

Notes on Reiko Abe Auestad:
*Rereading Sôseki, Three Early Twentieth-Century Japanese Novels*¹

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Reiko Abe Auestad's *Rereading Sôseki* is a slim but valiant volume which delivers much more than its title promises. In the process of "rereading Sôseki", Dr. Auestad confronts and questions many "basic assumptions", not only about her subject, the Japanese writer Natsume Sôseki, but also about "modern Japanese literature" as a whole. Obviously, this goes far beyond what is ordinarily expected, much less achieved, in a doctoral dissertation. Dr. Auestad is beyond the shadow of a doubt up-to-date on the state of the art of Japanese literary studies. This is obvious from the work itself, as well as from its bibliography. In addition, she has the courage to try something new. Despite her industriousness and astuteness, however, Dr. Auestad occasionally runs into difficulty in the course of her "rereading". This does not reflect on the author, but, unfortunately, on Japanese literary studies themselves, and – more specifically – on Japanese Studies as practiced in their Anglo-American variant. It is important to recall, at this juncture, that Abe Auestad's monography was written "on the periphery" of Japanese studies, in Scandinavia at the University of Oslo, and that her book was published by a German company – a renowned German publication company, but a German publication company nevertheless. Significantly, this review is also written by a German scholar. The first part will treat Dr. Auestad's book in general and point to its strengths. The second part, based on the reviewer's work in progress, will treat in detail one very interesting aspect of Abe Auestad's book – the use of free indirect discourse in Japanese. While there is some work in English on this subject, it has not, evidently, been sufficient to Abe Auestad's needs. This is a pity, since she has several interesting ideas on the subject, which she could conceivably have developed more satisfactorily had there been more basic research for her to draw upon. Once again, this by no means reflects on the author herself, but instead on the preponderance of poststructuralist and postmodernist poetics in the research she has consulted. In a certain sense, then, both Abe Auestad's book and this review may serve to demonstrate how structuralist poetics can be applied to Japanese literature.

Abe Auestad's *Rereading Sôseki* treats three works of the famous author, *Kôjin* ("The Wayfarer"), *Meian* ("Light and Darkness"), and *Botchan* ("Botchan" = nickname of the protagonist; in the following review, the Japanese titles will be used). There has certainly at no time been a dearth of critical studies of these works in Japanese, and with the "Sôseki boom", which Abe Auestad dates from the beginning of the 1990's (p. 24–25), a veritable flood of critical essays on the famous author has appeared. Thus, in order to "reread", and not merely to "rehash", Abe Auestad in her second chapter, "The Critical Reception of *Kôjin* and *Meian* in Japan and the West", divorces herself fairly clearly from existing "readings" in Japanese and in English. In the case of *Kôjin*, for instance, she lumps together "standard interpretations": "The stan-

1 Reiko Abe Auestad: *Rereading Sôseki, Three Early Twentieth-Century Japanese Novels*, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 1998 (= *Iaponia Insula*, 7).

dard interpretations of *Kōjin* can be roughly divided into three categories” (p. 19), and spares the reader the tedious details, as her footnote points out: “The standard interpretations of *Kōjin* appear in a great number of essays and books by Japanese critics. I have summarized certain tendencies without referring to the names of the individual critics” (p. 19). Abe Auestad devotes somewhat more space to Western criticism, presumably because there is – for one thing – considerably less of it, and also because she can expect her English-language readers to be more familiar with it. She demonstrates that here, as well, intuitive interpretation of the texts has been the name of the game. Abe Auestad offers good evidence for the fact that Westerners are no better at this game, but her criticism of Japanese literary studies seems, at least in one regard, somewhat unfair: “The focus on the relationship between Sōseki’s life and his novels, *combined with the [Japanese] critics’ indifference to non-Japanese readers*, seems to have prevented them from giving more thought to the social and cultural constituents of the texts” (p. 22, own emphasis). It would seem perfectly legitimate for Japanese literary critics to be indifferent to non-Japanese readers, just as French literary critics writing in French on French literature do not necessarily need to write for non-French readers. At least such Japanese critics, indifferent as they may be to non-Japanese readers, can read Japanese texts in the original, which is more than some Western critics such as Frederic Jameson or Roland Barthes (to my knowledge) can do. The question thus arises why Abe Auestad, in the course of her “formal analysis” (p. 3), should quote these experts at all, and the answer, of course, is that they are part of the critical canon of Anglo-Saxon Japanology. It takes enough pluck to state, as Abe Auestad does quite correctly, that Karatani Kōjin’s findings lack textual corroboration: “To be ‘good’ an insight should be validated, I believe, in a more formal and systematic manner than Karatani’s” (p. 2–3).

In her “Introduction”, Abe Auestad states what she – among other things – proposes to do: “While distancing myself from reductive linguistic determinism, I will also bring Japanese grammar into discussion of texts, wherever appropriate” (p. 3). It turns out to be very appropriate. In fact, it turns out to be a very good way of overcoming reductive linguistic determinism. By, for instance, giving examples of the way Sōseki constructs free indirect discourse, Abe Auestad helps to dispel the myth that there is something unique about the way that this narrative strategy is deployed in Japanese. Her work thus proves the effectiveness of the formalist approach, and yet, Abe Auestad chooses not to depend entirely on what Meir Sternberg calls “discourse-oriented analysis”, which “sets out to understand not the realities behind the text but the text itself as a pattern of meaning and effect”,² although she takes steps in this direction. Thus, Abe Auestad reduces her discussion of the “world outside the text” to a minimum: “I believe one of the most effective ways to attend to ‘the external politics of literature’ without falling prey to reductionism is to examine the worldly context from within the texts. For this reason, there will be relatively little discussion of historical background in the traditional sense except in chapters 3 and 5 which introduce chapters 4 and 6” (p. 6–7). Abe Auestad discusses “Sōseki, the author” in a brief two pages only at the very end of the book, after having completed her “functionalist approach to *Kōjin*, *Meian*, and *Botchan*” (p. 192). Chapter 3, the introduction to Abe Auestad’s analysis of *Kōjin*, deals with gender roles: “A New Sense of Sexual Difference”. Chapter 5, “The Cultivation of Modern Taste”, treats aspects of the “modern

2 Meir Sternberg: *The Poetics of Biblical Narrative, Ideological Literature and the Drama of Reading*, Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press, 1985, p. 15.

life style” depicted both in *Meian* and in *Kôjin*. These chapters of historical background are concise, to the point, and informative. They form an integral part of Abe Auestad’s concept of criticism as delineated in her chapter “Between the Novel, the *Shôsetsu*, and the *Shishôsetsu*”: “Particularizing an approach to modern Japanese literature does not help us break through cultural boundaries any more than universalizing one does. The most effective way to overcome the barrier of particularism and universalism may be to make an exhaustive survey of the ways in which individual texts are bound within social and linguistic specificities of a particular historical period” (p. 144–145). By explicitly expounding the historical framework she finds relevant, Abe Auestad lays the basis for the thematic formal analysis which follows, respectively, in her chapters on *Kôjin* and *Meian*.

