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REWRITING (PERSONAL) HISTORY –
PORTRAYAL OF EMILIO AGUINALDO
AND BOOKER T. WASHINGTON
IN ADVENTURE STORIES AND ARTICLES
IN “BŌKEN SEKAI”
(THE WORLD OF ADVENTURE) MAGAZINE

Tajima and Thornton summarized their article with an overview of Japanese portrayals of blackness as follows:

While the racism developed in the West would have the greatest impact on the world, clearly racial systems are both national and international projects, constructed partially from national cultural repertoires and new encounters and conflicts. Race is formed from beliefs, symbols, practices and conflicts, disseminated from the past, interpreted to conform to the present. Japanese national narratives of difference, morphed into the context of rising nationalism, converged with and drew from Western ideas of race, which provided a framework for categorizing, ranking and at times subordinating internal and external populations (Weiner 1997).¹

In studies on Japanese views of race and the Other, especially groups without extensive contacts with the Japanese up until the era of globalization, scholars should pay great attention to fluid and not always coherent local contexts and intellectual discourses. For example originally Western racial narratives and notions that started to flow to Japan around the *bakumatsu* (last decades of the Tokugawa shogunate) period exhibit adaptations made by Japanese intellectuals. One of them was a relativistic understanding of Western hierarchies of civilization and a search for arguments to subvert ideas of biological determinism regarding progress.² These

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¹ A. Tajima, M. Thornton, *Strategic solidarity: Japanese imaginings of Blacks and race in popular media*, “Inter-Asia Cultural Studies” 2012, vol. 13, no. 3, p. 360.

² In Poland some studies of intercultural contacts of Japan have been conducted by or published under editorial supervision of Ewa Palasz-Rutkowska (see: *Japończycy w świetle*

attempts mostly stemmed from a sense of threat and fear of foreign incursion and were aimed at a discursive renegotiation of their own rank in those hierarchies. As Japan's modernization made the specter of colonial domination of Japan by world powers less possible, its newly gained military and economic power enabled the country to make its own plans for imperialist domination.

This process caused the opinions expressed in the press, scientific publications and literature to diversify. One of the currents was the pro-expansion option in two main variants: the northern (*bokushin*, to the nearby continental regions of China, Korea, Manchuria, Mongolia) and the southern (*nanshin*) into the so-called Nan'yō, an area without clear boundaries, but mostly encompassing the Pacific islands and South-East Asia.³ Another strain, sometimes connected with expansionist ideas, postulated different forms of racial solidarity: from narrower Pan-Asianism⁴, often with varying shades of chauvinism (depending on the degree of the stress on Japan's leadership, as well as the emphasis on languidness, backwardness and inferiority of Asian 'comrades'), to a broader idea of a shared struggle of the 'colored peoples' or 'races' (*yūshoku jinsbu*), encompassing groups from distant regions – Africans, African Americans, native peoples of the Americas etc.

An important role in promoting these ideas was fulfilled by literature, including juvenile fiction. In Meiji period magazines specializing in adventure stories, non-fiction and essays disseminating racial and geopolitical ideology like "Tanken Sekai" (The World of Exploration) and "Bōken Sekai", appeared. In this article I will analyze the rhetorical devices employed in selected texts from the latter, which were published during the tenure of the first two chief editors – Oshikawa Shunrō (Masaari) and Abu Tenpū. A number of texts from this period utilized two important contemporary non-white figures to subvert biological notions of racial

(*do XX wieku*), ed. E. Palasz-Rutkowska, Japonica, Warszawa 2016; *Cudzoziemcy w Japonii (XVI–XX wiek)*, ed. E. Palasz-Rutkowska, Japonica, Warszawa 2017), but their primary concerns were relations with the West and to a lesser extent with neighbors of Japan and not with other non-Western areas or intellectual discourses regarding race or barbarity and civilization. On those particular topics I have written in: P. Sztafiej, *Afrykański Imy w Japonii. Reprezentacja subsaharyjskich Afrykanów w podręcznikach geograficznych w latach 1868–1945*, Wydawnictwo UMK, Toruń 2023.

³ Differences of opinion regarding this matter went beyond the journalistic and publishing circles, as they were also a part of disputes inside the military. Members of the army mainly backed continental expansion, while the navy generally preferred the southern direction. See: M.R. Peattie, *Nan'yō: The Rise and Fall of the Japanese in Micronesia, 1885–1945*, University of Hawaii Press, Honolulu 1988, pp. 36–38.

⁴ For information on Pan-Asianism generally and in connection to Japan see: S. Saaler, C.W.A. Szpilman, *Pan-Asianism: A Documentary History*, vol. 1 and 2, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Lanham 2011. In regard to the Philippines: N. CuUnjieng Aboitiz, *Asian Place, Filipino Nation: A global Intellectual History of the Philippine Revolution, 1887–1912*, Columbia University Press, New York 2020; S. Matthiessen, *Japanese Pan-Asianism and the Philippines from the Late 19th Century to the End of World War II: Going to the Philippines is Like Coming Home?*, Brill, Leiden–Boston 2016.

superiority and portray an idea of an alliance of the ‘colored peoples’ against Western hegemony – Emilio Aguinaldo, one of the leaders of the Philippine Revolution and subsequent Filipino-American war, the first president of the Philippines, as well as Booker Taliaferro Washington, a leading figure in the African American community in the late 19th and early 20th century.

