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Article

Representing In-Betweenness in Postwar Japan: Shimada Masahiko's *Suisei no Jūnin*

Yiran Xu

Abstract

This article examines the ways in which contemporary Japanese writer Shimada Masahiko represents his idea of "in-between" (*aida*) through the fictional character JB in his novel, *Suisei no Jūnin* (Inhabitants of the Comet, 2000). As the mixed-race child of an American father and a Japanese mother, JB straddles two races and therefore forges a hybrid, ambivalent identity. Shimada presents JB's sense of being "in-between" from two opposing perspectives. On the one hand, Shimada identifies in-betweenness as a force of enunciation that empowers the suppressed, marginalized subaltern and as a mediatory approach that promotes productive dialogues between two nations. On the other hand, Shimada takes prudential consideration of the negative impacts of in-betweenness on individuals through JB's oscillation in the wake of World War II, when he becomes trapped between two hostile races. JB's dilemma of in-betweenness resembles the similar liminal conditions of those in Shimada's generation who experienced the "lost decade" of the 1990s and found themselves trapped between Japan's past and present whenever they recalled Japan's abhorrent history of aggression. Shimada's contradictory stance of being "in-between" not only contextualizes the postcolonial discourse of hybridity but also offers us a distinctive perspective on Japan's in-betweenness in the context of its past and present.

Key words: contemporary Japanese literature, Shimada Masahiko, *Suisei no Jūnin*, in-betweenness

In this article, I will analyze *Suisei no Jūnin* (Inhabitants of the Comet, 2000), the first volume of Shimada Masahiko's trilogy, *Mugen Kanon*. Written at the turn of the twenty-first century, *Mugen Kanon* consists of *Suisei no Jūnin*, *Utsukushī Tamashī* (Beautiful Soul, 2003)

and *Etorofu no Koi* (Love in Iturup, 2003). This trilogy is the story of four generations of a multiracial family who cannot liberate themselves from the curse of love.[1] Through this multigenerational story, Shimada articulates a fictional history of Japan from the nineteenth century to the twenty-first century. In this paper, I focus on a biracial character called JB, a second-generation member of the family. As the child of an American father and a Japanese mother, JB inherits a mixed cultural heritage, which turns out to be both a blessing and a curse. The notion of "*aida*," which I translate and refer to as "in-between," is the key concept that Shimada deploys to identify the character of JB, as JB is located between two nations and "wanders around in *the space of 'in-between'* (*aida*) all his life" (Shimada, *Suisei* 303; my translation). [2]

In this article, I analyze the ways in which Shimada represents his idea of "in-between" (*aida*) through JB from two opposing perspectives, relying on both Shimada's original texts and some critical discourses of in-betweenness and hybridism from other theorists and critics. In light of this, I will first trace Homi Bhabha's innovative concept of "in-betweenness" and then examine the discourses of Japanese intellectuals Katō Shūichi, Maruyama Masao, and Iwabuchi Koichi, who have discussed the issue of hybridism in the context of Japan. Second, I will analyze Shimada's depiction of JB as a biracial character representing the "in-between" (*aida*) in the wake of World War II. I would argue that Shimada demonstrates both the strengths and the vulnerabilities of in-betweenness through this character, which should not be simply identified as another literary representation of postcolonial insights. Finally, I will argue that Shimada's contradictory idea of the in-betweenness that JB embodies in *Suisei no Jūnin* can be interpreted in both spatial and temporal terms if we examine it in the historical context of Japan in the 1990s.

In-Betweenness in the Context of Postwar Japan

Suisei no Jūnin is designed to be a Japanese sequel to the well-known opera *Madame Butterfly* by Giacomo Puccini. The opera is based on John Luther-Long's 1898 story, "Madame Butterfly," which tells the tragic romance of the US naval lieutenant Benjamin Franklin Pinkerton and Japanese geisha Cho-cho-san. Cho-cho-san ends up killing herself after she realizes her Western lover is coming back not for her but to take away their child. The opera *Madame Butterfly* is impressive, especially because of the scene of Cho-cho-san's suicide in which she gives her child a miniature American flag to wave and bids him farewell right before her death. This scene inspired Shimada to write a Japanese sequel to *Madame Butterfly*. Composer Saegusa Shigeaki recalled how Shimada developed the idea of JB's story in a conversation with him:

> After a couple of drinks, Mr. Shimada said: "In the opera *Madame Butterfly*, a character has caught my eye: the son of Pinkerton and Cho-cho-san. The opera does not tell us what happened to this little boy after he lost his mother. Inheriting the blood of both Japan and the United States, what kind of life will this boy lead in times of great change? This is the topic that has long drawn my attention." (Saegusa 2)[3]

Shimada is attracted to the sense of "in-betweenness" embodied by this fictional character with a mixed heritage. In light of this, Shimada starts his story with a question: what happens to this biracial child after his father, Pinkerton, takes him from his mother Cho-cho-san? Born in an opaque territory between the United States and Japan, JB straddles two races and cultures and generates an ambivalent, fluid identity. It prompts readers to wonder what JB's life will be like, especially when he becomes trapped between two hostile nations after World War II.

The Japanese word "*aida,*" literally meaning "in-between," is a central concept that Shimada deploys to answer the previous question and summarize JB's life. In *Suisei no Jūnin*, Shimada takes us through the life of JB, who is located between two nations. Before JB dies, his last words to his son Kuroudo are, "you will be just like me, wander around in *the space of 'in-betweenness'* (*aida*) with my mother's phantom" (Shimada, *Suisei* 303).

Before examining how Shimada's notion of "in-betweenness" is demonstrated in his novel, I will explore the conceptualization and dissemination of the notion of 'in-betweenness' as articulated by a prominent postcolonial scholar, Homi Bhabha, during the 1990s. Additionally, I will investigate how Japanese intellectuals Katō Shūichi and Maruyama Masao had already identified Japan as a hybrid, in-between entity, receptive to both traditional Japanese and Western elements, in their writings during the 1950s and 1960s, predating Bhabha's work.

Bhabha occupies a unique place owing to his pioneering work, *The Location of Culture* (1994), in which he first introduces the notion of "in-betweenness." In his definition, Bhabha employs the tropes of the "stairwell" and the "passage" to illustrate how the putative cultural and national boundaries, as well as initial identities, are re-negotiated in what he terms "in-between" spaces: the "terrain" and the "interstices" that emerge from cultural contact:

> The stairwell as liminal space, in-between the designations of identity, becomes the process of symbolic interaction, the connective tissue that constructs the difference between upper and lower, black and white....This interstitial passage between fixed identifications opens up the possibility of a cultural hybridity that

> entertains difference without an assumed or imposed hierarchy. (Bhabha 5)

Bhabha represents the "in-between" as an oppositional space that resists essentialism, exclusivism and aspirations for the "purity" of ethnicity, culture and identity. Bhabha's notion of the "in-between" challenges Edward Said's seminal theory of Orientalism, in which Said pessimistically interprets East-West relations as a static, mutually exclusive dichotomy.[4] Bhabha takes this binary structure in a new direction by creating the conception of "hybridity," an approach that "entertains difference" to manoeuvre or play with cultures and to escape from the presumption of distinct cultural and national identities (5). Bhabha eulogizes in-betweenness as a powerful and creative force that liberates individuals from the "narcissistic myths" of purity, origin and "authentic" identity (40).

Even if Bhabha officially devised the term "in-between" for postcolonial discourse and gave it an academic definition, we should not overlook the broad applicability of this term as it has also been utilized in various fields beyond postcolonial studies, for example, in border region studies, diaspora studies and transgender studies. In some of these contributions, the notion of the "in-between" is used not only in the sense of cultures but also in the sense of socio-political patterns, aesthetic styles or identities.[5] Among these studies, it is particularly helpful to examine the discourses of Japan's in-betweenness, in which Japanese intellectuals had already identified post-World War II Japan as an in-between "*chūkan-teki*, *zasshu-teki*, *aimai-na*" (in-between, hybrid, ambiguous) entity decades before Bhabha.