Abe Auestad offers astute and insightful discussions of both works. Rather than bogging down in details, she uses Western theory to delineate several lines of analysis. In chapter 3 the idea of “Male Traffic in Women” (p. 37–40) is offered as a useful concept for the way the men of the Nagano family instrumentalize women, and the dichotomy between “Osan” and “Koharu” (“domestic and maternal” = “Osan”, “love and female companionship” = “Koharu”) is used as a model for two roles available to women. In chapter 4 on *Kôjin*, Abe Auestad additionally introduces the triangle between King, Queen, and Snow White as posited by Gilbert and Gubar in *The Madwoman in the Attic*. These structural tools serve her well in unravelling the complicated human relationships in *Kôjin*. Rather than offering a chronological synopsis, Abe Auestad divides the story into “thematic blocks” (“Jirô’s First Errand”, Jirô’s Second Errand”) to emphasize the structure. To a certain extent, however, Abe Auestad’s interpretation remains interpretation, and it is sometimes difficult, to one unacquainted with all the nuances of Sôseki scholarship, to appreciate what is new about her results. She only infrequently contrasts her interpretation with “traditional” scholarship, as in this passage about *Meian*: “She [Kiyoko] appears trusting, ‘natural,’ and ‘innocent.’ The question, however, is whether she is *actually* as ‘innocent’ as she seems. Is she really a Snow White, or a ‘saintly woman’ (*seijo*) as has been contended by many Japanese male critics? Or, as Ôe Kenzaburô claims, by virtue of this saintly attractiveness, can Kiyoko function as the temptress in the world of darkness, who is to lead Tsuda astray? As far as her relationship with Tsuda is concerned, I am inclined to believe that she is neither a submissive Snow White, nor a temptress” (p. 133, emphasis sic). Abe Auestad then goes on to offer hard textual evidence for an interpretation that seems blatantly obvious. Only someone familiar with the winding paths of Japanese interpretation could have guessed that this is a new insight, such has evaded the likes of Ôe Kenzaburô. It is thus fortunate that Abe Auestad has, in this case, made this abundantly clear, and one wished she had done so more often, for instance in her analysis of *Kôjin* in chapter 4. It is also sometimes unclear whether a statement is “grounded” in textual evidence, or whether it is already the product of Abe Auestad’s interpretation, as for instance (*Kôjin*): “Since he [Ichirô] has never learned to cultivate personal relationships by tailoring his utterances or controlling his temper, he has little chance of winning the heart of his wife and thereby grasping ‘her spirit’ in the future” (p. 56). Or similarly, about Ichirô’s wife Nao: “Expecting a certain reciprocity in their relationship, she waits for him to make a special effort to improve their relationship” (p. 57). In addition, Abe Auestad is not above the occasional value judgment. Two pages after writing: “The episode shows how difficult it is, indeed, to try to act independently of the network of social conventions and obligations” (p. 69), Abe Auestad labels Jirô, who has as much trouble acting independently of the network of social conventions and obligations as the next one, a

“coward” (p. 71). By and large, however, Abe Auestad’s “reading” of both books, based on the historical and theoretical background she has given, is sound, insightful, and novel.

After having discussed all three novels, Abe Auestad sums up her method as follows: “I have applied a functionalist approach to *Kōjin*, *Meian*, and *Botchan* in an attempt to see how they function as texts by focusing on the thematic and formal conditions governing them.” It is now time to turn to Abe Auestad’s formal analysis. In the case of *Meian*, Abe Auestad discusses – as the most salient formal feature – “third-person narration”. In *Kōjin* it is “language and social hierarchy”. *Botchan* is treated as a first-person narrative which is nonetheless *not* a *shishōsetsu*, and this ties in to Abe Auestad’s general comments in her chapter 7, “Between the Novel, the *Shōsetsu*, and the *Shishōsetsu*”. In all three cases, Abe Auestad has indeed interesting points to make. In all three cases, however, Abe Auestad’s analysis could conceivably have been more precise if Japanese literary criticism were more completely integrated in comparative and structural poetics than is currently the case. To offer an example, Abe Auestad’s discussion of “third-person narration” and free indirect discourse will be treated in detail. The other two points will accordingly be treated more briefly, beginning with Abe Auestad’s ideas on *Botchan*, which are less dependent on concrete textual analysis than her formal analysis of *Kōjin* and *Meian*.

The chapter on *Botchan* is entitled “First-Person Narration in *Botchan*”, and the main theme here is whether *Botchan*, “despite its formal resemblance to a ‘typical’ Japanese first-person narrative” (p. 167), can be considered a *shishōsetsu*. After discussing the contents of the work, Abe Auestad reaches the conclusion that “the formal features of this work do not encourage a ‘*shishōsetsu* mode of reading,’ even though it is a first-person narrative largely drawn on the author’s own experience as a high-school teacher in Matsuyama” (p. 177). Her ensuing analysis of the work, however, deals with almost no formal features whatsoever, but treats largely the thematic content of the novel: “Despite its formal resemblance to a ‘typical’ Japanese first-person narrative, however, *Botchan* achieves multiple perspectives by exposing to the reader Botchan’s extremely naive reactions to the words of others, constantly reminding the reader of a whole range of nuances and meanings which Botchan fails to recognize” (p. 167). The features which Abe Auestad describes place the novel squarely within the genre of the picaresque novel, including the naive or overly-idealistic hero, and the first-person narration is no reason to disqualify *Botchan*. Mark Twain’s *Huckleberry Finn* is, after all, also a picaresque novel in the first-person. It would thus conceivably be easier to argue that *Botchan* is not a *shishōsetsu* because it is already a picaresque novel. But evidently – as Abe Auestad’s argumentation on the *shōsetsu* would seem to indicate – it is bad form to simply state that a genre such as it exists in the West might conceivably exist in Japan, even *after* the advent of Western influence: “As is well known, the notion that the rise of the nineteenth-century European novel is closely connected with the emergence of the modern individual, and that the ‘properly’ modern novel therefore is a necessary cultural product of any modernized nation had long influenced critics’ assessment of modern texts including those of non-European origins (See Ian Watt, *The Rise of the Novel*). This privileging of the novel, its ‘hegemony,’ based on an [sic] European model has been criticized in the last several decades” (p. 135, footnote). Thus, to avoid such “criticism”, to avoid “privileging” the novel and thus claiming “hegemony”, it is evidently opportune not to call the novel written in Japanese a novel, but rather to call it a “*shōsetsu*”.³ It is, however, possible to

