bad at comprehension. My vocabulary is limited and it matters, because I don't like reading. Also I am very bad at summarizing. Every bit of information seems important, and I don't understand what the main point is, so every summary is longer than it should be. I was told many times by the teacher that I must summarize concisely. I might have a knack (kotsu, 骨) for English to some degree, but I am not good at it yet. The teacher in the core course is from Hungary and English is not the first language for her. I heard that she started to study English at the university, but her English is like that of a native speaker. She has been living in Canada for 7 years, and I really wonder if I can be as good as her. Since I've come to Canada, I have been grappling (kakutouseuru 格闘する, a grapple) with the difficulty of reading and writing. But for me, speaking fluently (ぺらぺら) like native speakers is a much more attractive option than being able to read academic literature effortlessly, without a dictionary and being able to write essays. Thus, perhaps, my reading and writing might not improve. I moved to the new place with John and started a new life and it was a stressful summer. I have never studied so hard in my life like I did this summer.

雑巾は 絞れないほど 危機はらむ
 A worn-out floor cloth
 Being wrung day after day
 Pushed to her wits' end

Exhausted

絶体絶命 (zettai zetsumei, lit. desperate body and desperate life, trans. a critical situation) ぼろ雑巾 (borozoukin, lit. a worn out floor cloth)

Aya's diary, September 19th, 2006

Today we had a practice lab experiment; the main goal was to learn how to use an electron microscope. But I felt miserable. I will never want to do it again. (ぼろ雑巾, worn-out floor cloth). The lab took three hours and seemed that I would have enough time at first. But in actuality, I only manage to finish the procedure 5 minutes before the time limit. Therefore I had no time to write about the results of the experiment, such as a table, a drawing of the cell, and descriptions. I was in a big panic. After all, I handed in my lab without any description part. This was a group work, but communication did not go well. I read the manual ten times over and I thought that I understood it thoroughly. But from the extreme tension and anxiety, I forgot the procedure and found myself unable to read the manual because of all the pressure (絶体絶命). Now I am terribly (めちゃくちゃ) depressed. I hope that next week does not come. I don't want to get back that report I handed in. I am beginning to hate this course.

Furthermore, I noticed that I become nervous when I communicate with native speakers. This does not make sense, because I am accustomed to being with native speakers everyday, being with John more than any other student. Talking with native speakers still causes me anxiety and tension and I cannot express my speaking level (WIE). I can speak ten times better when I speak with students in ESL and international students. This means that my pronunciation, grammar and contents are better. The reason might be, possibly, that I feel inferior to native speakers and feel unequal. Canada is a very multicultural society and not being able to speak English fluently does not mean that I am

inferior, but I will feel shame if I make mistakes, expecting someone will laugh at me. Actually, when I listen to foreigner's Japanese, if the person is seriously trying to speak, even though their Japanese is strange, I would not laugh so I expect that Canadians would also not laugh at my English as well. Nevertheless, I still have my doubts, and very little confidence in my skill.

Aya feels desperate and exhausted, because she is often paralyzed by anxiety. She feels like a worn-out floor cloth that is becoming more and more ragged.

CHAPTER 7: TROUBLING THE AUTHORIAL SELF: WHAT DOES IT MEAN FOR A JAPANESE WOMAN TO STUDY ENGLISH?

Not only is the notion of standard English something of a myth but so too is the idea that it can somehow bring automatic benefits to its users.

(Pennycook, 2001, p.77)

Speaking / Not Speaking

口答え 何も変わらず 乾く喉
Bravely talking back
Nothing comes as a result
My hoarse voice echoes

Arguing

Aya voiced her reluctance to arguing during the second meeting on October 22nd, 2006.

Her statement conveys a certain frustration with logic as per the influence of Japanese society.

Aya: I hate arguments. John wants to share his opinion, but I feel that John is trying to persuade me and he denies many times that he is just trying to talk with me. The way he speaks is clearly persuasive; offering lots of questions and trying to control the conversation. He has answers to his questions and is trying to take my conclusions away from me. The power relationship is like teacher and student and I hate arguments.

Yoko says that when she first came to Canada, she was a very quiet, submissive girl who was very mindful of men's needs. However, this attitude did not appeal to her boyfriends who grew up here in Canada. While Aya dislikes arguing, Yoko is aware of the importance of arguing.

Yoko's interview, January 27th, 2007

Mika: When did you realize that your mother was not a bad wife?

Yoko: I cannot remember the exact time, but when she disagreed with my father and made him so angry, I could hear her opinion and I thought that she is right. I gradually noticed that my friends' fathers were different and thought that the abnormal person was not my mother.

In our third meeting, December 23rd, 2006, the following conversation ensued.

Yoko: Here in Canada, not only am I learning the language but Canadian habits and customs that are influencing me. For example, when we are communicating with Canadian women, I realize that they have their status and this amazes me. Canada's society thinks that women and men are equal, so Canadian women can express their

opinion strongly to men without hesitation. Japanese men expect Japanese women to behave womanly, but I don't think that is the case here. So looking at Canadian women's attitudes, I naturally learned that I don't need to behave like a Japanese woman who always consider men's needs and I acquired this attitude and made it a part of identity. In the case of language, I learned how to argue. In Japan, because my father was very strongly persuading me that black is white (*sagi wo karasu to iikurumeru*), so I must consider everything that he says and respond appropriately, otherwise I will be persuaded. From my childhood, I have had many mortifying experiences with my father, and through all of these experiences I thought about how I should react, and began to mentally train myself. But in Japan, I never learned rules about arguing and debating such as how to persuade others in an organized manner with a supporting argument and counterargument. Therefore I became better at arguments. Looking back, my arguments in Japan, in most cases were emotional and I did not know how to present my opinion. Examining Japanese Internet sites that discuss politics just contained random emotional chat that seemed like childish quarreling. But Canadians know how to argue. The other thing that I have noticed in English is clarity. In the beginning, after I had just come from Japan, I was trying to translate my Japanese thoughts into English; so many things were ambiguous and would often give into others easily (*iinarininaru*) because I could not express what I truly wanted to say. To protect myself, speaking clearly is a necessity.

Mika: I think that is true, but when I was in Japan, even though I knew how to argue, I struggled, because the social expectation of women was to be quiet.

Yoko: That's also true. When my father makes unreasonable complaints in Japan, I was thinking about how to argue in my mind, but I never had the opportunity to argue.

Mika: Did you have a chance to argue when you returned to Japan?

Yoko: Yes, I tried to argue with my father. He was so surprised that he thought my attitude was very negative and bad. For example, I was given lots of money as a gift during New Year from many relatives as a celebration of turning twenty and as a celebration of entering university. My father demanded that I make a list of who gave me money. I wrote a list of names and amounts and the numbers were a mix of Chinese and Western numbers, so my father got angry. He forced me to rewrite the list three times. I finally argued back at him asking why I had to write such a perfect list; this is family not a company. My father became emotional saying "*kuchigotaesuruna*" (Don't talk back!) and I gave up my argument with him.

Mika: I see, somehow arguments do not exist for women in Japan.

Yoko: Yes, Japanese men don't know how to argue, so in most cases, they just say "*damare*" (keep your mouth shut) and that's the end of argument. But my boyfriend knows how to argue, so our conversations continue on and our arguments don't end so quickly.

Mika: Does this mean that studying English causes women to be fond of men who can argue?

Rie: Definitely! At least women will not be attracted to the men like *teishukanpaku* (husband who has absolute power in the family).

Yoko: If I were not interested in English, I might have attracted to *teishukanpaku* and this is scary. When I was in Japan, I was not so focused on a goal, because men are so

controlling of women and society. But now I have a clear picture of my goal and I feel revitalized.

Mika: I do too. Now I can understand the reason why I struggled so much in Japan.

Yoko: So to fight back at men, we must go abroad to realize our social difficulties.

Yoko's father reminds me of the many Japanese men who give in to the deep social pressure in Japan to drink, become alcoholics and commit domestic violence. I could feel the frustration that she felt when I think about the story about a woman I knew who was wrapped up in toilet paper in the middle of winter in a flooded bathroom during one of her husband's drunken tirades. I also recognize the relationship between Yoko's grandmother and her father, as it resembles the relationship I have witnessed between many Japanese women and their mothers-in-law. Very often, the man's mother will stand up for him and talk down to the wife, despite the frequency with which he might drink and wreak emotional havoc on the family. Yoko's father would constantly compare his wife to his mother in the same way many Japanese men do. The similarities are truly uncanny. Yoko wanted her father to die; she mentioned killing her father off in her dreams many times over. Referring back to the story of the woman I knew; her daughter, as well, said the same thing. I was told that that woman's daughter once hit her father over the head with a beer bottle because she had become so infuriated with his drinking habit.

Yoko's story about her arguments with her father reflects the behaviour of some Japanese men who tell women not to talk back. They might often treat their children in that way as well, ordering them not to talk back. In Japan, because I was a woman, I did not have the opportunity to speak my mind because of this cultural expectation.

思いやり 一方通行 空回り
Consideration
Is a crowded one-way street
That doesn't give back

Ambiguous Discourse

Rie had many problems with her Chinese-Canadian roommate. In this diary entry, she talks about how she uses mothballs to keep her roommate at bay.

Rie's diary, November 22nd, 2006

I am avoiding my roommate and eating in my room because I don't want to talk with her anymore. Today I hung up a kimono that I borrowed from Mika and my roommate realized the smell of mothballs. Usually when she enters my room, I can't get rid of her but this smell worked very well. She closed my door and returned to her room. Next time when I have a problem, I will spread mothballs all over my room!

Rie's diary, November 28th, 2006

Yesterday I read an article (WIE) about the matter of "tacit understanding (WIE)" that Japanese people possess. Japanese people try to understand each other without saying everything that they are thinking about. We have a Confucian background and the proverb 沈黙は金 (chinmoku wa kin, lit. silence is golden) and therefore facial expressions play a major role in interactions. My breakup with my roommate depends on these differences between us. My roommate comes from a culture that embraces Confucian thinking, but she does not possess this part of her cultural background. Is her inability to relate and interact with my way of thinking that is based on Confucianism a result of her personality or the historical development of Confucian thinking in Chinese culture over time? I do not want to generalize Chinese people but I don't understand her. She found a new roommate and found out that she will only live with her for five months but she said that it was ok because she said that she would eventually find a new boyfriend and move in with him and get married for the second time.

Rie wants to avoid serious fights with her roommate before moving, but her roommate does not understand Rie's subtle hints to this effect.

Rie's diary, December 28th, 2006

Yesterday, I enjoyed Christmas in Ottawa with friends, watching Parliament's Christmas lights light up, eating at a Vietnamese restaurant and having coffee at the Second Cup. Most of my friends are more than ten years younger and if I did not come abroad to study, I would never have had a chance to hang out with these friends. After I returned home, my roommate came to talk with me saying, "I missed you (WIE)", but I don't like her, so I dodged her saying, "Go to sleep. You gonna work tomorrow (WIE)". Maybe, she is the only child in a rich family, spoiled and selfish. Her ex-husband had a love affair and now she is divorced (I think the reason for her divorce is partially her fault). Since then, she has been repeating the same mistake and I don't like her way of acting towards men; she

has an untidy and disorderly room and a selfish personality. I feel refreshed that I could be apart from her. I did all my moving by myself, because of my roommate and her mental uneasiness. My furniture was heavy and I bruised my body and it my skin turned blue in some places. But once I decided to do it by myself, I did not care. I have a strong will which I cultivated during my time participating in high school sports clubs.

During the third meeting in December 23rd, 2006, we talked about modesty.

Mika: Now I want to ask your opinion about Japanese proverb. When I showed my perfect test to my mother, she used to say that *minoru hodo koube wo tareru inahokana* (the good rice stalk bends low, trans: be modest).

Yoko: That's is similar to *nouaru takawa tsume wo kakusu* (the hawk that has talent, hides its claws, trans: be modest with your ability). My boyfriend Ken is Korean, so he is practicing this proverb very faithfully. When my roommate asks him "what do you know about economics?" he replies, "I don't know anything about economics". So my roommate took his answer literally.

Mika: When I was invited to my Korean friend's house, I saw *chisoku* (knowing one's legs, trans. to understand one's own reality) on the wall which means "to know oneself well". I thought that the Korean proverb and Japanese proverb were similar.

Rie: Canadians seem stupid. Everyone expresses what he or she thinks, and so there is no modesty. If I return to Japan, I must show my modesty by saying that I only know a little bit about education even though I have experience at the graduate level. To show modesty is necessary in Japan but I want to change the Japanese educational system, specifically the English classroom in Japan so I must choose my words carefully and express them in an appropriate manner. The most important thing is to change these classrooms and so suppressing the pressure of my surroundings at school is important. I must be very careful to choose modest and soft-sounding expressions with which to express my thoughts. "*deru kui wa utareru*" (protruding nail gets hammered down) and so even though I might be a protruding nail I must protrude in such a way that nobody will be looking to hammer me down.

Rie implies that ambiguous discourse is necessary as a survival technique if one lives in Japan.

Resisting/Accepting the Transformation of One's Style

染み付いた 肌が赤剥け 英語文
Red, my skin peels back
Rays of logic and order
From this Western sun

Kishoutenketsu

Rie expresses her struggle during the second meeting.

The second meeting, October 22nd, 2006

Rie: My "Tutorial" is going well and my Professor teaches me things such as that "they" is not good word and that I must clarify more content in an academic paper; also that this content is not related to that section, so I must add a new column; and so on. Before I handed my paper to the Professor, I sent it to my boyfriend by e-mail to edit at which point I realized that the way of thinking between Japanese and Canadian is different. When I sent my first term paper to my boyfriend, he said that my writing is in the Japanese style of KISHOUTENKETSU, so he suggested completely changing to the Western style of writing. There was a writing support group for international students and I met one student who came from Russia and she also said that in this culture we must say everything too clearly, and that it seems stupid. I thought, English seems strange not only from a Japanese viewpoint, but from a Russian viewpoint as well. Chinese students and Arabic students also complain about the different writing style. Last time in the course, we read TENSEIJINGO (famous column) from the Asahi newspaper that was translated into English. At first, the Professor did not mention that this English was a translation, so we could not understand what the author wanted to say. After the Professor disclosed, I changed into Japanese, and understood very well, because of my ability to understand the KISHOUTENKETSU style, catching the reader's attention, changing topic and somehow concluding without a logical sequence.

Mika: I experienced the opposite feeling this summer in Japan that you felt in the class. When I read TENSEIJINGO in Japan, the incoherent, pointless writing of the column shocked me. I wanted to accuse the author, who jumped from topic to topic, of having brain damage. Am I Westernized?

Rie: I think that your brain is changing.(laugh)

Mika: I think that this is a cultural difference rather than a difference in brains. I guess that this culture really values logical order.

At first I was so reluctant to change my writing style from Kishoutenketsu to the Western style, but now I am lambasting Japan's illogical style of writing that is used by Japan's greatest writers. Realizing this makes me also realize that I have changed so much over the last thirteen years in Canada. However, I see my writing style as being neither Japanese nor Western. My style exists somewhere in between the two.

English Essay vs. Japanese Essay

Yoko writes about the difference between Japanese and English essays.

Yoko's diary, November 15th, 2006

Because yesterday was the due (WIE) date for my essay, I want to talk about the difference between essays in English and Japanese. First, I'll talk about the problems I'm

having with English essays right now. Sometimes my sentences become too long, because I am used to long Japanese sentences. When I think about why this happens, I realize that when I write in Japanese I write whatever comes to mind. However, when I read it over again later, I get the impression that it is too difficult to read. This point is my main weak point. Another point I realized is, for example,

English Essay

State clearly at the “topic sentence” and explain about it later. Make sense whatever you stated with following sentences (WIE)

Japanese Essay

Stating the background while lining up the sentences that might contain reasons that support the thesis statement, which somehow take us toward the conclusion in a surreptitious way.

