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Title	The Voices of Women : The Literature of Manchurian Repatriation
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Citation	越境文化研究イニシアティヴ論集. 2021, 4, p. 69-82
Version Type	VoR
URL	https://hdl.handle.net/11094/85139
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The Voices of Women:
The Literature of Manchurian Repatriation

XUANJING WANG*

1 Introduction

On August 15, 1945, with the Jewel Voice Broadcast, Japan announced its defeat in World War II. With the collapse of the Japanese sphere of influence and its colonial empire, Japan was forced to form a new national system and build a new postwar society. The firebombing of Tokyo, the atomic bomb, and the Japanese repatriation from colonies—ever since the end of the war, the ways in which people have told their war stories about these historical events through various media have supplemented the official histories recorded in documents preserved and archived by the state. Memories of individual war experiences have been verbalized and transmitted via novels, poetry, manga, and many other forms of media. These unique writings have played an integral part in the construction of postwar Japan's collective consciousness of the war. Although the role of narratives about repatriation was overlooked for a long time, repatriation has recently, finally, entered the field of vision of many researchers.

After the conclusion of World War II, millions of repatriates returned to Japan from its colonies, particularly Manchuria, Taiwan, and Korea. Including both civilians and soldiers, the number of repatriates exceeded six million, which was nearly ten percent of Japan's population at that time. A vast number of writings about the movements of these people were left behind after the war. In order to understand the complete impact of repatriation on the structure of postwar Japan, two questions need to be considered. First, how have repatriates told their stories? Next, how have readers interacted with such stories about repatriation experiences?

When depicting repatriation, some of the most common themes in writing include the shifting statuses of perpetrators and victims, a sense of unbelonging because of the loss of one's homeland, and the sexual violence suffered by many women. These themes have already been explored in previous research, much of which has focused on the writing of famous authors such as Abe Kōbō (安部公房, 1924–1993), Ushijima Haruko (牛島春子, 1913–2002), and Fujiwara

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Tei (藤原てい, 1918–2016).[1] In one of the most representative studies dealing with this sort of repatriation literature, *Hikiage bungakuron josetsu: Arata na posutokoroniaru e* (引揚げ文学論序説―新たなポストコロニアルへ, 2016), Park Yuha focused on works by Japanese writers who were born and raised in the colonies, and she discussed these individual works from a postcolonial perspective.[2] However, in Park's study the subject of repatriation literature was limited to Japanese writers who were born and raised in the colonies. This meant that many people who moved to Japan's colonies in adulthood were excluded from its scope. It is now necessary to proceed with a complete, systematic study of repatriation literature. For example, many previous studies examined changes in the overall image of repatriation over the period from the 1950s to the 1970s, but there has been a lack of sufficient attention to subsequent developments.[3] With this in mind, this study expands the subject of repatriation literature in an attempt to construct a new framework for repatriation literature. It does so by conducting a diachronic study with a view to including a variety of works from different periods.

At the same time, the geopolitical relationship between Japan and the rest of East Asia remains a complicated issue to this day. When searching for the source of this tension, the history of Manchuria is an issue that cannot be ignored. As Manchuria ("Manchukuo", 満州国) was ostensibly based on the public principle of "Five Races Under One Union" (五族協和 *gozoku kyōwa*), it was a complex, multiethnic, multilingual country with people from all walks of life. The study of Manchuria reveals not only the relations between Japan and Manchuria, but also the power relations between China, Mongolia, Korea, and Russia. So far, representative studies that have focused on the former Manchuria, such as those by Kawamura Minato and Ozaki Hotsuki,[4] have mainly revolved around the literature of the period when Japanese people were living in what was then Manchukuo. However, there has been insufficient examination of repatriation from Manchuria after Japan's defeat.

Based on the above, this study will analyze the records of repatriation from a diachronic

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[1] See Kawamura Minato 川村湊, *Ikyō no Shōwa bungaku* 異郷の昭和文学, Iwanami Shoten 岩波書店, 1990, as well as Araragi Shinzō ed. 蘭信三編, *Teikoku hōkai to hito no sai-idō* 帝国崩壊とひとの再移動, Bensei Shuppan 勉誠出版, 2011.