3 The same argument in microcosm occurs whenever Western criticism, to avoid claiming hegemony for the We-

give two arguments against this. First of all, this view turns the “nineteenth-century European novel” into a much more monolithic block than was the case, as Georg Lukács points out: “Capitalist development begins later in Scandinavia and Russia than in West Europe. Therefore, the ideology of these countries had not yet entered the apologetic phase in the 70’s and the 80’s. The social conditions which had given rise to high realism, the school which had dominated the development of European literature from Swift until Stendhal, were still active in these countries, albeit in different ways and under very different conditions.”⁴ Although the “novel” thus came late to these countries, no one is seriously suggesting not calling Russian novels “novels”. Similarly, there would seem to be no reason for not calling Japanese novels “novels”. If they have – this the second argument – developed slightly different characteristics, this is, as Itamar Even-Zohar makes plain, only to be expected. His “laws of literary interference” offer a schematic model for the adaptation of literary models from a “source literature”: “1. General principles of interference. 1.1 Literatures are never in non-interference 1.2 Interference is mostly unilateral ... 2. Conditions for the emergence and occurrence of interference ... 2.2 A source literature is selected by prestige 2.3 A source literature is selected by dominance 2.4 Interference occurs when a system is in need of items unavailable within itself 3. Processes and procedures of interference ... 3.2 An appropriated repertoire does not necessarily maintain source literature functions 3.3 Appropriation tends to be simplified, regularized, schematized.”⁵ The rules under “3” offer an adequate explanation for differences between the European (“source literature”) and the Japanese novel. Since these principles of literary interference were distilled by comparing (for instance) Russian with Yiddish, and both with the extreme case of reviving modern Hebrew as a literary language, it can be posited that they are relatively universal and thus motivated neither by cultural imperialism nor by a bad conscience due to same. Abe Auestad as well seems to feel that more universalism would be beneficial to the discussion of Japanese literary forms, and criticizes works which emphasize Japanese uniqueness: “What seems to be the case with *some* of these studies, however, is that in their eagerness to attribute the peculiarities of the *shishôsetsu* mode to the Japanese language and native epistemology, they seem to move toward linguistic and cultural determinism. In fact, they come close to suggesting that all prose fiction written in Japanese necessarily displays certain *shishôsetsu* features, consequently subsuming variations within both the *shishôsetsu* and the *shôsetsu*” (p. 137). This is a very good point, and it is unfortunate that Abe Auestad nonetheless chooses to submit to the debate to the extent that she does in her chapter on *Botchan*.

In *Kôjin* and *Meian* Abe Auestad’s analysis is based to a greater extent on formal features. It is not clear why, in such passages, Abe Auestad quotes already existing English translations.

stern calendar, gives dates according to the reign of the Japanese emperors. Thus, the new German translation of Karatani Kôjin’s *Origins of Modern Japanese Literature* is equipped with a small, practical table to help readers convert to Western dates, Karatani: *Ursprünge der modernen japanischen Literatur*, Transl. Nora Bierich & Kobayashi Toshiaki, Basel & Frankfurt a. M.: Stroemfeld/ Nexus, 1996 (= Nexus, 34). At the same time, Karatani himself explains that modern Japanese literature developed in the 20’s of the Meiji epoch and can thus conveniently be labelled “20th century”, Karatani Kôjin: “Edo no chûshakugaku to genzai”, *Kotoba to higeki*, 6th ed., Daisan bummei sha, 1990, p. 91.

4 Georg Lukács: “Tolstoi und die Probleme des Realismus”, *Der russische Realismus in der Weltliteratur* (= *Georg Lukács Werke, Probleme des Realismus II*), Berlin & Neuwied: Luchterhand, 1964, p. 187. All following translations from German and Japanese are my own.

5 Itamar Even-Zohar: “Laws of Literary Interference”, *Poetics Today*, 11, Nr. 1 (Spring, 1990), p. 59.

Even the best English translation does not guarantee anything like literal translation, and Viglielmo's translation of *Meian*, "Light and Darkness", is, if we are to take Abe Auestad's word for it, by no means the best English translation. (In three distinct footnotes, she is called upon to correct errors.) Abe Auestad's own English is flawless, and she would certainly have been capable of translating the passages from Sôseki herself, as, indeed, she is often forced to do. Abe Auestad's sub-chapter on "language and social hierarchy" treats the use of language within the Nagano family of *Kôjin* as a mirror of the hierarchical structure of the *ie* family system. She is mostly concerned with the pronouns and forms of address used, and ties these in to a theory of "official" language. As interesting as the point is, a few doubts arise. She offers two types of data: "objective" data (Abe Auestad's own observations on the usage of forms of address), and "subjective" data (the comments of the characters themselves on the use of language and pronouns). The "objective" data has the inherent weakness of possibly appearing significant to non-Japanese, while being, for the Japanese speakers portrayed, so obvious and natural as to be virtually void of meaning. To underline the hierarchical structure of the *ie*-system in *Kôjin*, for instance, Abe Auestad points out the following: "Jirô is also bound to assume an appropriately reserved and humble manner of addressing Ichirô. Jirô refers to himself as *boku* and dutifully addresses Ichirô as *nisan*, whereas Ichirô uses *ore* for himself and calls Jirô *omae*" (p. 43). A Japanese critic analyzing an English-language novel could, similarly, come to the conclusion that there is a great amount of egalitarianism in the society, since the same pronoun "*you*" is used for everyone. This conclusion is not true even for the United States, much less for Great Britain. The "subjective" data also turns out to be rather disappointing. There is a quote by Jirô himself, in which he suspects his mother of only calling him "Jirô-*san*" – on those rare occasions when she does so –, because she consistently addresses her older son as "Ichirô-*san*". The problem here is that, first of all, one is forced to take Jirô's word on all of this, since he is, after all, the sole narrator. Abe Auestad freely concedes that her other first-person narrator, Botchan, is not to be trusted: "... one cannot always take what is said at its face value, including the words of Botchan, the narrator (p. 177)." She is, however, during her discussion of these linguistic features, not accordingly suspicious of Jirô: "He [Jirô] demonstrates an ability to remember and recount the smallest details of the past events ..." (p. 48), saving her doubts for a later point in the book: "In fact, Jirô does not always seem entirely 'sincere' about what he tells" (p. 163). Secondly, even if Jirô is reporting correctly, it is still possible that, once again, he is reporting on something he finds fairly normal. If Abe Auestad can, for instance, discover any signs of protest against the *ie*-system in Jirô's discussion of pronoun usage within his family, she does not divulge them. Evidently, there is nothing in Sôseki even remotely like the following lines from Jean M. Coetzee's *Boyhood*, in which the protagonist characterizes the Afrikaner culture of South Africa by its usage of pronouns: "But saying Uncle and Aunt like a good, obedient, normal child is as nothing beside the circumlocutions of Afrikaans. Afrikaners are afraid to say *you* to anyone older than themselves. He mocks his father's speech: '*Mammie moet 'n kombers oor Mammie se knieë trek, anders word Mammie koud* – Mommy must put a blanket over Mommy's knees, otherwise Mommy will get cold. He is relieved he is not Afrikaans and is saved from having to talk like that, like a whipped slave."⁶

