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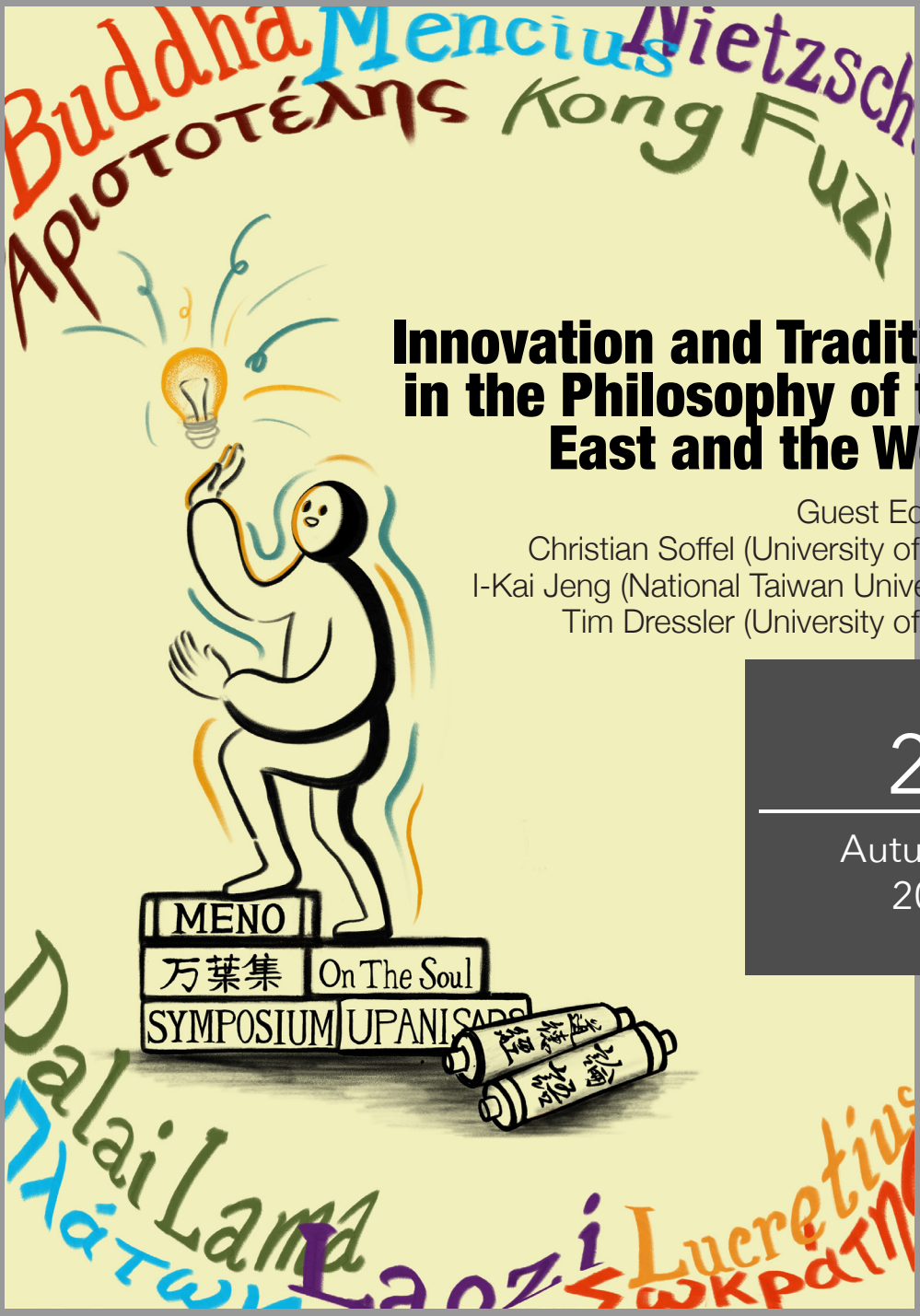

Innovation and Tradition in the Philosophy of the East and the West

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Editorial:

Innovation and Tradition in the Philosophy of the East and the West

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The current issue continues the exploration of patterns of narrative strategies that negotiate between tradition and innovation. The motivation for practitioners in a given sphere of practice to self-reflect and consciously define, advocate, and adopt a project can be a response to some dynamics within that sphere (for example, the style of neo-classicism in the sphere of painting or music can be understood to be against what is perceived as excessive experimentation); but no less often it can be a reaction to powers external to that field, such as geo-political pressure causing a crisis in cultural confidence, or economic factors leading to an adjustment of international policy. Needless to say, such processes are rarely, if ever, clearly classifiable as *only* tradition or *only* innovation; most of the time they are both. Agents who thought they were preserving tradition can turn out to be unwitting innovators; conversely agents rejecting tradition might only be evoking another part or aspect of tradition.

The papers published in this issue touch upon responses at different levels to political and socio-economic forces. Matthiew Felt's "Rehabilitating Tradition: Saigō Nobutsuna and Japanese Myths, 1945–1963" focuses on post-war Japan, whose intellectuals understandably suffered from some kind of cultural identity crisis and felt an urgency to properly define the relation to their past and history. Felt charts the literature scholar Saigō Nobutsuna's fascinating career, who went from trying to use tradition to achieve social and political goals (realising class con-

sciousness) to characterizing the Japanese past in a way that keeps it in a narrative space free from social and political changes, specifically the changes generated by capitalism and American imperialism. Saigō's relation to Western thought obviously evolved throughout his life. As Felt points out, Saigō's defense of Japan's past as a realm of myth and ritual, accessible through imagination, was inspired by English social anthropology. Saigō thus borrows from a Western, or at the very least a non-Japanese tradition, to make a case for opening up a space resistant to Western influence. Such an innovative take on Japanese past thus preserves at least a version of that past that survives Japan's identity crisis, an account whose effects––according to Felt––can be felt in the popular imagination, as well as attitudes and practices.

Rather complex is Jason M. Morgan's "'Humanism' in Two Acts: Motoori Norinaga, Lorenzo Valla, and the Competing Historiographies of Humanist Modernity." Morgan's paper does not focus on a single case, but compares two instances from seemingly very different times and places: Norigana from 18th century Japan and Valla from Renaissance Italy. According to his reading, we can identify a common pattern between these two intellectuals. Both aimed to reform language in order to get closer to the past (or their imagined past), and such a past had contemporary political significance. But aside from identifying a typical pattern where innovation is achieved by the effort to retrieve tradition, Morgan asks the further question as to why these two intellectuals have not received similar evaluations in Western scholarship: Valla is positively remembered as one of the founders of humanism, while Norigana occasionally even has been denigrated as the precursor of later Japanese fascist thinking. Morgan's investigation leads him to expose what he sees as implicit and questionable assumptions of superiority by Westerners. In this way, the theme of innovation and tradition also occurs on the level of Morgan's paper itself. The thesis that Valla and Norigana ought to be studied in similar ways and receive comparable evaluations performs an innovative intervention against the tradition of Western scholarship. The potential of comparative studies to invite us to probe into the hidden prejudices of scholarly tradition seems to be on display here and is worthy of further exploration.

Josie-Marie Perkuhn's "Contestation for Innovation: The Construction of Taiwan's New Southbound Policy" applies a role theory approach to examine the change of Taiwan's Southbound Policy during President Tsai Ing-wen's term. President Lee Teng-hui had begun Taiwan's Southbound Policy in 1990, in response to the new global reality in the post-Soviet era; while the policy more or less went on with the next two presidents (with a shift occurring during Ma Ying-jeou's term), the reasons for its continuation were changing. Perkuhn argues that a significant shift has occurred under Tsai because the cross-strait relation with China's PRC has forced the Taiwanese government to recalibrate and retool their strategy and stance in relation to South Asia. While with Lee the emphasis was laid on outgoing investment and establishing economic ties, with Tsai the accentuation was expanded to include incoming investment and establishing communal and cultural ties. According to Perkuhn's interpretation, under Tsai's leadership Taiwan has innovated its international role from a reliable economic partner to an innovator of goods and a non-aggressive and non-militaristic soft power. The policy itself has led to a transformation of Taiwan's projection of its image and also its self-understanding. This paper illustrates how changing geopolitical landscapes can motivate responses that build upon past strategies but generate new visions of one's own role in such a landscape.

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Rehabilitating Mythical Tradition: Saigō Nobutsuna and Japanese Myths, 1945–1963

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Abstract

Japan in the aftermath of World War II provides a unique opportunity to consider issues of innovation and tradition because of the rapid vicissitudes in attitudes towards Japanese traditions during wartime, occupation, and postwar periods. In the early 1940s, Japanese tradition was deployed to support the war effort. Then, following Japan's surrender, Japanese tradition became a scapegoat that explained why Japan had fallen into ultranationalism and militarism. Finally, Japanese tradition was rehabilitated into a repository of cultural heritage for the racially unified people of a democratic nation. This paper examines the treatment of Japanese mythical tradition from 1945–1963, with special focus on the writings of literature scholar Saigō Nobutsuna (1916–2008), and argues that Saigō's applications of myth and ritual were instrumental in creating a fantasy of antiquity for postwar Japan. Considering Saigō and the postwar Japanese case demonstrates that while innovation and tradition can work against each other, innovation can also rehabilitate, preserve, and create tradition. Furthermore, this study illustrates that the innovation process does not operate independently of socio-economic factors and that the meaning and significance of tradition must be rigorously historicized for a particular era to reveal how it was reformed, rehabilitated, desacralized, or obviated.

Keywords: Saigō Nobutsuna; Japanese tradition, ancient Japanese literature; postwar Japan; Japanese myth

Rehabilitating Mythical Tradition: Saigō Nobutsuna and Japanese Myths, 1945–1963

In the aftermath of World War II, Japanese mythical tradition went through a striking reversal of fortunes, from state orthodoxy to dangerous history to repository of popular identity, all in the space of about two decades. These quick turnarounds make the position of Japanese mythical tradition in the post-World War II period an unusual and illustrative case study for assessing innovation and tradition more broadly. Japanese mythical tradition in this period demonstrates not only the mutability of the role tradition can play in a given society, but also the means by which tradition can be rehabilitated in the face of challenges raised by the adoption of a new worldview. In the case of Japan, the recategorization of the country's oldest traditional literature from "scripture" to "myth" permitted literature to be reincorporated into the public sphere as a positive element linked to a prewritten and prehistoric cultural heritage.

In the late 1930s and early 1940s, Japanese mythical tradition was a matter of state. The sanctity and legitimacy of the emperor rested upon on the exegesis of several traditional Japanese texts, notably the 712 *Kojiki* (An Account of Ancient Matters) and the 720 *Nihon shoki* (Chronicles of Japan). Both texts describe the creation of the Japanese archipelago by the Shinto gods and the founding of the Japanese empire in 660 BCE, and as the two oldest Japanese books, were synonymous with Japanese mythical tradition. The canonical role of these eighth-century texts in the 1930s was clearly stated in works such as the 1937 *Kokutai no hongi* (Cardinal Principles of the National Entity of Japan).[1] *Kokutai no hongi* frequently cited *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki* as evidence of Japanese national supremacy and the emperor's divinity. Unorthodox interpretations of *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki* were punished. For example, historian Tsuda Sō-

1 For translation and details on the role of *Kokutai no hongi*, see Hall (1949).

kichi (1873–1961) was placed under house arrest in 1942 for publishing heretical theories about *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki*.[2] The Shinto religion, closely tied to the state during this period, used *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki* as its official scriptures.[3]

The canonical authority of *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki*, and of the Japanese mythical tradition for which these texts stood in, was completely overturned in August 1945, upon Japan's unconditional surrender to the Allied forces. At this inflection point, the future of the Japanese nation-state itself was uncertain, along with the fate of the ruling emperor, who was supposedly an invincible god-made-manifest. In the months that followed, Japanese mythical tradition confronted existential peril as the emperor made a public announcement renouncing his divinity, the ties between Shinto and the state were dissolved, and Supreme Commander for the Allied Forces Douglas MacArthur (1880–1964) banned *Kokutai no hongi*. Japanese intellectuals, many of whom had used their scholarship to support the war effort, quickly pivoted to malign traditions that they blamed for leading the nation first to war and then to disaster. Japanese mythical tradition went from scripture to scapegoat.

In less than a decade, the pendulum swung again, and scholars rehabilitated Japanese mythical tradition, *Kojiki*, and *Nihon shoki*. The texts were rebranded not as canon, but as myth, and they were enshrined not as the scriptural source of imperial divinity, but as the sourcebooks for a national culture. The release of what these texts could mean, first from an authoritarian state bent on enforcing a singular interpretation, then from an occupying army bent on defanging a former enemy, resulted in Japanese myths attracting a greater diversity of interpretations in the postwar era than at any point in their long history. Though the emperor was forced to renounce his divinity, the stories and texts that underpinned the imperial system became even more entwined with, and even synonymous with, a new notion of mythical tradition that pervaded postwar Japan.

2 Tsuda's case is discussed in detail in Brownlee (1997).
3 On Shinto during this period, see Hardacre (2017), esp. pp. 403–440.

Strictly speaking, the links between *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki*, Japanese tradition, and the Japanese state have always been in flux. In the ninth and tenth centuries, periodic court-sponsored readings of *Nihon shoki* positioned the text, and its support for the emperor system, as state orthodoxy. By the eleventh century, these official readings had ceased, and the emperor ruled in name only. In the twelfth century, *Nihon shoki* was cited in poetic treatises, linking the text with Japanese tradition in the dominant artistic medium of the era. In the fourteenth century, supporters of Emperor Go-Daigo (1288–1339, r. 1318–1339) rebelled against the ruling shogun and resurrected *Nihon shoki* as a guarantor of kingly authority for the emperor. Such on-again-off-again connections between these eighth-century texts, tradition, and state continue throughout the entire written history of Japan.[4] For the modern Meiji state, which restored the emperor to power in 1868, myth and tradition were powerful vehicles for cementing a new, centralized authority. Of course, the actual content of the texts required major reinterpretation to fit the modern era, and the traditions it enshrined were often rebuilt, if not wholly invented.[5] Given this long and complex history, it is not unusual that the oldest Japanese texts found a mechanism to survive after 1945: this was not the first time that these narratives had been challenged with displacement. What is striking is that they survived by forging a link between Japanese mythical tradition and the popular sphere, with *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki* becoming the emblematic texts of a racially unified nation.

Several recent works have shed light on the rehabilitation of modern Japanese literature in the immediate postwar era. Ueda et al (2017) highlighted the "Literature and Politics Debates" of 1945–1952, and Ueda's provision of multiple primary sources in English translation opened this topic up for scholars outside of Japanese studies for the first time. At these debates, literature scholars, imagined as the vanguard of artistic expression, participated in several roundtables and symposiums discussing the culpability of Japanese traditions for the war and the di-

4 On the changes in the reception of these texts, see Felt (2023), Hardacre (2017), Breen and Teeuwen (2000), among others.

5 On the use of myth and performance by the modern Japanese state, with special attention to the invention of traditional rituals, see Ruoff (2014) and Fujitani (1996).

rections for Japanese literature going forward. Ueda et al (2018) continued this line of investigation with a collection of essays by seminal scholars in the field of modern Japanese literature about the Debates, though contents related to traditional literature fall outside the scope of Ueda's analysis. The rehabilitation of traditional literature features slightly in Sasanuma (2012), who identifies the key figure Saigō Nobutsuna (1916–2008), a leading scholar of premodern Japanese literature and Japanese myths in the postwar era, as an ideal case study. However, Sasanuma's focus is squarely on Taiwan and the legacy of Japanese colonialism; Saigō's broader intellectual shifts, which rehabilitated Japanese tradition as myth, are not addressed. Shorter studies on Saigō such as Fujii (1978), Kannotō (1982), Go (1997), Mitani (1997), and Miura (2011) have also covered components of Saigō's thought, but not his rehabilitation of traditional Japanese literature. As such, the philosophical innovations that permitted Japanese mythical tradition to reinvent itself in the postwar era and the innovations applied by Saigō have remained shrouded.

In order to identify the process by which Japanese mythical tradition was restored and rehabilitated after 1945, this paper focuses on two key issues. First is the position of traditional literature scholars at the Literature and Politics Debates, which reveals the dire straits into which Japanese mythical tradition was forced into after the war and provides the context necessary to identify the terms in which Japanese tradition could reappear. Second is the shifting position of Saigō. Comparing Saigō's writings from the immediate postwar with those in later decades reveals that while the meaning and significance of tradition was always a major concern, Saigō's rehabilitation of Japanese mythical tradition was accompanied by a shift in philosophical perspective, from Marxism to historicized social anthropology. Notably, in his later writings, he began to categorize *Kojiki* as myth. I argue that this shift, and its consequent rehabilitation of traditional Japanese literature, resulted from both a loss of faith in the Japanese Communist Party in the 1960s and from an increasingly pronounced desire, in the global capitalistic and commodified postwar era, to return to a perceived authentic Japanese past. While academic discourse has since moved past Saigō's fantasy

of antiquity, it was an important fixture for restoring Japanese mythical tradition and retains meaningful influence in the popular sphere.

1 Traditional Japanese Literature at the Turning Point

One issue that has confounded modern research on premodern literature is the purported gap that modernity creates between the two. In the aftermath of World War II, this chasm of modern sensibilities divided researchers of traditional Japanese literature, often referred to as "national literature," and modern authors seeking new directions in literature. For example, at a roundtable held in September 1946, just over one year after Japan's surrender, six literary critics: Usui Yoshimi, Odagiri Hideo, Kubota Shōichirō, Gomi Tomohide, Nagazumi Yasuaki, and Fukuda Tsuneari participated in a symposium on the "Various Problems for Research on Japanese Literature" (Nihon bungaku 1946). A short exchange between Odagiri and Nagazumi captures the tenor of the conversation and the perceived distance between researchers who formed the old guard of Japanese literature scholarship and those associated with modernity.

> **Nagazumi**: Everything from the start today has been badmouthing scholars of national literature, on the whole, they have no establishment of subjectivity, and it is fair to say that they are not modern human beings.
>
> **Odagiri**: I don't know very many scholars of national literature, but when I go to one of their meetings, they're very uptight and somehow, it's painful for me to stay there. (laughter) They're completely unapproachable. I can't talk to them because we have no shared aspects of humanity. We've done nothing but badmouth scholars of national literature here today, but if we can't stop badmouthing them even more, we'll never get to connect [today's conversation] to contemporary literature.
>
> **Nagazumi**: We still have some time, so lay it on them! (laughter)

For Nagazumi and Odagiri, at the time both in their thirties, scholars of

national literature, that is, university professors of traditional Japanese literature, were objects of ridicule for both their conservative stuffiness and the dry, documentary-style of their research that seemed to deny a subject position for the researcher.

Some circumspection is warranted in reading this exchange as several of the keywords from this discussion like "national literature" and "subjectivity" are not commensurate with their English translation. Or more pointedly, as Naoki Sakai has argued, these concepts acquire meaning through the act of translation, broadly defined. Translation enables the formation of "national literature" and the "national subject" (Sakai, 1997). In that regard, Nagazumi and Odagiri's exchange takes on additional gravity, because the concepts they invoke are the product of a negotiation between their visions of Japan and of the West, and their discussion, in 1946, occurs at precisely the moment when the relationship between Japan and the West was being renegotiated, or in Sakai's terms, retranslated.