[2] Park Yuha 朴裕河, *Hikiage bungakuron josetsu: Arata na posutokoroniaru e* 引揚げ文学論序説―新たなポストコロニアルへ, Jimbun Shoin 人文書院, 2016.

[3] See Narita Ryūichi 成田龍一, "'Hikiage' to 'yokuryū'" 「引揚げ」と「抑留」, in Kurazawa Aiko ed. 倉沢愛子編, *Teikoku no sensō keiken* 帝国の戦争経験, Iwanami Shoten 岩波書店, 2006, p. 182.

[4] See Kawamura, op. cit., and Ozaki Hotsuki 尾崎秀樹, *Kindai bungaku no kizuato: Kyū-shokuminchi bungakuron* 近代文学の傷痕―旧植民地文学論, Iwanami Shoten 岩波書店, 1991.

perspective, focusing on works written about the experience of repatriation from Manchuria. Both because women who repatriated from Manchuria have attracted special attention, and with an awareness of ways in which this attention might be considered problematic, this study will focus on three works by women writers: Fujiwara Tei's *The Shooting Stars Are Alive* (流れる星は生きている *Nagareru hoshi wa ikiteiru*, 1949),[5] Miyao Tomiko's *Midsummer* (朱夏 *Shuka*, 1985),[6] and Sawachi Hisae's *Fourteen: Repatriation from a Manchurian Development Village* (14 歳〈フォーティーン〉―満州開拓村からの帰還 *14-sai (fōtīn): Manshū kaitakumura kara no kikan*, 2015)[7] as its main research subjects.

These three works are based on the actual experiences of their female writers, each writing in a different time period. This allows us to grasp the diverse perceptions of postwar repatriated women and their experiences, and how they have changed over time. In addition, since these representative works are highly influential and have enjoyed a large readership, through the reading of these three works, it is also possible to capture how works about repatriation have been read by Japanese people since the end of the war.

2 Women as Writers

After the war, repatriates mainly used their memories as raw material for attempts to recount their experiences. However, in general their works are not strictly recreations following these memories, but rather interpretive reconstructions of their own experiences. Further, as time goes by, the writer's attitude toward the transmission and reproduction of memory also changes. Accordingly, this section takes the aforementioned three works as clues to examine how women as writers have recalled repatriation and how the posture of their stories has changed over time.

In 1949, Fujiwara Tei created *The Shooting Stars Are Alive* based on her actual experience of repatriation from Manchuria. This work depicts her experience of leaving behind her husband Nitta Jiro (新田次郎, 1912–1980), who was working at an observatory in Manchuria, at the end of the war, and taking her three children with her to repatriate them from what was then known

[5] Fujiwara Tei 藤原てい, *Nagareru hoshi wa ikiteiru* 流れる星は生きている, Hibiya Shuppansha 日比谷出版社, 1949.
[6] Miyao Tomiko 宮尾登美子, *Shuka* 朱夏, Shūeisha 集英社, 1985. This work has also been referred to as *Red Summer* or *Vermilion Summer* in English-language research.
[7] Sawachi Hisae 澤地久枝, *14-sai (fōtīn): Manshū kaitakumura kara no kikan* 14 歳〈フォーティーン〉―満州開拓村からの帰還, Shūeisha 集英社, 2015.

as Shinkyō (新京). She first traveled through northern Korea, and then southward to the Japanese mainland. After writing this book, Fujiwara said, "I cannot help but feel that it is still a long way off from our miserable experiences."[8] In a related analysis, Suemasu Tomohiro has argued that when Fujiwara reread her work she felt an unexpected distance between what she had written and her actual experience.[9] Still, this in fact shows how Fujiwara struggled to recreate the experience of repatriation faithfully, and experienced anguish at realizing how difficult it was to pass on these events to posterity. It can be said that in this work Fujiwara wanted to emphasize how repatriates experienced repatriation as victimization, by focusing on bridging the distance between "the Fujiwara experiencing repatriation" and "the Fujiwara writing about repatriation".