The most interesting contribution to formalist studies of Japanese literature which Abe Auestad makes are her remarks on Sôseki's construction of narrative discourse: "As the most

6 Jean M. Coetzee: *Boyhood, Scenes from Provincial Life*, London: Vintage, 1998, p. 49. Italics in original.

secure way of separating a narratorial view in Japanese, Sôseki chooses to narrate in the third person and in the past tense with as little sign of ‘subjective’ modalities as possible. In concrete terms, this means avoiding the present tense in narrating past events, the practice of ‘ellipsis,’ as well as modal expressions that betray the narrator’s attitude, such as the *n-desu* extended predicate. The use of third-person pronouns is particularly conspicuous. Sôseki retains third-person pronouns (often possessive pronouns) where it seems more natural to omit them. Here are three examples from the first few pages of the novel ... It would have been more natural to omit the third-person pronouns and the prepositional phrases which I have italicized (p. 154).” The point which Abe Auestad makes here is a good one, but is unfortunately built upon a number of premises which are in themselves false. Abe Auestad quotes them at length and in good faith before reaching her own conclusion written above: “Two Japanese linguistic features seem to have the greatest bearing on writing: one is the strong ‘aspect’ orientation and the correspondingly weak ‘tense’ orientation in Japanese grammar, discussed extensively by Barbara Mito Reed, and the other is what Narae Mochizuki terms a ‘natural subjectivity’ in the Japanese language that ‘excludes the possibility of ‘speakerless’ or ‘narratorless,’ transparent, omniscient sentences. Because of the strong ‘aspect’ orientation, ‘deixis’ is considerably weaker in Japanese than in English. This enables the narrator to shift the focus of a statement between the narratorial point of view and that of the character involved without having to make the changes in tense, pronouns, and adverbs that English requires. Particularly important is the non-deictic nature of Japanese tense, which means that Japanese has only a time-related tense ... This possibility of change from *-ta* to *-ru* facilitates the shift of focus from the narrator to the character. Obviously, the frequent deletion of nominal subjects (ellipsis) makes such a shift in the point of view even easier (p. 150).” Three aspects of the above argumentation appear questionable: 1) English is taken as the norm, features of Japanese are described globally as “weak” or “strong” in comparison to English features. 2) Evidently, “the Japanese language” is being discussed. It would seem safer, in the context of the book, to discuss “the Japanese language used in prose literature.” Furthermore, there is no differentiation made for different epochs of Japanese literature. 3) The discussion admits of only two poles, namely “narratorial point of view” and “that of a character involved”. There is, in fact, an intermediate range, that of free indirect discourse, where the viewpoint of the narrator and that of a character involved is merged. This is a standard definition of free indirect discourse (and says nothing yet about the way it is constructed in a given language), to which Abe Auestad herself subscribes, calling it “a literary device often used to bring forth the dual voices of the narrator and the character” (p. 153). If there is, however, only the “narratorial point of view” and the “point of view of a character involved”, there are only two possibilities: Either these two viewpoints are always distinct and free indirect discourse does not exist in Japanese, or they are always merged and *everything* written in Japanese is free indirect discourse.

As outlandish as the last postulate would appear, Abe Auestad seems to give this “problem” serious consideration: “According to Mochizuki and Stinchecum, the problem is not just that the point of view easily shifts between the narrator and the character, but that a reader can always detect the personified voice of the speaker (the narrator-author) infiltrating both points of view” (p. 151). What Mochizuki and Stinchecum are evidently saying – assuming Abe Auestad is quoting them correctly – is that everything written in Japanese, literally everything, is “infiltrated” with the personified voice of the speaker and is thus free indirect discourse. Edward Fowler is prepared to go even further and classify not just every written utter-

ance, but any sentence whatsoever in Japanese as an “unspeakable sentence” (using Ann Banfield’s unspeakable terminology)⁷ and thus as free indirect discourse: “The Japanese sentence, in short, is doing precisely what the English version cannot do: ‘representing’ a character’s speech or thought by *imitating* that character’s very own words/ thoughts. The ‘unspeakable’ in English becomes the only way to talk – or write – in Japanese.”⁸ Thus in only a few simple steps, the linguistic *Nihonjinron* has come full circle. Step one: It is virtually impossible – expressed negatively – to keep the narrator from infiltrating his texts in Japanese, or – expressed positively – Japanese has, as opposed to English with its barriers of pronouns etc., a natural affinity for free indirect discourse. Step two: Japanese cannot help but write and speak in free indirect discourse all the time, while the form is “unspeakable”, i.e. cannot be constructed at all, in English. Fortunately and in character, Abe Auestad is more cautious than this. She states that there is only “rare use of the ‘indirect free form’” (p. 153) in Sôseki. Given such “theories” as those she cites, she must then offer good formal, grammatical proof for her contention that it is, indeed, possible to identify a “pure” narrative, diegetic voice in Sôseki, without any “admixture” of the point of view of a character, and this she does with her theory of “pronoun insertion”.

In point of fact, the “problem” of keeping narrative voice and the voice of the characters separate is, for many periods of Japanese literature, a non-problem. This applies to the tradition of the Edo *ninjôbon*, with its “roughly ninety percent of explicit direct discourse”.⁹ Obviously, this does not leave much room for narrative interference or “infiltration” at all. In cases where it occurs, the narrator often enough comes crashing merrily through, explicitly and in his own name as “author”, as in this example from Tamenaga Shunsui’s *Shunshoku umegoyomi* (“Spring-colored Plum Calendar”):

“*Sakusha iwaku, kono irogoto no kenka konna kotode osamarazu. Dôshita mono ka?*”¹⁰ “The author says: This lover’s quarrel is not finished with something like this. What was going on here?”