Nagazumi and Odagiri's critique is voiced in the present tense, and their critique targets national literature scholars both during and after the surrender, because scholars of national literature had made only superficial changes in their postwar academic work. National literature scholars did couch their postwar scholarship in terms of renewal, revival, and reinvention, but a closer look at their research and perspectives reveals little change. For example, in March 1946, the periodical *Kokugo to Kokubungaku*, the leading journal for the field of traditional Japanese literature, published a special issue on "New Directions in National Literature." Several of the most notable academics of the time, including Fujimura Tsukuru (1875–1953) and Hisamatsu Sen'ichi (1894–1976), wrote their impressions on how the field of Japanese literature would change, and would need to change, following surrender to the Allies. However, there is significant resonance when we compare the statements of senior contributors to this issue with their earlier, wartime positions.

As the most senior and highly decorated scholar featured in the issue,

Fujimura had the honor of writing the opening essay, "Kokubun gakuto kongo no ninmu" (Mission for National Literature Students Hereafter). Fujimura's earlier career had centered on early modern Japanese literature, and he was a key figure in canonizing the work of Ihara Saikaku (1642–1693) and connecting it to the development of Japanese fiction. Fujimura was also a founder of the journal *Kokugo to Kokubungaku*. Politically, the article is quite striking as Fujimura proclaimed that democratic systems were endemic to Japan, found in both the ancient emperor system and the Meiji (1868–1912) period. These stand in contrast to "warlike" and "militaristic" ideals, presumably referring not only to the early twentieth century but also to the long period of warrior rule in medieval and early modern Japan. By identifying examples of democratic systems in antiquity, Fujimura linked the postwar democratic state with a Japanese mythical tradition and an idealized past. He also cemented a connection between the *demos* and the state, ultimately hoping that an "independent democratic and peaceful state" would someday be achieved (Fujimura 1946). In the same vein, Fujimura suggested that one cause of Japanese defeat in World War II was the willful rejection of ideological engagement with the world. He stated in the opening of his essay that Japan "over relied on the spirit of the nation's founding, ignored the prevailing trends in the world, and blindly proceeded down an isolationist path" (Fujimura, 1946). These "prevailing trends" referred to none other than democracy.

The claim that isolationist tendencies had doomed Japan to both imperial expansion and wartime defeat was repeated in Hisamatsu Sen'ichi's "Kokubungaku ni tai suru hansei to jikaku" (Reflections and Realizations about National Literature), which appeared in the same issue as Fujimura 1946. Hisamatsu, while significantly younger than Fujimura, still constituted the "old guard" to scholars like Odagiri and Nagazumi. Hisamatsu finished his Ph.D. in 1934 at Tokyo Imperial University and was appointed to the faculty at the same university shortly thereafter. His research focused on Japanese poetry, especially the ancient, eighth-century poetry collection *Man'yōshū* (Collection of Myriad Poems), and over the course of his career, that study grew to cover premodern Japanese poetry as a whole. Hisamatsu also oversaw the creation of *Kokutai*

no hongi; presumably Hisamatsu handled the use of canonical Japanese literature in the text, that is, the incorporation of mythical tradition into fascist propaganda. Hisamatsu's support for Japanese imperial expansion and war vanished in his 1946 essay, where he repeated the same refrain as Fujimura, noting that "[National literature must], along with explaining literary qualities based on Japaneseness, that is to say, on the quality of being a national, make clear the universality and the worldly qualities of literature" (Hisamatsu 1946).[6] This dual thrust: a focus on the particularities of Japanese literature and a simultaneous cognizance of world literature and worldly trends, became a focal point for the old guard of Japanese literature scholars in the aftermath of World War II.[7]

The talk about reflections and new directions provides important context for Odagiri and Nagazumi's complaints about the state of the study of Japanese literature after surrender. Even though Fujimura, Hisamatsu, and others suggested that they were turning over a new leaf, the perception that their academic work lacked subjectivity and a modern consciousness persisted, and the criticism from their younger peers did not abate. The most straightforward reason that critique of scholarship on traditional Japanese literature continued despite the course corrections proposed by the old guard scholars was that these corrections were in fact not new or novel in the least. In June of 1942, Fujimura oversaw a special edition of *Kokubungaku kaishaku to kanshō* on "The Creation of Greater East Asia and the Ideals for a New National Literature" that had proposed none other than greater integration of Japanese national literature into a new world order (Fujimura, ed., 1942). The unique spirit of the Japanese nation that had undergirded Fujimura's application of traditional Japanese literature as wartime propaganda was the same unique spirit that he associated with peace and democratic ideals after the war ended. As Sasanuma (2012) has noted, the battlefield exhorta-

6 Yasuda (2002) provides a biographical sketch of Hisamatsu, including his shifting positions in the aftermath of the defeat.

7 As might be expected, it was precisely this period in which Comparative Literature emerged as a discipline for the first time in Japan. In October 1948, Kokugo to Kokubungaku did a special edition on "Comparative Literature." This was followed, in September 1949, in the periodical Kokubungaku kaishaku to kanshō, which issued a special edition titled "World Literature and Japanese Literature." A periodical devoted to comparative literature and a scholarly association appeared shortly thereafter. Scholars of Chinese literature had an outsized influence on the nascent discipline in Japan.

tions of national literature were simply exchanged with application of peace and democracy to the spirit of the Japanese nation. Yasuda (2002) has extensively compared Hisamatsu's pre- and postwar positions and similarly identified continuity for both the role of local customs and the character of the Japanese people. Tsuboi (2001) has proposed that for academics, shifting their output to conform from the pre-war censorship regime to the postwar GHQ press code meant replacing the national polity with national literature itself, such that their signified, Japanese tradition, could be preserved intact.

In any case, the semantic shifts and intellectual acrobatics of mainstream scholars of traditional Japanese literature did little to convince Odagiri, Nagazumi, and the other younger scholars who stepped forward after the war to condemn these superficial claims of change. As Nagazumi put it, "maybe what it means to be a scholar of national literature is that you adjust your walking pace to the circumstances," pivoting from support of the war to avoidance of responsibility for its devastation (Nihon bungaku 1946). Odagiri noted, in the same vein, that national literature scholars were "feudal" in mindset, that is to say, they strictly followed orders from above, as opposed to "modern" scholars who possessed subjectivity and could thereby "read literature as literature" (Nihon bungaku 1946).

Odagiri and his fellow postwar symposium participants were not the first to criticize national literature scholarship for lacking subjectivity, and placed awkwardly between the fierce young critics and the old guard was Saigō Nobutsuna, the most influential scholar of ancient Japanese literature in the postwar era. Saigō was educated during the war at Tokyo Imperial University, originally studying English literature. But, under the influence of Araragi-school poet Saitō Mokichi, Saigō was drawn to the eighth-century *Man'yōshū*, the oldest poetry collection in the Japanese tradition.[8] After the war, Saigō participated in the Literature and Politics Debates, and also continued his study of eighth-century Japanese classics, especially *Man'yōshū* and *Kojiki*, ultimately publishing over twenty books and dominating the postwar

8 On Mokichi's adaptation of the *Man'yōshū* for modern readers, see Shinada (2014).

study of ancient Japanese literature. Saigō was the same age as Odagiri, both slightly older than Nagazumi and the other symposium members, Saigō's training at Tokyo Imperial University undoubtedly put him in contact with Hisamatsu, and when Saigō broke onto the academic scene in the early 1940s, he did so in the journal associated with that institution, *Kokugo to Kokubungaku*.

Saigō's earliest critical work addressed the early modern scholar of traditional Japanese literature Motoori Norinaga (1730–1801), and there Saigō thinly hid his Marxist aspirations (Sagiō, 1943). Saigō argued that Norinaga's approach to reading and understanding ancient Japanese literature was characterized by hermeneutics and positivism, and could be labeled as "documentary" in nature. The documentary quality of Norinaga's work meant that while it was a substantial departure from the rationalist modes of interpretation common among Confucian scholars of Norinaga's era, it faced its own limitations of empiricism and personal experience. While Norinaga's scholarship had some level of "subjective, human self-awareness," its scope was strictly personal, and could not expand or develop into a larger grasp of general human subjectivity. This limitation also meant that Norinaga was unable to produce rational explanations for phenomena occurring beyond the individual level, such as society and culture.[9]

Saigō's critique of Norinaga was directed not only at early modern scholarship, but at his 1943 situation as well. Saigō invoked farmers, whose lifestyle he suggested as being the closest vestige of early modern livelihood still active in Japan in the early twentieth century. Despite the increasing rationalization and efficiency of agricultural production, this lagging industry was dominated by tenant farmers obsessed with their own productive capacity, which both limited the potential agricultural output of the nation but also prevented famers from realizing their own capacity to be civic individuals engaged in society. A more clarion, Marxist imperative for instilling class consciousness was out of the question for an academic article in 1943 Japan, but critically, Saigō

9 On Norinaga's epistemology and its limits, see Felt (2023). On Norinaga's construction of meaning for reading the Japanese classics, see Burns (2003).

indicated that this failure to develop a self was not limited to farmers but applied to the older generation of scholars: Fujimura, Hisamatsu, and others, whose hermeneutic and documentary mode of scholarship had changed little from that of Norinaga. Saigō's claim was especially pertinent given the 1940's zeitgeist of "Overcoming Modernity;" Hisamatsu had proposed a "new kokugaku" that would use traditional Japanese literature as proof for an ideology of Japanese intellectual superiority, and Saigō's critique noted that there was little daylight between this "new kokugaku" and its early modern forebearer.[10] Rather, Saigō emphasized the development of the farmer into a civic individual with a social conscience. In keeping with the times, Saigō framed Japan as the leader of Asia, and so his critique was not incompatible with wartime doctrine, and he never issued a call for revolution, though he advocated that research on traditional Japanese literature should have a social consciousness.

In the immediate postwar period, Saigō added the problem of the ethnic nation to his existing critique. In Fujimura's 1946 "New Directions in National Literature," Saigō's contribution was a short essay titled "Nihonteki to iu koto ni tsuite no hansei: kokubungaku no atarashii shuppatsu ni sai shite" (Reflections on What it Means to Describe Something as Japanese: A New Departure for National Literature) (Saigō, 1946b). There, Saigō claimed that the biggest issue in the study of Japanese literature was the notion of "Japaneseness:" the habit of literature scholars to assert that such-and-such a literary work expresses Japaneseness. He named several thematic motifs: *masurao* (manliness), *mono no aware* (pathos), *sabi* (loneliness, from *wabi-sabi*) and works of Japanese literature from ancient to early modern. He then suggested that if each of these works and motifs expresses "Japaneseness," then the term was essentially meaningless. Saigō also historically grounded his critique, noting that the tendency towards overly broad generalization went back to Haga Yaichi, one of the founders of modern Japanese literary study. Instead, Saigō proposed that the identification of Japaneseness needed to be historically grounded and linked to stages of societal development, again reflecting the influence of Marx. The "universality" and

10 On Overcoming modernity, see Harootunian (2002).

"world literature" conceptions that appeared in the 1946 writings of older scholars like Fujimura and Hisamatsu were absent in Saigō 1946b. Rather, Saigō suggested that within historical factors, there must be some identifiable typology that could be applied to Japanese literature that would distinguish it from Indian, Chinese, or European literature. And again, Saigō repeated the refrain that the study of Japanese literature in his era was no different from early modern scholarship. This could only be resolved by a "self-revolution" that would produce a new state of heart and mind in the Japanese people.

In 1948, Saigō republished some of his prewar criticism of early modern scholarship, but at this juncture, the problem of the ethnic nation identified in his 1946 essay did not feature prominently (Saigō, 1948).[11] Instead, Saigō removed references to Japan as being the leader of Asia and blamed traditional Japanese literature scholars for their responsibility in the development of ultra-nationalist sentiments. He diagnosed this condition as existing from the Meiji period, the era when Japan first modernized, and claimed that the field of traditional Japanese literature had been created to serve the state; it was not the product of scholarly investigation by civically minded individuals operating free of state interference. Echoing the critique of Odagiri and Nagazumi, Saigō explained that the study of traditional Japanese literature lacked the conception of a modern, civic self, and instead was simply a tool used by the state. Furthermore, traditional Japanese literature had functioned to hold back Japanese modernization. However, this modern self was not particular to Japan, but rather a generalized consciousness capable of recognizing the contradictions of capitalism and realizing itself as part of a social class.

Perhaps the reason that Saigō did not interject a discussion of the ethnic nation more directly into his rewritten critique of early modern study of Japanese mythical tradition was that the war had made the topic exceptionally thorny. For the older scholars with whom Saigō disagreed, the broad application of Japanese uniqueness to traditional literature

11 Saigō republished (Saigō, 1948) in 1965 as *Kokugaku no hihan: hōhō ni kan suru oboegaki*; this version ran through six editions, the final in 1989. On the difference between the 1965 version and the 1948 version, see Ōsumi (2013).

was an area identified as continuity, a place whereby Japanese mythical tradition could get a new set of clothes. The locus of mythical tradition, formerly fixed around the concept of a national polity or body politic, could be broadened to include not only the state and emperor but also the people and some underlying notion of Japanese spirit. As Hisamatsu proclaimed himself in 1946, "Our country has 2,600 years of history, and a unique national polity is consistent throughout that time. We also have a unique nationality and a unique national spirit" (Hisamatsu, 1946). But for younger, Marx-influenced critics who associated the ultra-nationalism of the wartime ethos with a failure to modernize and inability to form a modern subjectivity, it was unavoidable to think that it was Japanese tradition itself that had somehow held back Japan's developmental progress. Saigō's suggestion that traditional literature scholarship that invoked Japaneseness needed to historically ground the term was useful for studying earlier incantations of society. However, as put forth by Saigō, it did not explain what it would mean to be Japanese going forward or address whether Japanese tradition could continue to exist without putting the state and society at risk for falling into regressive, feudal thinking once more.

The dilemma between the ethnic nation and modernity was addressed most directly by Takeuchi Yoshimi (1910–1977), a scholar of Chinese literature known especially for his translations of Lu Xun, his support of Mao Zedong and the PRC, and his criticism of the 1960 US-Japan Security treaty, which kept the US military stationed in Japan. His 1951 article "The Ideology of the Modern and the Problem of the Ethnic Nation" notes, with plentiful examples, "with the defeat, the predominant thinking has been that ethnic nationalism is an evil," so much so that some critics even advocated abolishing the Japanese language entirely (Takeuchi, 1951, tr. Allen 2018). However, Takeuchi argues that this standpoint, while natural given the excesses of war, was fundamentally untenable. For Takeuchi, a simple, fundamental sense of ethnic nationalism was a profound feature of the human person. This fundamental ethnic nationalism was then distorted by modernity. In the case of Japan, the distortion was also warped, in that it did not produce a revolutionary consciousness. Clearly Takeuchi had the PRC in mind as an

example of a correct, contrasting ethnic nationalism, and in regard to literature, was focused on Lu Xun, the author at the center of his academic work. Takeuchi excoriates the Japanese left and the Japanese Communist Party for a double failure. Before Japanese fascism attained supremacy, Japanese communists had ignored the ethnic nation and focused on class, a move whose practical effect was the suppression of the ethnic nation. After the war, Japanese communists either shunned dealing with the ethnic nation or bluntly applied a Chinese model of the ethnic nation to Japan that did not fit. Most importantly, in Takeuchi's view, it was "impossible to have a revolution not rooted in ethnic traditions" (Takeuchi, 1951). Takeuchi distinguishes, in his semantics, between "nationalism," derived from English and written using the Japanese syllabary, and "ethnic nation," a Japanese word written using Chinese characters. Effecting a social revolution in Japan required literature that spoke to the "ethnic nation" without falling into "nationalism."

1951 also confronted Japanese academics in a very different fashion than the immediate postwar period. The American occupiers, initially hailed as liberators by imprisoned leftists, had thoroughly soured on Japanese communism following the establishment of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in 1948, the victory of the Chinese Communist Party in 1949, and the outbreak of war in Korea. The Supreme Commander for Allied Forces coordinated with the Japanese government and Japanese corporations to purge thousands of employees suspected of harboring communist sympathies. The Japanese Communist Party (JCP) split into two factions over dissenting reactions to Stalin's Cominform, which had criticized the Japanese Communist Party for pursuing a peaceful, democratic revolution under American occupation. Takeuchi's essay bolstered the claim of one JCP faction, the *Shokanha* or "Opinions" faction, because it retained an emphasis on the ethnic nation, that is, on Japanese particularity, that served as a foundation for the faction's rejection of Cominform criticism. In truth, that rejection was short-lived, but as Sasanuma (2012) has noted, in 1950–51, the *Shokanha* was invested in the notion that the ethnic nation, at the national level, existed before modernity.

In the same issue as Takeuchi's "The Ideology of the Modern and the Problem of the Ethnic Nation," Saigō wrote a brief article on the challenges posed by the ethnic nation for literature. (Saigō, 1951a). Saigō's target was modern Japanese literature, which he claims had produced numerous excellent works but nothing truly worldly. This he attributed to a gap between the elites, who were influenced by outside ideas and cosmopolitan trends, and the people, with whom rested the characteristics of ethnic nationality. Since Lu Xun and Pushkin maintained a connection with the people, China and Russia were able to produce a national literature that overcame both feudalism and capitalism. However, in Japan, such a literature was never realized.

For the study of traditional Japanese literature, the suggestion that a more fundamental and natural sense of the ethnic nation existed before modernity created an opening for left-leaning scholars of national literature to rehabilitate both traditional literature and Japanese tradition itself. Saigō was a key figure at this junction. Already, Saigō had claimed that the problem with the ethnic nation in the study of traditional Japanese literature was that literature scholars applied the term too broadly and without proper historical context. Takeuchi's simple and fundamental "ethnic nation" could equate with Saigō's Japaneseness if Saigō could identify, historically, when, where, and how this "ethnic nation" came into being and the manner of its historical development. Saigō's first published books had focused more narrowly on single periods in Japanese literature: his 1946 *Kizoku bungaku to shite no Man'yōshū* (*Man'yōshū* as Aristocratic Literature) overturned the hypothesis that the eight-century poetry collection *Man'yōshū* was comprised of popular literature by people of all social classes (Saigō, 1946a). Saigō's 1948 *Kokugaku no hihan* (A Critique of National Learning) was a rewrite of his prewar appraisals of early modern scholarship. But in 1951, Saigō cast a much broader net with *Nihon kodai bungaku shi* (A History of Ancient Japanese Literature, hereafter referred to as *History*). Of Saigō's early writings, this book was the most influential and popular, and it was republished in standalone form in 1963, 1996, and 2005 and as Volume Seven of Saigō's collected works in 2011. He published several other long durée studies in the 1950s, including one

co-authored with Nagazumi, but it was in *History* that Saigō first tried to rehabilitate Japanese mythical tradition.

The 1951 edition of *History* began with an introduction that built on Saigō's arguments about the role of antiquity as a repository for a primeval ethnic nation, with literature functioning as a repository of tradition. This paradigm was not unique to Japan, and Saigō noted that Goethe and Schiller both looked to antiquity in their own work to address the paradoxical atomization associated with individual existence in a civil society. In Japan, Saigō looked to early modern scholars of traditional Japanese literature, Motoori Norinaga and Kamo no Mabuchi, whose study of ancient literature was also grounded, according to Saigō, in the contradiction of individual and society. The reason that antiquity, whether in Germany or Japan, had the potential to overcome this contradiction of modernity is that the ancient period is the precise moment that ancient aristocrats, the first elites, were created out of an original classless society. Direct experience with antiquity through literature made it possible to identify the "secret of eternity," that is, the abiding characteristics of the ethnic nation. Early modern scholars, and the modern scholars whose methods Saigō criticized as identical to their early modern forebearers, were unable to fully commune with this ethnic ethos due to the contradictions of modern society. However, in the postwar era, a new socialist potential made it possible to resolve these contradictions and reintegrate the individual with their society.