The discussion of Japan's hybridity and in-betweenness can be traced back as early as to the nineteenth century when intellectuals such as Sakuman Shōzan and Fukuzawa Yukichi discussed the Western influences on Japan's cultural and ideological heritage.[6] In the 1950s, Japanese critic Katō Shūichi (1919-2008) proposed his Hybrid Culture theory (*zasshu bunka ron*) in "Zasshu bunka-Nihon no chīsana kibō" (Hybrid Culture: Japanese Small Hope). In this essay, he suggests that Japan's history of cultural movements led by intellectuals since the Meiji era had been a vicious cycle of rotating purification movements from two opposing poles: *Nihon shugi* (Japanism) and *Seiyō shugi* (Westernism). Katō remarks that any intention to imagine a pure, native and homogeneous Japanese culture is meaningless as Japanese culture has always been hybrid. In his 1955 article, "Japan as a Hybrid Culture," Katō contrasts "Japanese culture" and "English and French cultures":

> After returning to Japan, I began to think that in the case of Japan, unlike other Asian countries, I would have to seek things by beginning with recognition of the fact that *westernisation had already deeply penetrated the culture*. This does not mean

> that I had shifted my attention from traditional Japan to westernized Japan. Rather, I began to think that *the real characteristic of Japanese culture lay in the way that these two elements were so deeply intertwined that it would be difficult to eliminate either one of them.* That is, if we consider English and French cultures to be typical "purebred" cultures, then we must think of *Japan as a typical "hybrid" culture*. (Katō 16; emphasis mine)[7]

Compared with "English and French cultures," which Katō identifies as "purebred" cultures, Katō identifies Japan as an in-between, "hybrid" entity that is open to both traditional Japanese and Western elements. The antagonism of Japanism versus Westernism is neutralized in Katō's discourse, as he does not put much emphasis on what people should do to resolve the confrontation because, according to his observation, the opposition does not exist at all.

Instead, Katō offers a positive perception of Japan's in-betweenness. Standing in sharp contrast to the exclusivist and purist views that resist Western influences, Katō notes that the Japanese masses, in contrast to some Japanese intellectuals, have *already* embraced Japan's hybrid culture:

> In Japan today, it is no longer possible to identify traditional Japanese culture as something untouched by Western influence. The people know this very well. Therefore, they accept this hybrid culture as it is, and have adopted *quite interesting lifestyles* without clinging to such unreasonable desires as wishing to rid the culture of hybrid elements. (Katō 17)

According to Katō, the in-between, hybrid quality of Japan is "quite interesting." Even though Katō claims that he attributes "neither a positive nor a negative meaning to the words hybrid and purebred," he affirms Japan's hybrid culture as a powerful force that can generate new alternatives (16). Although Katō's argument shares some similarities with Bhabha's in terms of their refusal of binary logic and their celebration of the productive potential of "hybridity," Katō does not define the concept of hybridity in the same way that Bhabha does, as Katō is constrained by a quasi-essentialist assumption in which cultures are perceived as *productions* of different nations and categorized into either "purebred cultures" or "hybrid cultures."

In contrast to Katō's positive evaluation of Japan's *zasshusei* (hybridity), another eminent Japanese thinker, Maruyama Masao, developed a different position. In *Nihon no Shisō* (Japan's Thought), Maruyama problematized Japan's blind imitation of foreign cultural heritages with a lack of sufficient understanding of what should be accepted and

what should be rejected, which simply reflects the absence of its "*shisō-teki zahyōjiku*" (5-9; philosophical and ideological subjective axis; my translation). In light of this, heterogeneous philosophies and cultures are not intermingled in a new culture but merely coexist in Japan in a spatial sense, which Maruyama terms as "*seishin-teki zakkyo*" (16; the coexistence of philosophies), distinct from Katō's claim of Japan's *zasshusei* (hybridity). Despite their contradictory assessments of Japan's in-betweenness, Katō and Maruyama both reconceptualize Japan as essentially hybrid and in-between, and they both seek to offer mediation between the oppositional binary discourses of Japanism and Westernism by arguing that Japan had *always* been situated in-between.

In the 1998 essay, "Pure Impurity: Japan's Genius for Hybridism," Iwabuchi Koichi pays attention to the distinction between Japan's "hybridity" and "hybridism." He defines "hybridity" as a "non-Western cultural mixing under Western influences" and "hybridism" as Japan's strategic and intentional practice of cultural assimilation (Iwabuchi 71). Iwabuchi also identifies hybridism as a "fluid essentialism" in which Japan's intrinsic capability for "absorbing foreign cultures without changing its essence" is imagined as "an essential aspect of Japan's nationhood" (72-3). This insight points out precisely the limitations of Katō's affirmation of Japan's hybrid culture, which risks what Iwabushi defines as "hybridism."

The idea of "in-between" is more than just a theoretical concern in postwar Japan. It has also been contextualized in many postwar Japanese literary works. For instance, in the short story "Hoshi" (Stars, 1954), Kojima Nobuo portrayed the character of Joji/George, a Japanese American who endured wartime humiliation owing to his racial in-betweenness, clearly manifested in his physical appearance. Another trope is the Japanese translator in the 1958 short story "Fui no oshi" (Sudden Muteness) by Ōe Kenzaburo. This character acts as the only communication link between American troops and local Japanese villagers. Despite his Japanese ethnicity, the translator exhibits a sense of superiority over his compatriots. Simultaneously, the Japanese villagers perceive him as an accomplice of the Americans, engendering strong resentment towards this in-between figure. Compared to Kojima, Ōe delves into a subtler, more concealed in-betweenness rooted in one's psychological stance.

The tropes of in-between figures can also be found in contemporary Japanese literature. In *Beddotaimu Aizu* (Bedtime Eyes, 1985), Amy Yamada represents in-betweenness through her portrayals of the trans-ethnic sexual relationship between African-American men and a Japanese woman. Yamada's heroine proactively positions herself psychologically in-between Japan and the United States. For the heroine, this in-between identity functions as means of self-empowerment in matters of sexuality, and a manifestation of individual agency. In *Shishōsetsu from Left to Right* (An I-novel, 1995), Mizumura Minae

depicts a Japanese girl living in the United States, perpetually conscious of her liminal status as an Oriental. Mizumura not only situates her heroine in-between Japan and the United States, but also represents a liminal literary space in-between the "real" Japan and an imagined Japan. The deployment of fictional "in-between" characters has developed into a literary paradigm in Japanese literature through whom Japanese writers engage in a profound discussion about Japan's subjectivity and culture.

In view of the foregoing, when we read Shimada's *Suisei no Jūnin*, it is important to focus on one question: how can we evaluate Shimada's representation of in-betweenness when a number of Japanese intellectuals and writers have already foregrounded the issue and deployed fictional characters displaying in-betweenness? Does Shimada introduce any new perspective? In the following, I will closely read *Suisei no Jūnin* and examine how Shimada represents in-betweenness through the key character of JB.

Celebrating the Power of In-Betweenness

The postcolonial idea of "in-between" offers Shimada a new perspective to reinterpret the Madame Butterfly narrative, in which he manages to perceive it not simply as a colonialist narrative but also as an opening for contact between cultural differences. We should not neglect Shimada's theoretical reflections on post-colonialism, which serve as a supplement to his artistic production. In a 1997 symposium on "post-colonialism and plays," Shimada claims that the so-called "post-colonialist" works are essentially the *variants* of "colonialist" writings that cater to the new emerging market needs (Kawamura et al 10; emphasis mine). Despite this assertion, Shimada identifies "in-betweenness" as the feature that distinguishes post-colonialist works from colonialist works: "The colonized cannot utterly replace their master, they remain trapped in a *neutral, in-between* position. If we can represent *this sense* of in-between through plays and fictions, only then can post-colonialism be considered as a different stance from colonialism" (Kawamura et al 10; emphasis mine). Shimada's particular emphasis on the notion of "in-between" explains why he identifies this conception as central to his rewriting of Madame Butterfly and represents it in a quite explicit manner in his design of the JB character.

In *Suisei no Jūnin*, the narrative of Madame Butterfly serves as the prologue of the multigenerational story and, more importantly, the onset of "in-betweenness." The colonialist tone in the original narrative is diminished, and the butterfly narrative is presented as a "cross-border" narrative that disrupts the geographic boundaries of the West and the East. A "passage" linking the West and the East is constructed when Pinkerton lands in Nagasaki. To use Bhabha's words, the encounter of Cho-cho-san and Pinkerton "opens up the possibility of a cultural hybridity," and the birth of their child, JB, marks the

construction of the "interstitial passage between fixed identifications," that is, the East-West "in-between" space (5). "Madame Butterfly" has been unilaterally defined, presented and characterized by Western discourses with subtle and persistent Eurocentric stereotypes and prejudice. In approaching these fixed, essentialist stereotypes that identify West and East as distinctively different, Shimada offers a new vision in which he perceives these stereotypes as the prerequisites for the later hybridisation. The tension generated from "difference" activates the "in-between" space. To some extent, by inquiring what is going to happen to their biracial child, Shimada sheds light on the transformative potential of "in-betweenness" embodied in the butterfly narrative and revitalizes the vibrancy of this narrative that had been constrained by the Western hegemonic and colonial view.

