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The Correlation Between Literature, Drama and Film: A Discussion of *A Wife in Musashino*

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Abstract

The aim of this article is to demonstrate the close correlation between Ōoka Shohei's A Wife in Musashino, published in 1950 and its adaptations. This correlation between A Wife in Musashino and its adaptations allows us to find that the original text does not merely influence its adaptations, but also that their relations have interacting factors. This paper addresses Fukuda Tsuneari's drama adaptation, staged in 1951 and Mizoguchi Kenji's film adaptation, released in 1951.

In an attempt to examine the correlation, this paper compares the original novel with its adaptations. The comparative analysis discusses the following points. First, I examine the commonalities and differences of the ending between Fukuda's drama, Mizoguchi's film, and Ōoka's novel by examining how the ending of Ōoka's novel is transformed by Fukuda and Mizoguchi. Second, I examine the commonalities and differences of Michiko's suicide by focusing on the 'accidental' factors. Ōoka and Fukuda commented on the accidental factors in their novel and drama respectively. By looking at these comments more closely, I analyze the intertextuality between Ōoka and Fukuda. This paper shows that the correlation between A Wife in Musashino and its adaptations provides us with diverse ways to interpret and create.

Keywords: *A Wife in Musashino*, Ōoka Shohei, Fukuda Tsuneari, Mizoguchi Kenji, adaptation, correlation

要旨

1950年1月から9月にかけて、大岡昇平は、『武蔵野夫人』を『群像』に連載している。この小説は、発表当時において、文学座により上演され、さらに、溝口健二により映画化されるなど、様々なメディアにおいて変奏されてきた作品である。福田恆存により脚色された『戯曲 武蔵野夫人』は、1951年5月、文学座により上演された。その後、雲の会編集『演劇』

創刊号にその脚本が掲載されている。また、1951年9月には、溝口健二が監督した東宝映画『武蔵野夫人』が公開されている。本稿では、原作である大岡昇平の『武蔵野夫人』を、福田恆存が脚色した『戯曲 武蔵野夫人』、溝口健二が監督した映画『武蔵野夫人』と比較考察することで、原作が、どのような形や方法で、それぞれの作品において用いられているのかを検討する。具体的には、以下の2点を中心に検討する。(1) それぞれの作品における結末が、原作をどのように構成したものであるのか。(2) 道子の自殺という事件に至る展開をどのように表現したのか。本稿における比較考察を通して、小説『武蔵野夫人』と演劇『戯曲 武蔵野夫人』、映画『武蔵野夫人』という異なるメディア間の相関を明らかにしたい。

キーワード: 武蔵野夫人、大岡昇平、福田恆存、溝口健二、アダプテーション、相関

1. Introduction

In the 1950s, many works of Japanese literature were adapted for Japanese film. Kurosawa Akira's *Rashomon*, which won the Golden Lion at the 1951 Venice Film Festival, is based on Akutagawa Ryūnosuke's *Rashomon* and *Yabunonaka*. Mizoguchi Kenji directed films adapted from Japanese classic and modern literature. Nakamura (2018: 25) states that about 2,000 Japanese films, transformed from Japanese literature, were released in the 1950s. He demonstrates the close correlation between Japanese film and literature in the 1950s from the viewpoint of the film and its original.

A Wife in Musashino is exemplary of such interaction. The novel has been adapted both for the stage and for the screen.

Ōoka Shohei published his novel in the literary journal *Gunzō* from January to September 1950. The novel is composed of fourteen chapters. In a postscript, Washburn (2004: 152) states that the novel was a critical and commercial success and was quickly adapted for drama and film. The novel was adapted for the stage by Fukuda Tsuneari. Fukuda's drama was published in the first issue of the journal *Engeki*, which was edited by the art activity circle *Kumonokai*. The play was staged by the theater company *Bungakuza* in May 1951.

Fukuda's drama version has a four-act structure. Mizoguchi Kenji directed the screen adaptation which was released by Toho in September 1951. Mizoguchi's film is organized into twenty sequences.

This paper focuses on the close correlation between *A Wife in Musashino* and its adaptations, comparing the original novel with its adaptations. The comparative analysis examines the works in two stages. First, I discuss the commonalities and differences of the ending between Ōoka's novel, Fukuda's play and Mizoguchi's film. Second, I analyze the commonalities and differences of Michiko's suicide by focusing on the 'accidental' factors.