Moreover, the emphasis on the damage caused by repatriation is also reflected in the structure of *The Shooting Stars Are Alive*. The work begins when the Soviet Union entered the war, the focus is on the escape of the Japanese people from Manchuria, and there is almost no mention of people of other nationalities who were living in Manchuria at the time. By including a "Certificate of Death" (死亡診断書 *shibō shindansho*) of a child who died in the process of repatriation and a "Certificate of Repatriation" (引揚証明書 *hikiage shōmeisho*) from the time of landing, it is clear that Fujiwara is trying to emphasize the miserable nature of repatriation by providing various proof. In addition, the overwhelming number of conversational passages in the work brings the positions of the "protagonist Fujiwara" and the "writer Fujiwara" closer together. Based upon these facts, it is clear that Fujiwara had overlooked the aggression of the Manchurian immigrants and the harmful effects of the war on other ethnic groups, aspects of the war she was unlikely to face herself, and instead underlined the damage suffered by the Japanese people who were living in the colonies at the time of Japan's defeat.

In recalling her repatriation experience, Fujiwara chose to emphasize that her victimization was the result of a combination of objective and subjective causes. Objectively, individuals are often vulnerable to or victimized by historical flows. Subjectively, faced with the moral rupture of Japanese society after the defeat, the writer needed to reestablish her moral foundation through the process of writing. In other words, she emphasized her own victimization to regain

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[8] In Japanese, "*Mada watashitachi no mijime na taiken to wa hodo tōi mono no yō na ki ga shite naranai*" (まだ私達のみじめな體驗とはほど遠いもののような氣がしてならない). Fujiwara, op. cit., p. 317.
[9] Suemasu Tomohiro 末益智広, "Fujiwara Tei *Nagareru hoshi wa ikite iru*/*Haiiro no oka* o meguru 'hikiage' no kioku" 藤原てい『流れる星は生きている』『灰色の丘』をめぐる「引揚げ」の記憶, *Chiba Daigaku daigakuin jimbun kōkyō gakufu kenkyū purojekuto hōkokusho* 千葉大学大学院人文公共学府研究プロジェクト報告書, Vol. 330, 2018, pp. 20–42.

a sense of morality, and to escape from the moral dilemma of the colonizers.

Later, in 1985, Miyao Tomiko completed the work *Midsummer*. The story begins with the marriage of the novel's protagonist, Ayako. *Midsummer* tells the story of Ayako's journey to Manchuria with her husband, who was educating the children of Japanese settlers in Manchuria, and her newborn daughter. The work includes a bird's eye view description of information on the war and life in wartime Manchuria as background information, but overall, interest in the social background of colonization is not very high. *Midsummer* includes many deviations from conventional impressions regarding Manchurian emigration and repatriation. Rather than emigrating to Manchuria in order to assist in the work of "serving the motherland through education" (教育報国 *kyōiku hōkoku*), it would be more appropriate to say that the main character flees from danger in mainland Japan to Manchuria where there were no air raids. Ayako's husband also moved to Manchuria for a higher salary under the guise of patriotism. Miyao wrote about immigrant life in cold Manchuria, where *ondol*[10] were used to heat the entire room, and about a family named Wang who helped the Japanese people after their defeat in the war. Miyao sensitively grasped the wisdom and good intentions of the Manchurian people that had been hidden by the dominant images of "uncultivated Manchuria" and "expressionless Manchurians". In contrast, the Japanese who are featured in the work are not represented as people who help one another. Instead they show the cruelty of human nature, and it is as if they only want to survive. *Midsummer* also portrays the diverse perspectives of the Japanese people after Japan's defeat in the war, as some of the Japanese in Manchuria were not attempting to leave on the repatriation ships, but wanted to stay on the continent for various reasons.

Although the protagonist Ayako's experiences overlap significantly with Miyao's own, the gulf between Ayako and the author Miyao is insurmountable. Deviating from the protagonist's point of view, the writer does not simply portray the repatriates as victims but writes with an awareness of the coming collapse of the power structure in Manchuria. Previously, regarding her starting point in becoming a writer, Miyao had said, "It's not unusual to hear about the tragic state of the settler groups over there, or to hear about women who were assaulted by the Soviets, but at the time, my experience was a great shock to me."[11] Beginning in the 1970s, there was a

[10] A heating system used in houses on the Korean Peninsula and in northeastern China.