In light of this, Shimada leaps over the details of the romance between Cho-cho-san and Pinkerton and begins with the birth of their son in *Suisei no Jūnin*. Born in Nagasaki in 1894, the little boy is called *Chame* (*toraburu*) by Cho-cho-san. While *Chame* means "mischievous but cute boy" in Japanese, it is read as "*toraburu*," which is the Japanese pronunciation of the English word "trouble." This name is a double entendre that implies Cho-cho-san's determination to forget the "trouble" that she has undergone after marrying Pinkerton and perceive it merely as "mischievousness" (Shimada, *Suisei* 173). Cho-cho-san later changes the baby's name to "Joy" when she hears that Pinkerton is coming back. Following the plot of "Madame Butterfly," little *Chame* is taken away from Cho-cho-san by his father, Pinkerton, and Cho-cho-san kills herself in desperation. Pinkerton takes *Chame* across the Pacific Ocean and brings him to his new home: the United States. The original story of "Madame Butterfly" ends here, but it is where the story of JB begins.

The Japanese name *Chame* is no longer regarded as appropriate for the new life of this little boy. Mr. Pinkerton and Mrs. Pinkerton, therefore, give the baby a new American name: Benjamin Pinkerton Junior. Since then, people have called him "JB": J is the abbreviation of "Junior," and B suggests "Benjamin." "Of course," Shimada points out explicitly, "B is also the abbreviation of "Butterfly." Shimada uses a pun here to indicate that JB can be interpreted as both "Junior Benjamin" and "Junior Butterfly" (*Suisei* 178).

Shimada uses a paradigmatic literary tactic when he deploys a character's name to symbolize one's identity and past memories. Similar literary devices can be found in Kojima Nobuo's short story, "Enkei Daigaku Butai" (Yanjing University Corps, 1954), in which Kojima portrays a Chinese prostitute. In addition to her original Chinese name, she also has names in Japanese and English: "Toshiko" and "Julia," which indicate her multiple identities (Kojima 84). The fact that she never addresses herself by her Chinese name suggests that her Chinese identity was repressed during World War II. Similarly, in Shimada's story, the forbidden and abandoned Japanese name "*Chame*" serves as a symbolic representation of JB's past recollections about his mother and about Japan: "here,

there are no mother's breasts and white rice, no nanny who sings beautiful songs for him, no tatami mats with grassy fragrance, no paper sliding doors that he had licked a hole in with his tongue. Here, a boy named *Chame* is non-existent" (Shimada, *Suisei* 179). The decision made by Mr. Pinkerton and Mrs. Pinkerton to forbid the name *Chame* betrays their strong desire to erase JB's past memories about Japan. Evidently, in this new family, JB is not allowed to identify himself as Japanese.

Pinkerton tells JB when the child first sets foot on American soil: "JB, now we are in the United States. From today you must swear loyalty to this country" (Shimada, *Suisei* 178). Through Pinkerton, Shimada indicates the prevalence of a problematic presumption: one's national identity is associated with one's loyalty to the nation. The relevance of the connection between identity and loyalty is presupposed to be self-evident that we can foresee that JB's hybrid identity will inevitably invite doubts about his loyalty. The moment at which JB sets foot in the United States does not represent his rebirth as an American citizen. Instead, it marks the emergence of an "in-between" subject characterized by "alterity, marginality, exclusion, decentralisation, and disorientation" (Ainsa 61).

While JB's body has travelled across the Pacific Ocean, his heart has not. JB's past in Nagasaki is a taboo that must be discarded in the house of Mr. and Mrs. Pinkerton. Despite this, JB does not totally forget his biological mother and Japan as they wish, and he often finds himself feeling nostalgia for Japan. JB grows up and enters a high school in San Francisco. What he enjoys most is walking on the streets of Chinatown, where he finds delight in the familiar "Asian smells and lively atmosphere," a sensory experience that never fails to captivate his heart (Shimada, *Suisei* 181). One day, JB catches a few words spoken by an Asian woman which feel very familiar to him: "*ikagadesuka*."[8] At that moment, all of his memories about Japan that were buried beneath the dust revive, and he blurts out a few Japanese words: "*oishii, okki, chocho*..."[9] Named Suzuki, the woman is a student from Japan. "Suzuki" is the name of Cho-cho-san's maid. In the story of *Madame Butterfly*, maid Suzuki serves as the observer of Cho-cho-san's tragic life. She is the only person who constantly accompanies Cho-cho-san and patiently listens to her fears. Though maid Suzuki and Ms. Suzuki are different characters, Shimada uses the same name deliberately to indicate that "Ms. Suzuki" will play an important role in JB's life.

JB is very excited to meet Ms. Suzuki. He asks Suzuki whether she can teach him Japanese and everything that she knows about Japan. Through Ms. Suzuki, the severed bond between JB and Japan is reattached again. Ms. Suzuki guides JB to discover the positive dimensions and possibilities of his multiple identities rather than remind him of his marginal status in both countries. Ms. Suzuki illuminates that JB will be *needed* by both Japan and the US as he is located between two nations.

> I believe that someday, you will go back to the other side of the Pacific again. Please learn about the culture and history of Japan, then Japan will need you. You are a child born "in-between," so you can only *survive* "in-between." I believe that you will grow into a person *who thinks and acts not merely for Japan or for the United States, but for the "future."* (Shimada, *Suisei* 186; emphasis mine)

Ms. Suzuki is well aware of JB's "in-between" feature, and she never attempts to reinforce or impose a certain identity on him. Instead, Ms. Suzuki directs JB to accept his "in-betweenness" and reconcile with himself. More importantly, she encourages JB to discover the generative possibility that can be developed out of his in-betweenness that can lead to the "future" that is liberated from biological, territorial and cultural limitations.

JB eventually regains the repressed memories of his mother. In 1910, nineteen-year-old JB happens to read the short story, "Madame Butterfly," written by an American writer, John Luther-Long. He reads it three times overnight. At first, JB thinks that the story may well be fictional. After reading it three times, he comes to realize that this is precisely the real story of his father and his biological mother: the American protagonist who is also named "Pinkerton," the poor Japanese geisha who kills herself after being abandoned by Pinkerton and, most importantly, their little son named *Chame*. This is his lost name. The story, "Madame Butterfly," revives JB's memories of Japan and his mother that had been suppressed by Mr. and Mrs. Pinkerton. Overwhelmed by this sudden realization, JB cries bitterly.

JB resolves to talk with his father. He gives the book "Madame Butterfly" to Mr. Pinkerton as a gift. Mr. Pinkerton, although deeply disturbed and distressed by JB's actions, eventually confesses everything to his son, including the fact that he abandoned Cho-cho-san and she killed herself in despair. JB is outraged at Pinkerton's sophistry and ruthlessness:

> "You should apologize to my mother because *you* killed her!"
> "She committed suicide herself. I didn't expect that."
> "If she had not committed suicide, would you have brought her to America with us?"
> "I couldn't have."
>
> (Shimada, *Suisei* 189)

Pinkerton shows no intention to repent for what he did to Cho-cho-san; rather, he attempts to persuade JB to forget the dead and face the future: "You are AMERICAN, from your body to your soul! Don't forget that you have pledged allegiance to the Flag of the

United States of America, and you have the obligation to fight for this nation" (Shimada, *Suisei* 189). Pinkerton's attitude reveals his underestimation of JB's hybridity. Because Pinkerton had expected JB to forgo his identity as Japanese thoroughly to become a "pure" American, he gave JB a new American name and sent him to local schools. Although JB was born in Japan, he was brought up in the United States and received an American education. Pinkerton is so eager to impose an American national identity unilaterally on JB that he attempts to divest JB of his Japanese identity. However, Pinkerton's efforts to make JB a native American backfire. JB is instead constantly entangled between the United States and Japan.

Pinkerton and Ms. Suzuki are both aware of JB's in-betweenness. However, the ways in which they perceive in-betweenness are in distinct contrast. While Ms. Suzuki embraces JB's "in-between" feature and appreciates the generative possibilities that it may bring about, Pinkerton's repulsion towards JB's "in-between" identity only results in a growing estrangement and isolation. Through a comparison of the two characters, Shimada offers us an enlightening example of two opposing attitudes towards hybridity.