However, sometimes even this “conclusion” is ambiguous and therefore, we must interpret this ambiguity from the surrounding text. Otherwise you are not good (WIE)

Here, I realize what English essays require of the writer is that they must have an idea and clear reasons before starting to write otherwise, one cannot express oneself. If you have more than two ideas in one topic, the relationship between the ideas must be clear. If this relationship is not clear, the reader cannot grasp the relationships clearly so we must be careful. On the other hand, Japanese essays put the hard work on the reader’s back. A good point about that is

It is enriched by the thoughts of the reader.

Because of the display of background (WIE) information, we can expand imagination (WIE).

The writer can say more freely, (on the contrary, in English essays if you stated (WIE) something in the first sentence, you must support your statement, and this is the goal so we must avoid confusion (WIE) so it is more rigidly bounded). But overall, readers tend to get lost what the writer’s real point was (WIE).

Because I practiced English essays in such excess, I find them easier to read and write. In general I find English essays to be simpler (WIE) than Japanese essays. Keep It Simple Stupid (KISS) (WIE) I learned this phrase in ESL and it is the motto of English sentences. In my high school classes, ancient writing classes were the worst for me. Now I know why it was so hard for me, because it is based so much on ambiguity. On my ancient writing tests there were two pages of writings to read in order to answer the questions, and it’s so ambiguous that you can only discern 3 subjects as the topics of the writing. Therefore, often you would be asked, “What is the subject of this sentence?” It’s crazy (WIE)...

In contrast, Aya’s problem is different. She says that she has never heard of the kishoutenketsu style, because she did not enjoy Japanese class in Japan and she also did not like to read books.

Aya’s diary: March 9th, 2006

This week I didn't go to class at all. I just refused to go to school. Basically, I hate reading and I have no interest in novels or magazines and so I can't understand them well, even in Japanese.

Aya had a high school abroad experience, so she began her essay-writing career by engaging in the Western way of writing without first understanding the Japanese style of writing. Aya's writing problem is not because of the differences between the Japanese and Western styles of writing. She reflects on her lack of motivation in her diary.

Aya's diary; September 16th, 2006

But for me, speaking fluently (ぺらぺら) like native speakers is a much more attractive option than being able to read academic literature effortlessly, without a dictionary and being able to write essays. Thus, perhaps, my reading and writing might not improve.

Aya's reluctance to study what is considered good writing in Western society caused her to have to study ESL for two years before she could become a regular student. This is because in the academic world, there is a stronger focus on good writing skills rather than on strong speaking skills.

美文調 さりり諦め 小学生
Aesthetic Writing
Readily we discard it
To be kids again

Prestigious/Childish Terminology?

I remember my first writing assignment was returned with lots of question marks written on it. I thought that the professor would be able to understand me but with my question-mark-riddled paper in front of me; I did not understand what the professor thought I knew. There was a huge gap between the professor's expectations and mine. I was a good writer in Japan and always got the best mark in the class, but not here. The expectations between English writing style and Japanese writing style are completely different. The Japanese writing style requires some aesthetic element that is not valued here.

In my previous research, Tomoka said (July 10th, Yoshimoto, 1999):

Tomoka: When I wrote my composition about 'A wedding at the Cathedral Basilica of Notre-Dame', I showed my writing to my host family. They repeated the same question, 'Why was the church shining?' For me, it was obvious, because I wrote in the previous sentence that the statue was made of gold. I didn't understand why they didn't understand. When the teacher said that I shouldn't write childish sentences like 'The sun shines. The sky is blue. A butterfly flies.' I felt the deep difference between the two cultures. For me, to use transition words such as 'The sun shines, therefore the sky is blue.' seems childish. I don't want to say things straight out, rather I want to say things indirectly. I can not write an explicit sentence without feeling childish (Yoshimoto, 1999, p. 143).

After two months, Tomoka decided to be childish in order to get a good mark, and found this style to be easy but lost her joy and love for writing. She feels no excitement in this style of writing. Tomoka could not help but write how she did because her method is built on the sum of her personal experiences and not reason.

During the first meeting, we discussed writing differences.

The first meeting, February 26th, 2006

Yoko: In my political science tutorial, they said that beautiful terminology had nothing to do with writing a good essay. The point is to make the reader understand what you want to say and it is completely different than students who write essays in literature courses. In political science a simple, precise and persuasive essay comes out on top.

Rie: The purpose of writing is different between Japanese and English. In Japan, the author expects the reader to read between the lines of the text; and the more they use difficult terminology, the more prestigious they seem. In English though, the author must keep the reader in mind and ensure that the reader will be able to grasp the meaning. Expecting the reader to read between the lines of resulted in many puzzled looks and question marks. Our tendency to prefer being indirect is deeply rooted and all English writing seemed "Childish".

Donkel (1992) questions the Western tendency of focusing on reasons:

In my opinion, what recommends the approach which would call such reason into question is simply the intuitive recognition that human

relationships are not built around reasons or accounts, but are based rather on connections grounded in the depth of human experience.....Again, love has no reasons. (Donkel, 1992, p. 191)

Yoko also feels strange, stating the obvious.

Yoko's diary, July 19th, 2006

Now I am taking an English course for academic purposes. This course will help me prepare to do presentations, read textbooks, take lecture notes, do research, write essays, and summarize ideas. Japanese literature omits many subjects and readers are required and challenged to have broad background knowledge in order to read between the lines. On the contrary, English requires simple order and logic to make readers understand and this is the main point. I find it difficult. If Japanese people say that I spilled coffee, so I must wash my clothes, it seems so obvious to me. But in English, because coffee is black and it causes stains, I must wash my clothes. Incidentally, Arabic people seem to add more explanation that we already know as being common sense.

Japanese students may have to endure Western logocentric writing until they can find the third space for their writing, expressing their feelings in more personal way that accommodates the performative contradiction of style between the cultures they try to negotiate.

Western Cultural Ideology

問い正す 苛立つ汗の 無意味さを
Questioned relevance
Classroom on pins and needles
Sour ridicule

Questioning the Authority of Teachers

Aya says that she carries with her, the Japanese concept of “teacher” who must be respected.

Interview with Aya, January 7th, 2007

Mika: You mentioned in your diary that you hated your teacher at your junior high school. Why?

Aya: Things the teacher would say were contradictory and I could not make sense of them. I did not understand why the teacher would scold me, but I was overwhelmed by the power of the teacher and could not ask why I was wrong. For three years I was pressured by the teacher and felt shocked by his distrustful behaviour. Here in Canada, the relationship between teacher and student seems more equal than in Japan. However, I am still dragging with me, the Asian concept that I must respect the teacher and so I cannot accept that friendly relationship. Thus when I talk with the teacher, I become so nervous. In Japan I was forced to respect the teacher, even though I did not want to. The teacher had absolute power and I could not talk back. I had to obey the teacher. The teacher was demonstrating his position over me and I was forced to look up to him. This was so stressful.

Aya also expresses difficulty in being able to get along with her ESL teacher.

Aya's diary on March 2nd, 2006.

It's been a while since I made a diary entry. After the reading week a girlfriend from Hong Kong who was in Kingston, came to see me and I lost the will to study for a while. She was in my class last term. Recently I have had lots of troubles. I can't bring myself to like the teacher of oral studies. It seems like nothing, but to me it's very serious. After the reading week, the class was terribly bad. Because it had been a long time since I had been there, I was a completely nervous. My heart was beating so quickly like I was taking a language test or something. My hand was sweating so much. This was the first time in my life that I was ever like this in class. Since the beginning of this term, I've felt as though the oral skills teacher was different from the other teachers. At the beginning she was ok, but it was all down hill from there. Ever since I told her that I was married to a Canadian boy things changed. I can't put it into sentences why I hate this class so I will put it into point form.

- Irresponsible and doesn't do what she says she will.
- Unfair (WIE).
- She points at the same people who speak English well all the time
- She's never given us good feedback (WIE)
- Her job is to give us feedback and I go to class because I expect to get feedback from her so what's the point of going to the class? (WIE)
- I told her that I'm married with Canadian and after that she started saying "That's why your English is good...etc" (WIE) She seems like expecting I can speak good English and that makes me nervous. I feel I have to speak well.
- When she points at me I have to answer but when I cannot understand her I say that "I don't have the answer" (WIE) and she says "What were you listening? That was the easiest part of the listening." (WIE) She's so offensive.
- She overcorrects pronunciation and grammar and winds up making a fool out of the person. I don't like her personality. Her attitude and actions seem unprofessional.

When I read this entry, my first thought was of how this drive towards pronunciation, which mimics that of native speakers, causes embarrassment and humiliation, inhibiting the student's motivation. The teacher's method of repeated error correction wounded Aya's peer's identity. As Aya describes her, this teacher seems to demand perfect pronunciation until the class laughs at the inability of the student to pronounce a word like a native speaker. The acceptance and tolerance of different accents of Englishes, such as Japanese English, Korean English, and Spanish English is something ESL teachers must keep in their mind, since English is not only for native speakers. Pennycook (2001) points out that English spread through colonizing other countries:

Not only is the notion of standard English something of a myth but so too is the idea that it can somehow bring automatic benefits to its users. The effects of learning a language or a variety of a language can only be understood within a broader context of social and cultural relations. So too with literacy. (Pennycook, 2001, p. 77).

Pennycook challenges the traditional view that "English is superior to other languages in terms of both its intrinsic (the nature of language) and extrinsic (the function of language) qualities" (p. 56). As a teacher who teaches Japanese, I am constantly amazed how we have such detailed emotional expressions that cannot be translated into English.

虎の威を 借りたくなくて 犯罪者
Bound by citations
Freedom of information
Prison of the mind?

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is something that Japanese people are unfamiliar how to deal with it. When I was an ESL student, it was very frustrating to have to cite authority instead of saying

what I felt like saying. In Japan, we are not trained to cite authority bibliographically. In Japan, the word of authority is considered the truth, a very positivist notion. Moreover, if two scholars have differing opinions, it is the opinion of the scholar of higher status that prevails. This bowing down to authority absolutely is reflected in the Japanese expression, 長い物には巻かれろ (nagai mono niwa makarero, trans. give in to those in power).

Because of this faith in absolute truth, the feeling to need to cite authority in a bibliography is found to be unnecessary, and often creates problems for Asian students coming to study in Western universities. I can remember one Chinese graduate who returned to Canada to correct an accusation of plagiarism after he returned to his country, thinking everything was wrapped up perfectly. Before hearing about the seriousness of plagiarism, I was not at all careful, but since then I have been much more careful to avoid any sort of embarrassment and shame this might bring upon me.

Aya said during the first meeting, February 26th, 2006, “I cried about something I wrote in my diary but it is ok now”.

What Aya was referring to is the following diary entry regarding an incident of accused plagiarism.

Aya’s diary; February 8th, 2006

I think I will write about a shocking event that happened today to calm myself down. I wondered whether or not I should write about it or not but it was so shocking that I feel I have to. Today, the teacher handed back my globalization essay (WIE). She suspected that I had committed plagiarism. She said that there was nothing to correct and thought I might have copied directly from a website. I never do that so I am really angry. I had only tried to do my best but it made it look like I hadn’t done the work by myself. I had forgotten to attach a bibliography and that was my fault, but she doubted my efforts and that made me angry

Rie said during the second meeting, October 22nd, 2006

Rie: Last year in one of my courses, I was assigned to read five articles and to summarize them. I was told that my writing was plagiarism. I have never been trained to recognize plagiarism, so I connected many ideas by reading many articles. The professor said that if I did again, I could not get credit and I was surprised.

Aya: It's called patch-working (WIE).

Rie: In Japan it was normal to do these kinds of summaries; I did this during English literature courses at the Japanese university, and the teacher never mentioned that those types of summaries were not good.

Aya, Rie and Yoko have all struggled with plagiarism. I too, do still not quite understand plagiarism. Pennycook (1996) says, "All language learning is to some extent a process of borrowing others' words and we need to be flexible, not dogmatic, about where we draw boundaries between acceptable or unacceptable textual borrowings" (p. 227).

Yoko expresses the same idea about plagiarism in the second meeting.

Yoko's second meeting, October 22nd, 2006

Yoko: All of my words are influenced by others, so at what point a quotation mark is necessary seems a little questionable to me.

Japanese people learn Japanese language through metaphors, and through cultural wisdom, the origin of which is mostly unknown, so why do we need quotation marks?

Yoko continues her discussion about plagiarism in the second meeting on October 22nd, 2006.

Yoko: From the reader's point of view, if one person writes their ideas, it is logical and persuasive, but if the writer brings many ideas from elsewhere, they might be messy and illogical and difficult to read. So the teacher said that he would doubt that anyone would commit plagiarism. If you do patchworking, you must thoroughly digest and must write. This is very difficult, because I connected sentences with quotations and readers have difficulty understanding the writer's meaning. Until I understand completely, I cannot write what others say. So if I cannot find the information source, I cannot discuss the topic and this is frustrating to me.

How can we understand, as Yoko says, "completely" the aspects of a different culture?

Don't we have the right to discuss a subject if we have some knowledge about it? If we do not have a citation or a figure of authority to reinforce our point of view, is our opinion

invalid? Yoko remains quiet in her classes and connects her sentences with quotations in essays. I did exactly the same thing as Yoko and remained quiet in my classes. Who cares about intellectual property in academics? Everybody should share the great volume of human knowledge.

Pennycook (1996) conducted an interesting search to trace the originality of a particular instance of layered quoting. He found that Morgan (1995) was said to be claiming that Raimes (1991) was quoting Giroux. When he looked at Raimes, he found that Raimes was claiming that Faigley (1986) was citing Giroux. Pennycook finds out that words that were attributed to Giroux were in fact those of Faigley.

Pennycook (1996) says,

And so as these words and ideas circulate around the academic community, it becomes unclear quite what their origins are. And does it matter? The ideas attributed to Giroux are interesting, but do we need to know who really said them originally? Within contemporary academic writing practices, with layers of citations, e-mail, cutting and pasting, and so on, the adherence to supposed norms of authoriality are becoming increasingly hazy. (Pennycook, 1996, p. 216)

This layered quoting makes me feel like 虎の威を借る狐 (tora no i wo karu kitsune, lit. The fox who borrows the tiger's authority, trans: A person who takes advantage of borrowed authority). Even though I am just a small fox, I can be like a fierce tiger by quoting the tiger's words. This attitude is considered shameful and this metaphor implies a negative connotation. Usually this metaphor is used to describe someone who does not have the respect of others, but has power or authority by virtue of the fact that they have the favor of someone powerful, or is associated with a powerful organization. During the

first year of my Master's studies, I was constantly avoiding quotations; I was always trying to use my own words and my writing was littered with, "I think...." instead of citations.

Language

Yoko expresses anger towards her ex-boyfriend and his use of language during her second interview, on January 27th, 2007.

Yoko: The Chinese-Canadian and I had difficulty communicating, so in retrospect I think that it was good to split up. Second-generation Chinese boys call new comers from China "FOBs (WIE)". This is a discriminatory word that implies wearing strange clothes, fashion, accents and behaviour. FOBs (WIE) stands for F(Fresh) O(off) B(the Boat) (WIE). My second-generation Chinese-Canadian friends demonstrate their discrimination against FOBs (WIE). I could not understand their favorite T.V. programs and sports and I am bored during their conversations. Most Canadians are kind to Japanese girls, but my second-generation Chinese-Canadian friends have both a special pride and prejudice and I was hurt by their cruel comments about my accent and lack of knowledge of culture. Their parents speak less fluent English and they speak fluent English and being second-generation gives them a complex sense of pride and prejudice. I think that my boyfriend thought that I was not good enough to be introduced to his friends, having less fluent English than other group members.

英語剣 口にくわえて 技知らず
Dagger in my mouth
Dripping with English poison
I know not, its use.

