Introduction - Japan as Potential: Communicating across Boundaries for a Global International Relations

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Japan as Potential. Communicating across Boundaries for a Global International Relations. An Introduction

Felix Rösch and Atsuko Watanabe

Introduction: Reframing Dialogue

After decades of essentializing international politics, in which International Relations (IR) has extrapolated the particular historical experiences of a relatively small part of the world commonly identified as the "West", 'the academy's most overtly "international" discipline is finally going "global"', as Julian Go and George Lawson (2017: 2) recently noted. By going global, IR gradually moves from seeking seeming communalities through universally applying spatio-temporally conditioned concepts like the state or anarchy and opens itself up to 'the study of differences' (Inayatullah and Blaney 2004: 17), investigating how to communicate across boundaries (cf. Agathangelou and Ling 2004; Valbjørn 2008; Acharya 2011; Tickner and Blaney 2012; Blaney and Tickner 2017).

While contributions to this endeavor are coming from a range of perspectives, most notably but not exclusively feminism, postcolonialism, historical sociology, comparative political theory, and global intellectual history, all are driven by similar ambitions to establish a 'global dialogue' (Bleiker 2004: 135; also Dallmayr 2001, 2004; Acharya 2011). With this ambition, IR has been able to excavate and challenge its disciplinary origins in colonial administration, highlighting that many of its debates, interests, and concepts are rooted in a specific spatio-temporal conditioned ("Western") perspective (cf. Hobson 2004, 2012; Hoeber Rudolph 2005; Behr and Rösch 2010; Shilliam 2010; Ashworth 2014; Anievas and Matin 2016; Go and Lawson 2017). They demonstrated that IR suffered from an '"imperial gaze" that theorized non-Western populations through racialized lenses that essentialized and homogenized those populations while occluding alternative perspectives' (Go 2016: 4) to the effect that 'any theoretical comprehension of the "international" as a thick space of interconnection and co-constitutive societal differentiation' (Anievas and Matin 2016: 1) has been missing until recently.

Modern Japanese Political Thought and International Relations makes a contribution to this growing literature on differences in IR by taking a Japanese lens in aspiring to 'unlearn' (Rösch 2017; Bilgin and Ling 2017) this imperial gaze. In this respect, one might wonder how studying the thought of one particular state – seemingly, an obsolete political community in a globalized world – might be helpful. Yet, our aspiration is not to rehabilitate Japanese political thought (March 2009: 542) by providing its comprehensive history ever since this country was catapulted into Western modernity with the arrival of Commodore Perry's black ships (*kurofune*) into Edo Bay in 1853. Others have done this before comprehensively (cf. Wakabayashi 1998; Oguma 2002; Calichman 2005; Piovesana 2013). Rather, by considering Japan's interconnectedness with the wider Asia-Pacific and the world (Iacobelli, Leary, and Takahashi 2016), making it a knowledge exchange 'hub' (Yamamuro 2001), we understand Japan as a 'potential' (Mae 2007: 297), exploring the way political thought dealt with the manifold encounters of differences, trying to reconcile its emotional and intellectual commitments.

As such, provocatively put, this book aims to decolonize the idea of a dialogue itself, as this idea is 'culturally rooted in the European intellectual tradition' (Shogimen 2016: 325) and nearly absent in non-Western discourses, as evidenced in Japan. Aiming to going global, therefore, might paradoxically run the risk of reiterating rather than dissolving the imperial gaze of IR by falling back to a hegemonically imposed monologue, of which Fred Dallmayr (2001, 2004) has warned. To avoid this risk, in agreement with Naoki Sakai (1997, 2007), we do not aim to demonstrate an alternative way of conceiving dialogue, but a way of reframing it in which the purpose of communication is not located in the search for commonality as the fundament for dialogue, but in the opportunity to realize the particularity of the self by exposing it to the other. Hence, the dialogue we want to investigate is the product of difference. As Erich Auerbach (1969: 2) put it for the case of *Weltliteratur* (world literature), communicating globally and therefore beyond boundaries 'does not merely refer to what is generically common and human; rather it considers humanity to be the product of fruitful intercourse between its members [*wechselseitige Befruchtung des Mannigfaltigen*]. The presupposition of *Weltliteratur* is a *felix culpa*: mankind's division into many cultures.' Our interest is therefore 'excess', the 'singularity that is incommensurate with the Same [that] has to be eliminated' (Sakai 1997: 71) in a European style dialogue. Each contribution to this volume then shows "different pathways" to understand difference as excess.

