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**Embracing Japan's Post-Cold War:
An Examination of Intellectuals' Opposition to the Gulf War**

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Abstract

During the Gulf War in 1991, a group of Japanese intellectuals released the “Statement from ‘literary persons’ in opposition to the Gulf War.” This statement not only expressed an anti-war stance but also gestured to redefine Japan’s position in the post-Cold War world. 1989-1991 was a period of global and domestic changes, which involved complex questions about “Japan” as a nation. My central question is: what do the debates of the “Statement” reveal about the Japanese intellectual sphere in 1989-1991?

Through the analysis of publications contemporary to the statement, I examine how the statement responded to the question of “Japan” as a nation. The first chapter offers contextual frameworks for historicizing the moment of 1989-1991 and the Japanese intellectual sphere at that moment. The second and third chapter builds on the contextualization in the first chapter to analyze the statement as a text and the discussions that followed. The second chapter addresses how the statement and its discussion respond to the question of “Japan” as a nation, building on the legacy of intellectual struggles over the Japanese constitution and the emperor system in the postwar. The third chapter examines how the statement reflects some of the intellectuals’ awareness of the “Others,” namely the United States and East Asia, in thinking about Japan in the post-Cold War.

In contrast to the narrative of the “uselessness” of intellectual debates around the statement, this thesis argues that the discussions reveal the intellectuals’ desperate effort to present a future-oriented identity for Japan and at the same time to acknowledge the need to critically historicize the past. Embracing the past and the future, the anti-Gulf War statement was an attempt to open the possibility for dialogue to negotiate the ideas of national and transnational in Japan’s national identity.

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Introduction

*I think this is the first time the word “anti-war” has taken on meaning in postwar Japan.
This is because Japan was forced to decide whether or not to participate in the Gulf War.*

– Karatani Kojin¹

On January 17, 1991, the continuing conflict in the Middle East escalated to the beginning of the Gulf War. Iraq had invaded the state of Kuwait in the summer of the previous year claiming that Kuwait's excessive production of petroleum is economically unjust.² The Iraqi government was met with strong international condemnation and was immediately subject to economic sanctions. Mobilization of the military was underway in a short time, and an American-led coalition force was formed with the approval of the United Nations. The Gulf War began with the coalition forces' aerial bombardment of Kuwait in the name of its liberation from Iraqi forces. This war between Iraq and the coalition forces, involving the mass destruction of Kuwait and the bombardment of Israel by Iraq, ended after six weeks on February 28 with the dominance of the American-led forces. Japan, like many other states, was requested to provide military aid in this conflict. Instead of military aid, the Japanese government chose to “participate” in the coalition by providing financial aid of over 13 billion US dollars.³ They were criticized by those participating in the coalition forces for not sending military aid.⁴ Despite its seemingly unobvious role in the coalition forces, this was a critical decision for the Japanese government. It was Japan's first participation in war under the current constitution established after the Second World War.

In the backdrop of the Gulf War, political, social, and economic changes were occurring simultaneously across the globe. For Japan, the turbulence and anxiety accelerated with the

¹ Karatani Kojin 柄谷行人. ““Wangan’senjika no bungakusha” 「湾岸」戦時下の文学者 [Persons of letters during the Gulf War]. *Bungakukai* 文学界 4 (1991): 18. Translated by author.

² Ishikawa Masumi and Jiro Yamaguchi 石川真澄/山口二郎. *Sengoseijishi* 戦後政治史 [Postwar political history], 4th edition, (Tokyo: Iwanami Publishing, 2021): 170-186.