The Advantage of English

I cannot count how many times I have wondered how to voice my opinion strongly towards people who put me down. I simply do not know how to accomplish this in English. Instead I wind up mumbling away in Japanese about how upset I am at the person.

Yoko expresses frustrated disgust in herself for not being able to express refusal in a strong manner, in English.

Yoko's diary, June 12, 2006

Me: Hey just from (sic) my curiosity, I have a question, can I ask? (WIE)

Guy: Yeah (WIE)

Me: How old do I look like? (WIE)

Guy: ... not more than 25 (WIE)

Me: How old are you? (WIE)

Guy: turning 31 (WIE)

Me: I just don (sic) understand why you ask out a young girl like me? You think is it OK to do? (WIE)

Guy: I'm still young! Are you gonna call me? (WIE)

Me: I don (sic) think so, but take care (WIE)

Guy: alright take care, see ya (WIE)

I thought about it a bit. If I were a Caucasian girl I would probably not be hit on because they would probably say, "Fuck off"(WIE). But we Japanese girls do not have the courage to say no. I'm overwhelmed thinking about how to turn someone down. In Canada, I don't know how to turn down guys with a strong attitude. I just don't know how to turn someone down, or refuse something. I don't understand English terribly well so it is easy for men to get me. I think older men, knowing about these things and taking advantage of me are sick (WIE). Are they well in the head?

While Yoko is able to speak English, she still has difficulty adopting the practice of being assertive and confident in English because her Japanese social identity is imposing values of passiveness and indirectness upon her. Because of this, she is unable to gain the advantage of English.

トンネルの 灯りは自己の 多感性
Midnight, sans the moon
My intuition guides me
Through unseen language

"Authentic" English

Rie's diary, March 6th, 2006

I've started saying, "you know" (WIE). A couple of months ago I started adding, "...right?" after sentences and I was quite pleased with that. It's very convenient to connect sentences with words like this; it's very helpful for me. Tonight during my discussion group, there were many students who shared their opinions and I find I always miss my chance to get a word in. Tonight, a Chinese student made a presentation about the way to teach grammar through writing. I was very interested in her topic and I even put my hand up twice to ask a question. I was very satisfied. Also, every week in this class we do a web posting which I posted first. Many people agreed with my point of view, and so I felt more confident more the class started. After the class, the Professor said that she had noticed that I had been attending the talks at the university, and on the way home I talked with the Chinese student who made the presentation today. I think today's mission to listen and speak was successful!

Rie's diary; September 7th, 2006

Since all of my English lectures are so long, I find them difficult to follow. Besides, I was jetlagged, so I was absentminded.(ボーとしている). It could not be helped. In Japan, I was talking with my American boyfriend as well as the ALT (assistant language teacher) for my school, but our conversations were a mix of Japanese and English (チャンポンで。); It's been a while since I've been to my English classroom. It seems to take time to change from Japanese structures to English structures as well as to recall vocabularies and such. Observing my inattentiveness, my Canadian friend said, "You are a slowpoke (WIE)". I did not understand what she said, so I asked her again and she wrote this sentence in my notebook. Starting out on this note in my second year with the word "pokey" (WIE) seems foreboding. But it cannot be helped. Things will work out (WIE). During the first year I was too eager to succeed as a high school English teacher, but in this second year I feel more easy-going. Am I okay with this attitude?

Rie's diary, September 8th, 2006

Today was departmental welcome party. It was fun but I had a listening problem with regards to my professor's English and my Korean friend's English. The professor is a Francophone and somehow I feel difficulty understand them. One of the phrases that I remember the professor saying is: "I miss your story" (WIE). I thought this "miss" was as in, "I miss you", and so I was confused. Later I understood that this miss meant to fail to catch a story. I am sorry for my poor listening ability! (WIE)

Rie's diary, September 18th, 2006

I moved to the new apartment. My roommate seems like an easy-going person and she says that she is hyper. She makes a mess in the room, so I am trying to put the room in

order. Yesterday I asked her if it would be okay for me to tidy the room. She said that she does not care, so I cleared away the dishes in the kitchen. (ちょこちょこかたづけ た。) But when she came back, she said that her cup was very special, so, I should not pile it up. It seems that she received this cup from her “ex” (WIE). Even though she is 26-years-old, she is married once and divorced. She said that she is sorry about her attitude being “picky” (WIE), but I guess that she still likes him. The prefix “ex” is heartrending and I realize “ex” is also noun.

Rie’s diary, December 20th, 2006

Today I worked on moving furniture to my friend’s house. When I was doing it by myself, many Canadian men offered to help and I felt very happy because if I were in Japan, men would not help at all. If I had asked my friends to help me, there would be many people who would help me, but I didn’t ask them because I felt that it was responsibility to move on my own because I chose to move. My roommate is still being very annoying. I remember the Japanese proverb, 蓼食う虫も好き好き (tadekuu mushi mo sukizuki, lit. There are some insects that like a bitter taste. Trans. There’s no accounting for taste.) Lately, she found another guy. Yesterday, I heard the expression “Barby Girl” (sic, “Barbie Girl”) meaning that if you are a Barbie Girl everyone will help you; that was the context I heard it in. When I said to my roommate that I wanted to make a cake for a farewell party for one of my teachers, she said that she had to cancel going salsa dancing to go traveling with a guy who promised to pay for all her expenses. She was trying to make me think that she was a “Barbie Girl”, but she didn’t answer my question at all. She then insisted that we soon go out to dinner since we’ll soon be separating but I turned her down because I needed to be careful with what limited time I had left, and I didn’t want to be in that uncomfortable situation. Right now, she is eating pizza with her new boyfriend. When it comes to both men and pizza, she really is disgraceful. She orders more pizza than she needs from her workplace, she doesn’t help pay for it, but she always brings the leftovers home. There is often rotten pizza and oranges all over the place.

Yoko’s diary: February 5th (written entirely in English)

I feel bloated!

She bugs me

You’re so deinty [sic]

Bowling [sic] eyes

My roommate said, “You are deinty [sic]” so I go, “What does it mean?” courtesy she said, but it is more like being refined. I immediately retorted, “But I don [sic] think I am!!”(WIE) but it may seem like it. I asked her, “Is that because I’m Japanese?”(WIE) but she said it was not because of that.

Yoko’s diary, February 8th (entirely in English)

She is a prick. (by roommate)

Yoko’s diary, February 9th

I’ll keep you posting (WIE) (heard on the way to school)

Yoko's diary, March 10th (Entirely in English aside from the translation she writes)

I drink you under the table.

She drinks him under the table (translation in Japanese follows this English expression)

Yoko's diary, March 11th

I got puffy eyes (WIE) (translation in Japanese follows)

Yesterday I went on a date. I was able to drink more than him so he taught me the expression, "You drank me under the table" (WIE) and so today I got puffy eyes.

Yoko's diary, March 12th

Today I went with Amber to the Art Gallery. I learned this expression from the label underneath the painting, "Her and my relationship was stormy" (WIE)

"You look out of it" (WIE) Because I was absent-minded my roommate said this to me. I am remembering these words however I am not yet at the stage at which I am ready to use these expressions yet but eventually I sure I will be using them someday.

悔しくて お手玉投げて 手を祓う

A vexing event

Pelting with obscenities

The exorcised hand

Switching Language

Yoko's diary; May 30th, 2006

A couple of days ago, I was sexually harassed by a vulgar Japanese man and broke into English. Fuck ya!! Your hand was on me this morning!!! (WIE). Because I could express my anger better than with Japanese. Telling this story briefly; I went to an Asian nightclub with two male Japanese friends whom I trusted. I went to one of the guy's friend's house and drank until 5 a.m. in the morning. Eventually one of my friends returned home; the other guy stayed, since it was his house, and I fell asleep. Early in the morning, I found the guy next to me, passed out with his hand over my belly. I got up feeling キモッ (feeling sick). I met him that evening, and scolded him. Somebody might say that these are normal happenings between men and women and that it's more rare that nothing happens. But Not between Us!! (WIE). Because he was always acting impolitely beyond the limits of friendship, (like guys often do with each other) and so that's why I was always laughing. If anything, I felt like a brother to them. If I translate my anger into Japanese, くそめえ何してんの今日の朝 (Fuck ya! What were you doing this morning?). But I wouldn't have said anything about his "手" (hand), caz (sic) it would be too direct if it's in Japanese, you know... (WIE). Well, I am not so terribly sensitive about this, so it's okay, but...

Yoko's diary, November 28th, 2006

I prefer to talk on MSN messenger in English rather than to speak and talk in Japanese. Because English is more clear and the sentences are shorter and the nuances of English are less likely to be impolite. On the contrary, Japanese can easily be nuanced to sound very impolite. When I try to be more polite, the sentences become longer and the meaning becomes more ambiguous and it's such a pain in the neck.

The expressions of love and friendship are better in English.

Eg. Missed u! how have u been?(WIE) (still sounds friendly)

さみしかったよ。どうしてた?! (relationship sounds very close)

See ya! Love ya! (WIE) (sounds light-hearted)

またね! 愛してるよ! (?! Love me!? But we're just friends!)

When I exchange messages with my younger brother I can say love you (WIE) but I can't say 愛してるよ (I love you) in Japanese because I'm too shy to say it (in Japanese).

Because Japanese people are very sensitive to the nuances of words and how to express themselves, so I too have to carefully choose my words to be less impolite and I have to concentrate extra-carefully.. it's so troublesome.

When I talk with older people, I especially have to be careful to use honourific language, which is also an irritation.

But, when I speak English, I don't have to worry about these elements of Japanese language, and I just blurt out what I want to say, directly so I like that.

殻を割れ 外の寒さに 怯えずに

The world beyond sight

Like a cold lake in the morn',

Adapt and enjoy.

Being Aware of the World Outside of Japan

In Japan there is a commonly held belief that political topics should be avoided in discussion in order to maintain a harmonious group atmosphere. I have never discussed politics in the classroom in Japan and other topics such as the Emperor are also taboo topics. Here in Canada, these topics seem more open for discussion than in Japan.

The first meeting, February 26th, 2006

Mika: In my class I chose the election as a topic for my students to write about during class one day and so many of them wrote a lot about it. I was very surprised. In Japan the younger generation seems so indifferent to politics.

All: Definitely. (確かに)

Aya: I have never spoke with my friend in Japan about elections before. But, when I went to a Canadian high school for the first time, I was surprised about how my friends spoke about politics so often.

Yoko: In Japan, America made the constitution and we did nothing, but here in Canada through the spilling of blood, they started a country. So I think that's a big difference. Japanese democracy is not a democracy.

Yoko distinguishes between Cantonese and Mandarin in China.

Yoko's diary, February 26th, 2006

Yesterday night I drank with other Asian friends. I wanted to turn down the invitation because I was super busy but as a Japanese girl if they say, "Come on Yoko!! You have to come out this time!!" (WIE) I eventually give in and say "Ok..." (WIE). This group of friends comes mainly from Hong Kong. Personally, I like Cantonese people. They are interesting and I like their culture. They have fairly good knowledge about Japan. Compared to Mandarin people they are less afraid of strangers and more open to different circumstances. Yesterday, as usual, we played dice game and drinking games until 3 o'clock in the morning. Right now I am heading to Mika sensei's house (She uses honourific forms in this sentence which don't translate into English so readily).

Yoko's diary, May 27th, 2006

Me & myself

I am spoiled greatly. Students who came to Canada as refugees have backgrounds that differ to mine. There are so many strong people out there (WIE).

Yoko's diary, November 28th, 2006:

Studying Political Science (WIE) in Canada (WIE).

The difference between Political Science and other subjects is that I can look at the country of Canada (WIE) and the people and other countries very objectively. Especially Business, Psychology, etc. the content of which is not so dissimilar from the content in Japanese texts (WIE). However, feminism, liberalism, etc. are theories (WIE) that are more developed here and so there is more meaning to studying them here. For the students who come here from democratic countries that are one step ahead these theories might be commonplace but if you go to Japan, Japanese people are unable to understand these matters unless I explain them in full detail.

My (female) Japanese friends don't care about human rights and especially don't care about the fact that women should be given more rights and they choose to not pursue equality. There is a difference in cultural values. What I want to say to Japanese people is study outside of Japan. Japanese educators should have a responsibility to try their hardest.

Aya notices and admires her more adventurous girlfriend.

Aya's diary, October 24th, 2006

My terrible Tuesday is finally over; I was relaxing at home with John when suddenly my good friend from when I was studying abroad, Katie, called me. Earlier in the year she said that starting she would be going to Germany and Austria, in May 2006 as a nanny and that she would not be returning for two years. Suddenly she called me and said that

she had come back to Canada with her boyfriend saying that she was heading to Vancouver by hitchhiking and that she was in Ottawa right now. She said that she would be leaving Ottawa tomorrow so I rushed to see her and her boyfriend taking John with me. She was one of my best friends who were very trustworthy among my female Canadian friends. When I see her it feels very natural, even though I haven't seen her for so many months. She was studying Zoology at the University of Guelph up until this past April, but she took a leave of absence from her studies and traveled to Europe. She said that she would not be returning to Guelph to study and that in February she will be going to Tasmania for a year with her boyfriend who is from there. After that she plans to return to Canada and in order to become a midwife, will reenter university. She is a rather spontaneous girl who lives the way she wants to live, and she's quite attractive as well. Her power of taking action is quite strong. I like her way of thinking and living very much. So far coming to Canada has been a very exciting thing for me but since I've been here it has not been as exciting so I think I would like to go somewhere else.

Japanese Cultural Ideology

たんぽぽの 綿毛のような イデオロギー
Dandelion seeds
Like our ideology
Pervade stealthily

Bullying

Yoko said during the first meeting, February 26th, 2006:

Yoko: In my first Political Science class, the first question my professor asked was, "Are human being innately good or evil?" It seems to me that human nature is evil, with the exception of me! All <laughing>

Mika: I think that when we are born that we have both parts.

Yoko: I don't like that thinking. You must choose a side. I think that we are only good because of social pressure.

Mika: I think being good or bad is very much influenced by one's environment. I think that in the end we always have to flow in the direction of the rest of society.

Rie: At my previous workplace, when that male teacher bullied me, not only myself, but also other female teachers were devastated by his actions and we felt unsafe.

Mika: So do you think that the old high school you worked at was a hotbed for bullying?

Rie: Yes.

Confucian vs. Socratic

During the second meeting of October 22nd, 2006, we talked about Confucianism and

Socratic thought that reflects different cultural ideologies.

- Rie: I learned in the class that there is a huge gap between Confucianism culture and Socratic culture.
- Yoko: I learned in the ESL classroom that Confucianism that spread in China stresses the authority of the teacher, but Socrates made the students think by themselves. We are trained to listen to what authority says.
- Rie: That's why we cannot express our opinion. But is this a bad thing? There is one man in the last term who raised his hand all the time, when he became tired, he would hold his hand with his other hand and むかつく (mukatsuku, trans. disgusting) really irritate me. For him, showing his opinion was the most important thing and he never listens to other's opinions.
- Mika: I think that the old Japanese education made students think and after Meiji era Westernization damaged the Japanese education system.
- Yoko: I think the size of the school was small before the Meiji era and examination hell damaged Japanese education. I think that Japanese literature is very beautiful. Last term I learned that this culture's literature describes the characters in a novel very precisely, but Japanese literature gives the space for interpretation of the imaginary character and therefore the emotions of the characters become stronger and linger longer.

Politeness

Yoko's diary, February 6th, 2006

On Monday I always have to go to my part-time job. I am working as a waitress at a Vietnamese restaurant near my house. My boss, a Vietnamese woman, is about 35-year old. She has very strong character and so she is very strict with her employees. She immigrated with her family to Canada when she was 17-years old. I am being paid under the table and I don't get paid much, but I am made to work extremely hard. I can't say no. Most of the customers of the restaurant are Canadian rather than Asian. Because of this, I am able to pick up a lot of English. I learn from listening to how they use English. Sometimes male customers leave me their telephone numbers but most of them are middle-aged men. I don't know why these older men are trying to hit on a girl in her 20's like me. They are fucked up (WIE). The boss says I am too kind to the customers. However, because in Japan, the customer is God, this way of treating the customer comes naturally to me.