At first sight, Japan seems ill-fitted for this endeavor because its modern history apparently solidifies the conventional format of dialogue. Not only was Japan the first follower of the West in the non-Western world, but having aimed to surpass its dependence from the West by building its own empire, Japan was eventually defeated by the West in World War II. However, although we do not intend to averse this view, we argue that by focusing on Japan's own transformation throughout modernity, the above mentioned way to understand dialogue crystallizes. The work of Japanese scholars like Masao Maruyama[1] (1976) has been driven by an ambition to go beyond what appears universal and ubiquitous to highlight the particularities of humanity (Watanabe 2017). Maruyama (1997) stated that theories and worldviews as the first layer of political thought are buttressed by the second layer of imagination of the world to further our everyday (Yonehara 2007; Rösch and Watanabe 2017). In order to be appropriated, foreign ideas have to be supported by both. It follows that the apparent hegemonic worldview can be buttressed by different *everydays* (Maruyama 1964; Havel 2009), which contest this hegemonic view because trivial differences or 'nonidentities' (Marcon 2016:111), emerging in thought processes in which all of us engage, facilitate dialogue in practice, rather than processes of abstraction as argued for in conventional understandings of dialogue.

By studying the (re)shaping of these particularities (Shogimen 2016: 343) in Japan in the light of constant encounters of differences and their evolvement through 'localization' (Acharya 2016: 4), exportation, and re-importation, we look for a way of communication whose 'borders are made permeable not by means of prior intellectual or ethnic background, but by means of very hard work', as Leigh Jenco (2007: 752-3; similar Sakai 2007: 189-90) writes. Understanding communication as the sustainment of particularities rather than a dialogue in the conventional sense enables IR scholars to reimagine the global and argue for a 'universal particularism' that Christopher Goto-Jones (2005: 94-6) identified in the work of Kyoto School members. Better paraphrased as 'universal singularity' to more precisely capture Kitaro Nishida's (1982) emphasis on *kobutsu (das Einzelne)*, Rosa Vasilaki (2012: 20-1; also Ikeda 2011) further maintained that 'the "universal" is not fixed or timeless, but an open-ended project to be built according to the given historical circumstances by all those who share a commitment to the subversion of relations of domination within and beyond IR.'

It is for this reason – the aim to decolonize the idea of dialogue, while not renouncing the prospects of a global discipline – that we adopt Amitav Achariya's (2014; 2016) recently coined term of a

'Global IR'. It is not without reservations that we employ this term, as further expounded below, but, having been popularized in the 2015 ISA Annual Convention, presided by Pinar Bilgin and L. H. M. Ling, this term does not only allow to subsume the efforts of various IR scholars, but it also allows, if carefully defined, to stress the particularities of international political thought without falling into the trap of essentializing it again or sustaining an imperial gaze.

Seeing Japan in this way as a potential to contribute towards a Global IR, the contributions to this volume engage with modern Japanese political thought through the lenses of international law, colonialism, localization of (Western) concepts, and popular culture. To provide their context, this introduction has to answer three questions that the subtitle of this edited volume evokes. First, what do we mean by focusing on encounters of difference since the nineteenth century? Second, what do we mean by Global IR? Finally, what do we mean by speaking of Japan and Japanese political thought? In other words, how do we imagine Japan (Bellah 2003)?

When and Where was the Nineteenth Century for Japan?

To answer these questions, posed by Jürgen Osterhammel (2014: vii) in his *The Transformation of the World*, we could have simply taken the relatively arbitrary distinction of the Gregorian calendar (1800-1900) or settled for Eric Hobsbawm's (1987: 8) 'long nineteenth century', lasting from 1789 to 1914. However, although these latter dates had implications on a global scale, they still gaze at the world from a Eurocentric perspective. The same goes for the Gregorian calendar, which did not became commonly accepted even in Europe until the eighteenth century and outside of Europe until the nineteenth century, despite having been developed in 1582. China only adopted it in 1949 and, although Japan introduced it already in 1873, it still runs its own periodization system based on imperial rule since the seventh century. Hence, at the time of the publication of this book, Japan is in Heisei 30, the year before the current Tenno will abdicate.