In techniques reminiscent of postmodernist literature,¹¹ the author even asks his readers for advice in completing the story: “Tanjirô has already gone downstairs, Ochô has followed him – what is going to happen when these emotions run afoul of Yonehachi? Even I, the author, don’t know yet. It’s at times like this that even a good-looking man gets into the most unbelievable scrapes! How shall I continue the story? If you, my readers, have a good idea for a plot, please tell it to me quickly.”¹² It is hard to imagine a more explicit division of roles and thus of voices between narrator and characters. In medieval narrative genres as well, there is a strict “division of labor” between narrator and characters, as Roland Schneider points out: “In

7 For an interesting review with an extended discussion of free indirect discourse, see Brian McHale: “Unspeakable Sentences, Unnatural Acts, Linguistics and Poetics Revisited”, *Poetics Today*, 4, Nr. 1 (1983), p. 17–45.

8 Edward Fowler: *The Rhetoric of Confession, Shishôsetsu in Early Twentieth-Century Japanese Fiction*, First paperback printing, Berkeley et. al.: Univ. of California Press, 1992, p. 37.

9 Ekkehard May: “Konstanten der modernen japanischen Erzählprosa”, *Bochumer Jahrbuch zur Ostasienforschung*, 4 (1981), p. 140.

10 Tamenaga Shunsui: “Shunshoku umegoyomi”, *Nihon koten bungaku taikei*, Bd. 64 (= *Shunshoku umegoyomi*), Iwanami shoten, 1964, p. 184.

11 Brian McHale classifies such techniques as “foregrounding of ontological concerns”, see McHale: *Postmodernist Fiction*, London & New York: Routledge, 1993, p. 27.

12 Tamenaga Shunsui: “Shunshoku umegoyomi”, p. 89.

prose, as opposed to poetry or drama, the author (*Dichter*) and the characters take turns speaking. During the shorter or longer phrases of direct discourse, the characters ‘speak themselves free,’ so to speak, of the narrator, until such time as they are relieved of this function and re-integrated into the frame in the postcitation passages, which are obligatory in our texts [= texts of the late medieval period]. These postcitation passages are accordingly those points in the text where the narrator is more consciously engaged than at other points in shaping an epic out of a temporary drama, and it is at these junctures that we find the auxiliary verb *-keri*.¹³ In such texts of the Kamakura period, there is virtually no presentation of the inner lives of characters, except through direct discourse. The same can be said of those genres which were written in late Edo und early Meiji. This situation changed rapidly once Japanese writers, exposed to the “prestigious source literature” of the West, began to embrace “reform”, as is pointed out by Peter Kornicki.¹⁴ Kornicki concentrates in his monography not on the “canonized” Futabatei Shimei, but on the authors of the *Ken’yûsha* circle. In point of fact, it can be demonstrated that the mentor of this literary group, Ozaki Kôyô, experimented throughout the 1890’s until his death in 1903 with both indirect discourse and free indirect discourse. Both of these techniques can be considered formal hallmarks of “high” realism in the West, according to Harald Weinrich: “Starting at the latest with Flaubert, the author avoids drawing the attention of the reader to himself within the novel. He prefers instead to present the action from the perspective of the characters involved, that is to say, as their observations and reflections. The form of this presentation is indirect and free indirect discourse.”¹⁵

At the beginning of the 1890’s, Ozaki Kôyô’s works are written in *gazôken setchû tai*. This means that he retains the classical auxiliary verb system, including auxiliary verb *-keri*, which – as Roland Schneider has pointed out – functions as a marker for the authorial voice, due to its semantic dimension as the auxiliary verb for the epic preterite. At the other end of the spectrum is the auxiliary verb *-ki* for the directly experienced preterite. In the middle of the spectrum are two other forms, the auxiliary verbs of completed aspect *-nu* and *-tari*, the normal “narrative tenses”. (In his study on tense, Weinrich demonstrates that the preterite of such Western languages as German and French does not signify “past”, but points instead to the communicative function of “telling a story;” he thus refers to the preterite, for instance, not as a “past tense” but as a “narrative tense” = “*Erzähltempus*”.) The semantic dimension of “completed aspect” is not actualized in Kôyô’s prose; the auxiliary verbs *-nu* and *-tari* are merely the unmarked narrative tense, in contrast to which both *-keri* and *-ki* represent a “plus marking”. Auxiliary verb *-keri* has an affinity to authorial discourse, and auxiliary verb *-ki* has an affinity to the discourse of the characters, in this case to indirect and free indirect discourse. This verb system serves, in addition to other features to be discussed shortly, as a formal criterium for recognizing free indirect discourse in *gazôken setchû tai* Japanese prose: Often enough, in this prose style, the *last* sentence of pure authorial narration will end with *-keri*. The following sentences in indirect or free indirect discourse are then constructed with *-nu*, *-tari*, or – even more distinctively – with *-ki*. Although there is nothing similar to this in English, a similar

13 Roland Schneider: “Zu den Hilfsverben des Tempus und Aspekts im Spätmitteljapanischen”, *Nachrichten der Gesellschaft für Natur- und Völkerkunde Ostasiens* (NOAG), 104 (1968), p. 26.

14 Peter F. Kornicki: *The Reform of Fiction in Meiji Japan*, London: Ithaca Press, 1982.

15 Harald Weinrich: *Tempus, Besprochene und erzählte Welt*, 2nd, completely revised edition, Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1971, p. 100.

“contouring” with narrative tenses can be found in the Romance languages. In French, for instance, there are two “narrative tenses”, *passé simple* and *imparfait*.¹⁶ *Passé simple* cannot be used in indirect and free indirect discourse,¹⁷ and in this regard it functions the same way that *-keri* does in Japanese. While in French the “archaic” tense *passé simple*, which is no longer used in the spoken language, continues to be employed in modern literature – even more so in the literature of the twentieth century than in the literature of the nineteenth¹⁸ – the classical Japanese verb system was swept away by the *gembun itchi* movement. In his *gembun itchi* works, Ozaki Kôyô to some extent replaces the auxiliary verb *-keri* with the predicate modification *no de aru* as a sign of authorial discourse. (Viewed in this historical context, it is no longer possible to consider *no de aru* or its more colloquial counterpart *n-desu* a “modal expression that betrays the narrator’s attitude”, to quote Abe Auestad’s above remarks, since this predicate modification is a formal element and has nothing to do with attitude at all.) Still, deprived of the “contouring” of the classical verb system, the construction of free indirect discourse remains comparatively unstable in early works of *gembun itchi*, to which, perhaps, Sôseki’s novels may also be counted.