“Bōken Sekai” and its connection to Oshikawa Shunrō and Abu Tenpū

Oshikawa Shunrō remains an enigmatic figure in the study of Japanese literature of Meiji and Taishō period. His marginal status seems to be evidenced by the fact that, as far as the author is aware, no monograph on his literary works has been published in Japan and the scholarly output on his career is limited to articles.⁵ A publication of a non-academic nature worthy of attention is the biography of Oshikawa, currently one of the main sources of knowledge about his life.⁶ In English sources he is mentioned in the context of the emergence of the adventure story and speculative fiction in Japan, however these sources only briefly utilize him as an introduction to the later developments in those genres.⁷ In those sources he is often juxtaposed with Jules Verne and the only work of his that is referred to is his series on the underwater warship started with his debut *Kaitei gunkan* (Undersea Battleship) in 1900.⁸ Nationalistic undertones, motifs of resistance to Western imperialism and fantastical scientific inventions are also mentioned as elements of his works, however his journalistic career is left unnoted. Shortly after his debut Oshikawa was offered work as a leading author for “Nichiro Sensō Shashin Gahō” (Pictorial Magazine of the Russo-Japanese War, 1904–1905), a magazine founded by one of publishing giants of the time – Hakubunkan. As the title indicates, it reported on the Russo-Japanese war with an emphasis on the visual – photography. After the end of the war the title became “Shashin Gahō” (Pictorial Magazine) and the profile changed to general contents. The magazine was published till the end

⁵ However a doctoral thesis by Takeda Yuki from 2018 is available in Ritsumeikan University’s online repository, see: <https://ritsume.repo.nii.ac.jp/records/10484> (access: 9.03.2024).

⁶ S. Aizu, J. Yokota, *Kaidanji: Oshikawa Shunrō*, Tokuma Shoten, Tōkyō 1991.

⁷ R. Matthew, *Japanese Science Fiction: A view of a changing society*, Routledge, New York 1990, pp. 11–12; *Anatomy of Wonder: A Critical Guide to Science Fiction*, ed. N. Barron, R.R. Bowker Company, New York–London 1981, pp. 469–470. Oshikawa is mentioned in a similar manner in a classical study of history of Japanese literature in Polish: M. Melanowicz, *Literatura japońska*, t. 2: *Proza XX wieku*, Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, Warszawa 1994, p. 402.

⁸ *Kaitei gunkan* was not supposed to have sequels, but due to its popularity it became a 6 novel series with other loosely connected works. S. Aizu, J. Yokota, *Kaidanji...*, p. 164.

of 1907. The last issue featured a notice on its discontinuation, but also announced a new publication with Oshikawa at its helm.⁹

The new magazine, titled “Bōken Sekai”, started publication in 1908. Apart from the titular adventure stories it featured other popular genres for younger audiences (mystery, war, horror, science fiction), oftentimes unmarked translations¹⁰ or original articles (with varying degrees of fictionality) on exploration or hunting trips, essays calling for colonization (mainly economic emigration to build foundations for economic success of Japan) or on anthropology, race, (geo)politics and sport. This thematic cross-section indicates that the creators intended to form the readers’ opinion on the issues of race, civilizational progress and geopolitical standing of Japan. Oshikawa was the chief editor and regularly authored texts until his resignation in November 1911.¹¹

Oshikawa was replaced by Abu Tenpū, who made no substantial changes to the contents. In his youth Abu prepared for a career in the navy, but supposedly due to problems with his left leg went into reserve duty. He probably met Oshikawa around 1907 and, possibly with his encouragement, started to regularly contribute to “Bōken Sekai” (and a few other magazines) – mainly under aliases.¹² When Oshikawa left Hakubunkan he supposedly asked Abu to replace him. After that Abu was the new chief editor until June 1917.¹³

Philippines and Emilio Aguinaldo in Japanese discourses at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries

The second decade of Meiji period (around the middle of 1880s) was characterized by increasing interest in regions south of Japan – the aforementioned Nan’yō. The first ideogram means ‘south’, the second the ‘sea/ocean’, therefore the word is sometimes translated as the ‘South Seas’. Tsuchiya Shinobu remarks on this term as follows:

⁹ *Ibidem*, pp. 188–191. K. Sugimoto, *Meiji no bungei zasshi – sono kiseki o tadoru*, Meiji Shoin, Tōkyō 1991, p. 153.

¹⁰ I was able to discern a few cases of unmarked ‘borrowings’ from British “The Wide World Magazine”. About this publication see: K. Jackson, *George Newnes and the New Journalism in Britain, 1880–1910: Culture and Profit*, Routledge, New York 2016, pp. 121–128, 163–194.

¹¹ Resignation was probably caused by his involvement in a polemical debate on the harmfulness of baseball – his passion – with Tokyo’s Asahi newspaper. Soon after his departure Oshikawa created a similar magazine – “Bukyō Sekai” (World of Valor). S. Aizu, J. Yokota, *Kaidanji...*, pp. 267–279, 305.