[11] See Miyao Tomiko 宮尾登美子, "Igossō no bungaku: Jushōsaku *Kai* o megutte" いごっそうの文学 : 受賞作「櫂」をめぐって, *Bungei ronsō* 文藝論叢 Vol. 10, 1974, pp. 60–66. In Japanese, this is "*Mukō no kaitakudan no hisan na jōkyō to ka Soren ni ryōjoku sareta onna no hito no hanashi da to ka mezurashiku gozaimasen keredo mo sono koro, watashi no taiken to iu no wa hijō ni shokku datta wake nan desu*" (むこうの開拓団の悲惨な状況とかソ連に陵辱された女の人の話だとか珍しくございませんけれど

trend toward writing one's personal history in Japan, and a large number of "self-historical" works emerged.[12] These works illustrate two opposing impulses: the desire of those who survived the war to have their suffering be seen and understood by others, but at the same time wanting their suffering to be seen as distinct and unique. Miyao Tomiko, as a female writer recounting her experience of repatriation from Manchuria, used her unique gaze to write a personal story of repatriation, breaking from the typified and fixed narrative of repatriation that had been in place since immediately after the war.

More than half a century after the war ended, Sawachi Hisae wrote *Fourteen: Repatriation from a Manchurian Development Village*. In the introduction to this book, Sawachi said about her motivation for writing that when she was at the age of fourteen, a great number of things happened around her all at once. Then, a great number of years later, she finally "woke up".[13] The late awakening of this militaristic girl shows Sawachi had always been somewhat aware of the colonial nature of the Manchurian immigrants and their responsibility for the war, and she used *Fourteen: Repatriation from a Manchurian Development Village* to reexamine her own repatriation experience. Sawachi purposely avoided using the first person, instead depicting a relatively abstract image of "a fourteen-year-old girl" in the third person. Moreover, the foreign word "fourteen" (フォーティーン) was deliberately used in the title, and other foreign words like "teenager" (ティーンエイジャー) were also used in many places in the text. Since it is clearly stated in the text that the fourteen-year-old protagonist does not understand English, it is obvious that this is a tool used by Sawachi to distance herself from her experience at the time. As for the existence of Manchuria, Sawachi writes, "The girl fell asleep as she was thinking that adults never tell the truth. … The girl thought that there were lies and truths mixed together across this world, just as there were 'lies' in the rationing system of Five Races Under One Union."[14] These kinds of frank thoughts are presented through the medium of a fourteen-year-

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もその頃、私の体験というのは非常にショックだったわけなんです).

[12] For example, Saotome Katsumoto 早乙女勝元, *Tokyo Daikūshū: Shōwa 20-nen 3-gatsu tōka no kiroku* 東京大空襲—昭和 20 年 3 月 10 日の記録, Iwanami Shoten 岩波書店, 1971, and Suzuki Masako 鈴木政子, *Ano hi yūyake, hahasan no Taiheiyō Sensō* あの日夕焼け、母さんの太平洋戦争, Rippū Shobo 立風書房, 1980.

[13] Sawachi, op. cit., p. 12.

[14] Ibid., p. 53. In Japanese, this reads "*Otona wa,hontō no koto wa iwanai no da to omō uchi, shōjo wa nemutteita…. Gozoku kyōwa no haikyū seido ni 'uso' ga aru yō ni, kono yo ni wa uso to hontō ga majiriatteiru to shōjo wa omō*" (おとなは、本当のことは言わないのだと思ううち、少女は眠っていた。… 五族協和の配給制度に「嘘」があるように、この世にはウソとホントがまじりあっていると少女は思う).

old girl. Also, criticism of the Japanese imperial government can be seen in the expression, "No consideration was given to any of the Japanese people living in Manchuria, even the settlers, who were to be discarded"[15] after the defeat.