Comparison

Aya also notices the tendency of Japanese people to want to "keep up with the Joneses", which is a predominant aspect of the cultural ideology in Japan by comparing themselves to other Japanese people, which maintains the largely homogeneous culture, while engaging in a culture of competition with themselves.

Aya's diary; October 15th, 2006

On the 13th my girlfriend from my junior high school came to stay with me. She has been taking ESL at Queen's University since September. When she was in 3rd level junior high school, she moved so it's been 6 years since I last saw or heard from her. Two weeks ago I mailed her and we got in touch. I went to pick her up at the Via (WIE) (train) Station (WIE), and I was surprised at how grownup she's become. I don't have time to feel 21 years old, so looking at her I realize how grown up I have become as well. She came to Canada, to Queen's University on a recommendation by previous students there. This is her first time in the English world, and I'm so surprised how well she speaks. If she does stay for one year, she might very well improve by leaps and bounds. Having a private conversation in Japanese with her was fun, but I felt weird about talking to her for some reason. It was really weird (WIE). I wonder why... She is really feminine and warm-hearted and has her own opinion, and I like that kind of thing, but for some reason talking with her; our conversation was a little odd; not the content, but just the "feeling". Fundamentally, I don't like people who have the same dream as me. When I am talking with people who have different dreams and aspirations, I find it enjoyable, however. I compare my English skill with that of other Japanese people. I never compare myself to Chinese or Arabic students, but I habitually do so with other Japanese students, sizing them up. This is a really bad idea though I think. There is no reason to do it, and I hate myself for doing it. That is why I prefer being around people who are much different than I am.

Shame

Aya is critical about shame-oriented Japanese culture during her second interview, on January 7th, 2007.

Mika: If you became a mother, what kind of mother would you want to be?

Aya: I don't want to be a mother who says "Dame (Don't)". I want to explain myself instead of saying "Dame". Children ask many questions, and I don't want to be ambiguous. If I were to have complained when I was younger, I know that my mother would have worried very much, so I didn't. My eldest sister says that my mother loved me the most. My eldest sister and I have 10 years difference between us. My mother used to say "hazukashii kara yamenasai" (trans: it's embarrassing so stop it) but I don't want to say these words to my children. The concept of the majority that consider shame to be the motivator for proper behaviour, framed my action and thinking, so I don't wish to force my children to be bound by what is socially expected by most people. I don't want to push my children to be a member of the majority. The majority could easily be wrong.

完璧に 切磋琢磨の 欠けガラス
Gazing at the stars
Flower wilting, lifelessly
Perspective adrift

Perfectionist

How to answer the teacher's expectation was also a mystery for me, sometimes I would try too diligently to be perfect. My teachers also evaluated me, and their evaluations sometimes made me as mad as Aya wrote that she was. I feel as though most teachers did not see my inner strength and motivation. Every time, I got my evaluation, I learned more about this culture's expectations. Being free from someone's gaze is almost impossible, as we live in relation with others in Sartre's sense of existentialism.

Aya denies her perfectionist tendencies and hates to be evaluated by others. However, Aya seems to be a girl who cares most about what other people think of her.

Aya's diary; February 8th, 2006

You seem like you wanna do perfectly (WIE). Why are you pushing yourself so much (WIE)? Working too hard is not good for you (WIE)! How are you gonna survive when you have 5 courses at the same time (WIE)? You can't be perfect. Etc... (WIE). I didn't want to be perfect but I wanted to write something I could be proud of. I didn't write to get an excellent mark, but for my own good later on down the road when I am in Environmental Studies. Why did she have to accuse me like that? She just put me down!!(WIE) Usually I don't cry in front of others but I couldn't help to stop crying because I was so angry and sad at the same time. Besides that she said: Why are you here if you can write such an excellent paper (WIE)? Well, I'm in the class because I can't pass the second language proficiency test right?? I'm really mad at her for today. Jane said that I did too much but I am not doing my best in all my courses. The topic of globalization is one that will surely come up during my studies and so I wanted to do my best. What kind of person does she think she is? Because of this I talked to John and emailed my sister and my mother and thought about many things. I came to the simple conclusion that everything in this world is evaluated and that I hate this world. Up through until high school I tried to get good marks, but that was only to be recognized by teachers. But, is that really so important? I don't think there is any purpose to it. Am I doing my best to be recognized by the teacher? I don't want to do my best to get a good mark. I want to do my best to satisfy myself. If I cannot find something that I want to do at university then I definitely don't want to go to university. A life of being evaluated by others is unpleasant. I have a wish and I can't make it come true without going to

university. The reason for going to university is because I don't want regret giving up on what I want to do. However, a world in which people evaluate other people is one I hate. The reason I want to study Environmental Science is because nature is the only thing I can believe in, even though I cannot explain it. I believe nature is the symbol of beauty. At the same time, nature reflects the stupidity of human beings. Therefore, I want to become an environmental consultant and help protect the environment, at least. Not going to university is to give up on these dreams and that is absolutely unacceptable. After all, what I really want to say in this diary entry is, how can I live in my own way in this world that values evaluating everything so much. This is my life's theme. Even if ten people say I am making a mistake, in the future I might be the one that is right while ten others are wrong.

According to this teacher who is in the ESL program, Aya never tries to write during the class; she takes her assignment home and returns to class the next day with a nearly perfect paper. This teacher tried to alleviate her anxiety by pointing out that with her attitude it would be very difficult to survive once she begins regular university courses.

Aya said during the first meeting; February 26, 2006

Aya: I cried about something I wrote in my diary but it is ok now. Now, I am least confident about speaking. Conversation is ok for me but I find presentations difficult because I tend to panic in that situation, in front of people. Even though I prepare very well, I go up to present, and my mind goes blank. On the sixteenth I have an independent presentation and I don't feel good about it. It doesn't mean that I can't speak well but the tension gets to me and I become paralyzed in front of the class. I have an outline in my head but what I am saying and what I am thinking are completely different as a result of the tension.

Mika: Do you want to be perfect for your presentation?

Aya: I want to be satisfied with my presentation. <laughing> I don't think I tend towards perfectionism but others might disagree. Maybe I am a perfectionist. <laughing>

Mika: Don't you think that being a perfectionist is very Japanese?

Aya: I don't know if this is very Japanese but the influence of my mother and father does affect me. My mother and father were very motivated to be perfect and strict about everything. But I don't know if this has anything to do with Japan."

Aya describes her personality during the second interview, January 7th, 2006.

Mika: You wrote in your diary so many times that you don't have confidence, why?

Aya: I don't know, but I was expected to be a good girl so much in junior high school and I could not escape from the thinking of how teachers and friends perceived me and I wanted to be loved by everyone. I had always been sensitive to the gazing eyes of others'. Even though among my best friends, because of the trauma from my time at junior high school the element of distrust continued to linger, and I

could not act “like myself” because I would always be asking myself how others would react to my actions. Here in Canada, how my ESL teachers perceive my use of English is something that scares me and I cannot escape their evaluation. My confidence is always zooming up and down like a rollercoaster. When John says that I really shouldn’t be in ESL because he says I am already very fluent in English, and that I should have more confidence in my English, I still feel as though I can’t hold onto that confidence. I don’t even trust myself or I have too much pride.

From the perspective of others it might seem as though I appear confident however.

Because Aya cares so much about what other people think about her, her pride forces her to be perfect.

Rie was surprised by her peers in the Canadian classroom. Her shock reflects the Japanese social value that believes personal matters should be kept separate from academic ones. She writes about this in her diary.

Rie’s diary, February 13th, 2006

Today is a presentation day. I practiced as much as I could but it’s not perfect yet. But compared to the beginning of the term, my vocabulary has increased in size, and I’m less nervous about speaking English, so I think I’ve improved. However, I wanted my presentation to be more concrete and interesting so I started to talk about my experiences in Japan to which my Canadian friends became very interested; more so than about my main topic. I wasted ten minutes talking about my personal experiences in Japan. If I were in Japan, I would never use class time just to talk about my own personal experiences. These Canadian attitudes really shock me even though I dislike many Japanese habits. These days I really miss Japanese behaviour.

Her feeling that she wasted other’s time in the classroom, even though she tried to stick to her presentation reflects a deep connection to perfection, the “correct answer” and diligence in the Japanese classroom.

Non-oral Culture

In her diary, Rie notices that Japanese culture is not an oral culture.

Rie’s diary, February 28th, 2006

Because of yesterday’s crying I woke up earlier than usual today. I was studying at the library when thoughts regarding yesterday’s events popped up in my mind. Even though I am not good at classroom discussion, L2 students who came from Middle-Eastern countries participate aggressively in native speaker’s conversations. I guess their culture

is an oral one. I am so sad that I was educated in Japan and cannot express my feeling verbally. Dragging behind me, the feelings from yesterday's unfortunate discussion class, I looked up the phrase "be mortified at" in the dictionary.

Hierarchical Bureaucracy

When Rie returned to Japan, she compared Japan's hierarchical bureaucracy to Western bureaucracy.

Rie's e-mail, January 11th, 2007

I sent an email to my faculty at the university regarding the ethics proposal and consent form. Astonishingly, next morning I received a reply. Because in Japan I have been so ごたごた (troubled) I did not expect such a quick and cooperative response from anyone in administration. On one hand with Canada I send one email and get everything I want very quickly, and on the other hand with Japan I get sent in circles and have to put up with the egos of the people in power. The head of the teachers, in particular, demonstrated his power by saying, "In the future, be careful when contacting superiors." It's so ridiculous! Losing face, position, are these things so important? If I am ビクビク (nervous, afraid) I cannot demonstrate my own skill to my full ability. I want to get out of this patriarchal society as soon as possible!

皆同じ 色がはびこる 日本庭
One and all alike
Harmonious monochrome
Japanese garden

Group Thinking

Rie struggles with the grammar-translation method of teaching English and groupthink that is dominant in Japanese culture.

The following excerpt is from the third meeting on December 23rd, 2006.

Rie: From the viewpoint of elder female teachers in my school, I will be considered offensive (*iya na yatsu*); a woman who has confidence and who doesn't readily obey her elders. When I called Japan, last time, to request to be able to observe the class of an elder female teacher, I was very anxious. She was someone who I respected and admired, because she had experience abroad and I thought that her classroom was very good. But she denied my request and I was very disappointed. I thought about why she might deny my request when I realized that her experience was one-year undergraduate and mine is two-year graduate, so she might not feel comfortable around someone who is younger with a higher educational background. She is a proud woman, but I expected her support in allowing me to observe her classroom in order to write my research. Her attitude reminded me that Japanese society is not very open and this discouraged me. I know that I must work in the Japanese educational system, but the reason that drove me to Canada to study at a Canadian university was to be able to teach English better, and to become a better speaker of English. I studied second language acquisition theory in the communicative method, but when I go to apply this in my school, I believe that there might be many conflicts that arise as a result.

Rie describes her opportunity to gain more experience abroad, and then coming back to her peers, only to find that there might be some subtle resentment towards her for gaining the upper hand on them. This prompted me to mention the following during the third meeting.

The third meeting, December 23rd, 2006

Mika: I think also that older Japanese women try to stand in the way of younger women (*onna ga onna no ashi wo hipparu*, lit. women pulling on the legs of other women).

My third meeting reflection, April 6th, 2007

Thinking about my own situation, Katsuko, before the textbook fiasco, would often ask me how much progress I had made on my research. I wanted my relationship with her to be peaceful and cooperative but somehow it has degenerated quickly. Between the textbook issues, and the speech contest problems and the assorted office politics that she has brought up, I really get the feeling as though she is trying to bring me down. I guess it's just a matter of it being a dog-eat-dog world. However, I prefer the Japanese expression *女が女の足を引っ張る* (*onna ga onna no ashi wo hipparu*, lit. women pulling on the legs of other women) because it really speaks to the condition of women in a patriarchal society; fighting to be on top of their own hill. I think that this phenomenon is also a tool of the patriarchal society. If women continue to fight for dominance among them like this, they can never unite and fight back against this kind of society.

The problems that Rie and I have also differ in some ways as well though. Rie's problems exist in a society that is extremely patriarchal. On the other hand, my problems exist in a society where such extreme patriarchal social structures are not as prevalent. Where I am, women have a greater feeling of equality. However while my problems may exist inside the context of Western society, my exact problem, dealing with my peers whose minds and philosophies may be rooted deeply in Japanese thinking, and so in that way, Rie and I share the same problem among our peers. Katsuko's attitude amazes me because she is extremely rooted in Japanese thought. She never seems to come to a meeting without having first talked to others and gained support for her ideas. In Japanese this is called 根回し (nemawashi, making arrangements beforehand). This is what many politicians do before voting occurs, to see how much support they have. I have noticed that Katsuko almost never attends meetings in which all language teachers will be there. I suspect it is because she is unable to do nemawashi beforehand and gain support for any idea she has. I believe she always wants to be safe, and avoid risk if at all possible. As a result, when she makes a proposal, she has a quick majority to back her up, and little or no discussion follows.

When Rie returned to Japan from late December until early February, she kept a diary of her thoughts. I found her diary entry of January 26th 2007 to be very interesting; the way in which she describes her struggle really struck a chord with me.

When Rie was feeling very upset in Japan, she sent me the following e-mail.

Rie's e-mail; January 24, 2007

Today, I tried having the students apply certain activities in our English classroom in Japan. The result was “撃沈” (gekichin, lit. sinking battleship, trans. miserable defeat). I introduced many pair activities and self-motivated activities, but the students were not accustomed to listening to English, as well as speaking and writing, so my defeat comes as a result of something that I could not adjust myself completely to—the students' level of competence.

I asked the students to write what I had said in English, but there were some students who were still just translating my English into Japanese. I suppose that translating from English into Japanese is much harder for students than just taking dictation and this misunderstanding made me realize how

Japanese English classes focus on the translation method rather than dictation.

While I was accepting responsibility for my failure to my peers, they mentioned that these students are trained by the policy of the Japanese English teacher; and it turns out that giving the student a solid foundation in Japanese-English translation first appears to be the main expectation of teachers. Thus, for my students, my method of asking them to simply take dictation, without translating, was an unfamiliar and difficult task for them. So, I thought to myself, today's defeat could not be helped, but one question remains. Is it so important to write such an eloquent Japanese translation? Is it so important for them to translate into Japanese first before they understand the content? I had been thinking about this question for a long time, but it was the first time in a long time that I had experienced the feeling. Rather than translation, it seems absolutely more important to understand English by speaking, writing, and understanding according to each individual situation. So, for that reason, it's better to practice these skills in the classroom. If a student said, "I have been studying English since the start of junior high school and I can write an English test and pass but I cannot speak" I would be forced to think that they had wasted a lot of their time, leaving critical skills undeveloped... what can be done in the classroom?

After reading Rie's e-mail, I wrote a comment in my diary.

Mika's diary, January 24th, 2006: comment to her e-mail

I thought that what Rie is struggling with, in the grammar translation method in English education in Japan shares common elements with my own struggle to teach Japanese in a Canadian university in a communicative way. When teachers of the Japanese language in the West teach Japanese, we must use a Japanese textbook, most of which are heavily

influenced by Japanese structuralist thinking that values teaching grammatical structures over communicative competence. I think the reason why there are so many commonalities between Rie and I is that our Japanese backgrounds were both influenced by “group think”, being taught that grammar translation was more important than being able to communicate and the prevailing structuralism that exists throughout Japanese culture.