Saigō's introduction also included a discussion of literary genre, which he identified as the critical feature for historically seating literary development, and explained why he applied a long durée analysis. Saigō posited that literature, while written by elites after these figures had arisen from an original classless society, expressed relationships of societal domination and revealed class identity through the mediation of genre. For Saigō, genre reflected the form by which an individual expresses their freedom and resists societal constraints, or even enunciates class conflict. As society developed along historically prescribed lines, literature adopts new generic, more complex forms in turn. At a given historical moment, a single dominant genre, or, because genre arises out

of relations of domination, a single genre of domination, was the best measure of literary development. But while what Saigō called "class moments" precipitate changes in genre and literary expression, there is also an "eternal," a characteristic that runs across multiple historical genres. To identify this eternal is to identify the ethnic characteristics of the nation, the force and energy that arose from the contradictions between individual and society, but also the source for future revolution. In the case of Japan, this ethnic consciousness derived from the resistance of ideological domination by foreign and cosmopolitan ideas, and recalls a return to a primordial, agrarian community that existed before local elites emerged to dominate it. Saigō's target historical period for this study focused on the periods that he suggests exhibit this elite resistance, from the late seventh to late eleventh centuries CE.

The framework Saigō outlined in the introduction to *History*, which prescribed a critical role to Japanese traditional fiction, has deep resonances with 1951, the year of its publication. Still under Allied occupation, Japan signed the first US-Japan Security treaty and the San Francisco Peace Treaty in September. The treaty allowed the US to keep military bases on Japanese soil, which could be used at US discretion without consultation of their Japanese hosts. While the treaty set the terms for the end of Allied occupation of most of the archipelago, it also converted Japan into the forward station of American imperialism. The Japanese Communist Party, in disarray, still held out hope that socialist revolution could be achieved in Japan, hopes that pervaded until the October 1952 election, in which the JCP lost all 35 of its seats in parliament. Which is to say, when Saigō was writing in 1951, Japan was at a crossroads, with participation in the American capitalist system at the cost of sovereignty in one direction and socialist revolution in the other. Saigō's *History* was intended to identify the characteristic of the Japanese ethnic nation that would enable a Lu Xun or a Pushkin to emerge, presumably in the context of a social revolution akin to those in China and Russia. Saigō cast the Liberal Party, established in 1950, as the dominant elites, and their cooperation with the American authorities and embrace of market capitalism was yet another "class moment." However, the abiding ethos of the ethnic nation was resistance to domination by foreign ideas, and

this ethos would provide the energy for revolution.

In the body of *History*, Saigō summarized ancient Japanese literature in three genre-based sections: epic poetry, lyric poetry, and fiction. The first of these, epic poetry, originated in an "Heroic Age," likely inspired by Hector Munro Chadwick's 1912 *The Heroic Age*. In Japan, this age was epitomized in several eighth-century textual products, including *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki*. Before these texts were written, the actual heroes emerged as figures, and they were then preserved in oral tradition. For Saigō, the hero signified the formation of individuality: the hero is a distinct ego. The emergence of heroes also signaled the departure from a communal primitive society into one with a central authority that would ultimately coalesce into a state. The large tombs on the Japanese archipelago dating from the third to sixth centuries evoked this moment for Saigō. Heroes, because they emerged from the community of primeval society, encapsulated its virtues and values, and examination of these figures could reveal important features of antiquity. Unfortunately, in the case of Japan, the exploits of these heroes were never recorded in formal epic poetry. *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki*, Saigō noted, were produced by the imperial court, and so the heroic figures in the text were never able to create their own destinies like Achilles or Odysseus. Rather, they were always ultimately made subservient to the logic of imperial governance.

The second era, lyric poetry, reflected a historical age in which the formation of state administration and societal features encouraged a counter development of interiority. In the case of Japan, this corresponded with the end of the sixth century, when large burial mounds began to be built in several of the major polities of the archipelago. The mounds demonstrate extensive societal organization as well as rigid class differentiation, and when these polities merged and absorbed each other, they ultimately created the ancient Japanese state. Chinese poetry was the dominant genre for poetic expression among the elite of this society, and the vernacular poetry collection *Man'yōshū* demonstrated a native resistance to the colonizing and cosmopolitan influence of China. The poems in this vernacular collection and the formal qualities of their

expression arose from popular songs. At the same time, they were composed in the repressive environment of the ancient Japanese state which fomented a spirit of individual, as opposed to class, subjectivity.

Saigō's final era of ancient literature was the age of fiction. Japan has a very long tradition of prose fiction, and the late tenth-century *Tale of Genji* is usually appraised as its zenith. Often touted as the world's first novel due to the interiority and psychological depth of its characters, *Genji*, according to Saigō, was the product of a society in which the elites, divorced from the countryside, which was the locus for their primeval ethnic nationality, were filled with romantic longing. The contradictions imposed by the early Japanese state, in which a cadre of elites extracted resources from the far-off countryside, resulted in reflection and awakening of the inner self, which was then expressed using prose. Critically, for Saigō, this expression was voiced by the women of ancient Japan. The men, steeped in Chinese learning and often writing in Chinese verse, were overly influenced by foreign culture and ideas and unable to tap into their native form of expression. Women, largely writing in vernacular Japanese, were the creative engine channeling popular legends into written form during the age of prose.

In the century after the writing of *The Tale of Genji*, the disintegration of the Japanese state and the elite strata of individuals who ruled it brought an end to the ancient period whose literature Saigō takes as his investigative target. In the following medieval period, popular literary forms supplanted elite literature, which Saigō takes as an endorsement of the enduring power that popular, and ethnic, forces bear. Medieval literature was, in Saigō's telling, evinced by the *Anthology of Tales from the Past*, a collection of Buddhist tales aimed at a popular audience, and in the *Tales of the Heike*, with which Japan at last had a true warrior epic.

Saigō's claim that ancient elites inspired by foreign and cosmopolitan ideas resulted in the inability of modern Japanese literature to achieve a self-consciousness flew in the face of intellectual historians at the time. The orthodox argument among Japanese Marxist historians in the

1950s and 1960s was that Japan had failed to affect a revolution and instead tipped into ultranationalism because of vestiges of feudalism that remained after the 1868 Meiji Restoration that began Japan's modernization process. More pointedly, intellectual energy tended to focus on why these vestiges had remained and whether the short period before the establishment of the Tokugawa Shogunate in 1603 constituted a reprieve from feudalism, a moment that a transition to capitalism could have been achieved but failed. This also provided an intellectual framework for Marxist-influenced scholars of traditional Japanese literature to criticize traditional literature's premodern, arresting characteristics. Saigō's alternative hypothesis destigmatized Japanese premodernity and created an opportunity for him to add value to traditional Japanese literature in the context of a national popular literature corpus. Of course, Saigō's call to resist foreign intellectual domination also referred to the Allied occupation and the American push to cement market capitalism in Japan.

2 Connecting Tradition to Myth and Ritual

Saigō's writings in the early 1950's received a mixed reception. Scholars from the old guard expressed hope and promise in response to Saigō's research, perhaps because Saigō had found an effective way to preserve the study of traditional Japanese literature and the idea of Japanese ethnic uniqueness. Hisamatsu (1952) reviewed Saigō's 1951 *History* with praise. Hisamatsu himself was very invested in the relationship between regionalism and ethnic identity, and Saigō's focus on the connection between socio-historical factors and literature was described by Hisamatsu as both fresh and analytically sound. Hisamatsu agreed both with Saigō's partition of ancient literature into epic poetry, lyric poetry, and prose, and with Saigō's claim that dominant genres reflected particular socio-historical conditions. Strangely, Hisamatsu did not say anything about the marked Marxist influence in Saigō's approach, which evaluated literature primarily in terms of class struggle. Hisamatsu mentioned that he did not agree with all of Saigō's points, but he did not identify the actual items on which he dissented.

A more critical appraisal appeared in a Japanese-language review by the American scholar of Japanese literature Donald Keene. In 1954, Saigō published another long durée history of Japanese literature with Nagazumi and Hirosue Tamotsu. In this co-authored volume, Saigō was responsible for ancient Japanese literature, Nagazumi for medieval, and Hirosue for early modern. Keene reviewed Saigō's contributions to the 1954 work, and he referred multiple times to Saigō's 1951 *History* in order to address shared problems across the two histories. The general thrust of Keene's review stressed "objective" readings in a traditionally modern vein. To Keene, the fact that traditional Japanese literature had been appropriated by the Japanese right during the war and, in the postwar, by the Japanese left in search of an ethnic nation, meant that an objective view of Japanese literature was called for, lest Japanese traditions be doomed to interpretations and left with no meaning of their own (Keene 1954).

Keene's critique recalled Saigō's characterization of wartime study of traditional Japanese literature as overly focused on documentary scholarship; Keene argued that an objective view was required in order to understand both the worldliness and the uniqueness of traditional Japanese literature. Keene also took Saigō to task for not clearly stating the position against which he argued, and Keene chose Saigō's use of "ethnic nation" to illustrate his objection. This phrase, Keene noted, had changed meaning between its wartime, ultranationalist meaning and Saigō's socialist meaning, and since Saigō did not identify this difference, the significance of his critique was occluded. Keene's push for objective interpretation also signaled a conviction that Saigō's readings were overdetermined by his political leanings. Though Saigō purported to discuss aesthetic factors, Keene pointed out that the word "arts" is nearly absent from the text while "ethnic nation," "contradiction," and "feudalism" appear five or six times per page. The greatest contradiction, Keene asserted, was that Saigō claimed that Sei Shōnagon's tenth-century *The Pillow Book* was "spiritually crippled" because of the author's pejorative view of commoners. Perceptively, however, Keene observed that in truth Saigō did not hate this book, but was rather letting his political convictions determine his interpretive stance. A more pos-

itive review by Okabe Masahiro followed Keene's, and Okabe similarly suggested that Saigō's reading of Sei Shōnagon was overdetermined (Okabe, 1954).

Saigō forcefully responded to Keene in the August 1954 edition of *Bungaku* in a nearly complete rejection of every aspect of Keene's critique (Saigō, 1954). Noting that his problem with Keene was "not in the details," but in his fundamental understanding of literature, Saigō deployed Keene's 1953 *Japanese Literature* to illustrate that many of Keene's critiques were hypocritical. Keene's complaint that Saigō overused the word "ethnic nation" was matched by Keene's overuse of "genius," for example. More pointedly, Saigō noted that Keene's discussion of Japanese poetry omitted all poetry written before the tenth century and identified the first anthology of court poetry, the *Collection of Poems Old and New* (Kokin wakashū, c. 905), as the beginnings of Japanese verse. To Saigō, this was a travesty, and he sarcastically savages Keene saying, "Keene's grasp of literature is aristocratic. It is petit-bourgeois. If you don't like me putting it that way, then we can say it is possessed with a quite refined and genteel quality." Perhaps more important, though Saigō does not mention it, is the fact that by starting in the tenth century, Keene's model for literature history erased the ancient period that Saigō had posited as the repository of ethnic Japanese tradition. Saigō also noted that Keene's purported apolitical and objective stance on reading literature apart from class conflict was cheap and shallow. The only favorable comment Saigō had for Keene related to Keene's suggestion that religion was not antithetical to literature, a point that Saigō had made in his coauthored 1954 work. The connection between religion and literature, in the form of myth, would reemerge in Saigō's later work. However, in 1954, Saigō was still quite clearly framing literature history within a Marxist paradigm.

The Marxist paradigm disappeared in 1963, when Saigō published a revised version of *History* that, in his words, was "not a revised version of the earlier edition, but a freshly rewritten one" and that the earlier edition should be discarded (Saigō, 1963). This newer edition was reprinted again in 1996, minus one section on the development of Jap-

anese poetry, and this edition was far more widely circulated than the 1951 edition. A major change is that the socialist language that dominated the 1951 edition was largely removed (Sasanuma 2012). Sasanuma characterizes this act as primarily substitution, with the core material remaining unchanged, but this elides a major shift in the objective of Saigō's work. In his earlier version of *History*, Saigō was in search of the defining features of the Japanese ethnic nation, which he believed were inherited by successive genres of ancient literature. These features would provide the energy and vitality to a future socialist revolution in Japan and the creation of modern Japanese literature. They would also serve as a keystone for resistance to US capitalist imperialism. However, in Saigō's later version of *History*, while the search for the characteristics of the Japanese ethnic nation in ancient literature continued, there was no expectation that it would lead to future social, political, or artistic reforms. Rather, Saigō's objective was to use the understanding of Japanese tradition gleaned from ancient works of literature to both comprehend ancient Japanese literature as a field and to, in a spiritual sense, return to antiquity himself.

Saigō's updated formulation was based on a more critical and reflective application of his 1951 insistence that interpretations of literature, and by extension, of tradition, be historically grounded. Earlier, he had focused on the unique role of antiquity and traditional literature as a resource for apprehending an ethnic spirit that would function as the engine of a socialist revolution. In this sense, and as Keene criticized, Saigō's reading of ancient literature tended towards Marxist overdetermination: the actual contents of a particular work and the spirit of the times for a particular era were unique to Japan, but they also followed a standardized progression from feudalism to capitalism to socialism. In his 1963 *History*, Saigō abandoned this overarching framework and replaced it with one of uncertain historical progression. Both technology and literature continued to advance, Saigō argued, but whether a particular literary work would or would not be read in the future was unknowable, because the standards of reception were continually in flux. Stating that unknown historical conditions in future eras would determine how literature was interpreted was tantamount to admitting

that a revolution might simply not happen.

Saigō's 1963 model of historicity should be distinguished from his earlier 1951 work, from postmodern critique, and from Keene's "objective" scholarship. One keyword, used in both 1951 and 1963, that illustrates these differences is "eternity." In 1951, Saigō proposed identifying a "secret of eternity" through the study of traditional Japanese literature. This secret of eternity referred to the tendency of modern people to look to antiquity and ancient traditions, and Saigō noted parallels between his own work and that of Goethe and Schiller. The rationale for the desire to return was none other than the inevitable contradiction between the paradoxical atomization and inclusion in civil society of the modern individual. The gulf between antiquity and modern life could be bridged using direct experience and an application of the freedom from the paradox of modernity granted by socialism. Saigō noted that his own teacher, Mokichi, approached the world of the eighth century and his idol Kakinomoto no Hitomaro (n.d.–724 CE) through direct experience, i.e. reading Hitomaro's poetry, though Mokichi could not overcome the paradox of modernity to completely grasp the secret of eternity.

In 1963, Saigō instead wrote that the secret of eternity was no secret at all, but rather an illusory trap. Because the standards of reception were continually in flux, the notion of a shared continuity across eras was untenable. The desire to return to an idyllic past, which Saigō noted was not unique to Japan, should itself be the object of study. The true question was not how to return to antiquity or the secret of eternity, but why individuals in a particular moment of modernity paradoxically wished to recall antiquity. Saigō did not attempt to answer this question, but he noted that this approach would be apt for understanding Goethe, Schiller, and even Mokichi, who had a particular vision of antiquity and of Hitomaro. The intense historicization of Saigō's 1963 treatment gestured towards postmodern literary approaches and new historicism. However, Saigō still imagined societal and technological progress; he did not propose the death of meta-narratives. Saigō also criticized the idea that eternal notions of any kind existed within the literary work

itself, a rejection of precisely the sort of objectivity sought by Keene, who proposed that Japanese traditional literature was meaningful as world literature because it addressed eternal and abiding features of the human condition such as love and sacrifice. Saigō's critique on this point also applies to New Criticism. In Saigō's view, theorizing some form of eternity based on the literary work led to metaphysics and away from the work itself, which exists not in a hermetically sealed past, but in-between past and present. Literature history, for Saigō, was a story of historical human engagement, and this story persisted into his own present as well. The other-worldliness of antiquity, while not possible to experience directly, was approachable in imagination as a conversation between past and present.

Saigō also introduced a new concept, myth, in his 1963 *History*. Saigō suggested that myth was founded on the belief, for ancient man, that nature was conquered using magic. The discussion of myth replaces a long commentary on the origins and role of genre in the 1951 *History*, where Saigō identified genre as a product of the historical circumstances and system of domination in place in a given historical period. The word "myth" does not appear in his 1951 writing at all. In 1963, Saigō instead argued that myth and its associated beliefs with regards to magic, ritual, and nature provided the foundation for literary genres. When this foundation crumbled, then the associated genres disappeared as well. Identifying genre as a product of historical circumstances was held in common between the 1951 and 1963 version of *History*, but the Marxist language of social class and domination was replaced by the English social anthropological model of myth as an alternative to science and a mode of conquering nature. While not explicitly identified by Saigō, given his background in English literature and the popularity in early twentieth-century Japan of James G. Frazer (1854–1951), there is ample reason to suggest that Saigō was drawing directly on Frazer, Edward B. Tylor (1832–1917), and others in his vision of myth. More importantly, the pronounced role of participant observation in English social anthropology was a natural fit for Saigō's longstanding interest in direct experience as a bridge or vehicle to antiquity. Saigō imagined himself as an ancient person and attempted to read the Japanese classics

from the perspective of their own historical times.

Saigō's application of social anthropology, which was introduced to Japan prior to World War II, also bears traces of influence from postwar structuralist anthropology, although not enough to seriously consider Saigō as a structuralist. As Hirafuji (2004) has shown, the influence of Levi-Strauss in Japan for Japanese mythology was minimal. This is itself striking considering Levi-Strauss included Japanese myths in his analysis, a distinction that sets Levi-Strauss apart from other major European postwar scholars of mythology. Saigō's work in the 1970's incorporated analysis of logical structures, noted in Go (1997). However, Saigō made no attempt to abstract the interrelations or structures that he identified in ancient Japan to constant or universal laws. Rather, these structures were historically particular to ancient Japan and marks of a unique Japanese antiquity. Furthermore, while the structural anthropology of Levi-Strauss often stressed continuity, co-existence, or persistence of structures, Saigō focused rather on the changes in structure, especially political structure, and identified corresponding changes in linguistic and literate expression.

Saigō's 1963 discussion of myth centered on a new section containing an extensive discussion of masks and coming-of-age ceremonies. Placed at the beginning of the first chapter, this addition essentially constitutes a new beginning for traditional Japanese literature. In his 1951 *History*, the first chapter, on the Heroic Age, briefly touched on "primitive society," the wellspring of Heroic Age literature. But in 1963, discussion of masks and ritual ceremonies constituted a more intensive focus on the historical particularities of primitive society and what Saigō called "primitive literature," referring to oral tradition. In the Japanese case, Saigō linked the global prevalence of masks and coming-of-age ceremonies to the utopian land of Tokoyo, an other world that appears in numerous Japanese myths, to the courtship of the creator gods Izanagi and Izanami, and to other Japanese mythical narratives. He also suggested connections with the material culture of the Jōmon (10,000 BCE–300 BCE) period of Japanese history, connecting archeological discovery, mythical narrative, and anthropological observation of world

cultures. Most importantly, Saigō argued that some relics of coming-of-age ceremonies continued to be relevant in Japanese tradition. This resembled the "ethnic energy" discussed in his work from the 1950's, but instead of being an a priori object whose existence was determined by a Marxist framework, in 1963, Saigō inveighed empirical evidence to support his claims.

The ultimate purpose of Saigō's extended discussion of masks and coming-of-age ceremonies was to demonstrate a new thesis that ritual was the origin of science and art, including myth, epic poetry, and lyric poetry. Though no specific figure is cited, Saigō referred generally to the "findings of anthropologists," and his discussion of magic, nature, religion, ritual, science, and art has undeniable influences from English social anthropology. In Saigō's own reading, magic was related to systems of exchange and the creation of a community, and it was connected to mankind's productive engagement with nature, not its desire to conquer it or allay its fears about it. Primitive communities applied magic, as ritual, to impose their desires onto the natural world. This imposition, rooted in ritual, provided the socio-historical context that gave birth to myths, epic poetry, and lyric poetry. The respective differences between world cultures were derived from the particulars of that socio-historical context.