Although the protagonist of the work is a "fourteen-year-old girl", the story is not told strictly from her point of view, and we can find many descriptions that go beyond the girl's perspective to supply analyses of the characters and supplementary information about the historical background. Sawachi's attempt to distance herself from the fourteen-year-old "militaristic girl" is obvious. As mentioned in the novel, this work relies upon the historical accounts recorded by a number of different people.[16] Therefore, *Fourteen: Repatriation from a Manchurian Development Village* can be said to be a reconceptualization of Sawachi's experience of repatriation as a "fourteen-year-old girl" over sixty years earlier, based on the collection and condensation of various historical materials. Because Sawachi maintains her usual concern with social issues and the history of the war is explored, her narrative is no longer confined to her personal experience, and her abstract character is used to reevaluate the entire war and Japan.

In summary, while Fujiwara stuck closely to the repatriation experience and attempted to recreate it fully, Miyao consciously distanced herself from a single point of view, and Sawachi distanced herself from the experience of repatriation by making her characters more abstract. As distance from these events has increased over time, writers have freed themselves from the perspective of repatriation that labels them solely as sufferers. In other words, a greater distance between the author experiencing repatriation and the writing author, and a larger gap between the eyes of the author and the eyes of the protagonist, tends to liberate the repatriated female writer from her presumed position as a victim. The writer is able to look back on the repatriation experience from a broader perspective, beyond the single point of view she was limited to at the time of repatriating.

3 Repatriation Literature Being Read

In modern literary space, with the commodification of literature, readers play the dual role

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[15] Ibid., p. 96. In Japanese, "*Suterareru Manshū ittai ni kurasu Nihonjin, naka demo kaitakudan e no hairyo wa nai*" (捨てられる満州一帯に暮す日本人、なかでも開拓団への配慮はない).

[16] For example, Handō Kazutoshi 半藤一利, *Soren ga Manshū ni shinkō shita natsu* ソ連が満州に侵攻した夏, Bunshun Bunko 文春文庫, 2002, and Ikeda Sumihisa 池田純久, *Nihon no magarikado* 日本の曲り角, Senjō Shuppan 千城出版, 1968.

of selecting and receiving literary works. Therefore, it is necessary to consider the reception of repatriate literature while being aware of the readers as consumers in the literary space. In the previous section, the changing relationship between writers and repatriation was examined, but this section attempts to reveal why the works became important literature in the public sphere by focusing on the perspective of readers.

As mentioned earlier, among works written about repatriation, those by women have been substantially more influential. Yet Ikuta Michiko notes that traditionally, when Manchuria is discussed, it is often examined according to "antagonism between Russian and Japanese colonial expansion into Manchuria and Chinese nationalism" and the opposition between "puppet state and ideal state, center and frontier" with women barely visible. Japanese women, on the other hand, were the most visible subjects during repatriation.[17] Thus, it is necessary to consider why the women who repatriated from Manchuria have received so much attention, and how this changed the postwar Japanese perceptions of repatriation.

The Shooting Stars Are Alive was first published in 1949 and became a bestseller at the time.[18] In this book, the mother, Fujiwara, crosses the 38th parallel with her three children. This description of a tragic journey had a great impact on the formation of the war memory of the Japanese people because it was considered a "typical" story of repatriation. *The Shooting Stars Are Alive* was read as a moving nonfiction book about a mother and her children that began to record the war from the point of defeat.[19] Meanwhile, it overlooked the injustices of aggression against Manchuria, as well as the injustices of colonial rule and the suffering of other peoples in the Japanese empire. The image of the strong mother of the returnees and the mutual support among the Japanese made the story a touching one for readers.

After Japan's defeat, the continuity of nationhood and conventional Japanese values, which had been built up over the course of history, was suddenly severed in the minds of the Japanese people. It can be said that as citizens of a defeated nation, the Japanese people lost their sense of national pride. Therefore, reconstructing Japanese national consciousness and morality was an urgent task immediately after the defeat. *The Shooting Stars Are Alive* emphasized the

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[17] See Ikuta Michiko 生田美智子, "Taminzoku kūkan o ikita onnatachi" 多民族空間を生きた女たち, in Ikuta Michiko ed. 生田美智子編, *Onnatachi no Manshū: Taminzoku kūkan o ikite* 女たちの満州―多民族空間を生きて, Osaka University Press 大阪大学出版会, 2015, p. 13.

[18] The first edition was published by Hibiya Shuppansha (日比谷出版社) in 1949 and it has been reprinted many times, including in editions by Chūkō Bunko (中公文庫) and Kaiseisha Bunko (偕成社文庫).