Recently on the Japanese television program, “Aru Aru Daijiten” they did a show about how nattou, fermented soybeans, were able to help you lose weight and maintain your youth. After this show aired on television, people all around Japan were buying up nattou in massive quantities, to the point where there was none left to buy! They used the authority of an American scientist to glorify nattou. When I browsed the Internet for information, I found the blog of Mari, a Japanese girl living in Tokyo who said this of the incident,

So I went to the store to get Natto yesterday. Guess what! All the Natto was sold out. I checked three big supermarkets, but I couldn't find any Natto there. Crazy...Aru Aru Daijiten carries great weight with people in this country and maybe Japanese are simple-minded health geeks. But now I can buy “Kanten” (agar-agar) without problem, I can tell you the Natto boom will be over in a few weeks too. And I am still eating cabbage before meals; I won't judge and give up one method so quickly (Mari, 2007).

This matter reminds of a past experience involving the blind acceptance of authority on the part of my colleagues by which they believed that the textbook they had chosen was the “best” and had strongly insisted that I use it as well for this reason. When I refused to compromise by changing which textbook I used, I too was sunk like a ship. I was subjected to a lot of indirect pressure that forced me to do more work than I expected. Even though I don't regret doing what I did, each day I realize how good Katsuko is at controlling other Japanese people by manipulating their “group think”. Japanese people are, on the whole, slaves to the Japanese way of thinking.

Rie's students who are stuck in the rut of translating English into Japanese, Japanese people who do what the television tells them to, and the blind acceptance of authority in the case of using the “Minna no Nihongo” textbook are just a few examples of Japanese people being a slave to their own inborn deference to authority. How can Japanese people break free of the fishnet that is this pattern of blind obedience to authority?

真実は 一億あって 明日変わる
Fragile, today's truth
Embracing the différence
Temporal meaning

The Correct Answer

In Japan, teachers give the correct answers to students, so now Yoko must find the correct answer by herself here in Canada.

Yoko said during the first meeting, February 26th, 2006

Yoko: In political science a simple, precise and persuasive essay comes out on top. Before I write my essay, especially in political science, I have to decide what my stance is. Even though my essay might defend a position that I don't particularly agree with, it's ok. If I have proof to support my argument, it's valid. If the topic is difficult, I find it difficult to figure out which stance is the correct one. I collect as much information as I can and state the reasons to support a particular stance".

Yoko is more interested in "the correct" stance, as she puts it, than expressing her opinion.

Yoko states that she is aware that in Western essays, "If I have proof to support my argument, it's valid." Despite knowing that she can produce a "correct" point of view in this manner, she insists that it is "difficult to figure out which stance is the correct one."

This contradictory nature speaks volumes of the Japanese style of searching for absolute truth, the single correct answer; a very positivist view.

Yoko's diary, June 22nd, 2006

One of the things that I'm learning at a Canadian university is to say what I'm thinking, clearly and correctly; voicing my ideas. This is something here that is considered a sign of "intelligence" (WIE). In Japanese culture we are not required to do these things. So, I am not accustomed to having an opinion. Right now I am in the middle of this practice, to get the point correctly and exactly and to change it into my own words; to be able to represent (WIE) my own thoughts. In this process, having my own opinion is a prerequisite, and I want to have my own opinion but it's quite difficult to do.

Yoko's struggle to discover her own "correct opinion" reflects her cultural background.

On the other hand, Rie has to deal with her roommate telling her that her English

pronunciation is not “correct”. Her roommate’s first language is not English either but Rie has not attempted to correct her pronunciation. Rie is thinking that there are many different acceptably correct pronunciations in English.

Rie’s diary, October 21st, 2006

I went salsa dancing and I met a Canadian man and a Japanese girl. A Canadian man talked about her English that mixed “packing” and “parking” (WIE). For Japanese people, “r” is a problematic pronunciation, but for her, “ck” is difficult to pronounce. So if this is a personal matter, my roommate’s strange pronunciation might also be an individual matter rather than it being a matter of her Cantonese background? I am studying phonology ahead of her and when she corrects my pronunciation, honestly speaking, I am not comfortable. Maybe she says what she hears and this becomes her judgment of what is correct or not. I am not the person who comes to dislike somebody easily, but my roommate is a difficult person to get along with.

Aya questions the belief that the majority of Japanese people feel that going to university is the “correct” way to get a job.

Aya’s diary, November 15th, 2006

Is this my will or the social expectation on me to attend school? Or perhaps it is not my will and it is just satisfying the social expectation that I go to university.

Now, having lived for more than thirteen years in Canada, I believe that there are indeed many correct answers, as Rie has noticed. I had a disagreement with regards to the issue of changing the textbook that is used in my classroom, with my peers who think that their choice of textbook is the better one. My diary in my previous section illustrated my struggles with this issue.

Mika’s diary, January 14th, 2007

Nobody knows which is the better textbook, but if the majority uses it, then it becomes “the textbook” and it discourages others from exploring other possibilities. I struggled in Japan with “group think”, so I believe that it is important not to simply succumb to the wishes of the majority, but to think critically and with respect for difference.

The notion of the correct answer is becoming more and more unfamiliar to me. When the majority of people support “the correct answer”, taking a different stance that challenges the correct answer takes an enormous amount of courage.

Being Aware of the Different Perceptions of Aging

Some of our struggles were similar in the same social construction, but individually different with regards to how to deal with them. Rie feels that listening is difficult. I remember that I taped my classes during my studies in Canada and listened to them over again before I slept each night. This turned out to be a good lullaby.

Rie said during the first meeting; February 26th, 2006

What I am struggling most with right now is listening. I heard (from my Japanese friends) that around 26 or 27 years of age, that your ability to listen becomes worse. Even in Japan I had an experience to work with an ALT (Assistant Language Teacher?) and had a chance to listen to the news in English but I didn't have a chance to thoroughly listen to exactly what was being said. When I was talking with the ALT they tried to use simple language and speak slowly that I could listen and comprehend what they were saying. Before, I wasn't trying to desperately hear every single word but since I came to Canada, the speed of conversations between native speakers has really come to trouble me a little. Even though the conversation goes on, if I don't get the meaning I lose the timing to respond appropriately. If I can listen more actively then perhaps I can be more of an active participant in conversations”.

I wondered, like Rie, if this is a problem of aging. In Japan, many age-related metaphors exist and influence us. For example, if you don't marry before 25 years old, you will be called “unsold merchandise”, “Christmas cake” or “a woman like a defeated dog”. Most Japanese job listings state the maximum age of the person that they are willing to hire; for example, 35 years or younger. Many Japanese women feel a lot of frustration, finding a job after turning 35 years old. Because of this, Japanese women have negative feelings about aging. But now, I think that “the younger, the better” in language learning is too simplistic. Rie seems to be dragging these negative feelings about aging in Japan with her to Canada.

The “critical period” hypothesis focuses on “cerebral plasticity” after puberty that make second-language acquisition difficult (Lenneberg, 1967). I admit that the first two years were a struggle, but I feel that this notion of a critical period in age is somewhat discriminatory, ignores complex language learning and lays doubt on the ability of older people to acquire new languages. Much recent research shows the advantage and superior language learning capabilities of adults (Walsh & Diller, 1978; Krashen & Long & Scarcella, 1979). When I first enrolled in an ESL program, the teacher showed me a newspaper article about a woman who graduated from McGill University at the age of 100 years old, causing the teacher to quip, “Better late than never”.

Changing Identities

水耕華 自信吸い上げ 艶やかに
Transplanted flower
Siphons a brave confidence
Flourishes and grows

Being Confident about Oneself as a Woman

All three participants mentioned becoming more confident in their diaries and during the interviews. They believe that English facilitated their ability to see beyond the barrier, put in place by Japanese social values, that dictates that women should feel inferior to men and that all must obey the strict social hierarchy and defer to those with power.

Aya wants to be free from the social ideology that forces her to behave in a particular way.

Aya’s diary, October 12th, 2006

Today was our first Bio mid-term (WIE). It was very difficult. Although I did not study terribly hard, I did not find myself falling apart (ボロボロ) during the test. It was a multiple-choice test but it was difficult. I had much anxiety, even though I read the test many times, I did find myself feeling some anxiety. Why am I so wound up? Because of my anxiety I could not give more than 60% effort. Actually, this might be as good as I can perform. There are things that in daily life I understand, but once it comes to a test

situation, I am forgetting these things. I think it is because I am generally less confident. When I was in high school I studied abroad and I thought that I could gain some confidence, but now that I am living here, I realize that I don't have any confidence. I don't have confidence in not only my English, but in myself as an individual as well. After I returned from my high-school-abroad experience, I decided that I don't care what others think of me, but the truth is I still am concerned about what others think of me. People, probably, do not see me as being a confident person. John is always asking, "Why does Aya always have so little confidence?" He says that it doesn't matter what other people say, or what society criticizes you about, and I agree with what he says and I don't want to simply be one of the majority. However, living in Japan, a group-oriented country, I was raised as one member of that society and so I couldn't simply cut off my connection to that. I wanna be free (WIE). The reason that I want to have a job that is somewhat international in nature, because I want to find a place to be myself regardless of society.

Rie says that she does not care about her Japanese accent any more, in her diary.

Rie's diary, October 8th, 2006

Previously, when I went to sign a cell phone contract, the clerk guessed that I was Japanese from my accent. So today, when I went to buy a cable to use the Internet, I was careful about my accent. But again the clerk said, "I guess that you are Japanese". I asked why and he said that he could tell from my accent. I was so disappointed and discouraged.

This year, I am determined to do something that I could not do in the first year. So, I applied to attend a Canadian family's Thanksgiving party. One of the university staff gathered other Canadian families and four international students. Most of them came from Gatineau and were Francophone. So I introduced myself, remembering the French that I had learned at the Japanese university and suddenly the conversation switched to French and I could not understand anything. I said, somewhat upset, "Sorry, I don't understand any more. I can say just some phrases (WIE)". They were very friendly people, and we drank wine. I enjoyed having a conversation with this French Canadian family, as well as the company of the other international students who came from Malaysia and Taiwan. I noticed their different accents, but I thought that it added some charm to them. Previously I was ashamed by my Japanese accent, but today I think that my accent might be like a Japanese dialect that includes some characteristics of myself. This wonderful experience gave me some confidence.

Rie expresses changes that she has noticed in herself during her one-year tenure in Canada, while studying for her Master's degree, in her diary.

October 13th, 2006

Today, I have my symposium. This is not a major event for L1 language learners, but for L2 language learners we must be on our toes. I went to school early and printed 50 programs and set up the table with two Arabic students and a few Canadians. When I am in the middle of the conversations of Canadians, I cannot follow the conversation and enter a vicious circle of stuttering. I feel lonely. But looking back on last year, everyday was just like this situation, it could not be helped my depression. I was lucky enough having good friends who took care of me. One of the committee members is a friend of

mine, so it makes me feel safe. As I started my poster session, I could explain it smoothly because I know my research in and out. After the symposium, we all went to Mike's Place to relax. Canadian students said, "International students are doing very well, but I wish they would speak more in the class". So I replied, "Showing my opinion a little bit in the class gives me stressful and nervous feeling. Even now, my legs are like jelly (ガクガクする) and they said that was unbelievable. Thinking about one year before, these conversations never would have taken place, because I would have just been too nervous to speak my mind. One year's experience has given me a defiant 'so-what' attitude.

Rie's diary, October 28th, 2006

All day today, I studied. I am coming to understand the content of second language acquisition and this makes me happy but speaking and listening are not improving and that's unfortunate. I went to a Halloween party but I couldn't understand what they were talking about. I am afraid that my mouth and ears have become so accustomed to the Japanese language that I can barely speak or hear anything else which is very unfortunate. Recently, I met Yoko and she talked with me about how she had stayed up all night before a test, cramming in order to pass (一夜漬け, ichiyazuke, lit: one night pickled vegetables). In the case of Master's research, this never happens because the quantity of reading and writing is so great. Undergraduates might acquire lots of information, and not only information directly pertaining to their major area of study, but others as well. Concerning English, undergraduates have a better chance to prove their skills than those doing Master's research, and so I regret not having come earlier to Canada. But, some students who have been in Canada since high school, have told me that they cannot write kanji properly. So, this makes me think that it was better that I came here after having become an adult. In any case, I am just saying that sometimes I feel confident and other times I feel as though I have none. In her diary, Rie expresses the careful planning she has gone through in order to pursue her dream.

Rie's diary, January 31st, 2007

There were many steps involved in the planning because everyone around me was getting married, I really wondered if going abroad, going against the grain, was a good idea. When I turned 29 years old, I attended a seminar for English teachers, and I decided that I should definitely go for it. The next year, I was accepted to university for a Master's program. Each year I had a mantra. In 2004 I said, "In 2004 I come closer to my dream." In 2005 I said, "I make my dream come true in 2005." In 2006 I said, "After all this, it's time to do my best in 2006." Reflecting on my life, even though I have not yet completed my research essay, but my ten-year plan has gone successfully, as a grown up adult, I have much more confidence, and I began to see Japanese culture objectively, realizing its negative aspects, and negative tendency to pull people down.

独立を 望むそばから 母恋し
Independent woman
On my mother, I depend
We're becoming one.

Being Aware of the Importance of Being Independent

I think that not only Aya but everybody struggles to adjust to society. In her diary, Aya describes herself as struggling to find her own identity, and as having low confidence.

Aya especially deplores her lack of independence.

Aya's diary; October 21st, 2006

John is really lazy (ダラダラ) these days so I have also become lazier. I have many things I must do but I cannot drive myself to do them, I am procrastinating. I hate myself. Lately I have not been going to my statistics lectures so I must catch up. However I keep adopting the attitude that I have time to catch up until the midterm, and so I find myself falling more and more behind. I have little motivation to catch up. If I were in high school it would be ok, but now, last minute (ギリギリ) cramming can cause serious problems. I went to the public library to work on my bio lab report a little bit. I must write everything using the past passive voice. Previously what I handed in was only the Materials and Methods section however this time I had no exemplar and so I had no idea how to go about it. It's the rough draft so I must finish it up soon, but again, I lack the motivation to get it done. I miss Japan. Maybe I am not independent enough to say goodbye to my parents. I miss my mother more than my friends or anyway, I want to see her most of all. My biggest problem is not about cultural difference or language; it is a problem of myself. Even though I am struggling with language, I am struggling with myself more than anything else.

In observing Aya, I find that she is a sensitive perfectionist who is trying to do her best, maintaining Japanese cultural norms more than any of my other participants. Her self-analysis of her identity makes me realize the deep connection between language learning and identity construction. Although she is separating language learning and identity construction, I believe that the two are inseparable.

During one of Rie's classes, her professor asked her about if she had undergone any identity changes as a result of coming to Canada and she did mention that she had felt a

change. During this meeting, Rie talked about how previously, she had feelings of guilt as a result of choosing to come to Canada to study.

Rie; the third meeting in December 23rd, 2006

Rie: When I left Japan, I felt bad that my peers and my school took on more responsibility and stress because of my absence. But now looking back, I can see objectively why I felt bad about leaving the school. It's because of the cultural expectation to think of others based on Confucianism and the role of women. Leaving Japan, now I think that my view changed. I no longer feel guilty that I took a sabbatical. I did the right thing. Once I left Japan, I was able to understand how Japanese society is very different from other societies.

In Japan, we are trained to think about the feelings of others. To think about oneself is considered selfish, and self-centered. I endured the tribulations of my unhappy marriage but I always felt that it was necessary to do so for the sake of my children, and that to do otherwise would be selfish. In Canada, I have learned that it is important, to some extent, to be "selfish" because Western society does not possess the deep-rooted *omoiyari* (empathy and consideration for others). Western people, for the most part, are expected to take care of and deal with their own affairs, and in that respect, it is not considered selfish. However, it is considered one's responsibility to look after one's own affairs alongside the expectation that independent people should take care of themselves as well.

Rie goes on to say:

Rie; the third meeting in December 23rd, 2006

Rie: This very ordinary thing (the choice to be independent) is considered selfish in Japan, but it truly is not. Studying in Canada was something I initially thought was selfish, but now I believe it is not. If all women want to be "independently selfish", then society will change.