The role of myth in Saigō's new formulation was as a three-part bridge, connecting the oral traditions of the primitive period, the ancient period in which these myths were recorded as literature, and the modern period of his own time. The interpretation of ancient literature, written in the eighth century, was guided by the purported desire of its author's memories of the past and their desire to return to it. Similarly, the genres of ancient literature developed by progressively shedding elements of antiquity, creating a legacy of what was lost. Saigō attempted, using imagination, to understand ancient literature by placing himself in the subject position of its authors, informed by their socio-historical contexts. However, this is also a doubling of Saigō's own longing. As he himself noted in 1951, from Schiller to Goethe, a desire to return to antiquity pervaded the modern consciousness. The premodern author

longing for antiquity was a double for Saigō, and the longing for antiquity, in the form of rituals that bound the ancient community, was a projection of Saigō's own longing for a Japanese tradition that could unite the ethnic Japanese.

Saigō's final chapter, on fiction, was rewritten in the 1963 version of *History* to establish the development of genre as a particular response to the loss of tradition. Saigō devoted an entire new chapter to this period, focused on women's society, which identified the socio-historic factors that led to the development of fiction writing by many prominent female authors of the period. Unlike the primitive era, in the ancient period, women were pushed out of positions of social control. However, in Japan, Saigō noted, this process was not as total as in other societies, and women played prominent roles in government and the literary arts through the eighth century. By the late tenth century, the apex of women's writing in ancient Japan, women had been totally removed from the political scene, and instead, occupied salons, where they produced works like *The Tale of Genji* and *The Pillow Book* that expressed romantic longing for a lost cultural heritage linking them to the land and agricultural production.

Saigō's new chapter adding historical context to women's writing complemented a revised treatment of *The Pillow Book*. As noted above, and as pointed out by Keene, in his writings from the early 1950s, Saigō completely rejected *The Pillow Book* as the product of an out-of-touch aristocrat with no connection to the ethnic spirit of the age. Its author, Sei Shōnagon, was characterized as mean and spiteful, and the only value of *The Pillow Book* was as a demonstration of the degeneracy of the age (Saigō, 1951). In his 1963 history, the harsh words for Sei Shōnagon were considerably lightened. For example, when Sei Shōnagon deprecated a gentleman, Taira no Narimasa, for having too small a gate for the empress' carriage to pass through, in 1951, Saigō read this as "saying this minor matter was vexing, Sei Shōnagon roundly belittles and mocks Narimasa" (Saigō, 1951). In 1963, he revised the line to, "Sei Shōnagon teases Narimasa, but in doing so her dignity is vividly captured" (Saigō, 1963).

Saigō also adds considerable discussion of how Sei Shōnagon regarded nature. In 1951, these passages demonstrated the limits of her life experience, but in 1963, Saigō suggested that they reflected an ethnic tradition associated with polytheistic and agrarian communities like that of ancient Japan. Those societies performed rituals in response to natural phenomena that continued in later eras and influenced the direction and content of literature, even at the highest echelons of the court. In other words, Saigō's much more charitable reading of Sei Shōnagon was possible only through his abandonment of Marxist readings that simply castigated feudal elites and his invocation of myth and ritual as keys to ethnic tradition.

Saigō's conviction that ancient literature was a product of the engagement of past and present is clearly demonstrated when he notes that at the time it was produced, fiction was not regarded as a high genre. Rather, in his own contemporary era, the modern period, fiction rose to prominence as the most sophisticated of genres, and so women's literature from the ancient period attracted high praise and scholarly attention. However, in its own time, it was a reaction to the end and ultimate loss of antiquity. In this sense, Saigō appears to find a resonance between his own work and the writings of female authors around the turn of the first millennium.

3 Conclusion

Saigō's 1963 *History* was a major milestone for the academic study of Japanese literature, but it was far more important for the popular arena, where it provided a new and rehabilitated notion of Japanese mythical tradition for public consumption. The academic, but accessible, tone of the revised *History* made the book a long seller, and it was republished again, with revisions, in 1996, then reprinted in 2005 and 2011. In the academic arena, Saigō's work influenced a generation of scholars who came of age during the so-called "high-growth era," a period of unprecedented economic expansion in Japan. Ultimately, the academic field moved away from longue durée studies such as *History* to more special-

ized examinations of discrete texts. Ironically, this move towards documentary study, from around the 1980s, revived precisely the kind of apolitical study of traditional Japanese literature that Saigō himself had railed against in the 1950s. But even though academic studies moved away from Saigō's expansive style in the treatment of the textual object, at their core, these studies shared Saigō's fundamental assumption that such a thing as "Japanese tradition" existed in Japanese antiquity and was discoverable in ancient literature. In this sense, Saigō's *History* had a profound impact on the field of premodern Japanese literature in the last half of the twentieth century. Perhaps more significantly, in the popular arena, the influence of Saigō's work has continued unabated from 1963, most notably with the republication of his selected works in nine volumes from 2010–2013.

One possible reason behind Saigō's shift between 1951 and 1963 was the political alignment with the United States that Japan adopted in the early 1950s and cemented in 1960. In 1951, the position that Japan would occupy in the new post-WWII order was in flux. In the 1949 general election, the Japanese Communist Party picked up 31 seats to increase its share of the lower house to 35 seats, almost 10%. In the 1952 election, in the wake of the party split, JCP lost all 35 seats. The ratification of the San Francisco Peace Treaty in 1952, and perhaps more significantly, the renewal of the US-Japan Security Treaty in 1960, despite heavy protests, put the writing on the wall for socialist revolution and firmly fixed Japan within a US-led capitalist world order. In response to, or at least within this context, Saigō transformed the notion of the ethnic nation from the energy pulsing through the proletariat into the imaginative fantasy of a bygone world. Put differently, tradition changed from an impulse to advance modernity into an escape from modernity.

Saigō's conversion of Japanese mythical tradition into an escape and alternative to modernity and to modern life under market capitalism suited Japan's own revised image of itself as a racially homogenous ethno-state. Before Japanese surrender, Japan was the center of a far-reaching empire. As Oguma (1995) has demonstrated, the prevailing academic opinion was that the Japanese were a mixed-race nation, and this

perception was a smooth fit for a political state that sought to increasingly bring new nations within its political and economic hegemony. Notably, the pre-surrender perception of the Japanese as a mixed-race nation was also rooted in narratives from traditional Japanese literature, especially *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki*. Stories of various ethnic groups being conquered by legendary warrior-kings paralleled Japan's own imperial expansion. When Saigō wrote his 1951 *History*, Asia was the center of cold war conflict, with the 1949 revolution in China and the 1950–1953 Korean War. By 1963, the situation had stabilized and, much as Japan changed the word for World War II from "Asian War" to "Pacific War," the nation's focus was directed east to its new largest trading partner, the US, and away from Asia. Saigō's discovery of an ethnic Japanese tradition that resisted imported ideologies from China in the ancient period provided the basis for a new Japanese tradition wholly divorced from the Asian continent. It also provided a space for imaginative escape from US domination.

Saigō's rehabilitated Japanese mythical tradition correlated with the commodification of Japanese mythical tradition in a fashion that was unthinkable prior to 1945. During the era of the Japanese empire, the Japanese state mandated a singular, orthodox interpretation of Japanese mythical tradition, and especially Japanese myths, because they related directly to the legitimacy of the ruling emperor. Alternative interpretations were treated as criminal offenses. After the Japanese surrender, as discussed in the first section of this article, there was considerable ambivalence among younger scholars about whether Japanese traditional literature was worth studying at all. Saigō's conversion of antiquity into a source of ethnic particularity fueled by imagination made Japanese mythical tradition malleable and adaptable, and these same characteristics suited the commodification of Japanese mythical tradition. Of course, this applies to Saigō's own written work, which graced both academic journals and publishers as well as the more popularly-targeted pocket library format. The ethnic particularity given in Saigō's portrayal of antiquity formed a natural pair with the best-selling idea of Japaneseness given in the Japanese publication of Ruth Benedict's *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword* and the genre of "theories of Japanese-

ness" (Jp. *nihonjin-ron*) that followed in its wake. Adaptations of Japanese traditional narratives for television, in popular fiction, in comics, and in other media flourished in the high-growth era. While Saigō's legitimation of Japanese mythical tradition as a space of imaginative play and self-doubling was only one piece of this larger commodification phenomenon, the popularity of Saigō's work suggest that amenability to commodification is an important factor in the persistence and rehabilitation of tradition, at least in capitalist societies.

Finally, the doubling used by Saigō continues to play a major role in Japanese perceptions of the past today. Saigō's own work continued to play on the imaginative features of his antiquity, such as *Ancient People and Dreams* (Saigō, 1972) and *Shadow of the Classics* (Saigō, 1979). His extensive work on the *Kojiki* in the 1970s and 1980s, which culminated in a four-volume commentary that is still an authoritative secondary source for *Kojiki* study, was also centered on his self-projection into the past. As he wrote in his *World of the Kojiki* (Saigō, 1967), "what I wanted to do was to live in the world of the *Kojiki*, to inhabit the text." Although this theoretical model is no longer in favor in the academy, the idea of participant observation in antiquity is a critical component of making tradition into shared cultural heritage. Popular adaptations, museum exhibits, and even state intervention all play indispensable roles in sustaining this doubling. For example, the entire capital of Saigō's ancient world, the city of Nara, is now a UNESCO world heritage site, geographically seating over 1,500 acres of Japanese tradition where visitors are encouraged to literally return to antiquity.

While innovation and tradition can work against each other, Saigō and the postwar Japanese case show rather how innovation could rehabilitate, preserve, and create tradition. One clear conclusion is that this process does not operate independently of politico-historical factors. Saigō abandoned using tradition as an engine for socialist revolution when it became clear that a revolution was never going to happen. Similarly, the escapism venue that Japanese mythical tradition became in Saigō's thought was connected to his dislike of American imperialism. At the same time, the escapist role assumed by mythical tradition ironically

became commodified itself, a move that depended on the same adaptable vision of antiquity in Saigō's later work. In this sense, one aspect of a successful innovation is its future adaptability by others, whether by design or by accident. This unpredictable quality recalls Saigō's observation about literature reception in his 1963 *History*: we don't how future generations will appraise tradition, and we must instead study why works from the path have been read the way that they have in particular historical moments. Applying this observation to the question of innovation versus tradition suggests that any answer will need to historicize the meaning and significance of tradition to identify and appreciate how tradition can be reformed, rehabilitated, desacralized, or obviated.

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"Humanism" in Two Acts: Motoori Norinaga, Lorenzo Valla, and the Competing Historiographies of Humanist Modernity

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Abstract

Lorenzo Valla was an Italian thinker and polemicist who is today considered one of the founding figures of humanism, or the reconfiguration of Western society on more rational-secularist principles against the political influence of the Catholic Church. As part of this reconfiguration, Valla advocated critical approaches to the ancient canon, overcoming what Valla saw as the Scholastic corruption of the Latin language and restoring it to its original eloquence. Motoori Norinaga was a Japanese thinker and philosopher of religion and language who is associated with Kokugaku, or the attempt by intellectuals to evince an awareness of Japan as a distinct politico-cultural entity. To do this, Norinaga, like Valla in many ways, advocated critical approaches to the ancient canon, in particular a native Japanese-language (*Yamato kotoba*) reading of old texts written in Chinese characters. Norinaga and other Kokugaku thinkers also wanted to attenuate the sway of Buddhism, Confucianism, and other non-Japanese schools in favor of more Japanese ways of engaging with both the physical and the metaphysical. By eliminating Chinese influences, Norinaga thought, Japan could achieve greater awareness of itself as a country distinct from her continental neighbor. Today, however, while Valla is remembered as an important early humanist, Norinaga (and the Kokugaku intellectual tradition of which he is a part) are sometimes looked at askance in Western histories as a forerunner of twentieth-century "fascism".

Keywords: humanism; Lorenzo Valla; Motoori Norinaga; fascism; pre-modernity; Japan

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“Humanism” in Two Acts: Motoori Norinaga, Lorenzo Valla, and the Competing Historiographies of Humanist Modernity

Lorenzo Valla (1407-1457) was an Italian thinker and polemicist who is today considered one of the founding figures of humanism, or the reconfiguration of Western society on rational-secularist principles against the political influence of the Catholic Church.[1] As part of this reconfiguration, Valla advocated critical approaches to the ancient canon, overcoming what Valla saw as the Scholastic, medieval corruption of the Latin language and restoring it to its original eloquence (see, e.g., Library of Congress, nd). For example, Valla applied textual analysis to the Donation of Constantine, the document purporting to show that the Emperor Constantine (272-337) had ceded authority to the pope.[2] Valla’s conclusion was that the Donation of Constantine was a forgery, a conclusion which modern scholarship has reaffirmed (Ishizaka, 1991, p. 608). While Valla was not anti-religious, he was a proponent of questioning the bases of religious (and also political) authority. For Valla, resetting society on a firm basis required returning to the ancient sources and critically engaging with Western, in particular classical Roman, tradition.

Motoori Norinaga (1730-1801) was a Japanese thinker and philosopher of religion who is associated with Kokugaku, or the Tokugawa era-attempt to evince an awareness of Japan as a distinct politico-cultural

1 A modified version of this paper appeared earlier in Japanese translation. See Morgan (2022). I wish to thank the anonymous Interface reviewers who suggested revisions and the addition of sources and explications.

2 “In [the Donation of Constantine], it was alleged that the Emperor Constantine had recognized the Pope as Christ’s vicar on earth and made all bishops subject to him; that he had bestowed on the Pope the rank and ceremonial dress of an emperor, and on the Roman clergy those of the senate; and that he had made over the imperial palace of the Lateran to the Pope, together with the government of Rome and all Italy.” Davis (1970, p. 135).

entity (Kishimoto, 1965, pp. 3-15; Ienaga et al., 1966, pp. 14-15; Usuda, 1943). To do this, Norinaga, like Valla in many ways, advocated critical approaches to the ancient canon, in particular a native Japanese-language (*Yamato kotoba*) reading of texts written in kanbun, or Chinese characters (see Bilimoria, 2012, p. 16; Iwasawa, 2011). By eliminating the Chinese influence from Japanese culture and intellectual discourse, Norinaga thought, Japan could achieve greater independence and awareness of itself as a country distinct from her continental neighbor. Norinaga was also not anti-religious. He had deeply held religious beliefs and saw his work as, in part, a return to the spiritual fundaments of Japanese civilization. Norinaga thought that by clearing away the overgrowth, as it were, which had accumulated during the long period of Chinese influence in Japan and returning to the true, native Japanese (Yamato) readings of ancient texts, Japan could develop a sense of what is now called "national identity," an awareness of Japan as a country following a linguistic and spiritual path unrelated to continental states such as the Chinese dynasties.[3]

At first glance, Valla and Norinaga appear to have been embarked on similar projects. Both were linguistic reformers. For both, linguistic reform was connected to a reorientation of religious belief. For both, there were distinct political valences to their insistence on older ways of reading and writing language. Both also opened up, at least indirectly, intellectual pathways to participation in government by more than just institutional elites (Matsumoto, 1976, p. 216). While there are many dissimilarities between Norinaga and Valla, in their approach to the ancient texts of their own cultural milieux they were very much alike. And yet, Valla is often seen as a bold opponent to Scholasticism, a champion of truth against the unthinking truisms, linguistic tangles, and historiographical forgeries of his time. Valla as a father of humanism is typical of many of his treatments in current scholarly studies. While he was not embarked on a secularist project by any means, Norinaga, on the other hand, is almost never, as far as I have been able to determine, credited with founding a humanism in Japan.[4]

3 See Muraoka (1957, pp. 220-221).

4 On the variety of meanings of "humanism" in Japanese intellectual life, see Campagnola (2018, pp. 535-559). For a brief review of works by J.G.A. Pocock, Anthony Grafton, and other "humanism"

In fact, while Valla is remembered as an important early humanist, Norinaga, and the Kokugaku with which he is associated, are sometimes looked at askance in Western histories as forerunners of twentieth-century "fascism".[5] This tendency traces back to postwar liberal and prominent political science scholar Maruyama Masao (1914-1996). Maruyama found much to recommend in Norinaga's "optimism" about human nature (Maruyama, 1952, pp. 169-171), finding in this a kind of universalism shared by all (Maruyama, 1998a, pp. 212-213). Maruyama is also not dismissive of one of Norinaga's main themes, namely *mono-no-aware* (on this idea, see the "Motoori Norinaga" section below).[6] But on the larger reading, Maruyama places Norinaga and Kokugaku more broadly in the intellectual development leading to mid-twentieth-century political developments, including fascism (Maruyama, 1952, pp. 268-269; Maruyama, 1998b, pp. 294-298; Maruyama, 1998a, p. 226; Foulk 2016, p. 31, but see also p. 63).[7] In turn, the influence of Maruyama's work on Western scholars, especially in English translation, is profound.

Maruyama is not the only modern researcher to write on Norinaga, to be sure. Scholar of philology and religion Muraoka Tsunetsugu (1884-1946), for instance, rescued Norinaga from historiographical obscurity in the late Meiji era (Mizuno, 2018, p. 81), writing positively about Norinaga and his contributions to Kokugaku thought (Muraoka, 1930, p. 97). However, in doing so, Muraoka opened himself to criticisms by other, later scholars (especially post-Maruyama), who saw Norinaga's conflation of philological scholarship and credulity toward myth as problematic (Mizuno, 2018, p. 89). Intellectual historian Koyasu Nobukuni has been particularly critical of Muraoka. Koyasu saw, in the

historians in the West and the place of humanism in Western scholarship and cultural awareness, see Wang (2008, pp. 492-496).

5 And not only Western histories. Japanese Marxist Karatani Kōjin finds unnerving Bruno Taut's (1880-1938) "affirm[ation]" of Norinaga's views. See Karatani trans. Murphy, 2001, paragraph 29. For glimpses into how Norinaga was viewed inside of anti-modernist circles during the mid Shōwa period, see Koyasu (2008, pp. 89-92, 158-161), and Matsumoto (1976, p. 39). On Kaneko Mitsuharu (1895-1975), see Tankha, 2021, paragraph 46.

6 See Koyasu (1977, pp. 41-51), for an example of how mono-no-aware can function to offset the individual through private emotions in a way I read as similar to some humanists' emphasis on the individual over the organization (see also, e.g., Kamei 1975, p. 234). See also Koyasu (1992, pp. 194-200), Muraoka (1928, pp. 176-181), Nosco (1990), and Flueckiger (2011, p. 14). For a more complex view, see Burns (1992).

7 Maruyama traces much of the trouble through critic Kobayashi Hideo (1902-1983) (Otobe, 2023).

cohort of Japanese intellectual historians of whom the Norinaga specialist Muraoka formed a central part, the historiographical foundations of "the period of Shōwa fascism" (*Shōwa fashizumu ki*) (Koyasu, 2000, p. 114, cf. also pp. 175, 199). In a 1989 essay and 1995 book, Koyasu puzzles over what he calls the "Norinaga problem" (*Norinaga mondai*), invoking what Koyasu sees as related attempts to distinguish Martin Heidegger from his National Socialist sympathies by way of critiquing Muraoka for failing to appreciate the political pitfalls of Norinaga's writings (Koyasu 1995).