To reflect these spatio-temporal issues of classification, we engage with Osterhammel's questions by conceiving of the nineteenth century in consideration of Barry Buzan and Lawson's (2015) *The Global Transformation*. In this work, the authors showed that the socio-political and economic changes were so profound that they affect international politics still today. During this time, Europe overcame its 'derivative late development' (Hobson 2004: 190) and strengthened its global domination. However, this does not mean that Europe undertook independently these processes of modernization or that it was the only area of the world experiencing transformations, rather it

depended upon the continuous, often violent exchange of knowledge, goods, and people with the rest of the world. It is for this reason that the modernity that we locate in the nineteenth century has to be understood as a 'condition' that is 'improvisational', 'blended', 'conjunctural' (Gluck 2011: 683, 685), and 'co-eval' (Bonnett 2004: 61).

If we apply this understanding to Japan, the beginning of modernity ("Westernization") for Japan is not as straightforward as it seems. Commonly located in the arrival of the black ships and the Meiji Restoration, as Japan was relatively closed off during the Tokugawa Shogunate from the Western sphere of influence due to its *sakoku* policy (since 1633-1639), restricting foreign access to a few places like Dejima (an artificial island in the harbor of Nagasaki), recent contributions assert that *sakoku* was largely a myth, jointly excogitated by Japan and the West. Indeed, this kind of policy was common in East Asia and, therefore, is better understood as a way international relations worked in the region (Arano 1988; 2012; Mitani 203; Ōshima 2009). Due to this revision, the term *sakoku* is even to disappear from Japanese elementary school and junior high school textbooks (*Mainichi Shimbun* 2017).

Still, Maruyama (1967: 117) argued that Japan was 'suddenly confronted with the "international society" … forcing [Japan] to build a *"national identity"* (*Wir-Sein*), separating itself from the world, and in doing so, adapt to the international political order.' This awareness led to concerted knowledge seeking efforts by sending several missions abroad between 1860 to 1873 (Reinhard 2016: 844), with the Iwakura Mission being the most famous, and the later establishment of more permanent legations (Cobbing 2017) as well as concerted efforts of translating socio-political and legal concepts into Japanese (Howland 2002). However, if the aforementioned revision reflects Japan's "Westernization" in a more nuanced way, the Meiji Restoration must be understood in terms not only of a break, but also of continuity. This means that, already attaining the condition of its own modernity, Japan in the late nineteenth century was exposed to another modernity. In this respect, Tōkoku Kitamura (1893) was right to argue that the Meiji Restoration was 'not a revolution but a transition'. Its national identity was not newly developed but renewed, having the international political order transited from one to another. Japan did not remember this history to date because 'the past does not enable us to recall the excess' and not because we 'romanticize' the past (Kobayashi 1961: 76). However, the excess is returning, letting us imagine Japan differently.

Enlightenment scholars like Amane Nishi (Havens 1970) and Yukichi Fukuzawa (2009) did not merely translate Western concepts but forged them through transition. In fact, many important concepts like diplomacy, society, territory, philosophy, and love were absent in Japanese vocabularies. This does not mean that they were created out of nothing. Throughout the creative struggle over knowledge, these concepts evolved in manifold, unsynthesizable parallels (Rösch and Watanabe 2017) between Japan, East Asia, and the West, containing multiple pasts. The process led to unique contributions to political thought, as for example highlighted by Ryoko Nakano (2013) for the world political imaginary of Tadao Yanaihara (also Aydin 2007).

The nineteenth century in this context did not end for Japan with the outbreak of World War I, but still continues today. Although Japan seemingly quickly adapted European socio-political and cultural conventions, as reified in the Rokumeikan, it found itself in a conundrum, as Japan was still not accepted into the Western dominated international society, being perceived as 'abnormal' (Hagström 2015: 122) and even as a "freak" (Hopf 2017: 17; also Hook et al. 2005; Suzuki 2009). Partly as a consequence to this rejection, Japanese intellectuals discussed possibilities of 'overcoming modernity' (Calichman 2008), i.e. diverging from Western standards of development, and adopting imperialist policies, leading amongst others to the Russo-Japanese War (1904-1905) and the Treaty of Shimonoseki (1895); the latter ending the First Sino-Japanese War and effectively rendering Taiwan into a Japanese colony. It also caused the Mukden Incident (1931), marking the Japanese invasion of Manchuria, which the Japanese government insisted that had happened out of self-defense.