Rie put it well being "independently selfish". If we want to be independent, we have to be able to look out for ourselves, and that is a basic definition of selfishness. That does not make it necessarily a negative thing however; Westerners do not consider being

independent a bad thing at all, in fact, quite the opposite. In Japan, if you are independent, depending on your status, you might either be considered an outsider or respected. In Japanese we have the expression 一匹狼 (ippiki ookami, trans. lone wolf) and while in English it might describe one who “goes it alone”, in Japanese we can use it to describe both the independent outsider and the respected independent person. Now, I am reconsidering the concept of selfishness. When I was in Japan, and someone would call me selfish, I would feel shame. Comparatively, in Western culture I find that the word “selfish” is not used nearly as often.

Rie continues:

The third meeting, December 23rd, 2006

Rie: In Japan, when I entered the coffee shop, a group of middle-aged women were talking about bad things about their husbands and I felt uncomfortable, because their husbands support them financially. When I told this story to my mother, she said that being a housewife is their job and releasing their frustration in the coffee shop is a good strategy. I don't share this opinion with my mother. If they have so much time to complain, why don't they work outside?

Sato (2003) cites the words of socialist Yamakawa Kikue (1982):

Young women today put a high value on love marriages. But they are interested only in personal issues and have no social perspective, never demanding economic independence or trying to become independent beings in their own right. If they attempt to change the traditional relationship that exists between husbands, wives and families by merely adding the element of romantic love to it and not reforming the economic structure of society, then the changes that occur will be cosmetic change.

(Yamakawa, cited by Sato, 2003, p. 155)

渦潮に 揉まれて光る 御影石
Having braved the sea
Emerging; polished coral
Ne'er to return home

Hybrid Space

I am neither Japanese nor Canadian, but at the same time, I am both Japanese and Canadian; I am finding myself in a hybrid space, between both cultures. I am changing every day and I think that this change in my identity is necessary in order for me to grow as a person. In the morning I often eat toast with butter, mayonnaise and wasabi spread on it, with tarako (cod roe) and maple syrup. Sometimes I put nattou (fermented soy bean) on top as well. When my friend came to visit me, she said that this combination was so weird and unthinkable. When I was in Japan I ate only traditional food for breakfast and never considered deviating from this practice.

This year, I experienced many conflicts with other Japanese people and with my peers. I decided to stand firm regarding my teaching philosophy, faithful to my principles. However, if I had been in Japan, I would surely never have had the opportunity to deviate from the pack, or distort group harmony by singing in a new key. I am moving through a painful and complicated space in which I must think for and by myself, accepting my social construction. On Canada Day 2007, I went to Parliament Hill and sang "Oh, Canada" together with Canadians, feeling proud that I was a part of Canada in some way. More and more, I dream of transnational living that Noel Gough (2005) advocates with the image of a rhizomatic space, citing the Internet as an example, that we are all connected in an infinitely complex, and changing way.

In a world of increasingly complex information/communication/
knowledge technologies, the space of educational research is also

becoming a 'rhizome space'. Rhizome is to a tree as the Internet is to a letter—networking that echoes the hyperconnectivity of the Internet.
(Gough, 2005, p. 3)

Yoko writes about her own behavioral changes in her diary.

Yoko's diary, March 2nd, 2006

Speaking of which, during winter last year when I returned to Japan my attitude to my father became stronger than it had been 2 years previous to that. I wondered why that was the case. During my childhood, everything my father said to me seemed to be right. During junior high school I began to doubt what my father had been saying. During high school I tried to tell my father that he had the "wrong attitude" (WIE). At the end of high school I gave up trying to persuade him (I saw nothing but a wall). Looking back on it, I always acted and voiced my opinion thinking about how my father would feel. My father's opinion was my number one concern. "No matter what I say" (WIE). From my father's point of view he might have thought that I came back without courtesy or common sense. Because before I knew my father very well, when I wanted to voice my opinion I tried to put on the breaks as not to run into my father and cause him to blow up. Now however, I give him my opinion clearly and directly. From the point of view of the Japanese man who is accustomed to the cute and obedient Japanese girl, after I return to Japan, I will probably cause some men to be nervous around me. There might be some instances in which other people might look me at as being selfish, strong, or careless. Compared to Canadians however, I'm still very Japanese. (shy, kind to others, polite(WIE))

Yoko's diary, May 30th, 2006

The behavior that caused me learning English in Canada:

Yesterday, I sent out my favorite friend to Montreal. I'll miss you so much. Love ya! bye!! And hug (WIE). By the way, my friend is a gay person from Thailand, so they are English and Thai bilingual.

Previous winter, when I was in Japan, I met a friend who I had not seen for a long time, I tried to hug her naturally but stopped myself. My friend was not even aware of my action; this has become one of my habits.

Here in Canada, when we want to get to know each other or are seeing someone for the first time in a long time or when we must say good-bye, we go to eat breakfast, to the coffee shop, out for dinner or go out drinking. However, even though I came back to Japan after a long time away in the New Year, my relatives did nothing. They were watching TV in their usual fashion. Generally there are fewer coffee shops and breakfast places compared to Canada. (In Japan), we just "be" together. Do they believe that we can understand each other?

Rie's new goal emerges in her diary.

Rie's diary, January 1st, 2007

I was studying, thinking that I wanted to be a good teacher but right now I have another feeling that I must teach other teachers who do not know how to teach. My new dream has been born. In my private life my dream is to marry and have a family. So far, my boyfriend has reacted negatively towards the concept of marriage but the other day he said, "I want to be a house husband because I want to do a publishing job at home so I must marry a woman who has a job outside of the house." Listening to him say that, I thought to myself, I am an ideal woman for him. I don't know what will happen in the future, but if we can make a good colour of charcoal together, that would be great. If I hadn't started studying English, my private and professional lives would never have become like this. Even though my power is weak, English as a weapon can make my life more rich and full of variety.

After I read her diary, I asked her about what she meant when she wrote, "a good colour of charcoal" and she responded to me by e-mail.

Rie's e-mail, January 20th, 2007

Love (WIE)

The ink darkens in colour by the charcoal of calligraphy" (second translation: To do calligraphy, you must use charcoal to make the ink shine with a dark luster.) You want use the charcoal, and put enough effort into making the ink shine with a dark luster because this kind of ink produces a great work of art.

Like the other participants, Aya also expresses a change in her level of confidence, in her diary on January 22nd, 2007 and now realizes the "Japanese filter" that compels members of Japanese society to be polite, modest, perfect, and deferentially subserviant to the social hierarchy. Fighting with her mother, Aya is trying to be free from Japanese social taboos by engaging in the culturally-rebellious act of getting a tattoo.

“JAPAN, THE AMBIGUOUS, AND MYSELF”

Imagine this metaphor I just thought of: what if the two sides of a coin are the dichotomies in question? Dwelling in the in-between is actually being the coin itself, becoming the “inside” of both, assuming head and tail, constructing wholeness—a fascinating idea! (Sameshima, 2007, p. 69)

添え木して 折れた自信が 芽吹く春
A wounded flower
Braced by English confidence
Lives to bloom again

What Does it Mean for a Japanese Woman to Study English?

As I described for this research study, Rie, Yoko, and Aya, my participants, were the only women who volunteered. Because of this, it felt like we were fated to interact together. In Japanese we say 袖ふり合うも多生の縁 (sodefuriumo tashounoen, lit. touching sleeves connects people across many lives, trans. those with whom you share the experience of living within this life are those people with whom you will live again in your next life). Japanese people use this word 縁 (en) on many occasions and it does not exactly carry the same meaning that the word “fate” does in Western culture, which is often a representation of things you cannot escape. This 縁 (en) comes from the Buddhist notion of reincarnation and says that the connections you have in your old life will be reconnected in your new life.

I was shocked, hearing about Yoko’s mother’s situation, because it was extremely similar in so many ways to my own situation in Japan. Sontag (2003) remarks, “Shock can become familiar. Shock can wear off” (p. 82). Even though the shock of my experiences has in some way worn off, hearing about Yoko’s mother’s experiences caused me to revisit my past experiences that were frozen in the bottom of my heart, now melting quickly, inciting an emotional flood within me. I slipped back in time and suddenly I could remember events of my past as if they had occurred only yesterday and once again I felt the feeling of being stuck in quicksand in my situation as a woman in Japan. I found my compassion for Yoko’s mother’s situation didn’t fade after Yoko left my office that afternoon. I hope that compassion, unlike shock, becomes familiar without

wearing off. Rie reminded me of myself when I was struggling to complete my Master's degree, and Aya also reminded me of myself, struggling as an ESL student. From the first moment that I met these three beautiful girls, I sensed kindred spirits with which I could trust and share my thoughts with. The things that they say are ideas that I have wanted to say for a long time, and so I decided, with each of them individually, to gather at my house where we could sit down in a more comfortable atmosphere to share our experiences. They especially missed eating Japanese food and I was willing to share my Japanese style of cooking with them to give them a taste of home, abroad. In this context, Japanese food was our culture.

Just before concluding my research, I wrote the following e-mail as a reflection of the experiences I have shared with my participants, both as a part of my research and as a part of each other's personal and academic lives. This letter was in part inspired by Rie's acknowledgements in her Master's thesis where she referred to me as being like her second supervisor and her mother in Canada.

A Letter of Reflection to my Participants: May 23rd, 2007

バイカーは 夜明け疾走 女道
The perfumed biker
Blazing through the streets at dawn
The road untravelled

水滴は 大雨となり 涙川
A torrent of rain
From tears of a woman's strife
A river of hope

Before Rie returns to Japan, we gather once again to celebrate her successful completion of her Master's degree, to celebrate Aya's completion

of her ESL program and of Yoko's successful completion of another year in her political science degree.

I have been very privileged to be able to do this research with all of you, and I am particularly grateful for your trust in me, in telling your true-life stories in a frank and honest manner. I am honoured and I respect your voices. As Japanese people from the same place, I strive to write about our stories that are not often told. I had tremendous accessibility and permissibility as a researcher and I am fully aware that my position of power as an instructor at the same University you studied at was advantageous to my situation. I feel now, that I am not the same person that I was when I began this research.

In Japanese, we say, 一期一会 (ichigo ichie, trans: a once in a lifetime encounter). When I think about the vastness of the universe, I think that having encountered all of you, at the same time, in the same place, was certainly a miracle. When I started this research, I only knew you as Japanese women who were studying for your Master's in undergraduate and in ESL in the university. In the time we have spent together I have become very interested in your lives. After we gather, what you have said during our meetings echoes in my mind and I keep thinking about the questions you bring up. In fact, we have developed a close relationship, built on a multitude of interactions. These interactions have led me to reflect on my own past choices.

I am also scared to know myself in a deeper way, because my autobiography, which connects the personal to the cultural, will inevitably disclose the multiple layers of my consciousness. I thought that there might

be an emotional risk; that something unexpected might emerge from this study that would affect me greatly. Many of our interactions were not part of the research design . . . but these have liberated me in different ways.

When I attended The Japan Night in November, Rie and I performed a calligraphy demonstration together. When I was the chairman of the Japanese Speech Contest, Rie came to help me put on my Kimono to wear to the Japanese Embassy and I appreciate her generous assistance. When I was depressed with respect to the incidents surrounding my peers and textbook revisions, her lonely fight to try communicative methods in her Japanese classroom, heavily structured in the grammar translation method, also encouraged me to be true to my principles and to my own philosophy. To stand firm for a principle is never easy. I needed courage and strength in order to pursue my goal and I felt a sense of solidarity with Rie.

Yoko came to my advanced level Japanese class and I found out that some of my students were friends of Yoko and this helped me make another connection with my students because they were mostly students from other teacher's who had vastly different teaching philosophies. At first, I worried about this class, but it went very well and her support was a major boost for me. Through Yoko's interviews and diary, I now understand more about my own daughter's fear and injured feelings towards my marriage. I think that it scarred her mind and I regret that I did not have the courage to be free until late in my life.

In Japan, I felt that there was no exit and that I was trapped in my marriage. But of course, there was a choice and I did not realize it. I was not willing to see that the door was open and I was not willing to take

responsibility for myself. Yoko's father's story really overlaps with my story and my struggle in Japan so I don't believe that it is merely a personal one. I believe that all personal struggles are political problems that society creates in order to coerce us into supporting the social structure that is already in place. When we learn English, gender problems are an inevitable issue. I feel much solidarity with Yoko's mother.

In the case of Aya, her story of being "free from the gaze of others" was also my struggle. When I came to Canada, my "ideal me" and my reality did not match and I struggled with the gap between the two, frustrated that I could not get good marks, even though I made a lot of effort. I was somewhat perfectionistic, searching for the correct answer. Now, I know that there are many answers in life, but I still unconsciously seek out the correct answer, even in my PhD work. Thinking about my age, I have questioned whether or not this hard work is going to be worth it or not. There was a time when I considered quitting the PhD program. But, looking back, I learned so much and I feel a sense of solidarity with you. I am glad I have continued. Through your love to John, you have found yourself. Usually we try to find ourselves, excluding others, but I believe that we all depend on others and through the compassion to other selves, we find our own voices. We are connected with each other in a complicated, tangled way. We cannot be free from the gaze of others, but when we care about other people, through love and compassion, you might suddenly feel free. This is an ironical and paradoxical phenomenon. Life is not boring, because we have these "performative contradictions".

When I think of all of you during our meetings, the theme of being misunderstood was perhaps what came up the most. I found it to be a common and emotionally hurtful experience that we shared. Your insights and opinions were much more dynamic than my own thinking; in many ways you were made vulnerable and having come to understand you better, you often remind me of my own daughters.

My research is not to give a perfect answer to my questions, rather promote dialogue and invite compassion for the reader and myself. As I try to answer, “What does it mean for Japanese women to study English”? I am struck at the ways in which our identities become interwoven with and emerge from our second language. I hope that my research contributes to our understanding of our everyday experiences, experiences that are deeply contextual. Learning does not happen only in the classroom and we are historically, culturally, discursively, socially and politically constructed. I think that during the time we have spent together we have shared how our experiences here and at home in Japan have come to change our lives. When we study a second language, the world expands and we have opportunities to explore other thinking, rituals, foods, customs, and cultures. Our time together has reaffirmed for me that we do not exist isolated and alone, but with our friends and family, our coworkers and peers, and all of the people that touch our lives for even just a brief moment in time. We have experienced very different difficulties enacted with different people, in different ways, but at the same time, our struggles seem so similar. Relationships don’t really end, they evolve. There is a Japanese proverb that says, “女三人寄れば 姦しい” (onna sannin yoreba, kashimashii; lit: if

three women gather, it will be noisy; trans: women are useless chatter), but I believe that we can agree that women's voices are not useless chatter. There is also the saying 三人寄れば、文殊の知恵” (sannin yoreba, monju no chie; lit: if three people (men) gather, they find the wisdom of the Buddha) but it subtly excludes women. I prefer, “女三人寄れば、雨を降らせ 大河となる” (onna sannin yoreba, ame wo furase taiga to naru; lit: if three women gather, they cause the rain to fall, causing a great river to form). For this is within our power. Together we can begin to re-write the proverbs so that they include our experiences of living in different languages and cultures. At the very least, we should stop the Japanese practice of “女が女の足をひっぱる” (onna ga onna no ashi wo hipparu lit: women pulling on the legs of other women trans: women keeping other women from advancing and becoming prosperous).

I sent the above letter to my participants via e-mail on May 23rd, 2007, before we met for our fourth group conversation on May 26, 2007.

Fourth Group Conversation: May 26, 2007

Mika: What kind of effect did this research have on you?