³ *Ibid.*, 170.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 170-171.

synergy of global and domestic events. In 1989, following the death of Emperor Hirohito marking the end of the Showa period in January 1989, the Tiananmen Square Incident shocked East Asia in June, and the collapse of the Berlin Wall was streamed on television all over the world in November. Historian Narita Ryuichi reflects on the period of 1989-1991 that “an obvious awareness that a new historical period has opened up” was shared amongst many in Japan and abroad.⁵ The political turmoil that escalated into the Gulf War emerged in this context, which means that people were further unsettled by this event amid disorienting changes, asking new questions. The Gulf War was especially significant for Japan because its discussions opened up unanswered questions since the postwar, specifically the legacies of the Second World War and how to embrace them in the contemporary.⁶

For the intellectual sphere in Japan, the sequence of events also brought out an existential question of how to respond to the Gulf War, questioning the role of intellectuals in such crisis. The proximity between intellectuals and politics had always been in question, as a reflection of the intellectual sphere’s collaboration with Imperial Japan. In other words, despite the “obvious awareness that a new historical period has opened up,” the discussions that occurred in response to the Gulf War were not new. They were mostly in continuation of the discussions that had been repeated over almost fifty years. For instance, the debates on the war responsibility of intellectuals flourished immediately after the Second World War. Literary figures such as Yoshimoto Ryumei, who also responded to the debates of the Gulf War had taken part in these immediate postwar debates.⁷ The 1960s and 1970s Anpo protests was another key period that brought the relationship between postwar Japan and America under

⁵ Narita Ryuichi 成田龍一. *Kingendainihonshi to rekishigaku* 近現代日本史と歴史学 [Modern and contemporary Japanese history and historiography]. (Tokyo: Chuko Publishing, 2012): 247.

⁶ The term “postwar” in Japanese historiography refers to the post-Second World War.

⁷ Tsuboi Hideto 坪井秀人, et al. “Wangansensoshi ronso towa nandattanoka” 湾岸戦争詩論争とは何だったのか [What was the Gulf War poetry debate?]. *Gendaishitecho* 現代詩手帖 5 (2020): 64-73.

examination.⁸ Under the strong influence of Cold War politics, a group of literary figures drafted and signed an anti-nuclear statement in 1982 that stirred controversy over intellectuals' political activism. The Gulf War, however, involved a new dimension to this question. The Japanese government was deciding on participation in war for the first time since the Second World War. Since the intellectual sphere had long debated the issue of their role in the face of war, their individual stances were being questioned.

It was in these contexts that a trope of intellectuals released their collective stance on the Gulf War, known as 「文学者」の討論集会アッピール [Appeal from the discussions by 'literary persons'] or 湾岸戦争に反対する文学者声明 [Statement from 'literary persons' in opposition to the Gulf War].⁹ It is noteworthy that numerous anti-war statements were released by political collectives at the time, and this was one of many. Led by renowned literary figures such as Karatani Kojin, Nakagami Kenji, and Tanaka Yasuo, the statement was released at a press conference in Tokyo on February 9, 1991. It was in a form of a petition, expressing opposition to the Japanese government's involvement in the Gulf War. According to a report of the press conference, the target audience was not clearly specified. However, there were ideas to publish the statement in American media or to even go protest in the United States with the statement.¹⁰ Others mentioned that the statement was for a personal purpose and that they wanted to think about how to convey their anti-war stance in their own works.¹¹ Whether an American or a Japanese audience, they agreed to release the statement publically. The statement is made up of two clauses as below.

⁸ Anpo protests were a series of demonstrations against the United States-Japan Security Treaty, which allows the United States to hold ground for military bases in Japan.

⁹ “Wangansenso ni hantai suru bungakusha seimei” 湾岸戦争に反対する文学者声明 [Statement from 'literary persons' in opposition to the Gulf War] (Tokyo: February 9, 1991)

¹⁰ Koyama Tetsuro 小山鉄郎. “‘Bungakusha no toronshukai’ yoteki” 「文学者の討論集会」余滴 [Gleanings from the 'discussions of persons of letters'] *Bungakukai* 文學界 8 (1991): 174-177.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 174.

Clause 1

I oppose the involvement of the Japanese state in war.

Clause 2

The postwar Japanese Constitution includes a clause titled “The Renunciation of War.” This has been maintained as a voluntary (proactive) choice of the Japanese people, not forced from other countries. It is based on the remorse (reflection) of the Japanese people for having fought the Second World War as the “final war,” especially for the aggression against Asian nations. In addition, we believe that this clause includes the prayers of the Western peoples themselves, rooted in their experience of two world wars. At this major turning point in world history, we believe that the principles of the present [Japanese] Constitution are the most universal and radical. We do not wish Japan to be involved, directly or indirectly, in war. We believe that Japan should make every possible international contribution.