JB's subsequent response demonstrates that Pinkerton's repression of JB's Japanese identity and the accentuation of his American identity is in vain. With a surge of resentment, JB rebukes his father in the Japanese language: "*Anata ga haha wo uragitta. Watashi mo amerika wo uragitteyaru*" (Shimada, *Suisei* 189; You betrayed my mom, and I will betray America; my translation). Shimada manifests JB's hybrid national identity through his exceptional linguistic ability. Just as Shimada uses a pun to indicate that "JB" means both "Junior Benjamin" and "Junior Butterfly," the language one speaks is another literary tactic for addressing identity. JB's practice of secretly learning the Japanese language demonstrates his determination to embrace his in-between character and regain the repressed part of his Japanese identity. JB frustrates Pinkerton's expectations by mastering the Japanese language and ultimately confronting him in Japanese. As the son of Pinkerton and Cho-cho-san, born between the United States and Japan, JB refuses to live as a loyal American national but chooses to retain his hybrid identity.

Shimada articulates the power of "in-betweenness" through JB's action of shouting at Pinkerton in the Japanese language. This action serves as the flashpoint that finally awakens Pinkerton. For this to happen, Pinkerton has to accept that his attempt to transform JB into an American is doomed to fail: "Pinkerton has to admit that JB has grown up. From then on, they will drift apart, and JB will become 'the other' that he can't understand" (Shimada, *Suisei* 191). Through Pinkerton's failure, Shimada implies the obsolescence of Pinkerton's exclusivist, colonialist views. The "future" envisioned by Ms. Suzuki, in which differences can be negotiated, is expected to come.

It would be incomplete to read JB's challenge against his father simply as a

metaphorical representation of Cho-cho-san's "revenge" on Pinkerton, as it also embodies JB's significant role as a mediator between his mother and father, between Japan and the United States. In Shimada's narrative, the "in-betweenness" of JB is presented in the ways in which he enables the repressed and muted Japan to regain its own voice. In this sense, I would argue that Shimada's notion of "in-between" illustrated in his sequel to "Madame Butterfly" diverges from Bhabha's notion of "in-between." Instead, it aligns more closely with Said's idea of the force of "resistance" that rooted in "the rediscovery and repatriation of what had been suppressed by the processes of imperialism" in the past (210). In *Culture and Imperialism*, Said affirms "the newly empowered voice asking for their narratives to be heard," a sentiment echoed in Shimada's narrative through JB's assertive yell in Japanese (Intro xx). Though Cho-cho-san, the Japanese character portrayed in the Western canon, tragically ends her story without voicing her pain, Shimada's sequel brings forth her suppressed laments, now audible through JB. To some extent, Shimada's sequel to "Madame Butterfly" can be viewed as a manifestation of what Said calls a "work of resistance," as it presents this story from a Japanese perspective.

Another clue indicating that Shimada identifies JB as more than just an "avenger" is how Shimada creates a special arrangement through which father and son are eventually reconciled. After three years have passed since their quarrel, JB writes a letter to Pinkerton, inviting him to watch the opera *Madame Butterfly*: "Your Cho-Cho-san has reincarnated onto the opera stage. It is also the story about you, Adelaide, and the boy called "*Chame*," whom I used to be. Just for one time, I hope that you can come to see the opera to mourn her" (Shimada, *Suisei* 195). Without a doubt, this invitation is not for retribution but for reconciliation. Shimada does not intend to make the former colonizer pay for the pain that he has caused. Instead, he resumes the dialogue about these traumatic memories to reconstruct the severed bonds of trust. Although initially replying with "a butterfly can never fly as long as Adelaide lives," Pinkerton ultimately accepts JB's invitation (Shimada, *Suisei* 195). Pinkerton crosses a whole continent to watch the opera, during which he cries and confesses in tears that he has often seen Cho-cho-san in his dreams over the years.

The reunion between Pinkerton and JB facilitates a reflection on the past and also catalyses a new start in the present. In this process, JB functions as both an emancipator and a mediator, which demonstrates Shimada's perception of in-betweenness. JB refuses to let a part of his identity remain in oblivion. His in-betweenness compels him to reveal the concealed and suppressed memories underneath the dominant narrative. In addition to its liberating potential, Shimada identifies the mediating power of "in-betweenness" as it generates possibilities to reconcile the binary oppositions so that both Japan and the United States can directly and squarely confront the past.

To return to the question raised at the beginning of this essay: how can we evaluate Shimada's notion of in-betweenness when a number of Japanese intellectuals and writers have already foregrounded the surrounding issues and deployed tropes of in-betweenness? Compared with Japanese intellectuals such as Katō and Maruyama, who have identified and presented Japan as "in-between" in their 1950s and 1960s texts, Shimada shows greater affirmation of Japan's in-betweenness. In examining this difference, we should not overlook the major historical transformations that Japan experienced from the 1950s to the 1990s.

During the US occupation from 1945 to 1952, Japan experienced a passive hybridisation of both its political and ideological regimes. The Japan-US Security Treaty, revised in 1960, granting the United States the right to establish bases, essentially resulted in the United States' military and political control of Japan. Witnessing the nation's rupture caused by its defeat in World War II and the penetration of US power, some Japanese intellectuals attempted to resolve Japan's dilemma after the defeat by constructing a narrative to explain Japan's passive hybridisation. As critiqued by Igarashi Yoshikuni, thanks to the construction of the discourse of Japan's in-betweenness, postwar Japan was able to "leap over the historical disjuncture" of the defeat to "identify with American material culture" (105). Given this historical context, these Japanese intellectuals who considered Japan as having "always been hybrid" essentially managed to either relieve or draw attention to the political and ideological tensions and the binary opposition between Japan and the United States. By asserting that Japan has *always* had parts of it in common with others, they convinced the Japanese or even themselves that Japan would be able to be immune from the effects of the identity-based hierarchy imposed on it by the United States, the "colonizer" in the historical context of immediate postwar period of Japan.

However, in the 1980s and early 1990s, Japan entered "a new stage of hybridisation of culture," which resulted in a shifting of Japanese perceptions of the United States and itself (McCormack 12). First, the Japanese masses perceived Japan's hybridisation in a more favourable light because of their changing attitudes towards the United States. One possible explanation for this is that the United States managed to transition its self-image as it strove to render a de-politicalized image of Japan. First, the word "America" gradually became distanced from "the bombs," "bases" and "GIs" and came to be divorced from the image of military and political hegemony. Second, the United States was re-imaged as a symbol of a developed economy and a utopia of a capitalist society with an advanced consumer life (cf. Yoshimi 258). To most Japanese individuals nowadays, "American" reminds them of "Coca-Cola, Disney, McDonald's," etc (Yoshimi 258). As a result, Japan's hybridisation, mostly the Americanisation of the 1980s and 1990s, did not simply proceed in terms of ideology: "it permeated Japanese people's everyday lives" (Toyosaki and

Eguchi 7). Hip-hop music and Hollywood have a significant impact on Japanese popular culture; proficiency in English has become a superior skill. Most Japanese youths desire "to catch up with America and to obtain the American lifestyle" (Satsuka 78). The aforementioned observations illuminate that the easing of tensions between Japan and the United States has led to a perceptual transformation concerning Japan's hybridization/Americanization at the turn of the twenty-first century. This shift, I contend, has redefined it from being perceived as a threat to its homogeneity to being recognized as an indication of societal progress.

The second transition is that Japan was forging more global connections and expanding market access to more countries, which liberated Japan from the binary opposition to the United States and allowed it to become more confident in absorbing foreign elements strategically and proactively. Iwabuchi Koichi's notion of "Japan's hybridism" introduced in the first section is one of the representative observations of this transition. According to Iwabuchi, Japan does not passively accept foreign influence under colonial pressure but strategically absorbs foreign cultures and produces "a particular image of the Japanese nation: Japan as a great assimilator" (71). Japan's in-between and hybrid "feature" is not regarded as inferior to those "purebred" ones, but rather as a remarkable capability that enables it to adapt better to the new global realities where postulated absolute national and cultural boundaries are dissolving. Consequently, Japan's in-betweenness has become perceived as "coolness," "evidence of Japan's successful engagement in transnational capitalist flows" and globalization (Takamori 106). Ōe Kenzaburō, in a 1990 speech, claims that Japan possesses "a view of the world richly shaped by both traditional and foreign cultural elements, and a will to work as a cooperative member of the world community" (54). It is necessary to note that the discourse that celebrates Japan's in-betweenness as its distinct feature reinforces the sense of Japanese uniqueness and risks essentialisation. Despite that, to some extent, Japan has dispelled the inferiority complex in relation to its "in-betweenness" and transformed from a passive stance to a more active one in perceiving the process of hybridisation.