Rie: I could see myself objectively. If I hadn't participated in this research, I think I would have felt more troubled and muddled. From the viewpoint of the third person, I was able to see myself and why it was that I couldn't adapt to Canadian society and its customs as it pertains to how to act, and how to be. I have been able to think more clearly as a result of attending these meetings, and learning about myself. I have been able to reorganize all of my thinking as a result of this research. With the sharing of food and discussions that have taken place during these meetings, I have been able to sort out my problems. Having talked with all of you, and having listened to all of you, and receiving feedback about things, I feel accepted, having my problems recognized; it has been a positive experience for me. By the way, this food is really good.

Aya: Before, I didn't think about learning English very much so I appreciate you giving me the chance to think about it. Can I have some more pickles? I feel as though I can understand my feelings in a deeper way than before. I don't want to talk about the painful things but by disclosing my problems in my writing I can release my

stress and understand more about the feelings I had at the time, even though now I feel differently. Writing really helps to reorganize my thinking after experiences in the classroom where I felt negative feelings; I felt as though I could analyze why I felt like that. For example I came to conclusions like, “I didn’t need to feel like that” or, “This is a trifling matter”.

Rie: I really agree with that. In order to think when we write, we must really think about what we are feeling.

Aya: Writing diaries really helped me but also I enjoyed the meetings because other people’s different opinions helped me reflect on other ways of thinking. I also recognized similar experiences when I listened to Yoko and Rie. I felt that I was not alone, and so I felt determined to do my best. I think I was a negative person before this research and now feel that I am a more positive person. Learning English is painful but as a result, I have become positive.

Rie: I think that my goal became much clearer than it was before. Before I came to Canada I had only a vague idea of my goal but by writing this diary, I came to understand my goal, my position in Japan, my future, my social construction, it all became so clear.

Yoko: By talking and listening with all of you, and keeping a diary my ability to self-analyze improved. I feel that I have become able to better organize my thinking as a result of all of this. In my case, without thinking about my identity, I was analyzing myself before I became involved in this research. Before, I would think about myself, separate from my identity, but since I have met you, I have tried to think about my identity and how it connects to Japan. I grew up in Japan, and so that’s why I am like I am. Before, I felt emotionally angry towards Japanese society. But now, I have a better idea of what Japanese society is and why it is structured the way it is. The stories about how both yourself and Rie, who are already working in society, endured bullying and still persevered really helped me to understand my social environment both in Japan and in Canada.

Rie: Through this research I have been able to understand my personality better. All of us are very brave for striving towards our goal despite the difficulties that there have been. However, the way I have pursued my goal is different from the way you have all pursued yours. Before I came to Canada I felt my personality was very negative and I cried while speaking with my family about it. However, now I think that I don’t need to change my personality to adapt to society but rather that I want to use my personality effectively by being flexible with others, observing others’ responses, and sometimes giving in to authority.

Yoko: After participating in this research I became proud of Japanese culture. I’m not sure if this is related to our conversation or not though—what do you think?

Aya: Perhaps.

Mika: What part of Japanese culture makes you proud?

Yoko: Japan has so many disgusting parts but it also has many wonderful parts like its culture and my identity has been cultivated in Japan so I am beginning to be proud of.

Aya: After I attended these meetings I became more attentive to the fact that I am Japanese. Many people say that Japanese people are not religious but I think that this is a wonderful aspect of our culture. When I talk about John’s mother, for

example, she is a Christian but she wants to judge everything from the perspective of Christianity and I don't like this attitude. When she tried to be kind to me I sensed that she was trying to be kind in accordance with her religion and I don't feel that it is actually her who is trying to be kind. In Japan though, there is no pervading religion per se and I think that people are more open-minded and when people try to be kind, I believe that it is really from the heart. From my point of view, no religion accepts ideas or thinking that are different from itself. So, that's why I appreciate that I was born in Japan.

Mika: I think Japan is more of a multi-religion country than a secular country.

Aya: I think that people who are living in Japan have a different way of looking at religion than people living in Canada.

Yoko: I think that Islam doesn't fit within Japanese culture so well because Japanese people pride themselves on being busy. Ken is a Christian but he is a very good Christian who accepts other religions in an open-minded way.

Rie: After I read your letter to me I felt recognized, accepted and that made me happy.

Aya: I thought that your insight with respect to my conflict was similar to what I was thinking about it as well. There was a gap between my ideal me and the real me and you managed to realize that.

Yoko: In your letter to us, I first read what you wrote to Rie in thanking her for all the things that she did for you and I realize that I wish I had done more for you. I thought that you wouldn't mention anything but you did find some very kind things to say about me, for example when I visited your classroom.

Mika: Also your mother's story overlaps mine in many places so I felt very close to her and what she went through.

Yoko: I suddenly remember the question asking about how I have changed since studying English in Canada. My way of perceiving my mother has changed tremendously because before I felt that my mother was a very special person but now I believe that she is a housewife that can't escape from her environment, Japan. Up until now, I have almost always taken her side and had the same perspective as her, thinking as she does. However, I have some different opinions than my mother has and if I were she, I would not have made some of the same decisions that she has made. Her decision to not become divorced now does not make sense to me.

Mika: Do you believe that becoming critical of oneself means becoming critical of the people around you?

Yoko: Yes, I think so. But, I might be forgetting the situation and how I might have been coerced to think in the same way as my mother because I am not in Japan right now.

Mika: Does this mean that you're undergoing personal growth? If you were in Japan you might not think about the situation as critically.

Yoko: But, I have a deep love and respect for my mother who can't see a way out of her situation. She can endure it because she believes that self-sacrifice is a beautiful virtue. My grandmother believes her destiny is to sacrifice herself for the sake of the family and she taught me that this was a beautiful way of living as a woman. However, I don't think that I need to follow her advice.

Rie: I especially remember the enka song, 涙堪えて編んでいます (namida koraete andemasu) that describes a woman's lingering affection for a man who says goodbye to her forever, while she sits there crying, knitting a sweater for him that he will never wear.

Sharing Japanese food, listening to each other's stories, we developed a sense of community and solidarity as a support group in which we could tell the stories of our lives. It is important for me to add that when I talk about the people who were willing to let me share their experiences during the course of my research, I refer to them as my participants. While other literature might make reference to "subjects", I feel that this term robs the individuals who have been willing to share their experiences with me of their humanity. During the course of this research I have come to empathize with, share stories with, give advice and more generally, become intertwined in the lives of these Japanese women, seeing myself in them from an insider/outsider perspective. In many ways I have come to see them as my daughters. Because of our dialogue, I wish to honour their humanity and respect their voices as much as possible and so I choose to call them my participants. My participants and I needed an audience with which we could lament, complain or find encouragement in, in order to find each of us to find our self and a voice for women. Through dialogic discourse and interaction, we searched for what it meant for a Japanese woman to study English in Canada. The sometimes painful and at other times joyful, inevitably painting the picture of an autoethnographic approach that possesses an inside/outside view of culture, in order to advance the cause of compassion for others.

From a theoretical perspective, I kept both a sociocultural and critical theorist lens close to mind re-posing power relations and ideology and situating them with my own experience of negotiating between Japanese and Canadian culture. Similar to Norton's research about immigrant students, my participants are also a minority group. While

Norton's research is largely about a students' motivation, my research is about each woman's ideological struggle from a personal and sociocultural point of view in an ethnographic spotlight. My participants were very uncomfortable when their ESL teachers spoke unflatteringly about Confucian philosophy and Asian culture especially while in the same breath speaking kindly about Western culture and philosophy. Although Canada is thought of as being very multicultural, and embracing a multicultural pedagogy, there is still evidence that suggests that often an assimilative pedagogy is employed by some hegemonic institutions as a means of promoting a method for success in Western academic culture that is precise, logical, and orderly. I think that because of the autoethnographic method I have employed, I am able to detail the thoughts and feelings of my participants and I think that this adds value to the research.

I sense the "me" from thirteen years in the past in this research; struggling to understand her social construction when I met these three young female students and subsequently invited them to participate in my research. Their struggles and pains are akin to mine and yet different. I relived shocking events in my life again and reflected upon myself. This is a research study over the course of more than one year and I realize now how learning, which lacks an emotional side that includes identity construction, ethnicity, cultural values, and social construction, is missing an important element. Human beings are complex creatures whose linguistic acts cannot be summed up simply by examining one's motivation. Language does not occur in a vacuum, but in infinitude of relations both minute and complex that help define our nature. My question regarding what it means for Japanese women to study English is answered from multiple perspectives via Ivanic's notion of autobiographical self. Four Japanese women wrote their story about why and how they came to study English in Canada. Ivanic's notion of the discursive self that includes the inseparability of language and discourse, invokes the

metaphorical self. Japanese metaphors, expressions, and ways of thinking that feature gender discrimination have helped construct their identities as they stand today. Ivanic's notion of the authorial self is constructed through both Japanese and Western ideology. Finally, through writing, we strove to find our emerging selves that possess hybrid characteristics of both cultures. In my own diary I see my many different voices positioning themselves in ideational, interpersonal, and textual manners. I see interpersonal positioning take place in many different ways in my writing. To my respected colleagues I find myself sometimes critical but I believe evenhanded. Towards my participants I find myself acting as mother, offering encouragement and compassion for their struggles as I have experienced their plights before and I sympathize with them. Towards my supervisor I often find myself desperately needing guidance and look to her for inspiration, assistance and strength. With respect to ideational positioning, my use of specialized vocabulary from the fields of curriculum studies, education, second language studies and so forth are seen throughout my writing and are obvious examples of my desire to be understood within the field of academia.

In the realm of textual positioning, my use of poetic discourse, haiku in Japanese and English are ways in which I express various emotions and experiences. I think of haiku in Japanese, and I think about whom these haiku are written for. At first I think that they are written for me, by me. They are expressions of my lived experience. However I then realize that my participants too are living their own experiences, which are similar to mine, so I find that they are for them as well. Reflecting upon this notion again, I find that we are but a small subset of all Japanese women that exist and that there are others like us who live like us and so my haiku are for all Japanese women who suffer, feel joy, and experience difference. In the same way, my English haiku are for all women who suffer in the English-speaking world. I believe that haiku is the voice that belongs to the woman

who is estranged from all culture, who finds herself in her own place, a hybrid space between worlds.

Bhabha (1996) stresses the notion of cultural translation; that each culture interprets signs differently. There is a need for more specific cultural translation; interpretation of cultural interaction as it occurs. In order to escape the colonialism that English imposes on non-English-speaking countries, aesthetic devices serve to bridge the gap between the colonized and the colonizers. In this study, three female participants and I have gained confidence because of our collective negotiation. As the chairman of the Japanese Speech Contest in Ottawa last year, students sent me e-mails detailing how the experience made them want to learn Japanese even more. At the same time, however, I experienced trying conflict and difference of opinion with other Japanese people who subscribe to more traditional and authoritative attitudes and voices. This seems a necessary process, because I, as an educator, have an important responsibility. Educators are not just facilitators; my role as an educator is to make students think about their world through the lens of language. In my research, my participants and I shared the same identity shift rather than a shift influenced by hierarchal teacher-student encouragement. My research is co-constructed with my participants and has involved therapeutic qualities in aim of catalytic validity for all involved.

In my case, English liberated me from old cultural values and norms, transforming me in a third place, in uncharted waters. I am becoming something of an entirely different person who has multiple voices, challenging, breaking, revaluing and relocating both Japanese and Western cultural expectations toward women. Rie also gained confidence and began to somewhat shed the socially inborn sense of guilt from her identity as she studied English in Canada. She was considered a 負け犬女 (makeinu onna, lit. a woman like a defeated dog) in Japan while her mother was eagerly waiting for Rie to marry; she

is becoming more confident, taking on life at her own pace. While initially Yoko was very concerned about her mother's situation but idolized her mother's sacrifice for her family, Yoko slowly gained confidence through socialization in Canada and began to see her mother as not being able to escape the patriarchal mechanisms in place in Japanese society. English helped her to create space away from her father's expectations of women. In the case of Aya, English helped her to find love, her husband and the "Japanese filter". She struggled a great deal in an effort to be perfect. Aya also gained confidence after she entered her undergraduate studies in September 2007 by earning high marks and praise for her work. While initially her goal was to be fluent in English like native speakers, she has come to change her goal in response to a change in attitude in which she sees value in both Canadian English as well as Japanese English. English has made a significant change in the life of at least a few Japanese women, remolding both their identities and ideologies beyond the scope of grammar, syntax and vocabulary.

How do Japanese metaphors relate to Japanese women's identity construction?

Born in Japan, raised in Japan, lived in Japan for 50 years, I am curious about my country. Many different scholars see Japan from different perspectives.

In 1968, Kawabata Yasunari delivered a lecture, upon receiving the first Nobel Prize in literature awarded to a Japanese person, called, "Japan, the Beautiful, and Myself". Kawabata revered many medieval Zen monks for their traditional expressions of Zen philosophy such as emptiness is fullness.

Kenzaburo Oe (1994), on the occasion of his winning a Nobel Prize in literature, criticized Kawabata in a lecture entitled, "Japan, the Ambiguous, and Myself". Oe questions Japanese tradition, which is so beautifully fantasized about. Oe says that

Kawabata closed off his mind to the real world by living in the fantastical world that is/was Japan.

What I call Japan's "ambiguity" in this lecture is a kind of chronic disease that has been prevalent throughout the modern age. Japan's economic prosperity is not free from it either, accompanied as it is by all kinds of potential dangers in terms of the structure of the world economy and environmental conservation. The "ambiguity" in this respect seems to be accelerating. (Oe, 1994, p. 121)

One of Oe's children was autistic and so I believe that having to face this helped him to face reality and avoid being caught up in fantasy as so many Japanese citizens do. Oe was also politically involved in activism against atomic weapons and in abolishing the Emperor as the symbolic leader of Japan.

Roland Barthes (1970) calls Japan "Empire of Signs". Barthes sees Japan as a decentric or non-logocentric society. Barthes says in "Empires of Signs" with regards to food in the chapter "Food Decentered",

... here everything is the ornament of another ornament: first of all because on the table, on the tray, food is never anything but a collection of fragments, none of which appears privileged by an order of ingestion; ... sukiyaki, an interminable dish to make, to consume and, one might say, to "converse," not by any technical difficulty but because it is in its nature to exhaust itself in the course of its cooking, and consequently to repeat itself- sukiyaki has nothing marked about it except its beginning (that tray painted with foodstuffs brought to the table); once "started," it no longer

has moments or distinctive sites: it becomes decentered, like an uninterrupted text. (Barthes, 1970, p. 22)

Asada Akira (1983) argues that Japan is an example of “infantile capitalism”. He says that Japan skipped from the traditional to the postmodern without having to pass through the modern. However, Asada says that because Japan is an example of “infantile capitalism”, especially when contrasted with European societies, that Japan is in fact entering a modern period.

From my experience, I have never felt that Japan has been a democratic country. In Japan, women’s rights are subjected to a lower status than that of men’s, Japan’s borders are still in effect closed because of Japan’s immigration policies, and unions are weak. Japan’s current state seems like a pseudo-postmodernism; Oe calls the notion of “tradition”, “a convenient modern invention, a nostalgic rhetorical flourish” (Oe, 1995, p. xii); and so without fantasizing about tradition, Japanese people need to see themselves as global citizens, and not as Japanese citizens, isolated in traditional rhetoric.