[19] See Suemasu, op. cit., p. 29, "*Sorera ni shimesareteiru* Nagasareru hoshi wa ikiteiru *no hyō o kanketsu matomereba, 'haha to ko' no 'kandō' no 'nonfikushon' de aru*" (それらに示されている『流れる星は生きている』の評を簡潔まとめれば、「母と子」の「感動」の「ノンフィクション」である).

damage inflicted on Japan at the end of the war and overlooked how repatriation was an effect of Japanese imperial aggression, so it contributed to the reconstruction of postwar Japanese society by reemphasizing the importance of postwar family relationships to its readers.

Meanwhile, Miyao Tomiko was highly regarded as a writer of women's stories, and at the center of her creations was her life experience of rebellion against fate. Regarding *Midsummer*, one of Miyao's autobiographical works in which she describes her experiences in Manchuria and her repatriation, analysis of the story shows how Ayako transforms from a selfish girl into something like a hungry stray dog, and then into a woman who has learned the joy of working. Ayako's awakening involves a realization about the dangers of living a life of escape and dependence. For readers this communicated the message that other women, too, must become independent and fully "human" by working.[20]

In my opinion, Miyao was using the repatriation experience to think about how people descended into an uncultured, uncivilized life when supplies were extremely scarce. Because its characters faced pressure that turned them into something like wild animals, Miyao was able to avoid recreating the fixed image of the repatriating mother that was expected by readers who were accustomed to earlier repatriate narratives. This meant that the main character, Ayako, could be portrayed as an individual who could question the "problem of self-reliance" from its root. Since Ayako is not pictured only as a victim of repatriation, it turns out that *Midsummer* can be read as a story of a woman's growth as she discovers a new self through her unique experience. In this way, the narrative of Ayako's repatriation deviated from the typical narrative to that time and turned into a story that expresses individuality and humanity.

In the case of Sawachi Hisae, as one of the leading female nonfiction writers in Japan, she has earned a readership aware of her tendency to write socially relevant works based around a consistent questioning of war and the nation. Because the main character of *Fourteen: Repatriation from a Manchurian Development Village* is a fourteen-year-old girl, she is able to highlight particular issues that would be difficult to face as a young girl during wartime. The book forced readers to think about the pioneers who were abandoned in Manchuria after the defeat and the real image of the enemy. Compared to conventional works that emphasize the miserable physical conditions of the repatriation experience, Sawachi's description clearly stresses the girl's reflective character. To speculate on the reason why this work has been

[20] Fujimoto Chizuko 藤本千鶴子, "Miyao Tomiko *Shuka*: Osanai haha Ayako no Manshū taiken" 宮尾登美子「朱夏」―幼い母綾子の満州体験, *Kokubungaku kaishaku to kyōzai no kenkyū* 国文学解釈と教材の研究, Vol. 31, No. 5, May 1986, pp. 117–119.

received so well, in the last two decades, the desire to delve into history has overcome the tendency to read works of self-justification because fewer and fewer readers are people who actually experienced the war. Writers have therefore been able to escape from the need to depict repatriates as victims and have been able to talk about their war experiences more directly. In other words, the generations of people that have not experienced war have become the dominant force in mainstream society, and so the readership of repatriate literature is also changing. When reading about the repatriation experiences, newer readers tend to read about the war from a more distant and dispassionate perspective, and they take a more reflective stance on Japanese history.

As for the question of why readers continue to read about the repatriation experience at all, this cannot be answered simply by stating that reading about the horrors and violence of war brings about a greater understanding of the dangers of war and a desire for peace. Instead, by reading the suffering of others conveyed in literary works, the reader experiences the suffering as well. The act of reading shortens the distance between those who have experienced and those who have not experienced the events described in literary works, and furthermore, from the standpoint of the reader, as long as there is a sense of sympathy toward the victims of the war, they can escape the subject position occupied by those who conspired to perpetrate it. Therefore, both for the generations that have not experienced war and for survivors who hold heavy war memories, continuing to read literature about repatriation can be a means of moral liberation. In other words, reading is a way to be sure that one does not bear responsibility for the pain of war.