2. Commonalities and differences of the ending

2.1 The ending of Ōoka's novel

Tanigawa (2021) notices the significance of the ending in Ōoka Shohei's *A Wife in Musashino*. Tanigawa interprets the ending by likening Tsutomu's love for Michiko to Tsutomu's respect for the artificial aspects of the city of Musashino. The adaptations of the novel equivalently reflect the interpretation of the original text. Fukuda's drama focuses on Tsutomu's affection for Michiko by inserting Tsutomu's words. Mizoguchi's film emphasizes the reconstruction of Musashino through Michiko's narration and the screen images. Let us begin with examining the commonalities and the differences in the ending of Ōoka's novel, Fukuda's play, and Mizoguchi's film. Firstly, following is the ending of Ōoka's novel:

Just as he was stepping out of the apartment, Ōno realized that he had not told Tsutomu that Michiko was dead. He hastily pulled Tomiko back inside.

The human heart is a strange thing. Ōno tried to put on a brave front, but his heart was already strained by this setting, where he had quietly taken back his faithless wife. He lacked the imagination to be able to recognize the nature of the love between Tsutomu and Michiko, but he was able to sense, at that moment, that the news of Michiko's death had transformed Tsutomu into a kind of monster. And he was afraid.

(Washburn 2004: 145)

Tsutomu did not know of Michiko's death in the scene above. Michiko was the only person who had ever cared for him and Michiko gave him something worth living for. Michiko's death meant that Tsutomu lost his only support. Ōoka's novel does not show how Tsutomu feels about Michiko's death and ends with Ōno's fear of Tsutomu's metamorphosis. Hanazaki (2003: 21-22) relates Tsutomu's metamorphosis to Ōoka's experience of demobilization. Tanigawa (2021: 65) analyzes Tsutomu's metamorphosis by associating Tsutomu's love for Michiko to Tsutomu's respect for the artificial aspects of Musashino. Previous studies analyze Tsutomu's metamorphosis from diverse perspectives. Thus, the ending of Ōoka's novel allows for a range of interpretations.

2.2 The ending of Fukuda's drama

Secondly, in the ending of Fukuda's drama, Tsutomu is with Michiko when she passes away. Tsutomu argues with Tadao (Akiyama) after Michiko's death:

Tadao: (quietly) Now you are free. Michiko died for your sake.

Tsutomu: (silent for a while, laughs loudly) Do you know how frightening my freedom could be. I bear the burden of Michiko's death. You are so frivolous. I don't have the time to deal with you. (Stares at Tadao, presently) goodbye.

(Tsutomu turns his back on Tadao and strides out across the garden.)

Tsutomu: (mutters) And the freedom?

(Fukuda 1951: 276)

After Michiko's death, Tadao (Akiyama) blames Tsutomu for Michiko's death. We can find the word 'freedom' in their altercation. Tsutomu previously mentioned 'freedom' in Act III:

Tsutomu: Do you believe in God?

Michiko: I don't know. I don't know the existence of God. Therefore, I keep our vow.

Tsutomu: To hurt yourself?

Michiko: (shakes her head sadly) Do you believe in freedom?

Tsutomu: Of course, I believe.

Michiko: I equate your freedom to our vow.

Tsutomu: In addition, I also know how frightening freedom could be. I went to the war and was left alone by the defeat. Freedom was coerced because of the defeat.

Michiko: I feel how frightening our vow could be. No matter how fearful, I believe in the role I was given in this world.

(Fukuda 1951: 274-275)

In Act III, Michiko and Tsutomu stay at a hotel along the shore of the Murayama reservoir. Michiko and Tsutomu have the conversation above. This dialogue is based on the following conversation in Ōoka's novel:

“There are things more important than morality.”

“Such as?” He put the question to her harshly.

“A vow.”

“A vow?”

“If we promise to truly love one another, to never waver and to always keep our vow, a time will come when the rules of society change and we can live together without shame.”

Tsutomu gazed at her, entranced by the vital spirit in her haggard face as she spoke. It struck him as both a sign of new hope and the final radiance of despair.

(Washburn 2004: 103)

In the conversation of Ōoka's novel, Tsutomu does not refer to ‘freedom’. Fukuda adds Tsutomu's ‘freedom’ to his dialogue. Let us turn to chapter 4 of Ōoka's novel, we can find the word ‘freedom’:

“One lives freely in the mountains and forests.” He recalled this line of a Meiji era poet. Tsutomu, who had wandered solitary in the tropical wilds, knew how frightening freedom could be. The harmony of the pleasant green of the oaks that had played the muse for the Meiji poet now looked to Tsutomu like nothing more than firewood. He could not imagine that an oak could grow so luxuriantly without the aid of human beings.