Whatever it is, I worry about the trend of many books being sold under the banner of “Japaneseness”, because I believe that this tendency includes a sense of Japanese racism, essentialist thinking that Japanese people are somehow superior. Many politicians use the names of Kawabata as well as Benedict (1989) to fantasize about Japan as being ambiguously beautiful and beautifully ambiguous. The whole notion of unique 日本人論 (nihonjinron, lit. Japaneseness), the invention of nationalist “tradition”, should be abolished in order to promote communication and interaction with the rest of the world, and to promote democracy within Japan. In my study I attempted to heed Kubota’s (1999) warning regarding “Japaneseness”. Without looking at the ambiguous notion of Japaneseness, I strove to examine discourse in a critical framework. Bhabha (1996)

mentions that we should focus on language; what he calls, “cultural translation” rather than the abstract notion of identity. Bhabha utters during the same discussion,

And Benjamin is wonderful in the essay on the language of man where he says something like: What the process of translation metaphorically taken does is it allows you to see transformation as a continue, as an ongoing process, not, he says, to rest with abstract notions of identity and abstract notions of similarity and abstract notions of difference. (Bhabha, 1996, p. 27)

Bhabha also states that the term “culture” comes to stand for conflict; that it is not so much a symbol of collective nationality, but that of difference in the site of conflict. He finishes this thought, “So my question is almost not, “What is culture?” but something like “When is culture?”” (p. 29). I experienced conflict as a student when I began to study English in Canada and so in this research I strove to see “when” similar or different conflicts happened upon other female Japanese students.

For me, Japan is a country that is full of discriminative words toward women. It is a graveyard of women, a “discursively multilayered” (Fu, 1995) society, “empire of signs” (Barthes, 1970) that embraces “infantile capitalism” (Asada, 1983), “the dubious” and “ambiguous” (Oe, 1995), patriarchal, and in the words of the title of Kawabata Yasunari’s 1968 Nobel Prize speech, “the beautiful”. When I look at Japanese language, I see so many discriminative metaphors toward women. In this research I devoted a chapter to the metaphorical self. I personally have a grudge of sorts toward three particular metaphors: 売れ残り (urenokori, lit. unsold merchandise, trans. a 25-year old or older, unmarried woman), which made my mother worry about my marital status before she died, 下戸に蔵は建たない (geko ni kura wa tatanai, lit. a non-drinker doesn’t build

warehouses, trans. you must drink alcohol if you want to succeed, trans. in order to be successful you must drink), an expression which Japanese men use to justify alcoholism and excessive drinking, and 長いものには巻かれろ (nagaimono niwa makarero, lit. be wrapped up by those in power, trans. give in to those in power) an expression which some Japanese use to justify a philosophy of blindly giving into authority. Rie made mention of 親父社会 (oyaji shakai, trans. a society favouring older men) because of her struggles with male colleagues, as well as the expression 負け犬女 (makeinu onna, lit. a woman like a defeated dog) as her mother was constantly coercing her towards marriage. Yoko might resent へそ曲がり (hesomagari, lit. a twisted bellybutton, trans. a weird person) an expression that her father often called her, as well as 悪妻 (akusai, lit. bad wife) which is what her father often referred to her mother as being. For Aya, the expression 切磋琢磨 (sessa takuma, trans. apply oneself closely to one's study) is not the problem, but the emerging philosophy that comes about as a result of subscribing to this expression does as it promotes an air of perfectionism and devotion to diligence that can be self-defeating. It is common for Japanese students to follow this philosophy often because of pressure from parents and/or peers.

The Third Space

Bhabha (1992) explains this place:

The epistemological distance between subject and object, inside and outside, that is part of the cultural binarism that emerges from relativism is now replaced by a social process of enunciation. If the former focuses on function and intention, the latter focuses on signification and institutionalization. If the epistemological tends toward a "representation" of its referent, prior to performativity, the enunciative attempts repeatedly

to “reinscribe” and relocate that claim to cultural and anthropological priority (High/Low; Ours/Theirs) in the act of revising and hybridizing the settled, sententious hierarchies, the locale and locutions of the cultural. If the former is always locked into the hermeneutic circle, in the description of cultural elements as they tend towards a totality, the latter is a more dialogic process that attempts to track the processes of displacement and realignment that are already at work, constructing something different and hybrid from the encounter: a third space that does not simply revise or invert the dualities, but revalues the ideological bases of division and difference. (Bhabha, 1992, p. 58)

Thus, every culture seems in a process of hybridity and in a process of identification (Bhabha, 1990, p. 211). Not only personally, but as an educator as well, this place has many possibilities. Because of my experiences, I have been able to make small changes such as what textbook will be used in classes where I teach. Authority that is tied up in Japanese social and economic power as well as tests that reflect an “only one correct answer” attitude represents institutionalization.

In rethinking the matter of second language learning, I believe that I require a shift away from seeing language as unitary; as being about grammar, vocabulary, sentences and syntax, a fixed category that students must master mechanically and technically. Instead I want to see the classroom as a diverse set of discursive arenas that play a crucial role in developing a students’ interest and investment, as well as students’ identity construction. Through language learning, the classroom will become an intellectual place in which to consider one’s culture, others’ culture and recognizing the power structure that organizes the world while promoting compassion towards others. As a second

language teacher, I attempt to assess and develop my students' listening, writing, reading and speaking skills in order to promote communicative competence, while motivating and stimulating intellectual curiosity, acknowledging cultural backgrounds and shifting identities, a perpetual state of "laboured breathing" (Low & Palulis, 2004) in the classroom. This process is dynamic, generative, transformative, complex, and even contradictory and I have come to see "teaching as a messy text" (Low & Palulis, 2000). Through my past experience as a second language learner and from my participants of this research, I have found the power to dwell in my third space, with a desire to be compassionate, resisting and reflecting the fixed notion of traditional teaching that is extremely focused on the linguistic aspects of language.

Bhabha (2005) makes remarks about insightful words spoken by Edward Said:

He recommends the study of refugee societies in order to unsettle the paradigmatic stability of cultural institutions that underpin the traditional assumptions of the social sciences; and he resists the "separate essentialization" of national or cultural ideal –types—the Jew, the Indian, the French—because such "universals" represent the imperial legacy "by which a dominant culture eliminated the impurities and hybrids that the humanistic fold for having performed a transformative act of postcolonial magic by "introduc[ing] a particular kind of hybrid experience into English." And Said admires Garcia Marquez and Rushdie for their interest in issues of exile, immigration, and the crossing of boundaries and considers the "whole notion of a hybrid text" as practiced by them to be "one of the major contribution of late-twentieth-century culture. (Bhabha, 2005, p. 12)

I, myself, am not, “the Japanese”, but I embrace the “whole notion of a hybrid text”. Julia Kristeva (1989) questions, “How was it possible to conceive of language?” (p. 5). Through the course of research and writing, I have felt as though I have been written by language.

Writing is, finally, a series of permissions you give yourself to be expressive in certain ways. To invent. To leap. To fly. To fall. To find your own characteristic way of narrating and insisting; that is, to find your own inner freedom. (Sontag, 2001, p. 264)

During my research, I have been amazed to find to what extent I am discursively constructed, and to find out what effect my metaphors have on my thinking. By writing, I have been able to give myself permission; permission to not give in to the demands of my peers and permission to face the mistakes that I have made through the course of my life. I might even say that the Japanese language forced me into a cage of ambiguity and this caused it to be very difficult to escape from my experiences, because all of the ideological values are attached together and to break even one aspect of ambiguity would seem to cause a chain reaction, disrupting my identity that relies on the interconnected nature of all of the characteristics that are related to ambiguity and myself. I write, because I want to know about these ideological changes that are happening inside of me unconsciously in this moment.

By writing I put order in the world, give it a handle so I can grasp it. I write because life does not appease my appetites and hunger. I write to record what others erase when I speak, to rewrite the stories others have miswritten about me, about you. To become more intimate with myself

and you. To discover myself, to preserve myself, to make myself, to achieve self-autonomy. (Anzaldúa, 1983, p. 169)

By writing, I face the ambiguous Japanese Mika who still cannot express her thoughts clearly in Western academic discourse. By writing I realized that Japanese metaphors are a part of my social identity.

If we examine closely, unconsciously subscribed conceptual metaphors, we have multiple realities, implying the importance of individual differences and lived experiences in curriculum. Uncovering my metaphors both Japanese and English illustrated my worldview in my in-between space. Butler (1992) and Bhabha (1992) stress that metaphor, as the articulation of language, is central to contemporary cultural theorists:

To deconstruct the concept of matter or that of bodies is not to negate or refuse either them. To deconstruct these terms means, rather, to continue to use them, to repeat them, to repeat them subversively and to displace them from the contexts in which they have been deployed as instruments of oppressive power. (Butler, 1992, p. 17)

Therefore, I tried to write about Japanese metaphors as being “instruments of oppressive power”. At the same time, while one can see that English has given my participants and me a certain amount confidence over the course of this research, English also carries with it Western ideology and “colonial policy” (Pennycook, 1998, p. 20).

Trinh T. Minh-ha (2005) wonders about the ability of older Japanese people to master English:

It is not surprising, with this in mind, to see why many people in Japan seem to try very hard to learn English and yet rarely master it. Conscious

or unconscious, there is a kind of resistance to this mobile language of commercial exchange and of capitalism, whose power is represented by the U.S...And the reason for that, they said, is historical: language is shared, collective memory, and they can't forget what the States had done to Japan. For the younger generations, however, English represents a certain freedom, a license to break from the bounds of norms and conventions. (Trinh, 2005, p. 121)

As a member of that older generation, I would like to disclose that I hated studying English, thinking of it as being the language of the enemy until I saw Casablanca and Humphrey Bogart when I was in high school. I thought that the atomic bomb that killed people in Hiroshima and Nagasaki in a very cruel way was unforgivable. The U.S. forgave Japan's incident at Pearl Harbor and Japan forgave the incidents regarding the dropping of the atomic bombs and we became friends, but it was only a political strategy and this is not truly "forgiveness".

Derrida (2001) describes "forgiveness" as "unconditional but without sovereignty" (p. 59). The idea of unconditional forgiveness is difficult for everyone to imagine, but unlike before, I now don't consider any particular group of people to be my enemy, so I have no objection to opening my mind and my heart to other languages, inviting them to become a part of my voice. Whenever I forgive, there is always an element of judgment in my choice to forgive, overlooking the transgression of the other.

Zen philosophy embraces a non-judgmental emptiness that donates the gift of selflessness to others. The following story about a Zen master may serve to illustrate my point.

A Cup of Tea

Nan-in, a Japanese master during the Meiji era (1868 – 1912), received a university professor who came to inquire about Zen. Nan-in served tea. He poured his visitor's cup full, and kept on pouring. The professor watched the overflow until he could no longer restrain himself, "It is overfull. No more will go in!" "Like this cup," Nan-in said, "you are full of your own opinions and speculations. How can I show you Zen unless you first empty your cup." (<http://www.101zenstories.com/index.php?story=1>, retrieved September 15th, 2007)

This is a very popular Zen riddle in Japan, so when I was a child, whenever we spilled tea, we would joke with our parents by saying that had too much knowledge in ourselves and that is why we have spilled our tea. It is difficult for human beings to escape the notion of judgment; I believe that even for Zen masters, it is not a matter of escaping judgment, but of being vigilantly mindful of it. If we never forgive each other then tension and conflict will continue to rise. From a postmodern stance, truth is situational, contextual and temporal and so is judgment. We must find away to discard judgment and find a hybrid space where newness is created.

In this study, I tried to be open-minded and honest to my narrative, discarding/holding my judgments as best I could. However, while there is no absolute truth from a postmodern perspective, there might be an element of the fictional. "Being truthful to oneself and to one's making is, as said in another statement of the film, "being in the in-between of all definitions of truth" (Trinh, 1992, p.186). These comments evoke within me, a desire to be in a site of compassion, a rationale of my autoethnography and haiku, and the questioning of "all definitions of truth", in the interest of being critical of

my own judgment, even though this thesis is laced with my fragments of my own temporal judgment.

Future Research Direction

Sameshima (2007) introduces this liberating notion:

Imagine this metaphor I just thought of: what if the two sides of a coin are the dichotomies in question? Dwelling in the in-between is actually being the coin itself, becoming the “inside” of both, assuming head and tail, constructing wholeness—a fascinating idea! (p. 69)

My future research will try to include this notion of living at the center of a planar surface that stretches off to infinity in all directions, of dwelling in a hybrid space which both acknowledges and tries to continue to understand the complexity of living pedagogy. The notion of existing at the center of this planar surface depends on one’s perspective. To each person, the center point between infinities depends on experience, one’s ways of thinking and one’s specific context; a perception as complex as the living pedagogy that Aoki (1993) describes.

Noel Gough (2004) recommends Ursula Le Guin’s science fiction piece, “The Telling” as a powerful form of art that can give insight to educators to help foster peace in the world. Gough goes on to mention: “ ‘The Telling’ provides us with empirical evidence of the possibility of thinking what to many humans is unthinkable, such as imagining a world without ‘foreigners’ ” (p. 172).

I believe Gough’s (1998) suggestion of expanding educational research into the field of fiction, such as novels and science fiction is a very provocative and innovative idea; science fiction and novels as a tool for fathomable/unfathomable possibilities as

both self-“reflection and diffraction” (p. 94) of self. So while for me, the collection of haiku I have written is a self-reflection, for those who read my haiku, it may be a piece of self-diffraction; a conveyance of self. In fact, I believe that we can extend Gough’s idea to include other works such as music, paintings, and photography. Changing the educational world might come about from different forms of art consisting of non-judgmental imagination, from an in-between/hybrid/third space and from critical self-reflective research that acknowledges the suffering of others. “Imagining a world without foreigners” is not easy, because reality is full of tensions of binary thinking, we have no choice but to reside as Sameshima (2007) says, within the coin, between oppositions such as ambiguity/clarity, objectivity/subjectivity, body/mind, man/woman, direct/indirect, East/West. As we are forced to live between differences, I cannot help but remember this existential declaration made by de Beauvoir (1968), “since the individual is defined only by his relationship to the world” (p. 156); and we certainly are.

APPENDIX A

Discursive Genre and Presentation Style

Interview

Interviews are written in a dialogic style, single-spaced, in Times New Roman (12 pt) font with a hanging left margin indentation of 1 centimeter.

Example:

Yoko: Yes. I feel safer and mentally stable feeling that I have some place to return to. We call everyday and my sex life is so much better than before. He tries to satisfy me and he wants to enjoy it together. Before him, the boys that I was with were very self-centered to satisfy their own needs. But, Ken wants us to both enjoy things equally. I am entering a new stage of an exciting sex life.

Group Conversations

Conversations are written in a dialogic style, single-spaced, in Times New Roman (12 pt) font with a hanging left margin indentation of 1 centimeter.

Example:

Yoko: Why are Japanese men so cold?

Rie: They might be kind but they might be very frustrated with things like the ranking of the school they are working at and so it ends up that they take out their frustration on the weakest people there, which usually ends up some new young female teacher.

Yoko: Japanese men are childish. 50 to 65-year old men are the worst. Don't you think so? They (マザコン) are spoiled by society, their parents and don't suffer as much as women.

Diary

Diary entries are written single-spaced in Times New Roman (12 pt) font.

Example:

Aya's diary, March 11th, 2006

This second language proficiency test is the worst! I'm giving the finger to the test!!(WIE) The topic (WIE) was cities. My goal (WIE) this time was to get 50% overall but I couldn't get even 40%. My essay was terrible. My writing was really bad and I don't think it makes sense at all (WIE). This summer I want to take the 1300 course for credit. But I no way, I suck. Why am I so bad at writing? This is perhaps not because of English

but perhaps because of my lack of ability in Japanese. Even though I have improved my English a lot, It has been impossible for me to get a good score on the second language proficiency test. I don't like myself; I'm irritated with myself. To take ESL 1300 means that I will be able to be a regular student next September. This also means I will graduate when I am 25-years old. My parents pay for my education so I don't want to go that long. Tomorrow I have a speaking class but I'm not enthusiastic about it. I hate this second language proficiency test!!!

E-mail

E-mail is double-spaced and written in Arial (12 pt) font.

Example:

What is the definition of femininity?

"I don't think that it has a negative connotation. Both inwardly and outwardly, a woman should know how to wear clothes, how to act, how to behave and walk; it all needs to be feminine. I think that smart women should use their gender effectively. My image of femininity is elegant, peaceful, harmonious and quiet. On the outside she should appear harmonious, but on the inside she should know how to deal with men and be able to seize power from them without causing a fuss."

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