On balance, then, Norinaga is often seen as having brought Japan under the sway of dangerous, proto-nationalistic thinking. By the same token, some scholars, both in Japan and in other countries, see Kokugaku as the forerunner to twentieth-century fascism.[8] Norinaga's attempts to reform the written language and to critically investigate the received historiographical wisdom of his day, while considerably more aesthetically committed than those of Valla, are not credited with situating Japan on a trajectory toward a modernity which had made a healthy break with stultifying medieval traditions. Instead, Norinaga is seen as an unfortunate cultural chauvinist, and his Kokugaku as a wrong turn leading, eventually, to the civilizational disaster of the 1930s and 40s.

But why is this the case? If we accept Lorenzo Valla as a founder of humanism and situate him amid the humanistic stirrings of what would become High Modernism in Italy, then we cannot easily exempt him, except perhaps by special pleading, from responsibility for the Italian invasion of Ethiopia and the rise of Benito Mussolini (1883-1945) (although we will be able to enlist Antonio Gramsci (1891-1937) in making our case, as we shall see below). Of course, such a strained causal relationship requires far too much historical flattening, even distortion, to be convincing. Valla did not suggest invading north Africa (although the Roman civilization he lauded was no stranger to that project). He also did not call for a Duce to lord it over the Italians (although, again, Roman antiquity fills in many of the gaps in the argument). Howev-

8 Nationalism also comes in for such a treatment, being linked to one of several Tokugawa schools of thought. See, e.g., George M. Wilson's views on Kita Ikki (1883-1937) and the Mito School, Rangaku, and Jitsugaku, glossed in Pyle, (1971, p. 6).

er, when Western, and especially American, scholars study Japan, they sometimes make an analogous leap, from Norinaga and Kokugaku to intimations of Manchukuo and Pearl Harbor. Valla as humanist, then, but Norinaga and his Kokugaku as darkly prefiguring the Second World War. In this paper, I investigate why two paradigms of humanism have met such different historiographical interpretations.

1 Lorenzo Valla

Lorenzo Valla was born in the first decade of the fifteenth century in Italy, probably Rome (Nauta, 2021). It was a time and place of great intellectual ferment. Valla was raised in a world of religion and politics, and the tension between them. The nephew of a Vatican functionary, Valla was court philologist to Nicholas V (1397-1455) and later apostolic secretary under Calixtus III (1378-1458), and was also widely known as a polemicist and maverick who cut new trails out of what he saw as the sterility of late Scholastic discourse (Kenny, 2010, pp. 492-493); but see also (Celenza, 2004, pp. S66-S67).

On the one hand, given his opposition to Scholasticism, Valla would seem to have been a religious skeptic. For example, he is perhaps most famous today for having used textual analysis to debunk the so-called Donation of Constantine, the eighth- or ninth-century document—a forgery, Valla proved—purporting to effect the Emperor Constantine's ceding of authority ecclesial and secular to the pope (Celenza, 2004, pp. S76-S77). Valla used early humanist philological techniques—later greatly improved by men such as Agostino Steuco (1497-1548) and Angelo Poliziano (1454-1494)—to discredit the so-called Donation.[9] Valla, according to contemporary scholar Maude Vanhaelen, "question[ed] the political, religious and theological ideology of his time" (Vanhaelen, 2015, p. 648).

Valla was not at all anti-religious, though (Blum, 2005, p. 486). For

9 See Delph (1966, pp. 55-77) for a good overview of the controversy surrounding Valla's initial foray into the philological critique of the Donation.

Valla, Vanhaelen continues, the crowning of Constantine "as the first Christian emperor signified the end of authentic evangelism and the start of what Valla saw as the fundamentally wrong union between imperial power (*imperium*) and the Gospel's spiritual message (*evangelium*)" (Vanhaelen, 2015, p. 648). And as Ian Hunter notes in passing, Valla used his knowledge of ancient languages "for confessional purposes," such as in "Valla's unmasking of the Pseudo-Dionysius" (Hunter, 2014, pp. 338-339). Nancy Struever points out that what was important for Valla was not so much his having disproved the Donation of Constantine, as that this overturning of received wisdom was "exemplary of the Humanist discipline that rearranges the hierarchy in the Trivial arts; rhetoric is first, then grammar, then dialectic; here grammar and rhetoric are intricated in the philology that is the instrument of Humanist hermeneutic" (Struever, 2004, p. S49). What Valla was, then, in retrospect and by his own lights at the time, was a humanist (see Barsella, 2004, pp. S121-S122).

Humanism was a complex and multi-valent phenomenon, but most Humanists were united in their skepticism of the Scholastic institutionalism of their day and eager to re-found contemporary society on other bases (see Rabil, 2001, pp. 914-927). Contemporary Italian scholar Marco Sgarbi says that, according to "one school of thought," the Humanists of the Renaissance "were men of letters, textual scholars, and orators, but certainly not philosophers" (Sgarbi, 2011, p. 876). Sgarbi then intervenes in this assessment, introducing a book by Lodi Nauta arguing that Lorenzo Valla was an important Renaissance philosopher in his own right (Sgarbi, 2011, p. 876). Also, although she is speaking of Venice in the 1400s, scholar Virginia Cox argues that "those born in the first three decades of the fifteenth century" comprised the "'second generation of humanistically-educated patricians," heralding a "change in institutional attitudes to humanistic education within the republic [i.e., Venice]" (Cox, 2003, p. 675, citing King, 1986, pp. 225-231).

Valla's focus on language is not at all surprising, then, for language was at the center of the Humanists' project (but see Monfasani, 1989, pp. 309-323, cited also in Marsh, 1997, p. 591). For example, independent

scholar Karin Susan Fester explains that fellow scholar Alan Perreiah understands "late medieval and early Renaissance scholars" to have been seeking "to recover or invent a language that was pure and truthful in the way of Adam's original tongue" (Fester, 2016, p. 112, citing p. 16 in Perreiah). Valla, according to Perreiah, thought that classical Latin, the Latin of Quintilian (ca. 35-100), was "the perfect language" and "indispensable for competent thought" (Fester, 2016, p. 115, citing pp. 43 and 60 in Perreiah).[10] Valla eventually arrived at what Perreiah describes as "essentially a linguistic-determinist conception of thought, language and reality," according to which the "words and grammar of a language *constitute* the concepts that they express" (Fester, 2016, p. 116, citing p. 60 in Perreiah; emphasis in original). Philosopher and intellectual historian Peter A. Redpath also notes that:

> Valla locates the content of abstract general ideas in original linguistic usage. Purportedly, we find original truth in original historical usage. 'For this contains the hidden, or prefigured meaning which transcends the meaning which exists in books.' And original truth grounds all human learning.
>
> (Redpath, nd, np, citing Redpath, 1997, p. 106).[11]

This kind of linguistic investigation was common during and before Valla's time. Erasmus of Rotterdam (1466-1536), for example, "believe[d] in an essential connection of some kind between *res* and *verbum*," although Erasmus also held "to the Platonic view that this connection is always necessarily inadequate, that there can be an approach but never an arrival at complete meaning through human language" (Barnett, 1996, p. 542, citing inter alia Erasmus trans. Fantazzi, 1988, p. 32 and Erasmus 1969, pp. 132, 128-150, 248).[12] For Erasmus, the summative position of the Word, the Logos, the Christ inside and outside of history, rendered human language reflective, at best, of ultimate reality. Like Valla, "Erasmus undeniably saw the task of purifying the material text of Scripture from the contaminations of history as an act of piety, a

10 Quintilian was not the only Roman author lauded by the Renaissance humanists. See, e.g., Leeds (2004, pp. 107-148).

11 On Valla's philological projects, see also Fubini (trans. King, 2003, pp. 36-42).

12 On Christ as Word, or Logos, see Barnett, 1996, p. 550, citing Erasmus (1933, p. 211).

step toward restoring the full capacity of Scripture to act on its readers. He seems to look, sometimes quite literally, for a purer text that dwells beneath the corruptions and ill-conceived corrections visited on the palimpsests with which he worked" (Barnett, 1996, p. 561, citing inter alia Erasmus trans. Mynors and Thomson, 1974, lines 44-55; see also Nauta, 2012, pp. 31-66 and Spade and Panaccio 2019).[13] So, while Valla's researches into religious history and linguistic and philological analysis were sometimes fraught with Humanist, that is to say secularist and individualist, tendencies, Valla was in no way a secularist. And neither was Motoori Norinaga.

2 Motoori Norinaga

Motoori Norinaga was, like Lorenzo Valla, a philologist (Muraoka, 1930, pp. 97-102).[14] Norinaga was born in Matsuzaka, in Ise Province, today known as Mie Prefecture. In 1752 he began studying medicine in Kyoto, and Confucianism under Hori Keizan (1689-1757) (Heisig, Kasulis, and Maraldo, 2011, p. 472). Motoori was influenced by the hermeneutic approach of renowned Tokugawa era-scholar Ogyū Sorai (1666-1728) and the Buddhist priest Keichū (1640-1701), and was a student of Kamo no Mabuchi (1697-1769), an advocate of returning to the ancient Japanese language (Heisig, Kasulis, and Maraldo, 2011, p. 472; Teeuwen, 2011, pp. 458-459; Brownlee, 1988, p. 36). Unlike Sorai, though, who attached governmental importance to ritual, especially Confucian ritual, Norinaga was concerned with words and the connections among humans, the gods, and the natural world which words embodied and engendered (Shogimen, 2002, pp. 497-523). Norinaga did not want to perpetuate the Confucian legitimization of the Tokugawa state. He wanted to recast Japanese spiritual and intellectual life on native grounds, without any continental influence whatsoever.

Norinaga later became associated with Kokugaku, often rendered into

13 Given the date and letter number of the correspondence cited, Barnett may mean to cite Erasmus trans. Mynors and Thomson (1976).

14 Speaking of Ogyū Sorai, Richard H. Minear writes, "He who would study the Way must be a sophisticated philologist." (Minear, 1976, p. 39)

English as "national learning," but closer in spirit to a *ressourcement* and rethinking of continental influence (see generally Burns, 2003; McNally, 2005; Janti, 2012, pp. 91-117). Much like the Italian Renaissance, the Kokugaku movement was not, aspirationally at least, nationalist. Kokugaku scholars were not concerned with founding a modern nation-state—the thing did not even exist yet, after all. Kokugaku was, instead, a project of revisiting ancient sources and resurrecting linguistic modes which the Kokugaku philologists and political thinkers thought lay buried beneath foreign—Chinese—overlayerings (see, e.g., Chim, 2021, p. 56 on "karagokoro," a word Motoori and others used to describe being "China-minded").

Mark Teeuwen, one of the most prominent scholars of Shintō and Japanese religion and statecraft writing in English today, assesses that there were "four elements of ancient Japanese culture that formed the basis for a series of philosophical reflections and analyses that culminated in the eighteenth century with a movement called Native Studies [i.e., Kokugaku]": 1) *kami* worship, 2) "the valorization of the ancient Japanese language in the writing and appreciation of *waka* poetry," 3) the "early mytho-historical chronicles of the Japanese court (*Kojiki*, 712, and *Nihon shoki*, 720)," and 4) "the Japanese imperial lineage" (Teeuwen, 2011, p. 457). Of these four elements, Teeuwen continues, "the starting point of this theorizing [i.e., about 'a new set of teachings and practices that revolved around ancient court themes, especially *waka*, the *kami*, and the nature of emperorship'] was almost invariably *waka*," or Japanese poems (Teeuwen, 2011, p. 457).[15]

Waka are central because the Kokugaku project was, as mentioned above, very much centered on philology.[16] Teeuwen continues, describing *waka*:

> Written in painstakingly purist language that reputedly prohibited the use of any words or linguistic constructions originating

15 See also Fessler (1996, pp. 1-15) for a discussion of kami views among other Kokugaku scholars during Motoori's time, and Isomae (1999, pp. 361-385) for more about Kokugaku and the re-evaluation of the Kojiki and Nihon Shoki.

16 See Muraoka (1964, pp. 91-94, 245-264).

> in China, it came to represent the essence of 'Japan' in an environment that had been dominated by continental culture. The notion was that in the sounds of the ancient Japanese words lay a spiritual or aesthetic power that merged the 'mind' or heart (*kokoro*) of the poet with both the world and audience. This spiritual power came to be called '*kotodama*' and it served later as a key term extolling the near magical value of the supposedly 'original' Japanese language.
>
> (Teeuwen, 2011, p. 457).

Teeuwen's placing of "Japan" in quotes indicates his skepticism of the concept, at least at a time before there was a nationalist conception of such.[17] It is true that Norinaga argued that the Japanese emperor was a kami (see, e.g., Kōno, 1940, p. 12). But this should give us much less pause than contemporary researchers would suggest, for the word "kami" is complex and need not carry the exclusivist connotations of the monotheistic God. Also, Norinaga is hardly the only Japanese person to have used such language to predicate of the tennō—indeed, the tennō trace their lineage back to the age of the gods. And it should not call to our minds visions of proto-nationalism, much less proto-fascism. There is at least as much intellectual distance between Lorenzo Valla and the March on Rome, on the one hand, as there is between Motoori Norinaga and the kamikaze pilots, on the other. Scholars today, however, especially in the Anglosphere, sometimes find within Kokugaku, and within the writings of Motoori Norinaga, just such a proto-fascism.[18]

This association of Motoori Norinaga and Kokugaku with proto-fascism, but of Valla with Humanism (the rhetorical valence of "Humanism" remains extremely positive in the West, and Valla is almost universally heralded as a forerunner of the secular humanities), is odd. This is because, in many ways, Norinaga's project was very similar to Valla's. For example, Norinaga advocated a *ressourcement*, a return to the origins of his culture in antiquity—an antiquity from which that cul-

17 But see, on Teeuwen's call for nuancing between Kokugaku and "nativism," Flueckiger (2008, p. 212).

18 On the links between putative fascist Rōyama Masamichi (1895-1980) and Kokugaku, for example, see Fletcher (1979, p. 55).

ture was thought, by Norinaga and others, to have developed and later strayed. Norinaga, like his "posthumous disciple" (*botsugo no monjin*) Hirata Atsutane (1776-1843), emphasized the Japaneseness of the cherry blossoms, for example, seeing them as the very heart and soul of Japan (*yamatogokoro*) (Koyasu 1992, p. 2; Yamashita, 2012, p. 4; Hirata, 1998). Valla did not compose paeans to cherry blossoms, of course. But Valla did seek the revival of the spirit, the heart and soul, of classical Rome. Norinaga's Rome, on this reading, was ancient Japan. Antiquity was the lifeblood of the present for both men. As Ishikawa Jun writes of Norinaga:

> Verse [to Norinaga] was inseparable from the study of antiquity. Verse was not just for devoting oneself to the pursuit of refinement in everyday things. It was also about growing in understanding of the ancients, about learning of the tastes of their world. Verse was a way of entering on the path [of this growth in understanding]. Verse was always lending itself to such things. [Therefore,] one must not stop with appreciating old verse, one must also try to make verses of one's own.
>
> (Ishikawa, 1970, p. 8)[19]

Mutatis mutandis, this passage could be written of Valla almost as neatly as it could of its original subject, Motoori Norinaga.

But while the Kokugaku thinkers were fixed on the distant past, it is the present, and the much more recent past, that has tended much more forcefully to define them. "Thinkers" in the plural, because Norinaga is not alone in setting the tone of Kokugaku discourse. For instance, much of the reputation accruing to Norinaga filters through his disciple Atsutane. And this reputation in turn is filtered through Japan's twentieth century, in particular the cataclysm of World War II. Koyasu Nobukuni writes of Atsutane:

> In the prewar, Atsutane enjoyed a reputation as lofty as Norinaga's, as can be seen in the fact that Atsutane's disciples took

19 This and all other translations from Japanese in this paper by the author.

> part in the imperial rule restoration movement during the Meiji Restoration, as well as in crafting "unity of rites and government" (*saisei itchi*) policies during the very earliest days of the Meiji period. In the postwar, however, Atsutane was denounced, branded a "fanatical ultranationalist" (*kyōgenteki kokusuishugi-sha*). From prewar to postwar, Atsutane was thus subjected to extremes of both praise and censure. In order to rethink [lit., "reread"] Atsutane, a period of what must be called hesitation (*tamerai*) was required. It was also necessary to build a new viewpoint from which to rethink him.
>
> (Koyasu, 1992, p. 2)[20]

Valla looked to the prose masters and rhetoricians of ancient Rome, while Norinaga was attracted to verse that was impressionistic and redolent of the spirit of the past. Both men shared a desire to reform their present by returning to a golden age sunk deep under the waves of time. For Norinaga, this golden age was much nearer to hand, and that because of differences in methodology. Unlike Valla, who was almost exclusively philological, Norinaga could also turn to aesthetics, such as the lilting dance of the falling cherry blossom petals, to call back to life the days of old. Norinaga read old texts, as did Valla. But Norinaga also found the past recaptured in the nature of Japan he saw all around him.

And yet, even in his aesthetics Norinaga turned most often to words, as attested by his famous theory of *mono-no-aware*. In trying to make ancient language live in the present again, Norinaga was not, at a basic level, very different from Valla. Ishikawa Jun writes:

> Norinaga came up with […] *mono-no-aware* […] because his mind was with the old verses and the ancient writings. *Mono-no-aware* is a way of thinking that is to be expressed in the subtle relationships among words. As Norinaga writes, 'In verse, we do not know *mono-no-aware* so much as *mono-no-aware* comes

20 By "'unity of rites and government' (saisei itchi) policies during the very earliest days of the Meiji period," Koyasu may be referring to Ōkuni Takamasa (1792-1871). See Teeuwen (2011, pp. 463-464). See also Hata (2013, pp. 1-60); Ogawa (2021, pp. 24-25); Aizawa (2021a, pp. 42-46); Aizawa (2021b, pp. 32-36); Brownstein (1987, pp. 436-438).

> forth [from verse].' Further, 'In the *Kokin Wakashū*[21], *yamatouta* [i.e., *waka*] take the human heart as a seed, out of which comes a myriad of words. What I call here the heart is, more precisely, the heart which knows *mono-no-aware*.'
>
> (Ishikawa (1970, p. 14);[22]

Valla did not quite immanentize the ancient as much, or as literally, as Norinaga did, but the two men's dispositional approaches to the past were strikingly similar.

3 Modern Political Divides

For all of these similarities between Valla's and Norinaga's lives and lifeworks, there has grown a sharp differentiation between them, especially in modern scholarship. Not between the two men in particular, as there are, to my knowledge, no narrow comparative studies of them, and certainly Norinaga had never heard of Valla. But there is a contemporary differentiation between their milieux, Northern Italian Humanism on the one side, and the dark implications of proto-fascism and proto-nationalism on the other, with Japan's mid-twentieth century history read back into the Tokugawa period in a determinative way, a way which scholars of Western Europe tend to eschew as ahistorical (as indeed it is).

This is not to say that there is no political valence to either men's ideas. The political implications of Valla's ideas, for example, abounded in potential. Part of the Humanist project was the re-founding of the political, the reordering of ancient Greek *polis* ideas and Scholastic visions of common humanity into a more deft and agile arrangement capable of keeping pace with the pressures of the age (Boyle, 2004, pp. S225-S226). To put it more directly, many Humanists wanted to make their way in the world of fallen men, and not live among the abstractions of the Schoolmen. This involved making peace with, or excuses for,

21 Norinaga is probably referring here to the kanajo, a supplement to the Kokin Wakashū written in kana.

22 See also Ōno (2016, p. 26); Enomoto (2014, pp. 17-21).

fallen human nature. In other words, this involved politics. And Valla was certainly no stranger to the political world.