(Washburn 2004: 36)

In Ōoka's novel, Tsutomu feared 'freedom' from his memories of being alone in the war. Fukuda adapted this fear into Tsutomu's line, "In addition, I also know how frightening freedom can be. I went to war and was left alone by defeat. Freedom was coerced because of defeat." (Act III). In Fukuda's drama, Tsutomu recalled the word 'freedom' at the last hour of Michiko. Fukuda's drama ends with Tsutomu's line, "Do you know how frightening my freedom could be. I bear the burden of Michiko's death." (Act IV). Fukuda connects Tsutomu's 'freedom' to Michiko's death. Fukuda dramatized how Michiko's death changed Tsutomu. Thus, Tsutomu's love for Michiko plays a pivotal role in the ending of Fukuda's drama.

2.3 The ending of Mizoguchi's film

Additionally, Tsutomu's 'freedom' is equally adopted in Mizoguchi's film. Mizoguchi also contrasts Tsutomu's 'freedom' with Michiko's 'vow' in sequence 17 of the film. The film transforms the ending in a different manner. Michiko left the following message to Tsutomu:

By the time you read this letter, I will not exist in the world any longer. I have something to say to you before I die. You love beautiful Musashino so much. But your view of Musashino is delusion and just sentimental. Factories, schools, the dynamic rebuilding of Tokyo. These things are Musashino now. You will have to make a new beginning from there. You'll have to make a new beginning. Finally, the vow was not a mistake. I am happy with the vow. I will follow your future forever. Forever and ever.

(Mizoguchi 1951: sequence 20)

Michiko's words above are based on chapter 13 of Ōoka's novel. Mizoguchi changes Tsutomu's introspection into the note Michiko left behind. Michiko narrates it at the end of the film.

To begin with, let us look more closely at Tsutomu's introspection in Ōoka's novel:

I could never view the Musashino plateau, even though I climbed Sayama several times. So that's just a fantasy as well, isn't it? What does the delta of the ancient Tamagawa have to do with me? That river existed long before I was born. Even the forests of Musashino that people talk about

so much? Weren't they all planted just to protect generations of peasants from the wind? Factories, schools, airports, the sprawling residences of the citizens of Tokyo. These things are Musashino now.

(Washburn 2004: 129)

and again:

As he went along, shattering his delusions about the topography of Musashino, Tsutomu, almost without realizing it, shattered his fantasies about death as well. If even someone like me wants to go on living, come what may, then I'll have to make a new beginning.

(Washburn 2004: 129)

In chapter 13 of Ōoka's novel, Tsutomu casts an eye on the artificial aspects of Musashino. He focuses on "Factories, schools, airports, the sprawling residences of the citizens of Tokyo". Then, he imagines his new beginning. Mizoguchi inserts these sentences in the ending. These sentences are narrated by Michiko. The film ends with the scene of Tsutomu overlooking the sprawling residences of Musashino from the shore. By the adoption of Michiko's narration and a bird's-eye view of Musashino, the film likens Tsutomu's new beginning to the reconstruction of postwar Japan. Thus, the film emphasizes the reconstruction of Musashino city.

3. Commonalities and differences of Michiko's suicide

3.1 Accidental factor

Noda (2006) demonstrates that the misunderstanding between Michiko and Tsutomu triggered Michiko's death. She sent him a photograph without a letter. He took that as proof that he had completely lost her favor. After revisiting *Sayama*, he went in through the back garden of her house. He left the garden without calling out to her because of the lack of a letter. On the other hand, Michiko thought he had not come in spite of sending a letter to him. As a result, she was convinced that he had forgotten about their vow. This misunderstanding led to Michiko's death. Michiko's suicide took place on the veranda. Tsutomu was hiding in the thicket of the back garden and watching her. She did not know he was there. Tsutomu left the

garden so that he kept his vow with Michiko. Due to this, he could not stop her committing suicide. In addition, Ōoka's novel shows another result of her suicide:

If he had been quick-witted enough to guess what kind of medicine Michiko had dissolved in the seltzer water just now, he would have gone down to her at once in spite of their vow. Had he done so, there might have been a chance for him and Michiko to have experienced a happiness they never expected to have, however ephemeral that happiness might have been. Or perhaps they would have died together - an idea that had flashed across his heart once.

(Washburn 2004: 130-131)

Ōoka here implies that Michiko's death occurs accidentally. As examined above, Michiko and Tsutomu misunderstand each other. A letter, which Michiko believed she had sent to Tsutomu but which he never received, brought about Michiko's death.