¹² N. Ueda, *Abu Tenpū no gunji bōken shōsetsu: Nichibei miraisen no keifu o chūshin ni*, “Kokusai Jidō Bungakukan Kiyō” 1995, vol. 10, pp. 33–73.

¹³ After that the magazine had two other chief editors until its discontinuation in 1919 – Nagase Shunpū and Morishita Uson. K. Sugimoto, *Meiji no bungei zasshi...*, p. 153.

In a sense the ‘third’ regions (mainly Micronesia, India, South-East Asia etc.), which were neither the Tōyō (Orient) nor the Seiyō (Occident), in Japan were referred to as Nan’yō in a subjective, vague and relativistic way. Nan’yō is not a translated term. It is also not an imported notion based on theories of translation. It cannot be accurately translated as one phrase – the ‘South Seas’. It is almost never used as a complementary word to the Hokuyō [North Seas] and is not a side in a binary relation. Since the publication of *Nan’yō jiji* (Shiga Shigetaka, 1887) or *Nan’yō no daiharan* (Suehiro Shigeyasu, 1891) it was born from a specifically Japanese sense of direction with Japan as the point of reference. It created a fluid relativity, therefore it is not strictly prescribed and while remaining vague it took root as a geopolitical concept. That is what Nan’yō was.¹⁴

The Philippines was one of the primary places classified as Nan’yō and quite quickly became an object of interest of Japanese intellectuals as they gained knowledge of a nascent independence movement there. Among members of the literati writing on the matter were Suehiro Tetchō (1849–1896) – a journalist, political novelist and periodically a member of the parliament – and Yamada Bimyō (1868–1910) – initially associated with Ken’yūsha literary group and an active reformer of the written Japanese language in the spirit of *genbun itchi* (unification of the spoken and written language) ideals.¹⁵

During his travels abroad Suehiro met José Rizal (1861–1896), a Filipino doctor, writer and advocate of reforming the Spanish rule, who was later executed by the colonial authorities. This meeting had a strong influence on Suehiro’s writing, as he created works on Filipino matters such as a comical travel diary *Oshi no ryokō* (Mute’s Travels, 1889) and novels *Nanyō no daiharan* (Storm over the South Seas, 1891), *Arashi no nagori* (Remains of the Storm, continuation of the former, 1891) and *Ōunabara* (The Big Ocean, combined edition of two former novels, 1894).¹⁶ Yamada Bimyō took interest in the Philippines after the revolution began. Through his contacts with Yamagata Teizaburō (1859–1940) he was able to meet Mariano Ponce (1863–1918), a Filipino envoy sent to Japan to lobby for material, and if possible, political support.¹⁷ In Yamada’s texts on the Philippines he expresses how

¹⁴ All translations of passages from Japanese sources are by the author of the article. S. Tsuchiya, *Nan’yō bungaku no seisei: otozureru koto to omoi koto*, Shintensha, Tōkyō 2013, p. 36.

¹⁵ *Nihon kindai bungaku jiten: kijōban*, ed. Nihon Kindai Bungakukan [The Museum of Modern Japanese Literature], Kōdansha, Tōkyō 1992, pp. 772–773, 1529–1530.

¹⁶ M. Yamashita, *Nanshin no manazashi: Meiji 20-30-nendai ni okeru Firipin no egakikata*, “Sōgō Bunka kenkyū” 2000, vol. 3, pp. 84–89. S. Hayase, *Japan and the Philippines*, “Philippine Studies” 1999, vol. 47, no. 1, pp. 37–38. C.S. Hau, T. Shiraishi, *Daydreaming about Rizal and Tetchō: On Asianism as Network and Fantasy*, “Philippine Studies” 2009, vol. 57, no. 3, pp. 329–388.

¹⁷ He failed to obtain official support, but his pleas aroused the interest of some intellectuals. Thanks to Miyazaki Tōten and Nakamura Yaroku armaments and ammunition were bought and sent on a ship called Nunobikimaru. Unfortunately it sank soon after departure. Further plans of supporting the revolution were curtailed due to Japanese government’s fear of a diplomatic

moved he was by Rizal and the circumstances of his death, an emotion stemming from a sense of solidarity as a fellow man of letters. He romanticized a young revolutionary Gregorio del Pilar (1875–1899) as the main character of his novel *Momoiroginu* (Peach-colored Silk, 1902) and tried to provide a balanced evaluation of Aguinaldo in his two part novel *Aginarudo: Firipin dokuritsu senwa* (Aguinaldo: The Story of the Philippine Independence War, 1902).¹⁸

On the one hand Oshikawa Shunrō grew up during this time of Japanese fascination with Nan'yō, on the other in the era of nascent nationalism, disillusion of the society after not obtaining the expected gains after the Sino-Japanese war of 1894–1895 and the buildup of tensions with Russia, that culminated in a war after his debut. These circumstances, along with possible influence of his father,¹⁹ were some of the factors that caused his works to be permeated with nationalism and aversion to Western imperialism and the superiority complex of the 'whites'. Therefore it should come as no surprise that the Philippine Revolution and the later Filipino-American war were reflected in his literary works. Aguinaldo appears as a character in the aforementioned *Kaitei gunkan* series, starting with the second novel – *Bukyō no Nihon* (Martial Japan, 1902). Related plot threads are then subsequently developed in the 5th and 6th part, *Shin-Nippontō* and *Tōyō bukyō-dan* (New Japan Isle, 1906 and The Orient Chivalry Force 1907 respectively).²⁰ Aguinaldo is portrayed as an obedient ally of the Japanese heroes, but what is striking is his relative lack of agency. The Philippine Revolution in Oshikawa's work is in fact led from the shadows by a Japanese character, the historical figure of Saigō Takamori,²¹

spat with the US. See: M. Yamashita, *Nanshin no manazashi...*, pp. 89–91; S. Matthiessen, *Japanese Pan-Asianism...*, pp. 26–28.