As discussed previously, changing historical contexts have resulted in a shifting assessment of Japan's in-betweenness, transitioning from a negative, self-defensive stance to a more positive and proactive outlook. This transformation in the perception of Japan's in-betweenness explains why Shimada's perspective, which leans towards a more favourable representation, is in such stark contrast to the ideas proposed by Maruyama in the 1960s.

In addition, Shimada adopts postcolonial perspectives in the postwar discussion of Japan's in-between character as he celebrates the non-essential potential of in-betweenness. He imagines a subject of in-betweenness who "thinks and acts not merely for Japan

or for the United States, but for the 'future'" (Shimada, *Suisei* 186). The ways in which Shimada affirms in-betweenness as a force of resistance and mediation share more similarities with Said's (1993) ideas than with Bhabha's (1994) ideas, as Bhabha's emphasis on the generative, productive possibilities of in-betweenness are not adequately demonstrated in Shimada's depiction of JB.

However, the in-betweenness embodied by JB should not be simply understood as another literary representation of postcolonial insights. Instead, JB should be interpreted as the literary representation of how Shimada perceives "1990s Japan": an in-between entity that seeks to regain its marginalized voice and reconcile with its past. Shimada foregrounds the issue of in-betweenness in the context of 1990s Japan, where subjects of "ambivalence, doubleness and in-betweenness" are already "within Japan and not just 'out there'" (Iwabuchi 83). In this sense, the notion of "in-between" is not necessarily discussed within the binary relation between "the West" and "Japan" or between "the colonizer" and "colonized." Based on this observation, Shimada does not rewrite a story of *two* characters representing the West and Japan as David Henry Hwang does.[10] Shimada does not create another "Cho-cho-san" and "Pinkerton"; instead, he conceives *one* character of in-betweenness. JB should be read as the product of Shimada's literary imaginary of 1990s Japan, where hybrid, ambiguous cultures and identities have been substantially forged *within* Japan under the influence of globalization and hybridisation.

However, it is important to note that Shimada does not unilaterally celebrate the power of in-betweenness in his literary representation. Instead, he strives to explore both the *possibility* and *impossibility* of "in-betweenness." In the following section, I will analyze Shimada's representation of the vulnerabilities and limits of in-betweenness.

Trapped In-Between

Shimada's opposing evaluations of in-betweenness are addressed through what happens to JB in the wake of World War II: despite Shimada's celebration of the power of in-betweenness, he also addresses the negative perspectives of in-betweenness. JB is a hybrid in race, culture and language and has been located between Japan and the United States throughout his life. Shimada places JB in the special historical era of World War II when conflicts between various states have intensified, in which JB's in-betweenness is perceived more as a threat than a blessing. Shimada portrays JB's sense of dislocation, anxiety and hesitation generated by his hybrid and fluid self-identity, which results in his marginal position in both Japan and the United States. Moreover, Shimada also presents how JB endures suspicion, exclusion and hostility from the traditionally defined "pure" American and Japanese nationals. JB's irreducible predicament and emotional dilemma

reflect Shimada's critical thinking about the negative impacts of in-betweenness.

A few years after JB and Pinkerton's reunion, JB accepts the job at the Consulate in Kobe to return to Japan, his mother's homeland that he longs to visit again. In 1930, JB is dispatched to Kobe as an analyst of the US army. His real task is to monitor the movements of Japanese military officers and to gather operational intelligence from them. Even though JB has to follow the orders of the US military, he resolves not to betray either Japan or the United States.

Thirty-six years have passed since JB left Japan. In Kobe, JB meets Ms. Suzuki again, the Japanese lady who had secretly taught him the Japanese language. Ms. Suzuki becomes the principal of a local girls' school. Introduced by Suzuki, JB gets to know her student, Noda Nami. This Japanese girl reminds JB of his mother. They spend a relaxing and lovely two years together: writing letters, listening to classical music and travelling around. However, Nami's elder brother is a Japanese military officer who suspects that JB is a spy for the US military. Nami's brother is concerned about the increasing hostility between Japan and the US due to Japan's military actions in Asia, and he knows very clearly that the relationship between JB and Nami will inevitably bring them trouble. He tries to persuade JB to give up on Nami: "if you really love Nami, please bury your memory and go back to America quietly" (Shimada, *Suisei* 204). However, JB is not presented as another frivolous "Pinkerton," nor is Nami presented as another poor "Cho-cho-san." JB faithfully loves Nami, and they get married. Through the romance between JB and Nami, Shimada depicts an ideal love that can overpower the hostility between enemy states.[11]

As noted before, Shimada does not intend to rewrite the story of "Madame Butterfly" by simply telling another love story between an American man and a Japanese woman. Therefore, Shimada spares only a few pages on the romance between JB and Nami. Instead, Shimada focuses more on JB's individual experience of "in-betweenness" during the war. By having JB stranded between the US and Japan, in particular, in an era of World War II when the tension between the two nations was growing, Shimada indicates that the power of in-betweenness may not have an effective function in certain circumstances of social unrest and distrust. In such a case, an "in-between," hybrid identity will aggravate one's dilemma of moral judgment and generate senses of uncertainty and restlessness.

During the war, JB goes to China, where he becomes a first-hand witness to the atrocities of the Japanese army. As portrayed in Shimada's narrative, "Japanese troops invaded Shanghai and Nanjing, and massacred local people repeatedly" (Shimada, *Suisei* 211). The attitudes of ordinary Japanese people also make JB nauseous: "the Japanese people living in Harbin were extremely excited about this. They become thirsty for blood, and they treat the Russians and the Chinese as if the Japanese are their masters" (Shimada,

Suisei 221). JB's revulsion serves as a poignant reflection of Shimada's postwar Japan critique of Imperial Japan, shedding light on the dark chapters of history and underscoring the societal attitudes prevalent during that era.

JB's observation in China reverses his perception of Japan. Because of the tragedy experienced by his mother and his happy childhood memories in Japan, JB felt a close affinity with Japan and regarded it as his mother country. He had sympathised with his mother, the poor Japanese woman who was mercilessly treated and abandoned by his own father. Recalling his past memories in Japan and learning the Japanese language brought immense solace to JB, because these recollections associated with his mother represented love, warmth, and bliss. However, the atrocities of the Japanese troops give JB a severe psychological shock. JB cannot assuage his sense of anxiety and hesitation, as he can neither identify himself as a member of the wartime Japanese community nor feel a sense of honor for the victory of Imperial Japan. Simultaneously, JB also finds it difficult to perceive Japan decisively as a hostile Other as an ordinary American does. Due to his hybrid and fluid identity, JB is trapped "in-between" anger and shame, feeling torn between two opposing feelings in his heart.

In 1945, the United States dropped two atomic bombs that resulted in Japan's surrender. However, the termination of World War II does not mark the end of JB's "in-betweenness" and the entanglements inherent in it. American troops enter Japan and start their subsequent domination over Japan. Though working for the US military, JB fails to enjoy the victory of the US as a "normal" American national. Instead, he plunges into a deep depression for Japan's disastrous defeat and for the tragedies caused by the atomic bombs. Even though the world war is over, the war in JB's heart never seems to end:

> JB did not want to forget the "cruel atom bombs" that exploded in his heart, nor did he want to be a handyman working for the occupier. JB did not want to stand with either the Japanese Emperor or MacArthur. Neither did he want to be an accomplice in the war, nor the minion of the US Command. Therefore, he had affinity with neither the U.S. military, nor the Japanese citizens who are now ceaselessly throwing smiles at Americans. (Shimada, *Suisei* 232)

As long as JB is situated "in-between," he is incapable of attaining personal relief and freedom. Inhabiting the interstice of the United States and Japan, JB experiences a profound sense of dislocation, unable to find solace or connection among either his American "fellows" or the local Japanese community. It may seem that JB can choose to join either side. However, the reality is that JB is trapped in a marginalized status, ostracised by both sides. Essentially, JB is unable to stay at ease or gain a sense of belonging from either side.