Even without the “contouring” of the classical verb system, many markers of free indirect discourse remain in Japanese. For English, Brian McHale names the following formal criteria: “i) Deletion of the reporting verb of saying/ thinking + conjunction *that* ...; ii) Retention of the shift of person and back-shift of tenses characteristic of I[indirect] D[iscourse]; iii) Reinstatement of deictic elements of D[irect] D[iscourse] ...; iv) Reinstatement of the auxiliary + subject word-order of direct questions; v) Reinstatement of the DD features such as interjections which were (problematically) barred from ID.”¹⁹ McHale explains “the shift of person and back-shift of tenses” in connection with indirect discourse: “ii) Conversion of personal and possessive pronouns from first or second person to third person; iii) Conversion (“back-shift”) of verb tenses: the present tense of a D[irect] D[iscourse] utterance normally becomes past tense in I[indirect] D[iscourse], past and present perfect become past perfect, past perfect remains as it is, there being no means in English of registering a further back-shift.”²⁰ In Japanese, of course, subjects do not need to be explicitly stated if they can be implied by context.²¹ It is Eurocentric to describe this feature as “ellipse”, such as Abe Auestad does (p. 150), since this implies that it is somehow “normal” for sentences to explicitly include subjects, simply because this is ordinarily the case in Indo-European languages. At any rate, while McHale’s criteria “conversion of personal and possessive pronouns” and “back shift of tenses” thus cannot be applied to free indirect discourse in Japanese, his criteria i), iii) and v) can. As far as iii) is concerned, the question arises what Abe Auestad means by her statement: “deixis is considerably weaker in Japanese than in English.” This once again takes English as a norm. Japanese has not only such deictic elements as *kono*, *sono*, and *ano*, but also, in a wider sense, a myriad of elements which make it possible to identify the subject of a “subjectless” sentence in the first

16 *ibid.*, p. 93.

17 *ibid.*, p. 179.

18 *ibid.*, p. 98.

19 Brian McHale: “Free Indirect Discourse, A Survey of Recent Accounts, *PTL, A Journal for Descriptive Poetics and Theory of Literature*, 3 (1978), p. 252.

20 *ibid.*, p. 251.

21 Günther Wenck: *Systematische Syntax des Japanischen*, Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag GmbH, 1974, p. 645–648.

place – especially, as Günther Wenck points out, predicate modifications of address,²² but also address in general, politeness, and verbal modifications of utilitive orientation (*utilitive Orientierung*) such as *-te kureru*. All of these can be – and are – reinstated in sentences of free indirect discourse in Japanese. Along with interjections (McHale’s point v), which are useful to mark the exact beginning of free indirect discourse, this provides a large inventory of elements for “reporting from the perspective” of a character and thus constructing free indirect discourse.

There is, however, compared with English, one significant difference in free indirect discourse as constructed in the Japanese *gembun itchi* prose style. As stated above, free indirect discourse represents a dual perspective of narrator and character, and can thus occupy any given point of a continuum between two poles which McHale defines as “authorial presentation (diegesis) and representation/ impersonation (mimesis)”.²³ In English or French, with the “conversion” of tenses from first to third person in free indirect discourse, it is immediately obvious in every sentence that the narrator is still narrating, as for instance in this famous passage from *Madame Bovary*: “Elle se répétait: ‘J’ai un amant! un amant!’ se délectant à cette idée comme à celle d’une autre puberté qui lui serait survenue. Elle allait donc posséder enfin ces joies de l’amour, cette fièvre du bonheur dont elle avait désespéré.”²⁴ The third person makes it clear that here Flaubert is still speaking about his character, even though he is to a certain extent also speaking *as* his character. (Were Madame Bovary to speak for herself, she would of course say: “Je vais donc posséder ces joies de l’amour ...”) In Japanese, where the subject position is not filled, there is – once the auxiliary verb *-keri* has been eliminated by the *gembun itchi* reform – no corresponding formal element which in this manner unambiguously signals “narrator is still ‘talking.’” The inventory of formal elements to construct free indirect discourse is comprized only of elements (deixis, interjections, predicate modifications etc.) which unambiguously signal “character is ‘talking.’” For this reason, free indirect discourse in the Japanese *gembun itchi*-style is automatically closer to the pole of “mimesis” than to the pole of authorial presentation, of diegesis, and it is obvious that this presented problems, at least to Ozaki Kôyô, as one of the pioneers of free indirect discourse in modern Japanese literature – albeit in *gazoku setchû tai*.

Ozaki Kôyô’s response was threefold. First of all, he did not write much *gembun itchi*. Second of all, in almost all of these works, the “middle range” of free indirect discourse “flattens out” toward either mimesis (dialog or the “direct quotation” of thought) or diegesis (direct authorial description of the character’s feelings with no “admixture” of the perspective of the character). This would appear also to be the case for Sôseki, as Abe Auestad describes it. As far as diegesis is concerned, there is her interesting theory of pronoun insertion, as well as other devices: “Sôseki resorts to a number of other special devices to place the narrator outside narrated events. One method he adopts is to describe the situation and the characters’ feelings as graphically as possible from the outside: ‘Tsuda no kao ni wa ... shitsubô no iro ga mieta’ (‘A trace of disappointment appeared on his face’) instead of the more usual ‘Kare wa shitsubô shita’” (p. 155). Both of these sentences, the real and the hypothetical, are authorial presentation of Tsuda’s feeling, with no admixture of dual perspective. The other device in Sôseki – at the mimetic end – is dialogue, as Abe Auestad points out (p. 160). It would seem

22 *ibid.*, p. 647.