A letter does not appear in Fukuda's play, but Fukuda also dramatized Michiko's death as an accident. In Act IV, Tsutomu gives a sharp exclamation when Michiko mixes the sleeping pills with seltzer in a glass. Unfortunately, the sudden roar of an airplane interrupts Tsutomu's shout (Fukuda 1951: 265). Thus, accidental factors play a crucial role in both Fukuda's adaptation and Ōoka's original.

The following comment about Michiko's death appears in Ōoka's novel:

It was purely an accident that Michiko's suicide attempt did not fail. If her death had not been an accident, then no tragedy could be said to have taken place. That's the way tragedy is in the twentieth century.

(Washburn 2004: 144)

Ōoka (1950b) revealed that he adopted the device of an accident for his novel from Fukuda's play *Kitty Taifū* (Kitty typhoon), published in January 1950 (Fukuda 1950a). Fukuda replied that the death occurring in his play was also caused by accident (Fukuda 1950b).

On the other hand, Mizoguchi's film does not adopt the scene of Michiko's suicide. The film excludes the literal correlation above.

3.2 Intertextual connections between *A Wife in Musashino* and Fukuda's play

Noda (2006) examines the different manners of vow between *A Wife in Musashino* and *The Charterhouse of Parma*. According to his study, the vow in Ōoka's novel is not made before the gods. As a result, it is ambiguous and arbitrary. Ōoka depicts such cultural and historical gaps between nineteenth-century European society and postwar Japan. An accident plays an indispensable role in showing the gap. Ōoka and Fukuda interacted to depict an accident in their works. Fukuda's plays are further expanded through this interaction. For instance, Fukuda expresses this gap in his adaptation of T. S. Eliot's *The Cocktail Party*. In 1951, Fukuda translated the play into Japanese. And he wrote an essay about it. In January 1952, he published a play titled *Ryu wo Nadeta Otoko* (The Man Who Stroked a Dragon). In the end of this play, the hero goes mad. Then, he is taken to the hospital by the other characters (Fukuda 1952a: 69-70). On the other hand, this mental illness of the hero does not occur in *The Cocktail Party*. Fukuda (1958:284) reveals that this ending is caused by the gap between Europe and Japan.

In another instance, Fukuda published a play titled *Gendai no Eiyū* (A Contemporary Hero) in January 1952. The hero in this play goes bankrupt in the special procurement boom spurred by the Korean War (1950-1953). Fukuda adopts the predictions of Shakespeare's *Macbeth* in his play. A diviner predicts: "You will have a lucky reel. It will bring a lot of money to you" (Fukuda 1952a: 164). Just before these words, the diviner says:

Nobody can divine for other people. Those people who rely on fortune telling want a lead to their decisions. Whether they will be happy or not, the result is not important for them. So, we give the leads to their decisions.

(Fukuda 1952a: 163)

The diviner reveals that his prediction is an unreliable thing. And the hero surely hears that a 'lucky reel' is a haphazard word. Accidentally, he gets the news that the political office will call for bids for submarine cables. He takes these cables as the 'lucky reel', and he persists in winning a bid for them. The more he is consumed with a 'lucky reel', the more he loses his money. As a result, the 'lucky reel' leads him to go bankrupt. Thus, the accidental factor recurs in Fukuda's play.

4. Conclusions

The close correlation between *A Wife in Musashino* and its adaptations allow us to find that the original text does not merely influence its adaptations, but also that their relations have interacting factors. Firstly, Fukuda and Mizoguchi adopt *A Wife in Musashino*, but transform the ending. Fukuda dramatized how Michiko's death changed Tsutomu. Fukuda's drama emphasizes Tsutomu's love for Michiko. However, by adopting Michiko's narration and a bird's eye view of Musashino, Tsutomu's new beginning is associated with the reconstruction of postwar Japan in Mizoguchi's film. Thus, Ōoka's novel is clarified by their transformations. Secondly, Ōoka (1950b) reveals that Fukuda's *Kitty Taifū* influenced Michiko's death. Accidental factors play a crucial role in Fukuda's adaptation and Ōoka's original. Ōoka adopted the means of an accident from Fukuda's play *Kitty Taifū*. This shows the correlation between Ōoka and Fukuda. Moreover, this correlation brought about Fukuda's two plays: *Ryū wo Nadeta Otoko* and *Gendai no Eiyū*. Thus, the correlation between *A Wife in Musashino* and its adaptations provides us with diverse ways to interpret and create.

* Translations by the author of this paper

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