



Title	The Sociology of Excretion in Japan : Evolution of the Japanese Modern Mode of Excretion through Distinction Competition with the West
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Abstract of Thesis

Name (SZCZYGIEL Marta Elzbieta)

Title

The Sociology of Excretion in Japan: Evolution of the Japanese Modern Mode of Excretion through Distinction Competition with the West
(日本における排泄の社会学)

Abstract of Thesis

This study is the first to apply an historical-comparative sociological approach to characterize and evaluate Japanese excretory mores, and to identify differences between the Western and Japanese modern modes of excretion. Influenced by Inglis's research on Western defecatory manners, I conduct document analysis, ranging from government policy records and leaflets to newspaper articles, as well as literary sources. Moreover, I analyze interviews with Japanese nationals and answers obtained from non-Japanese respondents through an online survey, to characterize Japanese fecal habitus, namely Japan's evolving understanding of excreta and resulting excretory practices. I argue that change in the country's fecal habitus was triggered by encounters with the fecal habitus with the West. I trace the beginning of distinction competition in the fecal field to the opening of Japan in 1853, and I contend that we can identify a distinct second phase that corresponds with the American Occupation.

When we juxtapose Western and Japanese fecal habitus, we see that they are antithetical.

Drawing on the work of Mary Douglas, I show that origins of each evaluation of excreta can be found in their religious beliefs, respectively Christendom, and Shintoism and Buddhism. Western notions of excrement as moral dirt resulted in strict regularization of excretory practice. In Japan, however, a neutral image of excrement permitted its commodification as night soil. Consequently, these two fecal habitus established distant attitudes toward excretory practice – Western mores required defecation behind closed doors, while in Japan commodification of excrement made it a valuable good, collected in the open. After the opening of Japan, the clash of contradictory fecal

habitus resulted in Western contempt toward Japanese excretory practice, but at the time Japan held on to its excretory mores. During the post-World War II Occupation, however, uneven power relations, together with direct contact with Westerners and their fecal habitus, resulted in progressive adaptations of Western excretory mores to the Japanese cultural context. When Japan developed a wide-scale sewer system and popularized Western-style toilets, it attained a mode of excretion equal to the Western level. Thus, Japan gained a chance to seize dominance in the fecal field. I argue that Japan grasped the chance with the Washlet, a high-tech privy, which it is now able to use as a form of soft power.

Furthermore, through comparison of the Japanese and Western modern modes of excretion and an exegesis of the Japanese toilet, this study also analyzes and identifies distinctive features of non-material culture. Next, I categorize symbolic manifestations of excrement that are less likely to appear in the Western cultural sphere, but are present in Japan. These fall into three realms: health, education, and commodity. Finally, analyzing interviews with Japanese nationals and answers obtained from non-Japanese respondents through an online survey, I conclude that the ultimate difference between the Western and Japanese modern modes of excretion is found in the level of social visibility of excreta, with the Western one being low, and the Japanese level relatively high.

論文審査の結果の要旨及び担当者

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論文審査の結果の要旨

The Sociology of Excretion in Japan: Evolution of the Japanese Modern Mode of Excretion through Distinction Competition with the West

This is an inventive and carefully crafted doctoral research project that explores diverse historical and contemporary data sources from various disciplines to weave a theoretical story of how evolving discourses and social attitudes toward defecation and related bodily functions influenced social policies concerning public hygiene, and technological developments, such as sewer systems and Japan's justifiably famous high-tech toilets. Although this sociology of disgust and its associated social history of sanitation may seem an odd topic, it is a multi-faceted but relatively unstudied aspect of everyday life and culture that is attracting increasing attention from scholars across the globe. Every society must resolve the dangerous problems of waste disposal.

The author contributes to this emerging field a vigorous and clearly argued exploration of how disgust, a basic human emotion, has shaped, and been shaped by, the evolution of Japan's cultural strategies for dealing with human waste. this work is an addition to the sociology of sanitation that enrichs the small stock of research on sanitation practices in Japanese studies.

In her quest to uncover the hidden social history of excrement, the author dug into obscure historical sources to bring together theoretical perspectives thus far advanced in Japan and elsewhere. This story is framed as a comparative sociology of distinction competition between "modes of excretion" and this is the strength of the dissertation. As with modes of production and modes of reproduction, modes of excretion are the product of the interplay between micro-level practices, and macro-level forces and social structures. Together, these give rise to what can be characterized as a "fecal habitus," a slowly evolving set of embodied predispositions, notions, behaviors, and attitudes regarding human waste and how to deal with it.

Tracing and summarizing in some detail the religious origins and development of of "fecal habitus" in both Japan and Christian Europe, the study highlights how the commercialization of excrement in Japan organized its orderly disposal, thus avoiding problems experienced by societies that did not value human waste because they had access to abundant animal waste as fertilizer. Despite some notable exceptions, such as the outbreaks of flood-borne cholera that occasionally devastated low-lying riverbank communities, agricultural Japanese society's pragmatic or neutral stance toward excrement meant that it was generally untroubled by human waste related problems. 16th century European visitors remarked on Japan's superior environmental quality.

However, the night soil market was gradually destabilized. After the reopening of the country during Meiji,

and the subsequent industrialized urbanization of the first half of the 20th century, foreign toilet norms and customs grew in influence and Japan's fecal habitus became conflicted along lines of class and region. The conflict between native and foreign practice was especially evident after World War II, when, in response to Occupation pressure occasioned by Western disgust with Japanese use of human waste as fertilizer, Japan shifted to the mass use of chemical fertilizers. At first, this invasion of foreign norms led to environmental problems, as the now useless raw sewage was dumped into rivers and coastal waters. To redress the sewage pollution Japanese policy makers sought to imitate and spread the sanitary standards of the industrial West. However, in the process of imitation, Japanese government leaders and business people not only succeeded in imitating Western bourgeois practices that make feces invisible. From its own fecal habitus and mores related to human excrement, as well as industrial and commercial knowhow and craftsmanship, Japanese firms developed and popularized superior toilet technology, which raised the standard for civilized defecation, which has now become the envy of the world. The author tells this part of this engrossing story of cultural dialectics with wit and analytical skill.

To investigate the current varieties of practices and attitudes in Japan's fecal habitus, the author has also sought qualitative data in Japanese museums, daycare centers and schools, and homes for the elderly. Observations and interviews in these places brought out variation in contemporary, quotidian understandings of excrement and sanitation, allowing insight into intergenerational differences, and comparison with official discourses and Western modes of excretion. This was the weakest part of the work for me. Although the findings are not uninteresting, the comparison with the West suffers because the Western point of view is drawn from interviews with a small, non-random sample. Still, dividing manifestations of poop in the realms of education, health, and commodities seems useful, and the basic insight that there are different levels of visibility for excrement, which reflect different historically inflected notions of what is disgusting, is adequately established. Thus the survey fleshes out the current differences in Western and Japanese fecal habitus.

The committee are unanimous in finding the work to be satisfactory and recommend that the candidate be awarded the Ph.D. in Human Sciences.