23 McHale: “Free Indirect Discourse”, p. 258. Italics in the original.

24 Gustave Flaubert: *Madame Bovary*, Paris: Garnier-Flammarion, 1979, p. 191.

that, in this sense, Sôseki, as heir to the “modern” free indirect discourse of Japanese *gembun itchi*, is struggling with the same difficulties of constructing free indirect discourse as is Ozaki Kôyô. The difficulty is exacerbated for both authors because they depict a number of characters from omniscient perspective. Another “solution” to the problem of writing free indirect discourse in *gembun itchi* thus would appear to be – this being the third response of Ozaki Kôyô – to simply narrate in the first person. Such a text alternates between “reportive” narration (depiction of events) and “non-reportive” narration (depiction of feelings). The “reportive” narration is then “authorial”, describing the outside, the “non-reportive” narration, describing the inside, is free indirect discourse (which the narrator paradoxically constructs, using the inventory delineated above, with himself as main character). Almost as soon as he began to write *gembun itchi*, Ozaki Kôyô began to experiment with first-person narration of this sort, for instance in his autobiographical novel *Ao budô* (“Green Grapes”), and he used it in addition to “translate” his diaries – written in a *yomikudashi* form of *kambun* – into a number of *gembun itchi* prose texts relating to his terminal illness. Despite his early experiments with this medium, Ozaki Kôyô soon discarded it, however, and produced after “Green Grapes” one long novel in *gembun itchi*, *Tajô taken* (“Passions and Grief”), which contains extended passages in free indirect discourse for at least the two main characters Sumi Ryûnosuke and Otane. Although Ozaki Kôyô thus obviously had his doubts about this first-person narration in *gembun itchi* as a medium of modern literature, the same cannot be said about his disciple Tayama Katai, and the rest, if the reviewer may be excused an idiomatic English expression, is history, or rather *kokubungaku shi*.

In summary, it has been demonstrated that the catalogue of elements used in the Japanese literary language to mark free indirect discourse contains, to some extent, different items than in English. This would seem obvious, since French for instance also has different elements than either English, German, or presumably Hungarian or Hebrew, and the fact does not in itself justify a sweeping claim to Japanese literary or linguistic uniqueness such as the following: “As many *shishôsetsu* studies have demonstrated, the Japanese language offers unique restraints on and possibilities for organizing narratives and facilitates certain narratological tendencies (p. 190).” These “unique restraints” evidently do not restrain very effectively, considering that Ozaki Kôyô, coming from the Edo *ninjôbon* tradition, where the device did not exist, relatively quickly employed free indirect discourse, and even continued to do so after the *gembun itchi* ideology had pulled the Japanese *passé simple* out from under his feet, so to speak. Yet once again, not Abe Auestad is at fault here, but rather the “many *shishôsetsu* studies” upon which she has depended, and she has managed, despite these many studies, to reach new and valuable insights on Sôseki’s techniques for marking the authorial voice. One would have wished, however, that Abe Auestad had devoted less space to quoting questionable theories on narrative structure, and more to uncovering narrative strategies in those works of Sôseki that she is rereading. This is especially the case with regard to a tantalizing footnote to her discussion of *Meium*: “There are some examples of ‘indirect free form’ in chapters 172, 143 and 83. Because of the practice of ‘ellipsis’ (omission) and the weak ‘deixis,’ however, it is often difficult to identify ‘indirect free form’ in Japanese” (p. 153). For one thing, as McHale points out, free indirect discourse is – despite pronouns and “strong” deixis – also not easy to recognize in English: “It should also be obvious that grammatically there may be very little to distinguish F[ree] I[indirect] D[iscourse] from sentences of non-reportive narration, so that the question of how

its perceptibility is determined becomes crucial.”²⁵ For another, evidently Abe Auestad has no difficulty recognizing it in Japanese, either. Unfortunately, however, she offers neither examples nor proof. The passage from chapter 172 would appear to be the following:

... *Gyosha wa sakeki kara jikan no osoku naru no wo osoreru gotoku, yoseba ii to omou no ni, midaritaru muchi wo narashite, shikiri ni yaseuma no shiri wo utta. Ushinavareta onna no kage wo ou kare no kokoro, sono kokoro wo buenryô ni hon'yaku sureba, tori mo naosazu, kono yase uma dena nai ka. Dena, kare no ganzen ni bana kara iki wo fuite iru awarena dôbutsu ga, kare jishin de, sore ni teara na muchi wo kamaeru mono wa dare darô ka. Yoshikawa fujin? Iya, sô ichigai ni dangen suru wake ni wa yukanakatta. Dena yappari kare jishin? Kono ten de seikaku na kaiketsu no tsukeru koto wo konomanakatta Tsuda wa, mondai wo soko de nagenagara, izen toshite sore yori saki wo kangaezu ni wa irarenakatta.*²⁶

... A while ago the driver had begun to snap his be-draggled whip and to thrash the rump of the thin nag, although Tsuda would have preferred him not to. His heart, that was racing after the woman he had lost – this heart, if he were to translate it uncensored, was it not the same as this thin nag? Then – this pitiful beast in front of his eyes, puffing through its nostrils, that is he himself, and who is the person cracking the harsh whip? Mrs. Yoshikawa? No, it couldn't be wrapped up that simply. Then perhaps it was himself? Tsuda, who didn't feel like coming to a definite conclusion on this point, tossed the problem aside, but – unlike before – he still could not help thinking about it.

This would indeed appear to qualify as free indirect discourse. The signal for its onset, set in fat type, is the subject: “*sono kokoro*.” The first time this theme subject²⁷ shows up in the sentence, it is – Abe Auestad would call the device “pronoun insertion” – presented in authorial narration. It is then repeated, marked as the perspective of the character with the deictic element “*sono*”, and serves as the subject of the first sentence given in dual perspective. If the style of the ensuing passage is more elevated than one would expect in comparison to direct discourse statements (notably the minimal conditional phrase “*sono kokoro wo buenryô ni hon'yaku sureba*”), then this can also be counted as a device to underscore the voice of the narrator in the course of the dual perspective of free indirect discourse. In other words, since there is no explicit grammatical marker for authorial voice in *gembun itchi* Japanese, the stylistic “coloring” of the passage with the “neutral and rather artificial style” (p. 153) of the narrative discourse compensates to a certain extent. Markers for Tsuda's perspective are his question to himself in the simple dubitative (“*darô ka*”) as well as the form of address for Mrs. Yoshikawa, “*Yoshikawa fujin*”, which Tsuda himself uses, but not the narrator (who calls her simply “*fujin*”). Unfortunately for her argumentation, Abe Auestad's marker of “narratorial view”, namely the pronoun “*kare*”, also crops up in this passage of free indirect discourse. Yet this is not a contradiction; the pronoun “*kare*”, which according to Abe Auestad marks pure authorial discourse, also underscores the voice of the narrator in this passage of dual perspective = free indirect discourse. Thus, Sôseki's free indirect discourse begins, at least in this case, to look suspiciously like English or French, where the narrator has at his disposal third-person pronouns, in order to continue talking about his characters while representing their thoughts, and thus emphasizes his continued presence. Since Abe Auestad did not, unfortunately, analyze this passage, this interesting point escapes her. The free indirect discourse ends with the explicit naming of the

25 McHale: “Free Indirect Discourse”, p. 252.

26 Natsume Sôseki: *Meian*, Seikôsha, 1937 (= *Natsume Sôseki zenshû*, vol. 9), p. 712–713. The library of the University of Frankfurt does not have the new edition.