*We oppose Japan’s involvement in the Gulf War and any possible future wars.*¹²

The first clause was signed by forty-three signatories, and the second clause was signed by sixteen signatories. The first clause was signed by all of the signatories, but the second clause was signed only by the sixteen original members that drafted the statement. Like many of the statements by activists, no published records remain of this statement. The title is also unfixed because of this nature. However, these clauses appeared repeatedly in literary magazines because of their controversy.

Evaluating the statement in retrospect, the statement did not leave a significant impression on Japanese intellectual history. As the statement was immediately met with strong criticism by influential figures like Kato Norihiro and Yoshimoto Takaaki, most of the signatories either kept silent or later admitted that they regret signing the statement.¹³ Those who were involved and are still active today do not mention of this petition. However, from the perspective of understanding the historical moment of 1991, the drafting of this petition and the debates that followed are important evidence of the kinds of struggles and possibilities that a trope of intellectuals faced at the time. The debates encompass critical questions regarding the

¹² Translated by author.

¹³ Ko Hwajeong 高和政. “Wangansensogo no ‘bungakusha’ – ‘aratana hansen’ no yukue” 湾岸戦争後の「文学者」 – <新たな反戦>の行方 [‘Literary persons’ after the Gulf War: positioning of ‘new anti-war stances’]. *Gendaishiso* 現代思想 6 (2003): 142-155.

historicization of Japan's imperial era and the postwar, and the proximity to America. I aim to examine how these debates uphold the hopes and possibilities that the intellectuals had in the moment of 1989-1991. Hence, my question is: What do the debates of the "Statement from 'literary persons' in opposition to the Gulf War" reveal about the Japanese intellectual sphere in the transitory period of 1989-1991?

Because the period 1989-1991 is still relatively recent and the period itself is understudied, there are only a few previous scholarships that historicize the debates around this statement in 1991. One important article is "Nanimo shinaiyori zutto... –Wangan senso to gendaishi" 何もしないよりずっと–湾岸戦争と現代詩 [Other than doing nothing: the Gulf War and contemporary poetry], by Tsuboi Hideto, focusing on the poet Fujii Sadakazu's response to the statement.¹⁴ Fujii was not a member of the signatory but was active in bringing the statement under scrutiny and questioning the role of contemporary poems and poets. Fujii expressed an ambivalent attitude towards the statement, sympathizing with the desire to take part in concrete anti-war action and at the same time condemning the language use of the statement. Tsuboi's concern is primarily focused on the analysis of Fujii's seemingly illogical imagination of contemporary poetry-to-come. Tsuboi carefully traces the baggage of tradition that contemporary poetry holds and seeks a radical alternative in Fujii's works. The baggage includes the interpretation of the constitution, the emperor system, and the role of intellectuals against an actual conflict. While Tsuboi's analysis focuses on the literary analysis and does not take into consideration the historical context of the time, he offers a framework to consider some of the questions that emerged from the discussions.

¹⁴ Tsuboi Hideto 坪井秀人. "Nanimo shinaiyori zutto... –Wangan senso to gendaishi" 何もしないよりずっと–湾岸戦争と現代詩 [Other than doing nothing: the Gulf War and contemporary poetry]. in *Koe no shukusai – Nihonkindaishi to senso– 声の祝祭–日本近代詩と戦争*, by Tsuboi Hideto, 326-345. (Nagoya: Nagoya Daigaku Shuppankai, 1997): 326-345.