For instance, as Sarah Stever Gravelle points out, Valla was concerned with understanding why Latin, and then Italian, served "as a universal language," and why the Greeks "fail[ed] to unite linguistically or politically" (Gravelle, 1989, p. 335). Valla's "radical de-ontologization of language," as leading Valla scholar Salvatore Camporeale put it, sought to overturn the Constantine "superstructure" of the Church over the Bible (to borrow the phrasing of Melissa Meriam Bullard), which precipitated big changes in the political life of Europe and far beyond (Bullard, 2005, pp. 479-480, citing Camporeale, 1972, p. 6). One could even go farther than these specifics, positioning Valla on the cusp of the revolution from the religiously-bounded thought of the Scholastics, or even of Petrarch (1304-1374)—itself a development from the morally-informed political thinking of Seneca (ca. 4 BC-65 AD) and Cicero (106 BC-43BC)—to the amoral power politics of Niccolò Machiavelli (1469-1527) and the areligious, even anti-religious thinkers who followed him.[23]

This is the context of Valla's Humanism. Valla wanted to work backward, to recover a lost and pure Christian religion and Latin language.[24] But he also wanted to recover a theory of pleasure in marked contradistinction to what he saw as the Scholastics' over-emphasis on otherworldly asceticism (Diaconu, 2021, p. 140; see also Kircher, 2013, pp. 1-19.). In doing this he was ineluctably lurching forward, into a linguistically-pure future which entailed the hardening of borders and other early workings of the nation-state (Ledo (2019, pp. 395-396); see also Bauer (2013, pp. 146-148); Renner (2020, p. 601); Monreal Pérez (2017, pp. 195-212); Blum (2002, p. 121)).[25] To leave abstractions (and the unquestioned authority of the supranational "superstructure" of the

23 See, e.g., Trinkaus, 1987, pp. 12-14, and Jurdjevic, 1999, pp. 994-1020, esp. pp. 1000-1002 for a discussion of various Italian Humanist views of ancient Rome in light of the contemporary relationship between Florence and Milan.

24 This was of course a very common desire, especially during and after the Renaissance in northern Italy. See, e.g., Yost, 1969, pp. 5-13. Judith Butler would counter that there is no lost "authentic" to rediscover. See Larer, 2014, p. 509, citing and paraphrasing Butler, 1990, pp. 175, 41.

25 On the tensions inherent in the philological and historiographical—and religious—project which Valla and other Renaissance humanists initiated, see, e.g., Hunter, 2014, pp. 335-337.

Catholic Church) was to enter the world of men in cities and republics as one found them. Without churchly abstractions, those who came after the Humanists turned, often, to the state as a new organizing principle. In an age of upheaval and, as Nicholas of Cusa (1401-1464) was to embody, contradiction, the Humanists were searching for a lost past while backing unwittingly into a hardening political future (McDermott, 1998, pp. 254-273). Valla's works, for example, were "embraced," as David Marsh writes, by Martin Luther, portending the sharpening of confessional and, later, national borderlines which lay ahead for post-Humanist Europe (Marsh, 2003, p. 486; see also Bullard, 2005, pp. 477-478). Valla is almost never connected directly to twentieth-century politics today, but this is not because he was not, in his own time, political. It is also not because such lines could not be drawn should one wish.

As for Norinaga, his time was one of perhaps equal ferment to that of the Northern Italian early Renaissance in which Valla lived. The Tokugawa order was much less malleable than the Italian patchwork of republics and city-states, and so the political repercussions of Norinaga's thought, and of Kokugaku more generally, may have been delayed. But not forever. For example, Koyasu differentiates between the contemporary legacies of Hirata Atsutane and Motoori Norinaga, but also emphasizes that both legacies are bound up with Japanese modernity and in particular the ways in which the Japanese past is interpreted in the postwar (Koyasu, 1992, pp. 2-3). Kokugaku's name contains the kanji for "country" or "realm" (*koku*). So, if Kokugaku isn't political (even though it isn't national), then what else could it be? If Valla must be interpreted politically, in other words, then surely Norinaga must be as well.

And yet, things are not quite so simple. There is something else which nudges, or wedges, the reputations of Valla and Norinaga apart over time. To be sure, Motoori Norinaga and many other Kokugaku devotees did delineate a religious faith in the origins and particularity, even superiority, of the land of their birth, the archipelago of Japan (Motoori, 1934a, p. 13; Motoori, 1934b, pp. 21-32).[26] But there would seem to be

26 See also Motoori (1987, pp. 456-493) for an annotated translation of this work, and Brownlee

something more at work in modern scholars' critiques of Norinaga. Perhaps it is that, unlike Valla and his vaunted hardheaded rationalism, his refusal to accept the texts of the past at face value, Norinaga and some of his fellow Kokugaku devotees were more comfortable with what we might call a Derridean view of literature. "Emotionalism" is a not an uncommon critique of Norinaga, for example (Noguchi, 2010, pp. 28-30). One recalls here Carol Gluck's assessment of "the *minshūshi* [i.e., people's history] scholars" as being "in general" more "concerned […] with sentiment than institutions. […] They are engaged […] with matters of intellectual history, which they sometimes refer to as *seishinshi* (history of the 'spirit')" (Gluck, 1978, p. 38). Some of Gluck's targets are twentieth-century historian Irokawa Daikichi (1925-2021) and Kano Masanao, but Gluck makes the Kokugaku connection explicit (Gluck, 1978, pp. 44-45). On these readings, Kokugaku seems to evince a kind of Romanticism, the kind that, in the European context, some have claimed led to the twisted poetics of the mid-twentieth-century European dictators. Along these same lines, perhaps, and following Marxist intellectual Walter Benjamin in finding that "fascism aestheticizes politics," Emiko Ohnuki-Tierney saw in cherry blossom petals, which Norinaga so loved, the stirrings of twentieth-century fascism (Shillony, 2003, pp. 264-266). On such readings, Norinaga, who loved Japan at an aesthetic level, is tinted thereby with the darkness of the mid twentieth century in East Asia.

But why not indict Valla on the same charges? If anything, Valla's project of philological and linguistic rediscovery was held much more dearly by some twentieth-century revolutionaries than was Norinaga's. Italian Marxist revolutionary Antonio Gramsci "examined the Renaissance *questione della lingua* as a problem in the politics of culture," writes John Leeds (2004, p. 116). "Gramsci's *Prison Notebooks*," Leeds continues:

> contain an extensive series of essays on the political functions of Italian intellectual elites. One of the chief practical concerns

(1988, pp. 35-44) for an introduction to Tamakushige. See also Flueckiger (2008, pp. 211-263), and, Norinaga's Naobi no mitama (1711).

> motivating these essays was the extent to which formal training in standard (that is, Florentine) Italian might be a necessary element for popular political struggle. […] Gramsci […] formulates the choice between humanist neo-Latin and the vernaculars as an option for either reactionary or progressive political forces (Leeds, 2004, pp. 116-117).

Gramsci wrote in his *Prison Notebooks* that:

> Every language is an integral conception of the world and not simply a piece of clothing that can fit indifferently as form over any content. Well then? Does this not mean that two conceptions of the world were in conflict: a bourgeois-popular expressing itself in the vernacular and an aristocratic-feudal one expressing itself in Latin and harking back to Roman antiquity? And is not the Renaissance characterized by this conflict rather than by the serene creation of a triumphant culture?
>
> (Leeds, 2004, p. 117, quoting Gramsci, 1985, p. 226)

Valla was a gifted Latinist, of the classical and not "neo-Latin" variety. So perhaps on this scheme, Gramsci would have seen Valla as reactionary and not as bourgeoisie. But somehow I think it might have been the opposite, given Valla's standing as a Humanist and his debates (very vernacular ones!) against the Scholastics of his day.

Gramsci's ideas raise uncomfortable questions for our comparison of Valla and Norinaga. If Valla could look back to Rome with the desire to revive that classical milieu—something which Gramsci's contemporary, Benito Mussolini (the very leader whose alleged assassination attempt had led to Gramsci's imprisonment) made his own political project—then why could Norinaga not do something similar vis-à-vis ancient Japan? If another medieval European, Marsilius of Padua's (ca. 1270-1342), thoughts about language are admitted to be similar to Norinaga's, which I believe they are, then how is Marsilius of Padua not a proto-fascist, while Norinaga, in some circles, is? Norinaga even waded into a debate about Ise Shrine, a debate about documents and legitima-

cy very similar to the debate about the Donation of Constantine which Valla took on (Tucker, 1996, pp. 123-124). But somehow association with Ise, the spiritual homeland of the Japanese imperial lineage, taboos Norinaga, while clarifying the fight over the Donation of Constantine has done little but enhance the reputation of Valla.

Not everyone conflates Japan's premodern past with its modern history, to be sure. For example, in a review of the Emiko Ohnuki-Tierney book mentioned in a previous paragraph in this section, esteemed scholar of Japanese history Ben-Ami Shillony points out that the distinction which Emiko Ohnuki-Tierney wants to make in the case of Japan, "between patriotism, […] which is considered to be natural and noble, and nationalism, […] which is condemned as evil," is "ahistorical" (Shillony, 2003, p. 266). "The fact that prewar Japanese liberals espoused nationalism should not surprise [Ohnuki-Tierney]," Shillony writes, "and need not be explained by the existence of 'feudalistic remnants', as Japanese historians tend to do" (Shillony, 2003, p. 266). This is an important historical intervention by a careful scholar, and one to be taken seriously. By extension, it will not do to link Norinaga to what came several centuries after his time. By contrast, another careful scholar, Richard H. Minear, wrote approvingly of the comparison between Erasmus and Ogyū Sorai. The "European Christian Humanist [i.e., Erasmus] and Japanese Confucian moralist [i.e., Sorai] faced similar situations and resolved them in similar ways," Minear writes. "If the European Christian Humanist enjoys a worldwide reputation," he continues, "then perhaps the Japanese Confucian moralist is also worthy of our serious attention" (Minear, 1976, p. 49). I agree here as well. It is important to note that even Maruyama Masao saw similarities between Sorai and European pre-modernism along the Reformational track (Shogimen 2002, pp. 499-501, citing Maruyama, 1974, chs. 1 and 2; see also Ikeda, 2018, p. 26). While one must not overstep historiographical bounds, one should seek analogies and make comparisons across cultural borders. Norinaga and Valla are, on my view, very much analogous in terms of what I see as their humanistic commitments.

However, where culture boundaries have been crossed, one wonders

why some would insist on drawing hard lines again. While the findings of Maruyama vis-à-vis Sorai are described by one of the leading scholars of Tokugawa Japan in the United States, Harry Harootunian, as a "liberating view," it is not clear why further association with Norinaga and "Japanism" should dent the analysis (Harootunian, 1977, p. 521). "Unearthing Japan's indigenous roots of modernity in the field of political thought was Maruyama's attempt at rescuing modern values against attacks by ultranationalists who called for overcoming the disease of modernity through Japanism," Harootunian asserts (1977, p. 522).[27] But it is never explained, by Harootunian or others who write in a similar vein, why Japan must be "rescu[ed]" from its association with the likes of Motoori Norinaga. I know of no similar project to disentangle Italy from Valla, for instance, not even in light of Antonio Gramsci's praise.

It is similarly difficult to square the verdict of Japanese culture as one of "national narcissism" with the pass apparently given to similar dispensations in the West (DeVos, cited in Bellah, 1965, p. 573). Robert N. Bellah (1927-2013), renowned scholar of Japanese religion, praises Fukuzawa Yukichi (1835-1901) and Uchimura Kanzō (1861-1930) as "Japanese nationalists," but only on the condition that they were not "Japanese particularist[s]," a distinction which seems to be made much more frequently when speaking of Japan—especially from a postwar perspective—than when speaking of other places (Bellah, 1965, pp. 574-575). I have not seen such scrupulous pains taken to separate out Italian intellectual and political history from the fascist years—the "particularist" years—of the Mussolini era. 'Dante may have been a Florentine, but he wasn't particular about it…' On this score, Bellah's praise, in several places, of postwar anti-government campaigner and revisionist scholar Ienaga Saburō (1913-2002) may perhaps be allowed, for better or for worse, to speak for itself (Bellah, 1965, p. 577).

To come at it from another angle, Valla wrote before the "Cartesian split" between the subject and the world, and Norinaga almost certainly never knew of it either, despite post-dating Rene Descartes (Celenza, 2005, p. 484). Perhaps that also helps explain the different reputations of

27 See also Flueckiger (2011, pp. 25-26).

Norinaga and against Valla, for it is our ways of thinking, and not theirs, that shape those reputations today. Western scholars in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, whether they knew or know it or not, appear to have been operating along the same lines that Valla began to draw in the fifteenth century (Larer, 2014, pp. 502-504). Western political and intellectual history can be finely combed through, distinctions made ad infinitum. Asian political and intellectual history, however, is stickier, at least in the hands of some in the modern, Western-dominated world. Humanism in Italy and a quite similar undertaking in Japan amount, on the reading of Valla and Norinaga today, to very different things.

4 Conclusion

Lorenzo Valla and Motoori Norinaga were embarked on very similar trajectories of intellectual and political inquiry. So, why are they and their surrounding cultural and historical milieux treated differently in the West today? I have not found a way to escape the conclusion that the cause lies in virtually unnoticed assumptions among some Westerners (and even among some scholars in Japan, such as the very Western-influenced Maruyama Masao) of Western cultural superiority. How else to explain that two people embarked on very similar intellectual endeavors in very similar intellectual worlds could so differ in reputation? The very different historiographical reputations of Valla and Norinaga within the academy reveal, it would seem, some buried stereotypes. Valla was a Humanist because he questioned Scholastics and sought to revive the glories of Rome, two tropes which are intimately familiar to Westerners. Norinaga was, by contrast, a "proto-fascist" because he sought to rediscover a Japan, of some kind, beneath the many archaeological layers of "China" under which she lay.

It is hoped that in the future there will be many more comparative essays of this kind between thinkers of the Japanese and Western canons, especially on the subject of comparative Humanism, however defined. Richard Minear was on to something. Not only do comparative intellectual history and historiography reveal truths about the worlds of the

past, but they also speak to us about the world we live in today, wherein historical awareness has polarized into, for example, “fascism” and “Humanism,” despite very little apparent difference between them.

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Contestation for Innovation:

The Construction of Taiwan's New Southbound Policy

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Abstract

When in early 2016 the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) came to power the newly elected president Tsai Ing-wen launched the New Southbound Policy (新南向政策 Xin Nanxiang zhengce, NSP). Although going south was nothing new for Taiwan when looking at economic-driven incentives, the NSP is said to go beyond in order to foster cultural exchange and people-to-people relations. New features have been woven into the fabrics of the NSP. By doing so, a narrative of a new role of an innovator was actively constructed. How can we understand those new features and how does the NSP constructs a new role as an innovator by contesting the old? This contribution applies a role theory approach and argues that the NSP not only implements a new policy but also indicates a shift in the very core of Taiwan's self-identification. Building on role theory to understand the relation of contestation and role formation, this paper traces shifts in narrative by a qualitative content analysis and follows to introduce the analytical frame of the role of an innovator.

Keywords: Taiwan; New Southbound Policy; Narrative; Role Theory; Innovation

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Contestation for Innovation:

The Construction of Taiwan's New Southbound Policy

In midst of increasing global challenges, Taiwan's electorate voted in 2016 for a new era to come. When the first female president of Taiwan Tsai Ing-wen 蔡英文 (*1956, 2016-) got elected, she promoted the New Southbound Policy (*Xin Nanxiang zhengce* 新南向政策, NSP). With it, the foreign policy aimed to enhance economic trade among 18 countries in Southeast Asia and members of ASEAN. According to the government, the NSP "has been adopted in order to identify a new direction and a new driving force for a new stage of Taiwan's economic development, to redefine Taiwan's important role in Asia's development, and to create future value."[1] The southbound outlook in Taiwan's external policy agenda was nothing new. Taiwan's foreign policy tradition of going south started in the 1990s and pursued the road of liberalization based on economic incentives. Although, Tsai's new approach of the NSP continues to some extent the economic aspects, some new features have been woven into the fabrics of this new policy. The new trait is said to go beyond economy in order to foster cultural exchange and people-to-people relations. In that sense, the narrative of the former policy got contested by introducing something profound in terms of its characteristics. The NSP contests the former agenda of an economic-driven rational in-depth and substance. By doing so, this paper argues that a narrative of a new role was actively constructed and that it supports the creation of the role of an innovator. Yet the question is, how to understand those new features and how the NSP constructs a new role as an innovator by contesting the old? In this research agenda, the study applies role theory to tackle how a former role conduct, as in the southward going approach, is used by a government to implement a substantially new agenda. The argument is that on behalf of the newly elected government, the former national role conception (NRC)

1 Refers to https://newsouthboundpolicy.trade.gov.tw/English/PageDetail?pageID=50&nodeID=94.

got domestically contested by means of promoting a new Self. As will be analysed below, the former economic-driven self-identification gave way to an innovative-driven approach. By constructing the narrative of an innovative Taiwan, the self-identification forms a new role identity for the national role conception. Based on the constitutive understanding that the contestation of a national role concept also reflects shifts in how role beholders identify themselves, this paper argues that the NSP not only implements a new policy but also indicates a shift in the very core of Taiwan's self-identification. Despite describing causalities, role theory is applied to describe the way of understanding constitutive relations and the processes of multifaceted role formation. Instead of asking "why" for an explanation, the constitutive research context applied in this contribution asks the question of *how* (cf. Hollis & Smith 1991). The aim is to understand the formation of a new role in regard of contesting the very basis of the former national role conception, the self-identification. Building on role theory, this paper traces the new narrative within the NSP to support the argument of a contested self-identification and vis-à-vis the creation of a new role. The study seeks to introduce the features of the role of an innovator for further analysis. In particular, this study undergoes a qualitative content analysis to show shifts in the underlying narrative regarding the NSP and to demonstrate the plausibility of the role theoretical approach.

1 Role Theory as Research Context

Research designs that apply role theory and a constitutive understanding has increased over the past decades. After Holsti published his seminal work in 1970, more recently two major lines developed in the field of political science. One line reaches out to International Relation approaches analyzing structural aspects of roles and the co-constitutive nature of role taking/making within international relations and structures in interaction (Breuning, 2011; Elgström & Smith, 2006). In the last decade, the application of role theory became more prominent emphasizing social aspects, social norm development and contestation. The other line of research focuses on the actor and its underlying processes of role

performance, role evolvement and self-identification within the actor (Harnisch, 2011).[2] With the turn towards social constructivism in social sciences, social constructed role conceptions shape international and foreign policy, and research turned to include the study on ideas and identity alike (Harnisch & Baumann, 2012; Shih & Yin, 2013; Thies, 2008). Although, role theory supports both, the analytical spectrum of 'explanatory and understanding' (cf. Hollis/ Smith 1991; Wendt 1998), the turn to understanding and/or constitutive analysis gave role theory a grave boost.