¹⁸ Aguinaldo is also a character in *Momoiroginu*. Del Pilar sacrifices himself to protect him. Yamada also wrote *Gigun no sengen* (*Aginarudō no enzetsu*) (Declaration of the Righteous Army (Aguinaldo's Speech)), which was published in the 4th volume of his *Genbun itchi bunrei* (Model Texts of Genbun itchi) from 1902. As the title indicates it was a series of model texts in the new literary style promoted by Yamada. See: S. Tsuchiya, *Nan'yō bungaku no seisei...*, pp. 81–82; M. Yamashita, *Nanshin no manazashi...*, p. 91.

¹⁹ Oshikawa Masayoshi was an influential Christian missionary in Meiji period. He is also noted for combining Christian beliefs with 'samurai-like' rigidity and patriotism bordering on nationalism. He was also engaged in the support of the Filipino independence movement, therefore it is possible that Shunrō gained information about the Philippines through his father. S. Aizu, J. Yokota, *Kaidanji...*, pp. 39–43, 143, 151–153.

²⁰ S. Oshikawa, *Bukyō no Nihon: Eiyū shōsetsu*, Hakubunkan, Tōkyōdō, Tōkyō 1902; *idem*, *Tōyō bukyō-dan: Eiyū shōsetsu*, Bunbudō, Tōkyō 1907; *idem*, *Shin-Nippontō*, Hakubunkan, Tōkyō 1939.

²¹ One of the leading political figures of early Meiji period and later a leader of the Satsuma Rebellion in 1877 (Seinan sensō). Although presumed dead in this conflict theories on his survival appeared. Oshikawa utilizes this sentiment in the *Kaitei gunkan* series along with a similar story of the crew of the lost Japanese warship Unebi and connects those figures to his imaginary racial struggle.

seemingly suggesting that no significant resistance to the West is possible without Japanese involvement. Therefore Aguinaldo becomes one of the elements in a patchwork structure of non-Japanese characters, both real and fictional, supporting the Japanese cast – a reinforcement of the propagandistic message of the inevitability of Japanese leadership and an almost natural affinity and affection of the colored peoples for the Japanese. This element will be later reproduced in the portrayals of Aguinaldo in “Bōken Sekai”.

Early 20th century Japanese interest in Booker T. Washington

Japanese interest in the situation of African Americans is visible from the early Meiji period, for example in the records of the 1871–1873 Iwakura diplomatic mission to the US and Europe. Africans and African Americans are contrasted in a manner that relativizes the connection between race and civilizational progress. While the former are portrayed as uncivilized, the latter, for example African Americans observed during a visit to an educational institution, are pictured in a positive light. Their potential for development is stressed and the fact that more ambitious individuals were able to achieve success positioning them higher than uneducated whites is also noted.²² While this example does not mean that negative stereotypes created in the West did not penetrate into Japan, a strain of more sympathetic representations of African Americans is also visible: portraying them as unfairly discriminated against, criticizing racial lynching and even postulating some forms of racial solidarity. Koshiro indicates that literature was one of the mediums through which the Japanese gained knowledge of American prejudices against black people, citing the 1896 translation of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* as an example. However one of the first true African American voices in translation was Booker T. Washington.²³

Lockard, Penglu and Kim remark that his *Up from Slavery* was the only translation of an American slave narrative for much of the 20th century, pointing to the first one – *Kokujin: Bukkā Washinton-den* (The Great Black Man: The Biography of Booker Washington, 1919) by Sasaki Hideichi.²⁴ Koshiro indicates however that

²² Y. Koshiro, *Beyond an Alliance of Color: The African American Impact on Modern Japan*, “positions” 2003, vol. 11, no. 1, p. 185. A similar contrast between those groups was often reproduced in other publications, for example in school textbooks. See: P. Sztajfiej, *Afrykański Inny w Japonii...*

²³ Y. Koshiro, *Beyond an Alliance of Color...*, pp. 185–186.

²⁴ J. Lockard, S. Penglu, M. Kim, *Booker T. Washington, Frederick Douglass, and US Slave Narratives in Translation in East Asia*, “Translation and Literature” 2022, vol. 31, pp. 322, 330–331. They stress that: “Identification of cultural commonalities provided an early motivation for translation”. The common element in this case was the “self-sacrifice” in spite of adversities, that for Sasaki constituted the “interpretive key” for Washington’s work. It should be noted that Sasaki’s translation is abridged and rearranged in some parts, as noted in the introductory notes. *Kokujin: Bukkā Washinton-den*, trans. H. Sasaki, Meguro Shoten, Tōkyō 1919.