Building on this reflection in 1997, Tsuboi revisits the statement and the following debate in 2020 by interviewing Fujii and Seo Ikuo, another poet who responded to Fujii's provocation at the time. The interview again focuses on the future of contemporary poetry and less on the Gulf War as a historical moment.¹⁵ Tsuboi situates the Gulf War debates as a turning point both intellectually and historically. Fujii and Seo both acknowledge how Fujii's provocation was meaningful not because of its arguments, but rather its rhetorical nature. Tsuboi illustrates how Fujii's gesture of empathizing with the statement and criticizing it at the same time had the potential of overcoming postmodern narratives that positioned the two in binary. It is noteworthy that both Fujii and Seo are more conscious of the post-Cold War circumstances in the 2020 interview. They both discuss how the topics of war responsibility, the emperor system, and the constitution had begun to be spoken about in 1991, but they struggled with being trapped in the postmodern language that prevailed through the late Cold War. This work is essential to understanding the challenges that literary circles encountered at the time. However, they only attempt to recollect the impressions of the debate and do not go far to refer to the actual text and actors that participated in the statement.

Another work by Ko Hwajeong "Wangansensogo no 'bungakusha' – 'aratana hansen' no yukue" 湾岸戦争後の「文学者」 – <新たな反戦>の行方 ['Literary persons' after the Gulf War: positioning of 'new anti-war stances'] reflects upon the statement and the figures involved in the following debate in comparison to the literary circle's response to 9/11 and the Iraq war.¹⁶ This is an essay published in the literary magazine *Gendaishiso*, criticizing the reluctance of the intellectuals to act against the war. Ko examines Kato Norihiro's critique of the 1991 statement and analyzes the response of Karatani Kojin, Kawamura Minato, and Takahashi Genichiro, who signed the statement. Ko points out how these figures actively joined

¹⁵ Tsuboi, "Nanimo shinaiyori zutto... –Wangan senso to gendaishi," 64-73.

¹⁶ Ko, 142-155.

the signatory but eventually accepted Kato's critique that the logic of anti-war in the statement was wrongly based on the constitution and that the statement is void of meaning. He also takes an interest in how Kawamura reflected on himself as "inconsiderate of the victims of the Second World War" and how Takahashi described himself as "impulsive" and "stupid" to sign the statement in retrospect.¹⁷ This essay is useful in clarifying the afterlives of the debates in 1991.

While these studies convey the significance of the debates in 1991, they do not consider the moment of 1991 in its contemporary. Instead, the event of the Gulf War and the following debates by intellectuals are described either as a failed attempt at collective action or as a future-oriented, yet extremely niche discussion of Japanese literature and poetry. Furthermore, the motivations for signing the "Statement from 'literary persons' in opposition to the Gulf War" are often negated by the signatories themselves or are given ambiguous justifications in retrospect. In contrast to these previous scholarships, my research aims to reconstruct the narrative around this anti-Gulf War statement by Japanese intellectuals in its contemporary by historicizing the statement in light of the changing political and intellectual atmosphere of 1989-1991. I refer to the timeframe as 1989-1991, taking after the common periodization of the end of the Cold War. I aim to clarify the presence and absence of possibilities in embracing this period of local and global transitions.

In approaching my central question, I examine how the intellectuals address the national and transnational concerns in response to "Statement from 'literary persons' in opposition to the Gulf War." The sources that I examine include the text of the statement, published essays from literary magazines that respond to the statement, and books and interviews by those involved in the discussion published contemporary to the moment of 1991. Relying on the theoretical frameworks of postcolonial approaches, I situate the discussion in continuation of the ongoing discussion of Japanese postwar historiography. For the purposes of analysis, the

¹⁷ Ko, 147.

chapter structure of this thesis divides the discussions on “Japan” into national concerns and transnational concerns. However, the two aspects are inherently associated, as Benedict Anderson elucidates that “nation” is an imagined community upheld by certain common perceptions of the world, including the others outside the nation.¹⁸ Nevertheless, I chose to employ this categorization because the responses to the statement can be effectively identified as those concerning Japan’s “national” questions and those that attempt to grapple with the presence of others outside of Japan.