Even though being bilingual in English and Japanese makes him qualified to work for General Douglas MacArthur as a regional advisor, his excessive sympathy for the Japanese people is perceived as a drawback. JB never seems to find a way to become a "loyal American" as expected:

> JB stood in front of General MacArthur, the man who is now taking control of the fate of Japan. All JB wanted to do is to vent out his hatred roaring in his head, he thought, "You've dropped atomic bombs on my mother's hometown! Isn't it enough? How dare you even attempt to turn this country into a servant of the United States!"... Since then, JB had never stepped into General MacArthur's palace again. (Shimada, *Suisei* 234)

I would interpret the "you" in this citation as "the US military" rather than "General MacArthur" personally. Shimada depicts how JB suffers mentally as an American Japanese, as for him, his "father's country" is the one that uses bombs to attack his "mother's country." JB reproaches the US military not because he identifies as Japanese but because his feeling of powerlessness compels him to find someone to blame. JB's reaction should be interpreted as a result of the negative impact of his hybrid identities. On the other hand, JB's in-betweenness thwarts the fulfillment of absolute loyalty demanded by the era. As a result of his in-betweenness, JB finds himself marginalized and cast aside by both the United States and Japan.

It is important to explore why Shimada portrays JB's psychological and emotional dilemma of in-betweenness. Why does Shimada choose to highlight the detrimental aspects of this state by revisiting the traumas of World War II, especially at the turn of the 21st century, six decades after the war? Through Shimada's portrayal of JB's dilemma of in-betweenness, we are expected to revisit traumatic war memories and Japan's defeat, the past that postwar Japan is keen to forget. JB, as a fictional character, serves as a literary embodiment of wartime hybridity. The conflicts among different ethnicities, identities, and cultures are reflected through JB's inner crisis. The author's negative assessment of in-betweenness unveils his perception of Japan's haunting past, which exemplifies the broader postwar introspection concerning Japan's military past. JB's feelings of dislocation, alienation, and confusion—the adverse effects of in-betweenness—echo Shimada's own sentiments as a postwar Japanese individual contemplating Japan's turbulent military history. In this narrative framework, Shimada's position represents how "Japan in the 1990s," as an in-between entity, strives to reclaim its marginalized voice and reconcile with its colonialist past during World War II.

Therefore, it is necessary to interpret Shimada's deliberate choice to revisit Japan's

colonialist past and his representation of in-betweenness in the context of Japan in the 1990s. The term "in-between" possesses dual dimensions—temporal and spatial. I would argue in the following that Shimada uses JB's dilemma of being trapped "in-between" the United States and Japan (spatial) to recall that of the postwar generations living in the 1990s who are trapped between the immediate postwar years and the 1990s (temporal). This intentional parallel underscore the nuanced interconnections between individual experiences and broader historical reflection in Shimada's narrative.

In the postscript of *Suisei no Jūnin*, the first volume of the series, Shimada, who has been writing novels for nearly twenty years, articulates his original intentions for writing *Mugen Kanon*, which may help us answer the question of why Shimada brings us back to Japan's colonialist and militarist past when addressing the negative impacts of in-betweenness.

> Over these years, I have been writing works that I assumed people would enjoy. Every six or seven years, I'd try to add something new into my writings. But one thing that has never been lost is *my righteous indignation towards history and society. I have always been driven by the fear of forgetting the past*, the force that pushes me to work harder. (Shimada, *Suisei* 380; emphasis mine)

So, what causes Shimada's "righteous indignation towards history and society" and "fear of forgetting the past" in the 1990s?

To start with the conclusion: the re-emergence of neo-nationalism in the 1990s can be considered as a possible trigger for Shimada's "indignation" and "fear." Shimada's attitude resonates with the growing concerns of Japanese leftists about the ascent of ultranationalism and neo-conservatism during this period. With the conclusion of the Showa period in 1989, Japan experienced a remarkable social, political and economic change. With the Cold War order collapsing in the late 1980s, Japan had to adjust its international role and reconsider its diplomatic relations with the United States and other Asian countries. Japan developed closer connections with China, Korea and other Asian countries because of increasing economic cooperation and cultural communication. As a result, the Japanese public was acquiring more access to the voices of victims, the crimes and atrocities committed by Imperial Japan and severe criticism from victimized Asian countries.[12] This exacerbated the divergence of the Japanese public's opinions about the war responsibility and the reconfiguration of the post-war national identity. Meanwhile, the collapse of the Soviet Union and the fall of Communism in Eastern Europe posed an ideological crisis for many leftist groups and leftist intellectuals in Japan. They had to reinvent new strategies in response to the discrediting of Marxism and changing global landscape.

Amidst efforts for the promotion of economic equality, institutional and structural reforms, the ways in which Japan confronts the historical legacy of World War II serves a focal point. Some Japanese leftists were working actively to atone for war crimes, compensating the victimized countries and advocating anti-war ideals. Meanwhile, the conservative actions of publicly mourning those who died during the war and campaign for the revision of war-renouncing Article 9 to reinvigorate Japan's national pride intensified contradictions and caused growing tensions between these two camps. This is the historical context when the controversies over history textbooks arose.

The historical revisionist textbook campaign of the 1990s is perceived as "an ominous sign of neo-nationalist resurgence" (Rose 131). In the 1990s, historical revisionist conservatives modified the depictions in one of the secondary education history textbooks to whitewash and euphemise the war crimes of the Empire of Japan during World War II. In late 1996, Fujioka Nobukatsu and Nishio Kanji established *Atarashii Rekishi Kyokasho o Tsukuru Kai* (The Society for History Textbook Reform) to promote a revisionist view of Japan's history. *Atarashii Rekishi Kyokasho* (The New History Textbook), was compiled by members of this group and was submitted for authorisation in 2000. In *Kokumin no Yudan* (Carelessness of the People, 2000), the authors attacked the existing postwar history education and specifically its representation of Japan's wartime transgressions. Fujioka and Nishio asserted that the portrayals of the Nanjing Massacre and the comfort women issue in historical narratives exemplify a "*jigyakushikan*" (self-flagellant historical view) and are detrimental to cultivating a sense of "pride in the history of our nation" (201; my translation).

Politicians and intellectuals were not the only ones involved in the debate over history textbooks: the neo-nationalist discourse became prevalent in newspapers, books, the internet and other mass forms of expression and made an astonishing social impact in Japan. From December 1995 to August 1998, Fujioka Nobukatsu's "History Not Taught in Textbooks" became a best-selling series and sold more than 1.2 million copies. Nishio Kanji's *Kokumin no Rekishi* (The History of the People, 1999) sold 700,000 copies and became a bestseller in 2000.[13] The neo-nationalist narrative was astoundingly widespread among the Japanese public.

Despite the decline of leftist social movements in Japan since the 1980s, many leftist citizen groups and intellectuals still play active roles in resisting conservative attempts to erase Japan's militarist past. Multiple leftist groups, including the Japan Teachers Union (*Nihon kyōshokuin kumiai*), and Children and Textbooks Japan Network 21 (*Kodomo to kyōkasho zenkoku netto 21*) actively resisted conservative perspectives during the history textbook controversy. Noteworthy among these is the Center for Research and Documentation on Japan's War Responsibility (*Nihon no Sensō Sekinin Shiryō Sentā*)

established in April 1993. This group engages in rigorous research on Japan's colonialist history during the Second World War and advocates for postwar compensation. They submitted research materials concerning the issue of comfort women to the Japanese government in July 1993. Additionally, Japanese intellectuals such as Arai Shin'ichi and Tawara Yoshifumi also criticize the revisionist actions of creating a favourable and "beautiful" historical narrative in their respective publications.[14]

Shimada's stance on this issue aligns with the leftist groups and intellectuals.[15] The prevalence of the problematic neo-nationalist narrative and practice in 1990s Japan has evoked Shimada's "fear of forgetting the past" (380). In his 2003 essay, "The Trauma of Defeat," Shimada articulates his anxiety about the crisis that he sensed in the 1990s explicitly: "Japan *used to be* a country that well knew what defeat meant. I used the past tense of 'used to be,' it does not mean that we all have amnesia, but it means that the war history has been *deliberately* forgotten in the nearly sixty years after the war" (Shimada, *Tanoshī* 201; emphasis mine). Similar to the endeavours of numerous left-wing groups, Shimada believes that forgetting and distorting history are not viable means to overcome the trauma.

Even with the long passage of time, Shimada believes that Japan's past in relation to World War II needs to be remembered, especially when the generation who has truly experienced the war is gradually passing away. Even in the 1990s, when Shimada began to conceive of *Suisei no Jūnin*, the generation of Japanese people born and raised in the peaceful and prosperous "postwar Japan," like Shimada and most of his readers, still faced the question of how to identify themselves in response to the international criticisms on the war responsibility. This question has become a "collective trauma" experienced by Japanese people that "damages the bonds attaching people together and impairs the prevailing sense of communality," which is well proven by the striking divergence between reformists and the conservatives in the 1990s (Caruth 187).