Washington was introduced to Japanese readers earlier, in *Ijin no seinen jidai* (Days of Youth of Great Men) from 1908.²⁵ This publication was a collection of profiles and anecdotes about ‘great’ figures from fields such as politics, finance, science, pedagogy or literature. Through a superficial search in the National Diet’s Library’s Digital Collection (Kokuritsu Kokkai Toshokan Dejitaru Korekushon) I was able to determine that Japanese language texts on Booker T. Washington began appearing even earlier.²⁶ An interesting example is provided in *Jindō no ijin* (Heroes of Humanity) from 1901, a book similar in contents to the aforementioned *Ijin no seinen jidai*. Parts on Washington from those two texts are extremely similar – possibly they were based on the same source material, seemingly not the autobiographies, but on a chapter from a similar collection of anecdotes on historical or contemporaneous figures titled *True Stories of Heroic Lives*.²⁷ Both of these Japanese books also contain translations of the same passages from Washington’s *The Future of the American Negro*.²⁸

While the image of Washington in these Japanese publications is idealized, it does not necessarily mean that his position in African American community of the time is exaggerated. In both cases he is portrayed as a leader of the entire ‘race’, aware of the difficult conditions of the community thrown into the world to fend for itself after the Civil war and the abolition of slavery. The authors of the texts attempted to universalize his accomplishments and ideas on education either by indicating that they would be effective not only among Black people but also in Japan²⁹ or by hailing Washington as “a leader in developing humanitarianism” (*jindō kaibatsu no chōja*) and a figure that should not be equated with “common educators” (*kuku ikkai no kyōikushabai*).³⁰ While it is hard to conclusively demonstrate that Oshikawa and the circles involved in creating “Bōken Sekai” were familiar with these texts, the basic elements of portrayal of Washington, like stress on his leadership role among African Americans or activities as an educator, will largely be reproduced in articles and works in their magazine. However, as I will indicate later,

²⁵ Y. Koshiro, *Beyond an Alliance of Color...*, p. 186.

²⁶ Searches of “Booker Washington” and of two katakana renditions of the name (ブツカー・ワシントン; ブーカー・ワシントン) in the <https://dl.ndl.go.jp/> domain yield quite a few results dated back to 1901–1902.

²⁷ Some of the information provided in these Japanese texts do not appear or are different in Washington’s autobiographies, while they do conform with the contents of *True stories...* Compare: *True Stories of Heroic Lives. Stirring tales of courage and devotion of men and women of the nineteenth century, etc.*, Funk & Wagnalis Company, New York–London 1899, pp. 257–262; *Jindō no ijin*, ed. Tōkyō Hyōronsha, Chūyōdō, Tōkyō 1901, pp. 29–36; M. Ogōuchi, *Ijin no seinen jidai*, Yūhōkan, Tōkyō 1908, pp. 114–119.

²⁸ *Jindō no ijin*, pp. 24–28; M. Ogōuchi, *Ijin no seinen jidai*, pp. 120–122; B.T. Washington, *Future of the American Negro*, Small, Maynard & Co., Boston 1899, pp. 27, 32–35, 50–51.

²⁹ *Jindō no ijin*, pp. 28–29.

³⁰ M. Ogōuchi, *Ijin no seinen jidai*, p. 122.

Washington will be assigned with contrary to his modes of operation revolutionary characteristics in order to reinforce the anti-American rhetoric of Japanese authors.

Aguinaldo and Washington in “Bōken Sekai”

Texts pertaining to Emilio Aguinaldo or Booker T. Washington published in “Bōken Sekai” during the tenure of Oshikawa and later Abu can be broadly divided into two groups: marginal mentions as rhetorical devices intended to reinforce the theses of the authors or works in which they feature in more eminent roles (for example as characters in fictional stories).³¹

Yabanjin ni shōrai ari ya (Is There a Future for the Barbarians?) belongs to the former category. It appeared in a special issue titled “Sekai no banzoku” (World’s Savage Peoples) from November 1912, dedicated, as the title indicates, to the topic of ‘world’s savage peoples’. This article is a debate between two fictitious people (also marked as the authors). The first is Kagaku bannō koji – ‘a believer in the supremacy of the scientific’, while his antagonist is Hikagaku bannō koji – ‘a believer in the supremacy of the unscientific’. The topic of their discussion is introduced as follows:

Pro-science:³² Isn’t the problem of whether the savages have any future an interesting one?

Anti-science: It certainly is. Maybe not interesting, but demanding the attention of scholars and experts.

Pro-science: Do you think they have any prospects?

Anti-science: Yes, I do. Scientists create many sophistic terms like natural or artificial selection, but I do not have the patience to tolerate such cold scientific debates.

Pro-science: Ha, it seems to me that you must have some African ancestors, as you defend lil ol’ savages³³ so much.