The research approach of role theory has manifold values. According to Leslie Wehner and Cameron G. Thies (2014, p. 2), "these values explain the renewed attention that role theory has received in recent years." While the merits of the constructive approach still outweigh the pitfalls, the application of role theory has also faced criticism. The neglect of domestic contestation underneath the actor's unified National Role Concept (NRC) is one example (cf. Wehner & Thies, 2014, 3). The tendency of black-boxing the elites is another example, condemning role theory approaches to assume some degree of unity and agreement, although this might not be the fact (Cantir & Kaarbo, 2012, p.8; cf. Brummer & Thies, 2015). Deviant actor's foreign policy-making might be hidden by aggregation (Cantir & Kaarbo 2012, p.8) and result in contestation. The application of a role theory procures a different perspective on domestic politics, and might generate a different outcome when taking into account that agents might rely on the role's identity rather than political preferences (cf. Cantir & Kaarbo 2012, p. 17). Pursuing this line of thinking, several scholars offered approaches to tackle the domestic mechanisms in the analysis of roles. Kaarbo and Cantier followed their study of NRC (2018), other scholars elaborated on the nexus of actor's specifications in international role formation (Harnisch, Frank & Maull, 2011) or presented works on domestic role formation (Harnisch, Gottwald & Bersick, 2016; Perkuhn 2021). In sum, the constructive approach describes the simultaneous co-dependency of changes of an actor regarding the inside and the outside. While a one-directed cau-

2 This line builds on the identification of a self in society in alignment of George Herbert Mead. 1934. Mind, Self, and Society. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

sality is hardly reasonable in that context, the constructive approach of role theory describes an analytical perspective, in which a changed role might indicate an adaption strategy towards a co-constitutive alter or indicate the shifted self-identification through domestic role contestation (Harnisch, Frank, Maull, 2011, p. 8-9; Turner, 1990, p.27-28). Even though externalities might trigger role shifts as a result, the process of contestation and change happens domestically.

2 Key Terms of Role Theory

Although the role theory research community shares some understandings of key terms and mechanisms, variants are distinguishable. To some extent, they depend on the assumption and focus of each individual author (cf. Aggestam 2006, p. 18). The next section therefore introduces key terms to benefit the theoretical understanding of the relation between self-identification and national role contestation.

Unfortunately, the term 'role' is still broadly used in a colloquial sense. In the context of role theory, a social role defines an actor's position within a group it is directed to and carries a specific or general function for this group (Harnisch, 2011, p.8; cf. Thies, 2010). Roles *enable* political action and facilitate agency. The specific social context constrains the role and its role bearer. The role theoretical approach draws from social science and psychology alike when the state is seen as an actor with similar characteristics as a person who is complemented by and constituted through multiple relations. For example, an individual being enacts different roles in different contexts, such as a citizen, a co-worker, and a family member. Accordingly, roles are defined as inter-subjective and interactional, because, "a role cannot exist without one or more relevant other-roles toward which it is oriented" (Turner, 1962, p.23) and the self can only be recognized by the complementing other, as in the realization of an "I-part" through the "Me-part" (cf. Harnisch, 2011). Similar to a person's different social involvements, a state can bear different roles at the same time in different contexts. If not mutual exclusive, all simultaneously enacted roles compose a role set. The

unitary actor inhabits variant roles, for example a family man is most likely a husband, a father, a son or brother himself within his greater family. The bearing of roles within variant settings might origin from the different role functions and can be a source of domestic contestation.

The base for each role grounds on a self-identification that forms a role identity. In contrast to an adapting mechanism to a situational context, this role identity is more persistent and harder to change. Instead of vested interest, the constitution of a role identity derives from the intersubjective nature in the process of self-identification (Perkuhn, 2021, p.11). Social constructed role identities are more stable but not static, so that alterations, transformations and changes happen over time in sequences, caused by external triggers, further development and/or contestation (cf. Perkuhn, 2021). Role theory conceptualizes to link aspects of identification to the formulation of roles through role identities (Perkuhn, 2021). The core element that shapes the role conception here is the role identity. When the self-identification is affected, changes occur and differ from the National Role Conception (NRC). Whereas roles are temporally and contextually limited, a role identity in contrast accounts for the process that reiterated enactment of a specific role influences the role conception. In consequence, the role becomes part of the identity, lasts and inflicts other co-constitutive role sets. In the research context, a role identity describes the ontological self-understanding of a role and the NRC refers to the state's conception of a role. Both define an ideal of the enacted role for interplay and shape the possible role set as well as the process of role formation.

In the formation of roles, historical aspects are important. When actors are forced to take over a new role, the mass public "with its underlying beliefs and attitudes shaped by cultural and historical experience" plays a part (Brummer & Thies, 2015, p.277). Each actor builds on a historical perspective of itself and entails a self-description, which also manifests as an historical self-identification. In contrast to an external counter-role giver, the historical self can also function as a significant other in the formation of a (new) role (cf. Benes & Harnisch, 2014). Hence, it functions as the driving source for a domestic role contestation. This

contribution follows up on this understanding.

3 The Interlinked Processes of Contestation and Role Formation

Based on the understanding that a contestation of a role also reflects shifts in the national role concept and vice-versa, this paper argues that the NSP not only implements a new policy but also indicates a shift in the very core of Taiwan's self-identification. For this to happen, two processes interlink: the process of contesting the existing national role conception by introducing a transformed narrative and the process of forming a new role identity due to the outcome of a shifted self-identification by the process of contestation.

This results in the process of contesting the conduct of former self: In addition to the research approach by Cantir and Kaarbo, linking domestic role contestation to contemporary actors or current political party politics, the present approach adopts the theoretical approach of the contestation of the historical self. Going south has been ingrained in Taiwan's foreign policy conduct regardless the ruling political party (see also Chart 1). Therefore, the southward approach cannot be easily linked to the politics of bipartisan leadership. The NSP introduced under Tsai Ing-wen is not just the rehashed policy of former DPPs approach. Although, party politics seem to run Taiwan politics in general, the formulation of the NSP marks a deeper turning point. Taiwan's rejection of the former self might not be as disruptive as compared to demilitarized Germany after the Second World War. Nonetheless, this contribution assumes that the significant other for the formulation of the NSP is Taiwan's former self in contrast of an external actor or foreign entity. The contesting actor is the newly elected government that brings forward the narrative of a new political generation. Mainly official statements regarding the promotion of the NSP by president Tsai Ing-wen are used as aggregated output of the underlying debate for the analysis of the contestation.

In that interlinked process, material changes and developments matter.

Ongoing international interaction takes place and constantly influences the domestically driven role contestation. Besides Taiwan's position in the world, also globalization effects impacted on Taiwan. Both influence the playground for role formation processes. Hence, in the context of domestic role contestation, an increased international interaction also influences the condition of the material self. As a matter of fact, Taiwan's economic development and productivity in technological achievements enabled a shift in self-identification.

In the process of adopting and transferring the NSP into a trait of the self, the self identifies with it and results in role identity (cf. Perkuhn, 2021). The new narrative about Taiwan takes shape by implementing the policy and adopts features of the formulated NSP. This describes the process of constructing a new NRC. When the features are adopted as traits of identification, this indicates the shaping impact of the policy to the role identity. From the altered role identity, we can draw conclusions for the newly foreign policy role that I will introduce as the "role of an innovator".

4 How to apply narratives in role theory research?

In this approach, narratives are applied as means of an interpretive method for analysis. In social science, narratives have been introduced for analytical purposes, such as the approach of analytical narratives (Bates, 1998). Here, a narrative characterizes the focus that lies on the story and context told, while the required analytical reasoning (Bates, 1998, p. 10) is given by the applied role theory. Narratives contextualize norms, beliefs, attitudes and a world perspective like a framework of understanding. They function as a background story for the role formation. Regarding the application of narratives in the context of role theory Wehner and Thies stated,

> "Narratives in the interpretive approach produce and reproduce traditions and are able to capture changes in traditions in light of new dilemmas [… and they] are thus understood as strategies

> constructed by political agents that speak on behalf of the state, in internal and external relations, to frame and cast roles and achieve specific goals and interests.“
>
> (Wehner & Thies, 2014, p.11).

Further on, they elaborate on how narratives can be applied as method by “analysing different sources viewed from different angles with a goal of bringing them into perspective” (ibid). The study by narratives necessarily relies on different actors, sources and/or specific times, so that it is possible to understand how roles form against the background of domestic change and how a contestation occurs. The contested subject of this study is the aggregated southward policy of the historical self. Usually, the narratives as method rely on primary and secondary sources, such as policies, official documents and press declarations. They are used “to find yardsticks for specific narrations“ (Wehner & Thies, 2014, p. 11). The narrative behind the former southbound policies will be drawn on the basis of a literature review. In addition to a commenting academic debate, the analysis of the NSP focuses on the self-promoted governmental agenda.

A new role conception succeeds the alteration or contestation of a former role. According to the constructive approach, to trace a domestic role contestation of a dominant or former role, changes to the former narrative and self-description function as indicators. In that way, a shifted narrative indicates a new role. To analyse this comprehensive circle of domestic contestation affecting the self-identification, this study takes the former southward policy of Taiwan as baseline for the description of Taiwan’s role identity of foreign policy role conduct. According to the argument outlined above, the narrative itself should impose the new features. This is how the NSP contests the former self-identification and sets forward the new role of an innovator.

What is meant by innovation? In the last decade, the term has become a catchphrase similar to ‘cyber’ that basically relates to anything ‘techy’. The word innovation is derived from Latin and denotes novelty. In this context, innovation relates to the creation of political framework

with conditions that offer solutions for socio-political or socio-economic problems by means of innovative technological developments. The most intrusive example is the recently rampant COVID-19 pandemic or rather how to defy it by mobile or web applications and for monitoring and management. In general, implementing a novelty means to propose something new that ultimately also contests a predominant trait or understanding. In this context, contestation for innovation refers beyond the general assumption of something new in particular to the theoretical context of role theory and the process of role contestation to actively promote an innovative self. The narrative approach seeks to go beyond the counting of technological innovation or tech parks in order to trace a more comprehensive understanding of innovation. For example, the ideal of an innovative Taiwan as a political entity defines against the background of domestic gains while taking over a position among others for promoting progressive values to that group. The difference of this innovative concept includes innovation as method of how to encounter the world and procuring solutions, such as digitalization of work space and processes.

5 The Former Narrative Behind Going South

The following is a brief outline of Taiwan's former southbound policy to extract the NRC of the historical self that will be contested by the NSP. The description presents the understanding of Taiwan's historical self and serves as the counter-role for the formation of the new role by domestic contestation.

5.1 President Lee Teng-hui Goes South

Going south is nothing new for Taiwan. Although Tsai's proposed *new* southbound policy seems as following a trajectory of path-dependency, the means and strategy behind going south have diverged over the last decades (cf. Chart 1). That Taiwan is strategically reaching out southwards started with former President Lee Teng-hui 李登輝 (1923-2020,

1988-2000) in the 1990s, when his foreign policy set sail to pursue the road of liberalization based on economic incentives with special regard to the ASEAN countries. In the aftermath of the downfall of the Soviet Union the world experienced a wave of liberalism and, mainly economically speaking, liberalization. Against that political background, policymakers followed the understanding that economic ties secure peaceful cooperation and ultimately build trust over time. In addition, another circumstantial effect emerged in the reshuffle of the world order after the fall of the Soviet Union and the opening up of the People's Republic of China (PRC): the PRC grew stronger economically and ultimately politically. To what extent the former President Lee had both trajectories in mind when he launched the "Go South" Policy (1994-1996) is uncertain. Yet, the foreign direct investments (FDI) that flew into ASEAN countries even outgrew the amount of investment that went across the Strait. According to a CSIS report on The New Southbound Policy, Deepening Taiwan's Regional Integration, "the FDI into ASEAN countries grew from $1.76 billion in to $4.98 in 1994" and "Taiwan's investment into Mainland China fell from $3.17 billion to $962 million" (Glaser, Kennedy & Mitchell, 2018, p.3).[3] Granting his party affiliation, the strategy foresaw a "three-pronged strategy to boost investments from both KMT-affiliated companies and state-run companies in Southeast Asia, while simultaneously increasing the flow of foreign aid to targeted countries" (Glaser, Kennedy & Mitchell, 2018, p.3). In midst of the beginning Asian financial crisis before the elections, Taiwan's Ministry of Economic affairs shifted its policy to encourage domestic industrial growth at the cost of FDIs in December 1996 (Glaser, Kennedy & Mitchell, 2018, p.3).

5.2 Manifesting the NRC of Going South

Although the Asian financial crisis reached its peak, the then re-elected President Lee Teng-hui launched a second term of the "Go South" policy in 1997. According to Andrew Yang of the Center for Advanced

3 For online access go to https://csis-website-prod.s3.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/2022-10/180613_Glaser_NewSouthboundPolicy_Web.pdf?VersionId=cbs.Isc0WZ7FhB3I9OvdL1L_Gr42Gh52

Policy Studies, the "Go South policy–shifting the westbound policy to a southbound policy–coincides with his [Lee Teng-hui's] strategy", as mentioned by Richburg (1998).[4] Once again, that policy favoured the economic-driven party interest and in particular the KMT-affiliated companies as "[o]ne of the leaders of the Go South strategy is the Taipei-based China Development Corporation, or CDC, the business arm of the ruling Kuomintang (Nationalist) party." (Richburg, 1998). In contrast to scepticism, whether the strengthening of economic investments will win Taiwan long-term ties and support, "Lee viewed the crisis as an opportunity for Taiwan, and he remained steadfast that despite the ongoing market turmoil, investment into Southeast Asia would benefit Taiwan" (Glaser, Kennedy & Mitchell, 2018, p.7). As a result of the political agenda, a holding company was installed. The Southeast Asia Investment Company conducted mergers and acquisitions in the region (Glaser, Kennedy & Mitchell, 2018, p.7). In sum, the goal of going south under President Lee functions the objective of growing Taiwan's economic outcome and minimize dependency from the business in and with Mainland China by diversifying FDIs–mainly to south-east countries or in particular ASEAN countries. The narrative of going south relied on economic gains and manifested the self of the economic developer and powerhouse that brought about the foreign policy of the pocket money.

During the Presidency of Chen Shui-bian 陳水扁 (*1950, 2000-2008) Taiwan's renewed approach of "Go South" pursued the additional strategy of increasing Taiwan's regional influence by means of business investments. Alongside the injected money, the investments diversified and hence "the policy also established assessment mechanisms, facilitated industry investments, and provided training for returning employees" (Glaser, Kennedy & Mitchell, 2018, p.8.). Quite controversial to the aim of "reducing economic reliance on the Mainland", according to Glaser et al (Glaser, Kennedy & Mitchell, 2018, p.8) "Chen's own policy paved the way for business from Taiwan to seek opportunities on the Mainland". As a result of Chen's market liberalization policy in

4 Quote taken from "Taiwan Buys Up Bargains And Widens Its Influence", by Keith B. Richburg", 22 January 1998, Washington Post Foreign Service, P A23, available at https://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/inatl/longterm/china/stories/taiwan012298.htm.

2001, former restrictions on the high-technology industry were lifted allowing investments above $ 50 million (in US dollar). In spite of being the opposing political party, this policy aim manifested the economic-driven self-identification and pursued investments along the region to increase Taiwan's economic influence.

5.3 South or not South: Foreign Policy Agenda under Ma Ying-Jeou

After the DPP-affiliated president Chen Shui-bian was succeeded by Ma Ying-jeou 馬英九 (*1950, 2008-2016) from the KMT, the policy focus regarding the southbound agenda shifted twice. In the first period of his presidency, Ma turned his eye on Mainland China. The Taiwan-based scholar Fu-Kuo Liu frames the political heritage of Chen Shui-bian regarding Mainland China in his quite devastating words as "years of suffering a bitter relationship with the flamboyant Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) government in Taiwan" (Liu 2014, p. 140). Obviously, he supported Ma's policy agenda, who "resumed links with Mainland China and started a rapprochement across Taiwan Strait" (Liu, 2014, p. 139). Most prominent was the successful negotiation of the Economic Cooperation Framework Agreement (ECFA) in 2010. During Ma's presidency, the economic cooperation with Mainland China and Hong Kong accumulated up to 40 per cent. The economic dependency towards China has been sensitive. Critics voiced their concerns about Ma's inability of leadership skills and the failure of drafting a new national security strategy (Liu, 2014, p. 147, 151). With regard to the territorial disputes in the South China Sea and over the Diaoyu Island that escalated once again during Ma's presidency, "the Ma administration has been left floundering and indecisive." (Liu, 2014, p. 151).

While the rise of the PRC emerged as yet another condition that impacts the new world order, the economically strong player increased its pressure on Taiwan's international partners. Still, according to Chu, under the former presidents Hu Jintao 胡錦濤 (*1942,2002-2012) and Ma Ying-jeou a sort of 'diplomatic truce' was reached implying as "long as Taiwan does not pursue independence, Beijing will not seek to reduce

further the number of states that maintain diplomatic relations with Taiwan" (Chu, 2014, p.168). Shortly after the leadership changes, this truce came to an abrupt end. Meanwhile, Taiwan lost formal diplomatic support. Malawi (2008) and Gambia (2013) have ended their official recognition for the Republic of China (R.O.C., Taiwan).[5] Presumably, after the leadership change among the Chinese Communist Party—ultimately transferring to Xi Jinping's 習近平 (*1953, 2012-) taking post after 2012—concerns grew and Taiwan's foreign policy widened towards the south. At last, during the later period of Ma's presidency again Taiwanese firms intensively relocated their investments towards Southeast Asia. In light of the main focus of cross-strait rapprochement, the suggestions of the ASEAN plus 3 plus 1 (ASEAN +4) served to benefit Taiwan's trade investments among member state. Domestically the liberal foundation of going south prevailed.

As derived from the historical context, the southward-directed agenda shows two drivers: the prospect of economic gains and the reduction of dependency of Mainland China through economic incentives. Both drivers reveal a self-identification linked to economic conduct, either as an economic powerhouse derived from the historical success of having been part of the Tiger States or as an economy of a liberal democracy. This indicates the implementation of being a reliable (economic) partner. Over the course of time, derived from that southbound looking foreign policy, the self-identification of an economic developer regarding its Asian partners ingrained in the role identity. Entering the millennium, this self- identification has become a part of the ontological Self and an integral part of the underlying role identity for the national role conception. In sum, the former southward looking policies manifested the economic-driven Self. Skipping to the current presidency under Tsai Ing-wen, the renewed southbound agenda proclaims new features beyond that economic-driver.