As Eri Hotta (2007: 2-6) explained, how to call this war, officially termed *Daitoa Senso* (Greater East Asian War) during the war and now termed "the previous war" by the Japanese government, is still politically a contentious issue in Japan. There is reason to suggest to call it a Fifteen-Years War (Weber 2012: 148) to denote its prolonged temporal aspect or the Asia-Pacific War to highlight its geographical space (*Verortung*). While we do not settle for a specific term, a way to understand this confusion is as part of the struggle over globalization of knowledge and its changing subjectivity throughout not only of a 'hinge period' (Osterhammel 2014: 918) that would cover the 1920s and 1930s, but of a 'constitutive experimental phase' (Kunkel and Meyer 2012: 9) that started in the 1850s and continued beyond the end of the war (Hotta 2007: 104). Indeed, in Japan, this has been called 'the issue of historical perspectives (*shikan mondai*)', in which not only historical questions of racism, colonialism, capitalism, and Marxism are seen (Ueyama 1964), but

also the validity of a geographical divides like the ones between East and West, Asia and Europe are questioned. In this context, all monikers reflect partial (institutionalized) fact as well as fiction to support the fact (Maruyama 1964: 487), framing what is the Japanese self and that of the other, and consequently what Japan is, differs. During this long nineteenth century, Japan has experienced a series of perceptional breaks in this respect, taking place in accordance with wider ideological transformations globally. Then, one might argue that the ongoing revisionist move is finally marking the end of Japan's long nineteenth century.

Reconfiguring Global IR

With Global IR, Acharya (2016: 4) aims to transcend the Western dominance of the discipline and 'embrace greater diversity'. While this aim is indisputable, approaches as to how to reach this goal are contested, as Bilgin (2016) rightfully stresses by asking 'how to do Global IR?'. In a series of essays, Acharya proposed to search for concepts beyond the Western canon, initially calling them 'local produce' (Acharya and Buzan 2007: 296) and apply them on a wider scale to add different perspectives to enhance our understanding about international politics. In his ISA presidential address, for example, Acharya (2014: 650), urged 'to develop concepts and approaches from non-Western contexts *on their own terms* and to apply them not only locally, but also to other contexts' (similar 2016: 14).

However, merely adding voices to the Western nomenclature may not constitute a Global IR (Liu and Vaughan-Williams 2014: 3). Rather, as Ching-Chang Chen (2011: 4) maintains, this approach may reproduce 'the logic of colonial modernity rather than disrupting it' because much of what is produced in terms of international political thought in East Asia operates with frameworks delineated from Western scholarship (also Go 2016: 6). By merely following 'historicist trajectories laid down by the West' (Chen 2011: 16), the danger of creating particularistic national schools rather than a Global IR (Buzan 2016) exists, as recent attempts to forge a Chinese IR highlight (Kristensen 2016). Differently put, the historicist attitude that is evoked here would be a mimicry of Western understandings (Sakai 1997). Thus, trying to "catch up" does not allow to transcend IR's imperial gaze, and the binary between the West and non-West would not be overcome, but essentialized. Operating with the assumption that both have had distinctive, separate historic trajectories, Western scholarship would be able to maintain its hegemonic grip over scholarship produced elsewhere (Shani 2008; Chen 2011; Lin and Vaughan-Williams 2014).

If adding non-Western voices is not enough, how (if at all) is a Global IR possible? To approximate this question, we consider Go's (2016: 2) recent intervention to turn "south" 'by attending the concerns, categories, experiences and practices of subaltern subjects at the bottom of global hierarchies.' While at first glance Japan does not seem to easily fit this category, it provides in its long nineteenth century such a standpoint, or rather, standpoints, as contributions to this volume highlight. Go proceeds to connect this standpoint with what he terms a perspectival realism. Similar to epistemological stances taken by classical realists (cf. Molloy 2006; Rösch 2016; Behr and Williams 2017), Go's realism treats knowledge as perspectivist, meaning that its validity is not absolute, but rests on spatio-temporal relations that establish convergence through expressing their antagonisms. This implies that knowledge can only be partial, allowing for the possibility of multiple truths (Go 2016: 6-7).