27 Grammatical terminology according to Wenck: *Systematische Syntax des Japanischen*.

subject: “*Tsuda wa*.” Although Abe Auestad has developed a theory of “pronoun insertion”, she might have done well to consider name subjects such “*Tsuda wa*” in this category as well.

So far, so good, but three examples of free indirect discourse in a modern novel of almost eight hundred pages is slim pickings indeed, especially in light of Abe Auestad’s remark that “one of the climactic parts of the novel, chapters 89 to 123, is rich with narratorial comments in which the narrator is given omniscience so that he can trace the interplay of the different attitudes and secret thoughts of Onobu, Tsuda, and Ohide ...” (p. 159). If one opens the book somewhere at random between these two chapters, for instance at chapter 103, it does not take long to find an additional example of free indirect discourse. The passage is admittedly short, but then no one is claiming that passages of free indirect discourse need be long:

*Agariguchi no ippō ni wa, ochinai yōjin ni, ikkeen hodo no tesuri ga koshiraete atta. Onobu wa sore ni yotte, Tsuda no yōsu wo ukagatta. Suru to tachimachi surudoī Ohide no koe ga kanojo no mimi ni itta. Koto ni nē-san ga to iu tokushu na kotoba ga kवादatte komaku ni hibiita. Migoto ni yoki no hazureta kanojo wa, moto hatto omonaserareta. Katat kichō ga yurumu itomanaku futatabi kanojo wo osotte kiita. Kanojo wa Tsuda ni mukatte Ohide no kuchi kara nagetsukerareru nē-san to iu sono kotoba ga, donna imi ni mochiirarete iru ka wo shiranakereba naranakatta. **Kanojo wa mimi wo sumashita.***

*Futari no gōsei wa kiite iru uchi ni kyū ni natte kiita. Futari wa **akiraka ni kenka wo shite ita.** Sono kenka no kachū ni wa, shiranai ma ni, **jibun ga hikikomarete ita.** Arinwa **jibun ga kono kenka no omo na gen’in ka mo wakaranatta.***

Shikashi, zengo no kankei wo shiranai kanojo wa, tada sore dake de jibun no ichi wo kimeru wake ni yukanakatta.²⁸

To one side of the stairs, there was a handrail, as long as the space between two pillars, such that one would not fall down. Onobu approached it and listened to see Tsuda’s condition. At this point, suddenly Ohide’s sharp voice rang in her ears. And it was especially the words “elder sister” that reverberated against her eardrums. It put her, she, who had strangely enough come with no premonitions, on her guard. The nervousness, which had only just subsided, hit her again full force. She had to know what it meant when Ohide referred to her with the words “elder sister” in speaking to Tsuda. She pricked up her ears.

The tenor of the discussion became heated while she was listening. Obviously, the two of them were having an argument. At some point, she knew not when, she was drawn into the maelstrom of the argument. Perhaps she is even the main cause of this argument.

However, for her, who did not know what came before and afterward, it was impossible to figure out where she stood just from this alone.

Semantically, the first paragraph narrows the “omniscient perspective” down to the single perspective of Onobu, and thus serves, as McHale puts it, as a “bridge”: “... any expression which directs the reader’s attention to a particular character may serve as a ‘bridge’ between narration and free indirect discourse.”²⁹ Everything which is reported after the final “authorial” sentence (“*Kanojo wa mimi wo sumashita*”) is reported in Onobu’s perspective, as she stands there, all ears. In the next paragraph, the very *absence* of an authorial subject marking such as “*kanojo*” enables it to be read as free indirect discourse, and the passage ends, significantly, with a renewed insertion of “*kanojo*” in the last paragraph quoted. Within the passage, the deictic “*kono*” = “this (argument)” as well as the formal noun “*jibun*”, which can approach a first-person pronoun in function, signal Onobu’s perspective. A further indication is the emphatic adverb “*akiraka ni*”. This case would have been more clear had the adverb been obviously colloquial, such as “*kitto*” or “*yappari*” (the first example given above contains “*yappari*” in such a function, emphasized in fat type). Still, this is the sort of insertion that the omniscient

28 Natsume Sōseki: *Meian*, p. 404–405.

29 McHale: “Free Indirect Discourse”, p. 268.

narrator does not “need” to make, since he of course “knows” exactly that Tsuda and Ohide have been having an argument. At any rate, this passage as well is clearly free indirect discourse. Should there be many more like it, then Abe Auestad’s claim that Sôseki does not make much use of free indirect discourse is in need of revision.

To adequately treat questions such as this, Reiko Abe Auestad would have had to attend to this subject in much greater detail, such as this reviewer has taken the liberty of doing for only a few pages. It is, however, questionable what would have become of her doctoral dissertation had she chosen to expand her linguistic and formal arguments at the cost of those chapters which are more accessible to those readers who do not know Japanese and thus might conceivably be less impressed by this aspect of her research (including, perhaps, members of her committee in Oslo). Thus, as stated at the outset of this review, the above remarks are not intended as criticism of Abe Auestad’s “rereading”, since it can be assumed that she has gone as far with the subject as she can go in a doctoral dissertation, and much farther indeed than could have been reasonably expected. Perhaps this is due, as stated at the outset, to her position “on the periphery” of Japanese studies here in Europe, where the peer pressure to produce poststructuralist and postmodernist theory is not as great as in the United States. This allows European researchers – including this reviewer – the luxury of attending to obscure and archaic auxiliary verbs in Japanese texts, for instance. This is the sort of task for which Dr. Abe Auestad seems eminently suited, and it is not for nothing that she quotes Paul de Man: “As Paul de Man declared in 1979, ‘the spirit of the times is not blowing in the direction of formalist and intrinsic criticism.’ With a touch of sarcasm, de Man notes that ‘we can now confidently devote ourselves to the foreign affairs, the external politics of literature’” (p. 3). She then states her own credo: “I believe that literature is still in need of formal analysis, and that this does not necessarily contradict one’s devotion to ‘the external politics of literature’” (p. 3). Perhaps this review has helped to show that “formal analysis” not only does *not contradict* the “external politics of literature”, but may even be identical with it. In Japanese literary studies, only hard textual evidence can be brought to bear against the sort of linguistic and literary *Nihonjinron* against which Dr. Reiko Abe Auestad is forced to pit her sound and good conclusions. It is to be hoped that she will continue to work along these lines in the future, having, as she beyond a doubt does, the talent, courage, and background to do so.