Anti-science: I am not defending them. Wait, actually I don’t mind it. Just look... Pride comes before a fall. Surely there will come the day that those who boast of being a model of civilized men will be grabbed by their necks and talked some sense into them by pitch black and thick-lipped fellows.³⁴

³¹ All the issues of the magazine are collected in microfiche form: *Bōken Sekai*, ed. Waseda Daigaku Toshokan [Waseda University Library], vol. 1, no. 1 – vol. 12, no. 12, Yūshōdō, Tōkyō 2002.

³² In the dialogue the characters are simply referred to by the first characters of their pseudonyms – Ka and Hi. Here I will render them as Pro-science and Anti-science.

³³ It should be noted that the phrase ‘bankun’ (蠻君) is used, denoting some sort of ironic endearment.

³⁴ Kagaku bannō koji, Hikagaku bannō koji, *Yabanjin ni shōrai ari ya*, “Boken Sekai” 1912, vol. 5, no. 15, p. 97.

The difference of opinion between the two is evident from the beginning of their conversation. As is quite clear from their names, Kagaku bannō koji represents the pragmatic and scientific beliefs, while his opponent is an idealist romantic. The former constantly cites demographic statistics pointing that the world's indigenous peoples are steadily disappearing. On the other hand Hikagaku bannō koji presents a vision of an awakening of those groups that will enable them to save themselves. After an early monologue of the idealist the realist replies ironically:

Pro-science: Here we go again. And it's all because among the black Americans for example there appeared someone like Booker Washington. But the statistics are an indisputable proof that those so-called savages are in a decline.³⁵

Washington is utilized as a symbolic refutation of an intrinsic inferiority of certain groups and an example of the potential for development of those who were placed on the lower levels of civilization in Eurocentric hierarchies. At the same time the realist seems to indicate that singular cases are not sufficient to turn the tables for peoples under imperialistic pressure of world powers. Aguinaldo is also mentioned in a similar, argumentative way, this time by the idealist:

Anti-science: And I'm telling you that someday a terrible divine punishment will come to those so-called civilized people. For now they can sleep peacefully only because the savages have not yet awakened. Just look, didn't England's power start to wobble for a while when the Boers of South Africa resisted? Of course, the Boer are not the savages. But if only people at least equal to the Philippines' Aguinaldo start to appear in Africa or Nan'yō, the whites will surely turn white and tremble in fear.³⁶

The discussion is concluded with a certain synthesis. The realist reveals that he is actually not opposed to the idea of the awakening of oppressed peoples, however he believes it is not possible for this to happen spontaneously. He emphasizes the need for "missionary work full of self-sacrifice", utilizing images of Confucian sages (*seija*), Prophet Muhammad and Christ as examples of various aspects of such evangelical work. The article is then concluded with words of approval from the idealist and his offer to shake hands with his interlocutor.³⁷

While Aguinaldo was linked to military resistance, the mention of Washington provided no detailed explanations of his activities. It may have been a conscious decision as in the same issue an article devoted mainly to this figure was published – *Kokusboku jjin Būkā Washinton* (The Black Hero Booker Washington) by Hashido Gantetsu (1879–1936). The title may suggest that the text is simply a biographic profile of Washington, however the main thesis is actually a refutation of the idea

³⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 98.

³⁶ *Ibidem*.

³⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 100.

of inferiority of the black race. Washington is utilized as the major proof for that argument, but the author refers to two other cases – contemporary boxing world champion Jack Johnson, as well as the country of Haiti, namely its successful revolution against France.³⁸ The fragment on Washington provides a brief overview of his achievements and his ideal of attaining ‘racial harmony’. The text in parts exhibits some differences to the aforementioned early Japanese portrayals of Washington. It is stressed that Washington rarely if ever referenced contemporary cases of lynching of black Americans. This seems to suggest that Hashido may have been cognizant of criticisms (for example from W.E.B. Du Bois and his circles) levelled at Washington at the time, accusing him of accommodationism to white supremacy.³⁹ However Hashido seems to justify this silence and changes the focus to white racism, providing for example the synopsis of the incident of an assault on Washington in New York.⁴⁰ Therefore it can be said that Hashido tries to keep intact an earlier idealized view of Washington and his leadership among African Americans, while also exhibiting knowledge of quite recent events like the aforementioned assault from 1911.

Both Washington and Aguinaldo are marginally mentioned in a number of Abu Tenpū’s adventure stories based on a conflict of Japanese characters with different Western powers. In *Shimen bantō* (The Barbaric Lion-Faced Tower)⁴¹ from issues 3 and 4 of 1912, Germans plot to abduct and kill influential Asian figures. Booker T. Washington is mentioned in passing as a famous figure met by one of Japanese characters during his travels around the world while promoting resistance against world powers among oppressed peoples.⁴² Washington is also referred to in *Kyōwan tekō* (The Iron Duke of Great Arm (sic!)),⁴³ issues 5, 7–10 and 16) from 1912 – an

³⁸ G. Hashido, *Kokushoku jin Būkai Washinton*, “Boken Sekai” 1912, vol. 5, no. 15, p. 118.

³⁹ On critical appraisals, conflicts with Du Bois and the problem of evaluating Washington’s legacy see: M.S. Bieze, M. Gasman, *Booker T. Washington Rediscovered*, The Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore 2012.