Approaching Global IR through a southern standpoint with a realist lens enables us to perceive "global" not as an ontological category, but as an encompassing one 'that mark[s] out spatial and analytical *scales* of social interaction (Go and Lawson 2017: 4). In this way, global resonates with place in Nishida's sense, as 'it cannot be objectified, for it were, it would simply be another "being" and not the "place" of being' (Arisaka 1997: 552; also Watanabe 2017). However, Go's terminology ("the south") also creates limitations. As discussed, Japan's changing perspectives calls into question the validity of geographical divides in world politics (Ó Tuathail 1996). Or it is the adjective "geographical" per se that restricts perspectival realism, as it limits historical aspects which can ultimately lead to geographical determinism. The Japanese debate of historical perspectives adumbrates that even in a geographical community, there is no sole perspective but only perspectives. Thus, space and time must be considered as space-time (Harvey 2006). In order to get a more comprehensive picture about the complexity of world politics, we should contextualize the relations through which knowledge has been exchanged with a careful assessment of the power relations enshrined in these knowledge exchanges. This procedure has to avoid the perpetuation of a hegemonic standpoint, be they Western, Japanese, a 'unique "Yamato soul"' (Dower 2012: 49), or even southern, as there is no 'global standpoint' (Shogimen 2016: 327). Then, how can we conceive of the diverse (and changing) perspectives of Global IR simultaneously without losing spatiality and still not falling into a geopolitical trap?

Japan as Potential

In our investigation, Japan is reconceived as a space of manifold social relations, in which people engage to give meaning to their life-worlds through a specific intellectual style. People in different contexts see different conditions in this space. Though the people living in this space are never the same, the geographical confinement in which people experience their everyday gives them a common denominator. For this investigation, we go beyond IR as a discipline. Indeed, the academic division is misleading for nineteenth century Japan, as academic disciplines in the Western sense were only introduced after the Meiji Restoration (Arisaka 1997: 543) and even works of scholars like Nishi or Fukuzawa cannot be simply classified as philosophical, sociological, or political. Rather, they were polymaths, accompanying Japan's Westernization as translators, educators, journalists, political thinkers, and public officials. Although we use the term Japanese political thought, we agree with Goto-Jones (2005: 3; also Jones 2003) that 'political philosophy [in Japan] was a richly textured landscape … [that] contained a wide variety of distinct political concepts, each of which was contested within a healthy and lively discourse … [that relied] on a combination of both Asian intellectual traditions *and* European philosophical conventions.' It is posited as an experimental field of global knowledge interaction, or a heuristic device, in which people (not just "Japanese") staying in the community deliberately studied foreign knowledge, sustaining each singularity. It is not just a structured dialogue, but various unexpected encounters in which people were learning and teaching at the same time. As we have demonstrated elsewhere (Rösch 2014; Rösch and Watanabe 2017), such encounters often accommodate misunderstandings, because they are integral to learning. The encounters we examine are therefore singular events blending and overlapping with other singularities in this unique space called modern Japan, which is imagined differently by each of them at each space-time intersection.

This space is evocative because encounters revolving in it contain a lot of excess. While people were ardent followers of the West, they still have kept their singularities. Because Japan has not been colonized, people voluntarily interpreted foreign knowledge in this relatively closed space. They further developed their own fruits of learning and used knowledge largely in their own language for their own purposes. At the same time, however, this apparent autonomy was never truly autonomous because it has been exposed in continuous knowledge exchanges by people going in and out of this space (on the redrawing of Japan's borders, see Morris-Suzuki 2016). This is evidenced in the evolving discourse of *sakoku*, the modern wars Japan has fought, and therefore the historical perspectives. Thus, Japan can be observed as a showcase of changing relations of

space and power in world politics. It is strictly in this sense that we call the target of our collective investigations "Japanese political thought" and not because we want to explicate the thought to provide different theories for students of IR. By investigating the struggles to understand/develop ideas, concepts, and theories in Japan, our aim is to rethink how our globe as a political space has come to be perceived as such, despite the differences among us. In this respect, the "uniqueness" of Japanese political thought is only one example of such diversity. We investigate this place not because Japan is unique, but on the contrary because it can exemplify the diversity of knowledge. In perceiving this potential of Japan, we believe, we can find one way to understand the diversity of world politics, which is increasingly becoming discernible, providing a basis for Global IR.

Outline of the Book

To highlight this potential of Japan, the reminder of the book aims to discuss Japanese political thought and its relevance for IR not in isolation, but to acknowledge connections, overlappings, and simultaneous coexistences, i.e. 'potentialities working themselves out in process' (Levenson 1965: 10). To this end, it is divided into four parts, each of which comprise of three chapters.