Thus, with the changing of the times, the readership of repatriation narratives is also changing. Since the 1980s, readers have become more and more comfortable with depictions of diverse events and unique experiences of repatriation. Against the backdrop of generational change, readers have achieved a more dispassionate point of view toward Japan's history, and they believe it is necessary to delve into history in more detail.

This also helps us understand why women's voices have been so much more prominent in repatriation literature than male voices. The internment of male soldiers separated them from female civilians in a way that simplified the role of civilian repatriates, making it easier for readers in Japan to empathize with them.[21] In addition, while power relations in the colonial space confounded the two structures of "colonizer-colonized" and "male-female", women who

[21] See Suemasu Tomohiro 末益智広, "Hikiage no kioku kara nani ga bōkyaku sarete kita no ka" 引揚げの記憶から何が忘却されてきたのか, *Chiba Daigaku daigakuin jimbun kōkyō gakufu kenkyū purojekuto hōkokusho* 千葉大学大学院人文公共学府研究プロジェクト報告書, Vol. 349, 2020, pp. 11–26.

were excluded from the violent system of war appeared in various statuses as mother, wife, and daughter. These were roles that readers were able to identify with irrespective of their nationality or ethnicity.

4 Repatriation as Cultural Trauma

In the more than seventy years since the end of the war, repatriation has continued to be narrated and read. So what kind of experience is Manchurian repatriation for the Japanese people? This section briefly attempts to clarify the social significance of repatriation literature and further pursue the particularities of repatriation from Manchuria.

Based on theories of cultural trauma, historical events themselves do not lead to collective trauma. Instead, that trauma is a product of socially mediated processes. According to Jeffrey C. Alexander, "Cultural trauma occurs when members of a collectivity feel they have been subjected to a horrendous event that leaves indelible marks upon their group consciousness, marking their memories forever and changing their future identity in fundamental and irrevocable ways."[22] The repatriation experience undergone by a tenth of the Japanese people resulted in mixed emotional responses: a sense of injustice among the people toward the colonial system that created them, both loyalty and distrust toward the nation, and sympathy and guilt toward the dead. These chaotic feelings also coexist in repatriation literature.

Akiko Hashimoto has collected and examined conflicting narratives of trauma in Japanese public discourse by analyzing memories of Japan's defeat in the war. Hashimoto explains that there are three kinds of narratives about the trauma of defeat in Japan, corresponding to the roles of the hero, the victim, and the perpetrator, each rooted in a different sense of morality and ethics.[23] These three narrative patterns are mixed together in the public sphere, but within a single narrative, they are always unified; in other words, when an individual records a historical event, the contradiction exists externally, but internally, the position is always consistent.[24]

However, repatriation from Manchuria, which is one part of the complete war experience,

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[22] Jeffrey C. Alexander, "Toward a Theory of Cultural Trauma," in Jeffrey C. Alexander et al., *Cultural Trauma and Collective Identity*, University of California Press, 2004, p. 1.
[23] Akiko Hashimoto 橋本明子, *Nihon no nagai sengo* 日本の長い戦後, Yamaoka Yumi trans. 山岡由美訳, Misuzu Shobo みすず書房, 2017, p. 9.
[24] For example, the narrative of kamikaze pilots is always presented as a heroic story of sacrifice for the nation, while the narratives of the Tokyo Air Raids and the atomic bombings emphasize the victimization of the common people.

is a mixture of the heroism involved in being sacrificed for the nation and the "development of the continent", the perpetration of forcible colonization of foreign lands, and the victimization involved in being a citizen of a defeated nation. Therefore, when talking about repatriation, it is difficult for narrators to agree on consistent positions within each work.