5 Panama, El Salvador, Burkina Faso among others followed during the presidency of Tsai Ing-wen.

Chart 1: Overview of Going South since 1990s			
Time	***Policy***	***Context***	***Policy Aim***
1993/4-1996	Southward Policy "*Go South*"	Linked to the ASEAN initiated economic measures for market liberalization in 1992. Lee Teng-hui (KMT) first followed this calling[6]	Reduction of economic reliance on the Mainland and increase of FDI to boost growth dependent on ASEAN Countries
1997-1999	Southward Policy "*Go South*", Second term	Former President Lee Teng-hui (KMT) relaunched a second period of the southwards policy in midst of the Asian financial crisis	Taking advantage of the crisis to benefit Taiwan's relations with ASEAN by investing into them, i.e., through the Southeast Asia Investment Company
2002	"*Go South*" Strategy (Revival)	President Chen Shui-bian (DPP) at that time launched a strategic southbound policy mostly to foster economic integration after Taiwan acceded the WTO in 2002	In addition to the former policy aims, the economic investment aimed to increase Taiwan's economic influence.
2008/ - 2012	ASEAN-prone outreach	Ma Ying-jeou (KMT) focused on ECFA suggested the ASEAN plus 3 plus 1 (ASEAN +4) policy to benefit Taiwan's trade investments among member state. After the leadership change of the PRC, Taiwanese firms shifted their investments from PRC to Southeast Asia	The aim of ECFA was to strengthen the cross-strait relations by furthering economic trade. FDIs were redirected from PRC to the region and sought for cheaper production cost

6 Yet the policy of regional investments abruptly ended in 1996 in anticipation of the coming financial crisis of 1997.

5.4 Analysing the Contestation by Promoting the NSP

While Taiwan's foreign policy role was facing a new normal due to a changing international environment, again, Tsai's administration set sail southward. In 2016, Tsai's government presented Taiwan's "New Southbound Policy" (*Xin Nanxiang zhengce* 新南向政策, NSP). The aim of the programmatic orientation is not only to strengthen economic cooperation among 18 countries in Southeast Asia and members of ASEAN, but also to deepen civil and diplomatic relations. Beyond the scope of pursuing the people-to-people agenda by means of education or tourism, the NSP also aims to establish links on local and city levels (Black 2019, p.256). Partners of the NSP are composed by a diverse cultural community and include Vietnam, Singapore, Myanmar, Malaysia and India, as well as Australia, New Zealand, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. By doing so, the Tsai administration reflects also the changed international environment as it shifted towards a new normal. The contextual change demanded to include much broader geo-strategic objectives and gave further incentives to alter the former narrative. Against the background of growing tensions across the Strait due to the growing assertiveness that originated from Beijing's foreign policy attempts, i.e., to isolate Taiwan internationally (Englund, 2022), the Beijing's policy behaviour functions as an external-driven incentive that furthered to derail the common narrative of going south. Yet, this contribution views this as contextual change that nurtured the domestic debate on political beliefs and attitudes in regard of shaping Taiwan's self-identification. According to the theoretical approach applied here, external drivers condition the internal process of contestation, yet, they are not viewed as direct causes for the direction of how the former southbound policies gets contested. In addition, the outcome of the policy or result of conduct might reify the intention, yet, cannot be includes as the source of the construction. After implementing the NSP, the US-China competition also favoured a more comprehensive agenda for Taiwan, that includes security objectives in the Indo-Pacific region and has later led to the establishment of Development Assistance Coordination Mechanisms.[7]

7 Although established after drafting phase of the NSP, the Taiwan-Asia Exchange Foundation

As integral part in the drafting stage, one of the promoted new traits is to go beyond economy in order to foster cultural exchange and people-to-people relations. The governmental webpage states that NSP "has been adopted in order to identify a new direction and a new driving force for a new stage of Taiwan's economic development, to redefine Taiwan's important role in Asia's development, and to create future value."[8] Aside from trade cooperation (*jingmao hezuo* 經貿合作), the NSP entails education promotion (*rencai jiaoliu* 人才交流) with attractive training and exchange programs including short-term research grants and cooperation promotion of 'common goods' (*ziyuan gongxiao* 資源共享). This regards cultural exchange in general as well as the improvement of medical care and the spread of medical technologies in particular. The comprehensive approach of the revised NSP shows in the five flagship programs and three innovative fields that complement the NSP.[9] In contrast to the former southward-directed policies, the NSP claims to forge bonds far beyond economic exchange rates. Conor Stuart reduced the 'new' under Tsai's administration is to redirect policy, such as cash flows and tourism,[10] so that a previously outgoing policy turns incoming to benefit Taiwan's demands. Economy-wise, this means on the surface to attract South Asian investors instead of investing abroad or arranging educational schools abroad to bring knowledge home. In a much deeper sense, for Taiwan's foreign policy the calculus of gaining soft power outdoes economic gains. Beyond numbers, there is a clearly stated new incentive for DPP's attempt of going south.

An underlying trait of the NSP strengthens Taiwan's regional role. The Taiwan-based scholar Huang Kwei-Bo defines the five flagship programs of the NSP as, "*regional agricultural development, medical and*

(TAEF) was founded in 2018 and contributed greatly with their publications on monitoring the policy outcome ever since. The development during Tsai's presidency broadened in reach and scope, as the research report of TAEF on "Assessing Trends and Demand Signals for Taiwan's New Southbound Policy and Building a US-Taiwan Coordination Mechanism" demonstrates. For further information on conduct and cooperation outcome see https://www.taef.org.

8 Refers to http://www.newsouthboundpolicy.tw/index.aspx.

9 The five flagship Programs center on agricultural development, medical and public health cooperation, talent cultivation, innovative industries and youth exchanges and policy forums, as illustrated by the CSIS report, 2019, available at https://southbound.csis.org.

10 He illustrated this points based on a presentation held by the consultant Hsu Chun-fang for the Chinese National Federation of Industries (ROC), retrieved March 12, 2018, from http://en.naipo.com/Portals/0/web_en/Knowledge_Center/Feature/IPNE_161028_0703.htm", 28.10.2016.

public health cooperation and the development of industrial chains, industrial talent development, industrial innovation and cooperation, as well as the New Southbound Policy Forum and youth exchange platform." (Huang, 2018, p. 55). All of which entail a stronger focus on exporting Taiwan's self-defined strength in building on innovation by policy agenda and by including broader actors of the civil society, such as educational institutions and science parks or medical suppliers (e.g., cooperation on medical equipment). In contrast to previous advances, the NSP aims for a greater regional integration and to build on Taiwan's strong innovation industry. Under the 'Regional Link' (*quyu lianjie* 區域連結) the cooperation should also be institutionally secured. Although Huang acknowledges that the NSP might not lead to more formal participation, "it can facilitate Taiwan's presence in and link to these regions and re-position Taiwan in a more strategic place with fewer political barriers." (Huang, 2018, p.51). The establishment of an international cooperation company was planned for the exchange in the agricultural sector and, again, by re-routing trade ties from Mainland China to other countries in order to diversify dependency. This attempt also corresponds with one of the five flagship programs under the NSP that targets agricultural development in particular and combines Taiwan's advances in farming with innovative technological approaches (One prominent example for the policy outcome is the Modern Agricultural Demo Farm in Karawang that is a core project of the cooperation with the Indonesian Ministry of Agriculture).[11] Besides the manifestation of the narrative of Taiwan's innovative self through knowledge transfer of technology, an economic-driven aspect remained under the regional scope of the NSP. In 2016, Ma Tieying was concerned with China's decreased growth rate, and emphasized Taiwan's market dependency, "*China's slowdown, rebalancing and rising wages are prompting Taiwanese firms to adjust overseas strategies… Asean markets are attractive, thanks to strong growth, low-cost labor, and ongoing reforms and economic integration*", according to Roman (2016).

11 For more information on the cooperation project and Taiwan's attempt to support the Indonesian development in regard of upgrading agricultural technology see the government webpage on "Taiwan and Indonesia cooperate on a Modern Agricultural Demo Farm in Karawang; Core farmers and officials from the Demo Farm come to Taiwan for training", (02. November 2018) at https://eng.moa.gov.tw/theme_data.php?theme=eng_news&id=543.

The expansion of cooperation in the field of tourism was specifically designed to deepening long-term transnational and interpersonal relationships among the addressed countries. A measure taken to facilitate the deepening of relations was to ease visa restrictions from addressed nation states in Southeast Asia (Thornton, 2017). In addition to the Five Flagship Programs, the NSP pursued three innovative fields of which tourism is one. An explicit goal is to reify Taiwan's social innovative trait as inclusive and open. Against this background, the government took measures to mark Taiwan as Muslim-friendly destination.[12] The reasoning for this policy trait of the NSP might have been also originated from the fact that Taiwan experienced an influx of migration between 2009 and 2017 from South Asian and South East Asian countries of close proximity, including a high proportion of Muslim background.[13] However, the employment structure of migrants from these countries manifest rather a downside of Taiwan being a socially inclusive society, as most of them are employed beyond the innovative industry sector.

On a conceptual basis, the NSP aims at making a difference. President Tsai calls for "substantive cooperation" (*shizhi hezuo* 實質合作). On November 15, 2016, President Tsai gave her remarks at Taiwan-ASEAN Dialogue and named three main objectives, "*The first is to strengthen mutual understanding. The second is to steadily expand two-way exchanges. The third is to forge strong and comprehensive partnerships*."[14] In this statement she highlighted these new characteristics in making foreign policy with the addressed partners by emphasizing "the *mutual* understanding", "*two-way* exchange" and the "*comprehensive partnerships*". She elaborated further that the mutual approach pursues a two-way street to go beyond governmental departments by promoting "mutual visits by senior officials", so that they "build a new kind of

12 As prominently outlined in the description of the NSP, see also "Three Innovative Fields", https://southbound.csis.org.

13 According to Integral Human Development 797,122 foreigners or 3,4 per cent of the population were in registered in 2020. Whereas the primary country of origin was Indonesia with 32 per cent, Vietnam with 30 per cent and the Philippines with 19 per cent. However, most of them took employment in the productive sector (66 per cent) and 45 per cent were even employed in the 3D industries, that are regarded as dirty, dangerous, and demeaning. For the detailed information see the Country Profile on Taiwan, July 2021, available at https://migrants-refugees.va/country-profile/taiwan/ .

14 President Tsai made this remark at the Taiwan-ASEAN Dialogue on 15. November 2016, retrieved March 14, 2018, from http://english.president.gov.tw/NEWS/5022.

partnership" including "bilateral and multilateral exchanges, in culture, tourism, medicine, science and technology, agriculture and other domains" (ibid). The later established cooperation mechanisms reflect this agenda of substantive cooperation.[15]

One way to implement this new trait in people-to-people relations is by deepening the cooperation between think tanks. She said that they "firmly believe that they are the best connectors between nations and peoples" (ibid). The strengthening of sustainable ties of trustful and lasting cooperation becomes the core and with it by self-description the narrative shifted towards a *genuinely* different trait. By this mutual two-way approach, she also reveals a new way of perspective of Taiwan's self in regard of interacting with others.

Building on the understanding of being a role model among East Asia, the NSP started to promote innovation as a key driver for cooperation. Over the last decades, Taiwan has received positive responses among Asia and the West for its remarkable developmental agenda. Taiwan ranks 11th in comparison by the World Economic Forum (2018) regarding its innovative economy. That makes Taiwan one of the most innovative countries among the NSP partners. Taiwan delivers 64 per cent of semiconductors counted by world market share. The program for Industrial Innovation and Cooperation promotes the Five-Plus-Two Innovation Industrial Initiative.[16] According to the official webpage, the shift towards a new commercial model "will stimulate innovation, boost the competitiveness of industry and increase corporate profitability" and will result in a "more balanced development to all regions of Taiwan."[17] For the Ministry of Economic Affairs that means to "utilize Taiwan's economic assets toward strengthening the NSP" and build on elements, such as the "Asian Silicon Valley" which is the label of the Taoyuan industrial park. The idea is to develop this park into a "hub of innovation for domestic enterprises, as well as a testing ground for projects

15 See also the monitoring reports from the TAEF think tank (see fn. 7 above).

16 Five-Plus-Two Innovative Industries Initiative" regards IoT, biomedical, green energy, smart machinery, and defense in addition of new agriculture and the circular economy as the plus two.

17 See the webpage https://english.ey.gov.tw/iip/B0C195AE54832FAD , retrieved February 24, 2023.

and technologies that are tailored to the need of NSP target countries" (Glaser, Kennedy & Mitchell, 2018, p. 59).

A year after the proclamation of the NSP, President Tsai picked up the new narrative of innovation and claimed the following for Taiwan at the National Day Address:

> "We want to place Taiwan at the forefront of promoting innovation and progressive values across the Asia-Pacific. As we welcome official and non-official participation from every country, we look forward to discussions on regional development, environmental protection, medicine and health, religious freedom, free markets, and multiculturalism. All of this will create a more sustainable environment for innovation in Taiwan and the world."
> (Tsai Ing-wen, President Tsai delivers 2017 National Day Address).

In total, seven agencies and ministries are involved in Industrial Innovation and cooperation under the NSP.

Presumably, the recognition of Taiwan's strong ICT and innovation technology industry, such as semiconductors, supports the constructed narrative. Innovation beyond economic incentives provides attractiveness for countries to follow Taiwan as an ideal and by doing so building on like-minded cooperation. The innovative for-runner position is basically derived from Taiwan's long-term ties along with the Western world it identifies with and the beneficial position Taiwan holds within East Asia. Hence, in contrast to former domestic (economic) gains, Taiwan's new trait of an innovative Self-identification is placed in relation to others. The positive response is not limited to produce innovative technology in digital industrialization, but also includes concepts of social innovation, such as promoting an integrative society across religion, gender and culture, as well as implementing elements of digital democracy.[18]

18 Although the completion by reification of Taiwan's role as innovator is not explicitly part of this study, the fact that the think tank and innovation hub ITRI is recognized among the top 100 global Innovators in 2022 serves as one example. See Formosa News Webpage, 21 April 2022 at https://english.

From the above mentioned, we can draw that the existing economic relationships became comprehensive in scope of trade sectors and cultural cooperation. A much deeper approach regarding topics, such as medical and public health, an inclusion of citizens and personnel, accounting for extensive educational and academic exchange, and the building of new industrial branches for promoting digitalization supported the creation of Taiwan's innovative development. Induced by the government under DPP's leadership, the NSP agenda contested the former southbound approaches and put forward the narrative of the innovative Taiwan. Taiwan's self-identification shifted by introducing this new narrative about the self and contested the previous role identity. Hence, it moved from a mainly economic-driven to an innovation-driven Self. After almost two-terms in practice, the new turn to comprehensive relations within Southeast Asia and among ASEAN members show effects.[19] The new constructed self-identification as innovator grew even beyond the regional scope, including topics of regional security or coordination mechanisms for the Indo-Pacific security framework. Examples, such as the global importance of semi-conductors by TSMC, indicate that Taiwan's new role as innovator will be reified in foreign relation's conduct, yet, to estimate the extent and success of the new role analytically remains for future research.

ftvnews.com.tw/news/076952070D55448BE7CD264DB0F74295. The advances in green technology, such as offshore wind farming or hydrogen, are recognized by Australian political actors and companies, reifying the innovative trait of Taiwan's new role. See for example the Australian-Taiwan Hydrogen Trade and Investment Dialogue, 29 July 2021, at https://australia.org.tw/tpei/aus_tw_hydrogen_trade_investment_dialogue_rep_bloomfield_remarks.html, retrieved November 30, 2023. The image of Taiwanese businesses regarding electronics, digital and communication services in Thailand as TAEF reported on 28 December 2021, available at https://www.taef.org/doc/974, retrieved November 30, 2023. An example of reifying Taiwan's innovative characteristic beyond the member states of NSP is the recognition of Taiwan's importance to the global supply chain, see for example the impact assessment "The European Union, Taiwan and Global Supply Chain Security" by J.-C. Gottwald, S. Weil und M. Taube, November 2022, available at https://reinhardbuetikofer.eu/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/EU-Taiwan-Studie_digital_final.pdf, retrieved December 12, 2022.

19 For further information see the monitoring reports on Taiwan's foreign relations with regard to the NSP provided by TAEF at https://www.taef.org.

6 What are the features of the role of an innovator drawn from the study of Taiwan?

By analysing the narrative of the NSP, the study seeks to introduce Taiwan's role conception of the role of an innovator. The newly elaborated NRC originates from a process of contesting the former southbound policies and resulted in a shift of Taiwan's self-identification as an innovative actor. The paper now proceeds to introduce the analytical frame of the role of an innovator by taking the features exemplified by Taiwan's governmental NRC and role conduct.

A role is defined by an actor's social position within a group. The social position of the innovator regards primarily the position among Asian countries addressed by the NSP. Derived from the study of Taiwan's role emergence/formation, the role of an innovator describes a social position that relates to others as a pioneer or fore-runner in a field of innovation technology and innovative approaches of work processes, such as digitalization of industrial development, and might entail traits of social innovation, too. The role is characterized in that field as superior or further developed compared to others, yet it entails the trait of an educator or even a role model to level up to. Hence, the enacting of the role comes with internal and external-driven expectations in regard of the NSP countries. The external expectation regarding the role of an innovator, yet, need to be further evaluated in future research. Given the feature of a comprehensive (civil) approach of the role of an innovator, further research is needed to flesh out the external expectations and should include a systematic assessment of civil actor's responses from among the interaction.

The self-referred expectation promotes an ongoing improvement to provide a breeding ground for further research and development. Most of them are outlined in the Five+2 Innovative industry plan, that "will serve as the central driver of Taiwan's industrial growth in the next era".[20] As the Startup Island Taiwan Report 2021 points out, the exist-

20 For quote see the innovative industry plan webpage at https://english.ey.gov.tw/iip/B0C195AE54832FAD , retrieved February 24, 2023.

ing corporate industries have not only started to invest in the domestic startup ecosystem, but also observed that they "have become more open-minded towards innovation" (2021, p.34). Based on the innovative mindset as a process, they state further on, "with the strong semiconductor and technological foundations, we foresee a bright future for Taiwan corporate innovation scene." (Startup Island Report, 2021, p. 34). According to the new self-identification, Taiwan is expected to live up to its ideals and improve the domestic environment as breeding ground and sandbox. The wide application of innovative approaches, such as promoting smart grid, a digital industrialization, green energy or even an open government[21] are elements that manifest the contested narrative and new role identity.

While the bar for external role expectation is not minor. The role of an innovator is by self-declaration expected to allow others to participate in this process, for example, by sharing knowledge in dialogue among like-minded countries. Over two terms of conduct, this scope has even broadened to the world. By self-declaration of the Startup Island Taiwan, a brand to promote Taiwan-based startups, the arena outgrew the NSP members towards international Community (Startup Island Report 2021, p. 2).

The function of the role of an innovator is self-prescribed as providing innovative developments in the industrial sector and beyond. One aspect of this role conduct is therefore to support the startup ecosystem for innovation. As claimed by the Startup Island Taiwan Report 2021, "the fastest and most efficient way to engage upon digital transformation for corporations is to work with startups, adopt their innovative technologies, and most importantly incorporate their entrepreneurial spirit into their corporate culture and business (2021, p.34). The innovator therefore provides a platform for showcasing and mutual learning. As promoted by the NSP, one characteristic of the innovator role is to attract others via this innovative trait. One feature became the innovative society that is characterized by a mutual understanding and openness.

21 For example see also the "Taiwan Open Government National Action Plan, 2021-2024", launched in January 2021, available at https://gec.ey.gov.tw.

The NSP pursues to attract talents and to create opportunities, i.e., by increasing the number of exchange students to work in a multinational context (cf. Tsai, 2017), or for immigrant children of a diverse religious and cultural background (Glaser, Scott & Mitchell, 2018, p. 42). By doing so, the role of an innovator relates to a liberal mind-set and carries educational and (social) inclusive traits.

7 Concluding Remarks

Taiwan has emerged as an innovative actor and is taking up a pioneering role in facing 21st Century's megatrends. The origin of Taiwan's strength seems to derive from the specific combination of innovation and social inclusiveness that brings about new key features of the self-identification. This contribution applied a constructive role theory approach to understand the process of how a former role got contested by Taiwan's turn for innovation proposed by the representative of the government, President Tsai Ing-wen. By actively promoting the NSP, the former southbound outlook got domestically contested and reached out to the addressed members of the NSP in order to recognize a renewed self-identification to complete the process of role transformation. The reification of the addressed partners exceeded the limits of this contribution, yet, examples of interaction under the NSP indicate the plausibility of the applied theoretical approach. The new narrative of the NSP deliberately constructed a national role conception that emphasizes Taiwan's innovative characteristics. Although several elements of the former Southbound Policies stayed intact, e.g., economic conduct, the narrative changed in substance and depth. In the process of contesting the historical self by an actively promoted narrative, a new role conception emerged from the shifted self-identification of Taiwan as innovator. The features outlined above can nurture further research on innovative countries that undergo similar processes of domestic contestation when they align to previous policies and actively promote a new Self due to the awareness of facing complex circumstances that create a different role context. In the case of Taiwan, role theory allows the inclusion of relational aspects, such as the interactive identification in role formation

beyond the definition of sovereignty or nationhood. Hence, the research design of role theory seems beneficial to the case of Taiwan to understand the social constructive depth and impact of the pursued NSP and its lasting effects by forming a role identity.

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