The first two parts, titled "Challenging International Law and towards a Global IR? Investigations into Japan's entry into the Westphalian system of Nation-States" and "Empire-Building or in Search for Global Peace? Japanese Political Thought's Encounter with the West", mainly, but not exclusively, deal with pre-World War II Japan. In the first chapter, *Atsuko Watanabe* and *Ariel Shangguan* trace the introduction of Western international law to China and subsequently to Japan in the mid-1800s. In doing so, they demonstrate that international law was not merely imposed on these countries, but that it triggered different imaginations of international law. This is followed in the second chapter by *Tetsuya Toyoda's* study on Mineichirō Adachi, a member of the Permanent Court of International Justice ("World Court") during the early twentieth century. Through investigating Adachi's influence on the "World Court", Toyoda questions assumptions that Japan would have embraced Westernization unreservedly, but, invoking Homi Bhabha's (1994) 'mimicry', it early on challenged it. In the final chapter of this section, *Kevin Doak* presents with Kōtarō Tanaka another in Western academia underappreciated early twentieth century Japanese scholar. Being influenced by Catholicism and personal experiences in South America, Tanaka was one of the first scholars to have developed a theoretical account of international culture, much of which resonates with more contemporary critical IR scholarship.

The opening chapter of second section begins with a discussion of Yukichi Fukuzawa's work, arguably one of the most important Meiji intellectuals and amongst others founder of Keio University. In this chapter, *Atsuko Watanabe* questions common understandings of the concept of region in IR, contributing to the spatial turn in the discipline. In the fifth chapter, *Seiko Mimaki* looks into the activities of the Institute of Pacific Relations, a transpacific NGO that promoted peace and cooperation in the Asia-Pacific in the interwar years. In her chapter, Mimaki not only highlights its members' thoughts on how to establish peaceful change, but she also calls IR's disciplinary history into question. Given that this Institute was established three years before the International Studies Conference (Long 2006) in 1925, Mimaki, concurring with recent IR scholarship (cf. Carvalho, Leira, and Hobson 2011), challenges common readings of IR being a discipline that has been exclusively formed in Europe and North America. Finally, *Ryoko Nakano* provides a discussion of the works of Inazō Nitobe and Tadao Yanaihara, two pluralist scholars, with the aim to shed light on the dilemma of humanitarian aid and development assistance as a vehicle to sustain the liberal international order.

By studying Japanese conceptual discourses, demonstrating how "theories" travel, to use Edward Saïd's terminology, the third section, "Local(ized) Japanese Political Concepts for a Twenty-First Century IR", critically engages with Claudia Derichs's (2017: 15) recent intervention that 'localised knowledge in Asian IR theory building is an under-researched and conceptually under-developed topic'. In the first chapter of this section, *Eiji Oguma* provides the readers with a genealogical account of "people" in Japanese. This term, frequently changing between *minzoku, kokumin,* and *shimin* in Japanese discourses over the course of the twentieth century, provides for an impressive account of how ideas and concepts change over time. A careful spatio-temporal contextualization is required to understand the connotations of these terms, sometimes altering the meaning of "people" dramatically. In chapter eight, *Misato Matsuoka* reconsiders the concept of *amae*, originally developed by the Japanese psychoanalyst Takeo Doi in the context of Japan's discourse of uniqueness (Derichs 2017: 18), to gain fresh insights for contemporary dependency theory by reconsidering Japanese-American nuclear politics. In the final chapter of this section, *Hiroyuki Tosa* excavates the Japanese overcoming modernity debate in the interwar years. In this chapter, Tosa not only demonstrates this debate is indeed ongoing and in recent years even intensifying, but that it also allows to consider the possibility of a new regionalism in world politics, encouraging to imagine different pluralist world orders.

The final section studies “Japanese Popular Culture in Historical Perspective” by asking if it forms “an Imagined Community, yet Reaching People Globally?” *Sean O’Reilly* begins this section with his chapter on Shōin Yoshida. He demonstrates how this short-lived, relatively unknown early nineteenth century thinker was mythologized through works of popular culture since the 1880s for the sake of forging a national identity. *Kosuke Shimizu* then brings the reader back to the twentieth century by studying in his chapter the work of one of the most famous Japanese film directors and animators: Hayao Miyazaki. Shimizu demonstrates how the Studio Ghibli cosmos generally and *Princess Mononoke* in particular lends itself as a form of Japanese soft power, as Miyazaki speaks a traditionalism beyond nationalism that reaches people globally. In the final chapter, *Michael Tsang* investigates the political thought of another well-known Japanese artist: Haruki Murakami. By discussing Murakami’s “wall-versus-egg” speeches, Tsang reflects how political thought can extend beyond its original context by demonstrating its influence on the democracy movement in Hong Kong.

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[1] Throughout this volume, Japanese and Chinese names are written in the Western way of first mentioning the given name and then the family name. The decision to do so was taken to enhance readability and avoid confusion among readers.