In the immediate aftermath of the war, Japan faced economic, political, and institutional collapse, and *The Shooting Stars Are Alive* served as the foundation for shared national memories of victimization. Fujiwara emphasized the damage caused by repatriation and the war, and helped reconstruct unified perspectives on Japanese ethnic and national identity by showing the common experience of Japanese people helping one another after the defeat. However, in *Midsummer*, Miyao not only depicted the repatriation experience of the Japanese, but also the extremely difficult life of all people in Manchuria at that time. While *Midsummer* focuses particularly on the hardships suffered by the Japanese people, it also argues that war brings harm to common people. Miyao's writing shows that the search for narratives that critique the war has continued across ethnic and national boundaries. By opposing war, Miyao presents a pathway to pacifism. In more recent years, Sawachi's *Fourteen: Repatriation from a Manchurian Development Village* finally turns away from the traditional repatriation narrative of victimhood and creates a space for a more complex narrative of war remembrance. Sawachi's stance is deeply rooted in pacifism, but also reveals the need for further reconciliation through reflection on war.

Even among the many types of repatriation narratives, the writings about repatriation from Manchuria are special. The colonization of Manchuria was granted a unique veneer of legitimacy by the puppet regime ruling there, distinguishing it from Japan's other colonies. As explained by Irokawa Daikichi, the Japanese government took the lead in recruiting and sending many agricultural immigrants from mainland Japan to Manchukuo as a national policy, as part of its plans to solve apparent land shortages and overpopulation during the Showa Depression and to realize the Japanese imperialist rule over Manchuria.[25] Miyao described the continent as a place where people lived freely without fear of wartime air raids, while Hisae Sawachi described Manchuria as a society where people could live without being questioned about their pasts. Yet the colonial status of Manchuria during the wartime period was part of a delicate balancing act from the beginning. Contributing to the development of the "uncivilized new country of Manchukuo" was a precarious path for Chinese people and Koreans, as well as a new

[25] Irokawa Daikichi 色川大吉, *Shōwa-shi to tennō* 昭和史と天皇, Iwanami Shoten 岩波書店, 1991, p. 26.

experiment for Japanese immigrant settlers. Due to the constant precarity of this Manchurian experiment, it remains possible to discern the many contradictions of Manchukuo in the records of Manchurian repatriation to this day.

5 Conclusion

As times change, the mainstream narratives related to repatriation in the literary space are also changing. While such shifts of course involve the writers, they are also strongly related to the consciousness of readers.

This paper first used three books by women writers as indications of how the distance between the "author experiencing repatriation" and the "author writing" has expanded over time, and how this gap between the author and the protagonist has gradually led to a liberation of female repatriate writers from their original position as victims of the war. While Fujiwara Tei maintained the gaze of the victim in her depiction of repatriation, and Miyao Tomiko began to write more personal narratives of the end of the war, Sawachi Hisae withdrew somewhat from her own story in order to gesture toward social issues related to the Japanese nation. In this way the repatriate, as a writer, has gradually moved away from the position she was in at the time in order to look back at repatriation experiences from broader perspectives.

Next, from the standpoint of reception, this paper attempted to capture how readers in specific historical contexts and from specific social backgrounds have interacted with narratives of repatriation. This attempt is based on the understanding that literary works related to repatriation can be established as literature in the public sphere regardless of the extent to which these match private records. In terms of the images of repatriation in the three works discussed in this paper, the narratives related to repatriation that readers have sought out have changed over time from stories depicting simple victim consciousness to narratives including more individuality and diverse events, then to stories delving further into history and self-reflection. It is believed that readers gain moral emancipation from their individual positions by reading about the repatriation experience and thus escape some of the responsibility and pain of war. Further, as women are particularly vulnerable within contemporary power structures both inside and outside of Japan, female writers are often able to transcend nationality and ethnicity, helping their stories reach more readers.

In the end, the contradictory narratives of victim, perpetrator, and hero that lurk in repatriation narratives complicate postwar stories dealing with the repatriation experience. Each

of these narratives suggests a different moral foundation for postwar Japan. Just after the war, victimhood narratives rescued readers from the postwar moral deficit by emphasizing their own victimization, while the narratives of the 1980s brought more of the history of the nation into view, making it simpler to critique how the war brought suffering to all parties involved. The emphasis on the harm done by the war led to an increase in pacifist sentiment. Finally, in the 21st century, the desire for reconciliation led to the emergence of new narratives that reflected on Japan as a nation and a people to a greater extent. Greater reflectiveness has resulted in a new focus on Manchurian colonization and repatriation, a complex undertaking involving multiple power structures that can perhaps best be understood by reading the literary works of women who wrote about repatriation from Manchuria.