Controversies surrounding Japan's past never seem to have vanished in postwar Japan, which indicates that in many cases, "postwar Japan" is acknowledged by international communities outside Japan to be a continuous entity of "Imperial Japan."[16] However, influenced by the Japanese official narrative, many Japanese people today perceive the war as a "closed book" (Segers 260). The end of the war is a watershed marking the construction of a new "Japan" that is distinctly different from "Imperial Japan." Postwar Japan is the peaceful, democratic modern country where the people born in the 1960s or later than that, are now located; while Imperial Japan is perceived by them as a radical "other." It is well accepted by most postwar generations that "postwar Japan" is a discontinuous entity from the past.

On the other hand, it is psychologically difficult for most Japanese individuals born

in the postwar period to identify war participants, who might be their parents and grandparents, as "criminals." Japanese scholar Takashi Aso articulates his vision of how Japanese people perceive their past: "most Japanese people today assume that their fellow citizens are antimilitary and peace loving, and thus, they are reluctant to face the imperialist and military actions that Japan undertook in the past" ("Ethics" 15-6). Hence, some Japanese people are eager to redefine themselves by divorcing themselves from the "Imperial Japan" of the past and its atrocious war crimes. Aso illustrates that "the reality of war" has been converted into "images," which have been artificially disseminated and intensified as "memories" (*Little Saigon* 30). "History" has been reproduced once it is narrated in any form. In this sense, for Shimada's generation, who has no direct experience of war, how "history" is articulated as "historical narratives" and what "images" are artificially produced and left behind are even more of a concern (cf. *Little Saigon* 31). Japan has constructed an official historical narrative concerning the war "from their side," in which Japanese subjects were manipulated, "the instigators had been punished, reparations made, justice done" (Segers 260). Wrenching testimonies from atomic bomb victims and unsevered kinship bonds with the wartime generation are entangled with Japan's "narrative" and largely prevent Shimada's generation from taking an absolute opposing position to the people who directly participated or witnessed the war.

Escaping from the colonialist past, in this case, becomes a seemingly alluring resolution for some Japanese people. Igarashi Yoshikuni makes an even more negative assessment as he claims that "the process of forgetting was completed within postwar Japan" due to the United State's cover-ups under the Cold War political paradigm and the postwar Japanese revisionists' beatification of Japan's history (200). Igarashi argues that Japan's traumatic past lost its original impact over time despite its repeated re-articulation (210). In correlation to Aso's claim mentioned above, what gets completely forgotten is "real history as such," when only "narratives" and "images" are left over. Thus, at the social level, Japan's past is inevitably dissipating. In this historical context, according to Igarashi, the desire of younger postwar Japanese generations to distance themselves from the colonialist past of "Imperial Japan" is becoming astonishingly stronger.

Have postwar Japan and its younger citizens totally forgotten Japan's past? Shimada offers an alternative presentation of Japanese people's perception of the war, though it is highly based on his personal observations. Shimada vividly presents the conflicting and ambiguous sentiments of the Japanese living in the 1990s when they recall the wartime Japan, which he identifies as a dilemma of "in-betweenness." These Japanese people, according to Shimada, find themselves oscillating and trapped between Japan's past and present. They yearn for a decisive distinction between *wartime* and *postwar* Japan, yet face severe criticism by the international society for this aspiration. Shimada

illustrates that his generation never truly forgot the past despite the fact that they sought to ignore and leave behind Japan's fascist and militaristic past.

To Japanese generations living in the 1990s, the dilemma of "in-betweenness" remains unsolvable as long as the "others" exist, who are either Asian nations previously victimized by Imperial Japan or Japan's former enemy, the United States. In victimized Asian countries where the suffering and humiliation as a result of the Japanese occupation are taught in meticulous detail, the collective memories of the War of Resistance against Japan are reinforced, and victims are still seeking apologies and reparations at both the official and individual levels. As long as victimized countries keep reminding Japan of its colonialist past, young Japanese generations will be forced to confront it. The perception gap concerning Japan's war history was intensified in the 1990s by the increasing impact of the previously victimized Asian countries, in particular, China.[17] In contrast to postwar Japanese generations' complicated feelings towards the nation's past, victimized Asian countries, viewing Japan as the Other, criticize, condemn and disdain Japan's wartime inhumanity in a rather resolute and decisive way. No matter how eager younger Japanese generations seek to conceal and leave behind Japan's fascist and militaristic past, the real others ceaselessly remind them that they cannot be regarded as an exclusive part of the "Japanese community" as a whole. No matter how many years have elapsed, wartime and postwar Japanese history is perceived as continuous. Therefore, the postwar Japanese generations still have an ethical responsibility to face Japan's past and initiate the provision of compensation as long as they inherit same language, and same historical and cultural heritage as the wartime Japanese generations. The presence of real others functions as a reminder and an external power that prevents the postwar Japanese generations from distancing themselves from Japan's past. As a result, according to Shimada's assessment, the postwar Japanese generations are essentially stuck in the interstice between Japan's past and present.

In *Suisei no Jūnin*, Shimada portrays JB's interweaving feelings of anger and guilt to present Japanese people's mentality of "in-betweenness." Just as JB feels indignant and ashamed about the brutal war crimes undertaken by Imperial Japan, Shimada's generation who experienced the 1990s find it difficult to empathise with the behavior or mentalities of the war participants of Imperial Japan. On the other hand, it is difficult for JB to sever the bond between Japan and himself completely. JB takes the initiative to learn Japanese against his father's will, and he still perceives Japan as "my mother's hometown" after witnessing the atrocities committed by Japanese troops. Through JB's psychological and emotional dilemmas, Shimada illustrates the predicament of the Japanese people of his own generation: no matter how much they want to, they are unable to disconnect entirely from the blood of an emotional link with the wartime generation.

Shimada attempts to reconcile the past and the present by rousing the consciousness of the Japanese public. According to Shimada's assessment, Japanese individuals of his generation entrapped between the past and the present are enduring haunting after-effects of Japan's colonialist history and struggling due to their liminal mental state. Hence, some of them give up on critical reflections, subscribing to the official rhetoric of history, and adopt a numb, reluctant and evasive attitude toward Japan's past aggressions. However, Shimada believes that the young postwar generations should confront the trauma at its origin: only by knowing what had happened can Japan wholeheartedly face the issues of its responsibilities. Despite the feelings of depression and dislocation, Shimada acknowledges that the practice of distorting history and dissociating themselves from their nation's war memories is not a solution to ease the tension and resolve disputes. He conveys to his readers the message that one must not give up even when in pain and exhaustion. JB's last words to his son Kuroudo adequately conclude his entire life and what Shimada intends to express: "you will be just like me, wander around in the space of 'in-between' with my mother's phantom. I know it is tiring, but *don't give up, never*!" (Shimada, *Suisei* 303; emphasis mine). Just as being trapped in-between is a curse for JB and his son, being trapped between the history of collective violence and the present is a "curse" for Shimada's generation. Nonetheless, Shimada displays his courage by articulating his opinion on how to confront Japan's past and transcend it: one needs to *contemplate* and *accept* Japan's history of aggression and its consequences rather than *overlook* it or replace it with a deceptive narrative.

* * *

In conclusion, Shimada presents JB's sense of in-betweenness from two opposing sides: Shimada not only echoes the postcolonial perspectives that celebrate the liberating and mediating power of in-betweenness but also takes prudential consideration of its possible negative impact on individuals. However, JB should not be understood simply as another literary representation of the postcolonial insights of Said or Bhabha. From the following three points, we can tell that Shimada's conception of "*aida*" (in-between) is not addressed in the same sense as Bhabha's notion of "in-between."

First, while Bhabha develops his discussion of in-betweenness more from the perspective of *cultures*, Shimada identifies "in-between" more as a *national identity-related* liminal position or mental state. Shimada's deployment of "in-between" can be interpreted in both spatial and temporal terms, as an analogy is drawn between JB's predicament and that of Shimada's generation. Ostensibly, in-betweenness refers to JB's liminal condition when trapped between the United States and Japan (spatial). However, placing

Shimada's texts in the historical context of 1990s Japan, we can find the hidden meaning underneath: JB's liminal condition essentially represents a similar dilemma of the younger Japanese generation who are trapped between Japan's past and present (temporal) when recalling its abhorrent history of aggression.