⁴⁰ G. Hashido, *Kokushoku jin Būkai Washinton*, pp. 118–119. Lynching is explained as “the most barbaric deed of whites, perpetrated mainly in the south of the US”. Hashido remarks that “Americans who boast of their status of a civilized country of the world, as well as American ladies who take great pride in promoting charitable endeavors, find nothing strange in watching as blacks who did not do anything particularly bad are massacred”. According to Hashido Washington’s lack of strong reactions to those events stems from his realization that those problems are impossible to address from the stance of rationality or morality as their cause are “hard to eradicate racial prejudices”. After that Hashido fluidly transits to the assault incident (in scholarly literature referred to as the “Ulrich incident”, see: *The Booker T. Washington Papers*, vol. 11, eds. L.R. Harlan, R.W. Smock, G. McTigue, University of Illinois Press, Urbana 1981).

⁴¹ Continuation of *Kaijō gōketsudan* (Group of Naval Heroes) published in issue 1 from 1912.

⁴² T. Abu, *Shimen bantō*, “Boken Sekai” 1912, vol. 5, no. 3, p. 11.

⁴³ This pseudonym of the main character is provided (in katakana) in this dubious English form in the novel.

incohesive patchwork of various ideas or monologues and disputes on racial and geopolitical matters that only in its last installment introduces a diplomatic intrigue with Germans as adversaries. The figure of Washington is utilized there in a similar fashion to the aforementioned *Yabanjin ni shōrai ari ya*, which was to be published a few months later. Yatsuji, an older Japanese man who gained wealth in South Africa, takes his adopted daughter Rinko on a world tour. “The sight of illusion-like civilization, a society in which the power of the material and vanity is so strong” disgusts Rinko. As she harbors an idealized view of primitivism, she begs her father to show her Africa. In Cape Town she is saddened by the “invasive white power” and asks to be taken to a place that is not yet affected by it. Yatsuji takes her to a remoter, but still fairly safe region. At the same time he tries to disillusion her. He states that nowadays some “curse the vices of civilization” and advocate for a “great alliance of savages”, but he considers it to be a reaction caused by hatred towards the mightier. According to him “savages” have no future, their natural selection is underway and thinking that they have prospects just because “among black Americans there is a Booker Washington” is a mistake. He acknowledges that African Americans were enslaved, but they are not modern-day “savages” and remarks: “I have some plans that I would like to try with these inferior peoples, but it is truly a big venture. Protecting these savages is impossible unless the world powers throw away their greedy ambitions and are prepared to lose to some degree their possessions”.⁴⁴ Yatsuji exhibits many commonalities with the position of the realist from *Yabanjin ni shōrai ari ya*, however his “plans” are never brought up again, which along with other plot inconsistencies seems to confirm that Abu had no preconceived image of the story before writing this novel. Mention of Aguinaldo appears in another of Abu’s works, *Shōsetsu: Manira shūgeki* (Attack on Manila: A Novel) from issue 7 of 1913. Unexpectedly the narrative is mostly provided from a perspective of American members of military forces stationed in the Philippines. Only in the final pages of the story the perspective switches to the crew of a Japanese vessel that enables the future isolation and destruction of the American Pacific Fleet. Early on the Americans discuss some riots around Mindanao with the “remnants of Aguinaldo’s faction in the center of this movement” and rumors that some influential Japanese figure is behind them.⁴⁵

In contrast to the above marginal mentions, Aguinaldo and Washington figure in a more prominent role as characters in *Buyū shōsetsu Daiban dōmei* (A Novel of Valour: The Great Barbar (sic!) Alliance⁴⁶) from issue 5 from April 1911. The introductory note indicates that this adventure story was dictated by Oshikawa Shunrō, written down by Aby Tenpū, while another “Bōken Sekai” collaborator, Kawaoka

⁴⁴ T. Abu, *Kyōwan tekko*, “Boken Sekai” 1912, vol. 5, no. 7, pp. 5–7.

⁴⁵ T. Abu, *Shōsetsu Manira shūgeki*, “Boken Sekai” 1913, vol. 6, no. 7, pp. 4–5.

⁴⁶ Once again this dubious English spelling appears in the Japanese text.

Chōfū, was also involved in its creation in an unspecified role.⁴⁷ The main character, a Japanese aviator Ōkita Tonaō, embarks on a journey across the continents inhabited by non-white societies and observes their oppression. In the Philippines he is glad to hear that Aguinaldo is remembered fondly. While in South America he meets the descendants of the Inca. Unexpectedly he becomes their leader and gains access to their treasures. Thanks to this he builds an advanced vehicle, a mix of a submarine and an airship, and continues his travels. Shortly after departure he finds a lifeboat with two men onboard – a black one and an Asian. His suspicions are soon confirmed – they are Booker T. Washington and Emilio Aguinaldo. The men wanted to join an unspecified revolution in Mexico to “reduce American power even if by a little bit”, but their ship sank on the way. Ōkita quickly gains their trust and forms the titular alliance. Aguinaldo yells: “destruction of the whites” (*bakujin metsubō*), while Washington says “hail the Great Barbar Alliance”.⁴⁸ Shortly thereafter the story unexpectedly comes to a rushed end. On the span of just one page the time of action moves two years into the future, skipping most of the scenes of preparations, the subsequent conflict and the crushing victory of the heroes. Aguinaldo returns triumphant to Manila and Washington moves to Texas. Both of these characters become simple symbols of the potential non-white allies devoid of any real agency. They provide a convenient ideological justification for Ōkita’s unexpected night bombings of major cities of the Western powers. The liberation of oppressed peoples by Japanese heroes seemingly does not mean a deconstruction and extrication from paradigms of civilizational hierarchies,⁴⁹ but rather a change to a ‘benevolent leadership’ of the Japanese as the natural leaders of the ‘colored peoples’. The employment of the title of the “Great Barbar Emperor” (Daiban Teiō in ideograms) by Ōkita also appears to be somewhat symbolic as Oshikawa apparently failed to notice the term’s ironic connections to imperialism.⁵⁰ The entanglement in Western notions of progress or, to be more exact, in the paradigm of the civilized (rather than white) man’s burden is apparent in the last sentence on the further exploits of Ōkita’s friend:

⁴⁷ S. Oshikawa, *Buyū shōsetsu Daiban dōmei*, “Boken Sekai” 1911, vol. 4, no. 5, p. 24.

⁴⁸ This reading in katakana is provided along with ideograms Daiban gōmei – the second part slightly different to the titular Daiban dōmei. *Ibidem*, p. 37.

⁴⁹ Japanese feeling of superiority is quite apparent in a sentence about the liberation: “This great change simply had to cause even the most ignorant peoples to awaken from their centuries long confused slumber of unenlightenment”. *Ibidem*.

⁵⁰ It should be noted however that Ōkita retired after his victory in spite of the pleas of the Inca. He married his beloved, ordered his special weapons to be destroyed and became a “loyal ally of the colored races”.

Hyōdō Gantetsu left the Andean forest, remarking that he would go to Africa.⁵¹ He probably became a king of some cannibal village and with his usual barbarian-like boldness strived for their development.⁵²

The figure of Aguinaldo in this story was largely consistent with his earlier portrayals in Oshikawa's works – he was a symbol of bravery and armed struggle against white powers' encroachment, as well as loyalty and obedience to the Japanese. The view of Washington is more significant, as it represents a departure not only from coteremporary views of him of some black intellectuals but also from later appraisals of his legacy. By some Washington was considered an excessive accommodationist, by others a protean man, who changed the contents of his speeches depending on his audience. He emphasized the need for building an economic base by African American communities, an incremental vision of changing their status, sometimes even expressing chauvinistic arguments against European immigrants. However, Washington was certainly not seen as a revolutionary figure, willing to engage in direct and militant critique of white supremacy as he is portrayed in *Buyū shōsetsu Daiban dōmei*.⁵³

The process of adapting originally foreign narratives about race to local contexts is apparent in the portrayals of both Aguinaldo and Washington in texts from "Bōken Sekai". Oshikawa, Abu and their inner circle of people who contributed to the magazine have apparently been quite keenly following racial discourses and recent events connected to the topic. At the same time they provided their own interpretations based on a critical view of Western imperialism and colonialism, but also marred with some degree of japanocentrism and colored by dreams of Japan as a leader of 'colored races'.

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⁵¹ In the original the ideograms used read "America", but the reading provided next to them was "Africa". Considering the context it was probably supposed to be the latter.

⁵² *Ibidem*, p. 37.

⁵³ See: M.S. Bieze, M. Gasman, *Booker T. Washington Rediscovered*. Washington seemingly was also capable of working behind the scenes to damage the careers of other African American figures who were critical of him.

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STRESZCZENIE

PRZEPISYWANIE HISTORII (OSOBISTYCH) – UKAZANIE EMILIO AGUINALDO I BOOKERA T. WASHINGTONA W UTWORACH PRZYGODOWYCH I ARTYKUŁACH Z MAGAZYNU „BŌKEN SEKAI” (ŚWIAT PRZYGODY)

Artykuł poświęcony jest analizie sposobu reprezentacji i funkcjonalnego wykorzystania dwóch „niebiałych” postaci, Emilio Aguinaldo oraz Bookera T. Washingtona w artykułach publikowanych w japońskim czasopiśmie młodzieżowym „Bōken Sekai” z późnego okresu Meiji i wczesnego Taishō. Analizowane teksty pochodzą z okresu, gdy redaktorami naczelnymi byli kolejno Oshikawa Shunrō (pionier japońskiej powieści przygodowej oraz SF) oraz Abu Tenpū (również autor powieści przygodowo-militarnych). W ramach kontekstu przedstawiona jest również historia recepcji postaci Aguinaldo i Washingtona oraz jej ideologiczne implikacje dla modernizującej się i zmierzającej ku budowie własnego imperium Japonii. Poprzez skupienie się na elementach retorycznych stanowiących lokalne adaptacje zachodniocentrycznych hierarchii rasowo-cywilizacyjnych możliwe jest wykazanie z jednej strony prób ich podważania poprzez postulowanie idei solidarności lub nawet sojuszu „kolorowych ras”, ale też i ideologiczne zaplątanie się, uniemożliwiające pełne wydostanie się autorów z paradygmatów misji cywilizacyjnej czy darwinizmu społecznego z ideą przetrwania najsilniejszego.