Second, in Shimada's narrative, "in-betweenness" is not represented as a general or universal theoretical conception but as a reflection of the concrete particularity of Japanese discourse. This is because Shimada's notion of "in-between" is largely based on his observations of Japan, the place where he was born, raised and situated when writing *Suisei no Jūnin*. Therefore, in this fiction, we observe that JB does not take a neutral and impartial stand toward Japan and the United States; rather, he shows more emotional affirmation for Japan. Shimada is not a typical diasporic or cross-border writer like Kazuo Ishiguro, Ian Hideo Levy, or Mizumura Minae, who have real-life transnational experiences. This explains why Shimada's presentation of in-betweenness is largely based on his literary imagination, and his critical concerns have always been closely associated with what he has observed and sensed in Japan. As a Japanese national who has spent most of his life domestically, Shimada has undergone Japan's postwar internationalisation and read cross-border writings but still finds himself trapped in the bind of a single nationality. I would argue that the in-betweenness embodied by JB is Shimada's grasp of his own conflicting psychology as he both fears and desires to have transnational experiences. However, this does not mean that Shimada's observation is less important, as he provides a perspective of an *insider* and illustrates that the issue of "in-betweenness" can also happen *within* Japan.

This is why we should not forget to trace the discourses of Japanese intellectuals on Japan's hybridity and hybridism in addition to the postcolonialist discourses of Said and Bhabha. Shimada appears sceptical of the Japanese discourses of the immediate postwar period that attempt to pre-empt the inferior and fragmentary status of postwar Japan by asserting that Japan has always been hybrid and thus partially similar to the colonized. Shimada also refuses to perceive Japan's hybridism as its unique strength. Distancing himself from ethnocentricity and exclusivism, Shimada puts more emphasis on the delicate feelings of Japanese individuals who are situated in the post-Cold War era. Therefore, Shimada's presentation of in-betweenness can be considered a response to and an update of postwar Japanese discourses. More specifically, Shimada portrays "1990s Japan" as an in-between entity that seeks to retrieve its marginalized voice and reconcile with its past but instead finds itself trapped in-between.

Third, Said and Bhabha place a relatively greater emphasis on the relationship between "the West" and its non-West "others" rather than the relationships *within* the non-West world when developing their discussion of the notion of in-betweenness. Shimada

broadens this view by shedding light on Japan's dual condition of "in-betweenness" as Japan is both formerly semi-colonized by the West and a former colonizer of Asia. Shimada's portrayals of JB's observations of Japan's war crimes in Asia illustrate that he does not overshadow the presence of victimized Asia when engaging with the issue of Japan's in-betweenness. As mentioned above, the younger Japanese generation's dilemma of in-betweenness is closely related to the growing presence of Asia, which serves as a reminder of Japan's haunting past.

Despite Shimada's portrayals of victimized Asian countries, in most instances, Shimada's exploration of the concept of in-betweenness does not deviate too far from the dichotomy of "Japan" and "America." This limitation could invite criticism. However, in the final volume of *Mugen Kanon*, Shimada undergoes a notable departure from the butterfly narrative and the binary framework that contrasts Japan with the United States. Instead, Shimada delves into the deconstruction of the imagined homogenous identity of "Japan" by introducing the perspectives of the Ainu and Russia. This progressive shift transcends the rigid US-Japan binary framework and embraces an exploration of identity beyond the US- Japan binary, warranting further research in the future.

In light of these three points, I contend that Shimada's opposing presentations of "in-betweenness" expand postcolonial insights and revitalize the critical arguments of Japan's in-betweenness. They offer us a distinctive perspective with which to perceive Japan's in-betweenness in the context of its past and present.

Notes

1 *Suisei no Jūnin*, the first volume of the trilogy, takes us through the tragic love affairs of the first three generations. *Utsukushī Tamashī* focuses on the story of a fourth-generation family member, Noda Kaoru, and his hopeless love for Asakawa Fujiko, a girl who is later chosen to marry the crown prince of Japan. The final volume, *Etorofu no Koi*, depicts Kaoru's exile by his nation to the island of Iturup for loving Fujiko.

2 All the English translations of Shimada Masahiko's texts and dialogues are mine unless otherwise stated.

3 Cited from the preface to the script of *Jr. Butterfly* (2004). This opera was composed by Saegusa Shigeaki, and the libretto was written by Shimada Masahiko, who recasts his novel, *Suisei no Jūnin*, as an opera. Unlike *Suisei no Jūnin*, *Jr. Butterfly* is not a transgenerational story but merely centres on the story of JB.

4 In Said's later works, such as *Culture and Imperialism* (1993), he points out some of the limitations of *Orientalism*.

5 For example, *The Space In-Between: Essays on Latin American Culture* (2002) translates articles by Silviano Santiago, a Brazilian critic who examines the strategic relations between the

disciplines of dependency and universality. Ayla Oğuz's "Ambivalence and In-betweenness in Hanif Kureishi's *The Buddha of Suburbia* and Doris Lessing's *Victoria and the Staveneys*" (2013) offers a literary study of the ambivalent identities of characters with mixed heritage. *The Power of the In-between* (2018), edited by Sonya Petersson, Christer Johansson, Magdalena Holdar and Sara Callahan, focuses on the ways in which "in-betweenness" is utilized as a central instrument for conducting artistic assessment and encouraging discerning contemplation in architectural works. For more, see Fernando Ainsa's "The Challenges of Postmodernity and Globalization: Multiple or Fragmented Identities?" (2002), Sonja Kmec's "Petrol Stations as In-between Spaces: Practices and Narratives" (2016) and M. Reza Shirazi's *Contemporary Architecture and Urbanism in Iran: Tradition, Modernity, and the Production of space-in-Between* (2018).

6 Japan's cultural hybridity developed even *before* any intellectuals' discussions concerning this issue. Many religious, political, ethical and linguistic aspects of Japanese culture have been profoundly influenced by ancient China, in particular the Tang Dynasty. For example, Taoism, Buddhism, Confucianism and the use of *kanji* are present in Japanese culture.

7 Translated from Japanese into English by Yagi Kimiko and Rebecca Jennison.

8 "How do you like it" in the Japanese language.

9 "Delicious, big, butterfly" in the Japanese language.

10 David Henry Hwang's 1988 play, *M. Butterfly*, is one of the well-known postcolonial rewritings of "Madame Butterfly." It tells the story of a French diplomat and a Peking opera singer.

11 It is speculated that Thomas Blake Glover, a British entrepreneur who resided in Nagasaki, and his love story with his Japanese wife named Tsuru Awajiya, served as a prototype for JB and Nami's love story. Thomas Glover was instrumental in founding a Japanese shipbuilding company, establishing Japan's first railroad, mint, mechanized coalmine, and brewery, and sending Japanese students to study abroad. He therefore becomes the first non-Japanese who was presented with the Order of the Rising Sun.

12 For more, see Igarashi Yoshikuni's *Bodies of Memory: Narratives of War in Postwar Japanese Culture, 1945-1970,* Princeton University Press, 2000. ProQuest Ebook Central, 203-4.

13 For more, see Kohei Kurahashi. *Rekishi shūsei shugi to sabukaruchā : 90-Nendai hoshu gensetsu no media bunka*, Seikyusha, 2018.

14 For more, see Arai Shin'ichi's 1995 book *Sensō sekinin-ron*, Tawara Yoshifumi's *"Tsukurukai" bunretsu to rekishi gizō no shinsō*, and Shirai Satoshi's 2013 book *Eizoku haisen-ron.*

15 Despite the limited influence of leftist movements in the late 1990s when Shimada wrote *Suisei no Jūnin*, he shared similar concerns with leftist groups regarding the revisionist attempts. However, categorizing Shimada as a strictly leftist writer necessitates more careful consideration. In his debut work, "Yasashī sayoku no tame no kiyūkyoku," Shimada portrays leftist movements among Japanese youth as a mere form of childish play that lacks seriousness or clear ideological goal. I would argue that Shimada's 1980s texts reflects his contradictory attitude towards Japanese leftist movements. Shimada is disillusioned with the radical student protests, while also feeling a sense of loss regarding the fading spirit of resistance in Japan. In this sense, despite his numerous portrayals of leftist social movements in his 1980s works, I would argue that Shimada's stance is more nuanced and ambivalent, rather than strictly aligned with any single ideology.

16 For example, China and South Korea, at both the official and individual levels, have protested against Japanese politicians for their visits to Yasukuni Shrine. America's Associated Press criticized Abe Shinzō, a Prime Minister of postwar Japan, for his increasing attempts to "whitewash Japan's brutal past since taking office" (Yamaguchi, 2020, August 15).

17 Rien T. Segers suggests that the rise of China since the early 1990s has "consequences most severely for Japan in particular" (253). See "The Necessity for a Reinterpretation of a Changing Japan" in *A New Japan for the Twenty-First Century* (2008).

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