The first chapter offers contextual frameworks for historicizing the moment of 1989-1991 and the Japanese intellectual sphere at that moment. I survey the contemporary perspectives on situating 1989-1991 as a transitional moment in Japan’s national history and world history. Then, I locate the Japanese intellectuals involved in the anti-Gulf War statement in that context. The second and third chapter builds on the contextualization in the first chapter to analyze the statement as a text and the discussions that followed considering the moment of 1989-1991. The second chapter addresses how the statement and its discussion respond to the question of “Japan” as a nation, building on the legacy of intellectual struggles over the Japanese constitution and the emperor system since the post-Second World War. The third chapter examines how the statement reflects some of the intellectuals’ awareness of the “others,” namely the United States and East Asia, in thinking about Japan in the post-Cold War.

Through examining the discussion of “Japan” under national and transnational contexts, this thesis portrays how a trope of intellectuals in the 1989-1990 moment attempted to respond to the challenges of redefining Japan’s position in the post-Cold War world. The discussions reveal their desperate effort to present a future-oriented national identity for Japan and at the same time to acknowledge the need to critically historicize the past, especially Japan’s actions in the Second World War and the postwar legacies. Embracing the past and the future, these

¹⁸ Benedict Anderson. *Imagined Communities: Reflections On the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. (New York: Verso, 2006)

fragmented, yet emotive exchanges between the intellectuals were an attempt to open the possibility for dialogue to negotiate the ideas of national and transnational in Japan's national identity. Despite the intellectuals' seemingly clashing arguments, the sense of desperation and urge to respond to evolving historical moments offer meaningful legacies to the discussions of nation and history in the current and future public sphere.

Chapter 1

Historicizing the “Statement from ‘literary persons’ in opposition to the Gulf War”

In recent historiography, the year 1989 has been becoming a global interest as one of the potential turning points in history.¹⁹ The year is commonly described as the end of the Cold War, accompanied by many events of change around the world. As symbolized by the fall of the Berlin Wall, the end of the Cold War signified the victory of the Western path of modernization and democratic ideals. In 1990, then-American President George H.W. Bush proposed the term the “New World Order,” situating the United States as the supreme guardian of global justice.²⁰ For many who aligned themselves with the West welcomed this change in the global system, despite the violence and instability that followed in the peripheral regions.²¹ 1989-1991 was a historical moment that was accompanied by not only a series of physically memorable events but also intellectual changes.²² For instance, the rise of neoliberalism and anti-intellectualism began to have a visible influence on the public sphere during this time.²³ Subsequently, reflecting upon the years 1989-1991 and considering the implications of this period to the making of the current public sphere holds contemporary significance.

Amongst the supposed changes in 1989-1991, this thesis examines the intellectual responses to the Gulf War in 1991 in Japan and the debates that followed. It focuses particularly on the “Statement from ‘literary persons’ in opposition to the Gulf War,” which was a statement made by a group of intellectuals in the literary field that condemns Japan’s participation in the war. While Japan is not often mentioned as a significant actor of the Gulf War in world history

¹⁹ Sakai Keiko. 酒井啓子 “Shiso no kotoba 思想の言葉 [Words of Shiso]”, *Shiso 思想*, vol.1146 (October 2019): 2-5.

²⁰ “Address Before a Joint Session of the Congress on the Persian Gulf Crisis and the Federal Budget Deficit” September 11, 1990, Public Papers, George Bush Presidential Library and Museum, National Archives and Records Administration.

²¹ Carol Gluck. “1989 nen no kibo to shitsubo 1989 年の希望と失望 [Hopes and Disappointments of 1989]”, *Shiso 思想*, vol.1146, (October 2019): 7.

²² *Ibid.*, 6.

²³ *Ibid.*, 6.

narratives, the Gulf War in 1991 was an event that exposed many questions about Japan's past and future. This chapter aims to situate the "Statement from 'literary persons' in opposition to the Gulf War" in the global, national, and intellectual context of 1991. While the "Statement from 'literary persons' in opposition to the Gulf War" only involved a small fraction of the Japanese intellectual sphere, the statement reflected a common anxiety and urge for action as an individual and as an intellectual living in their milieu.

1.1 "1989" as Japan's historical problem

In an interview for the Japanese literary magazine *Shiso*, historian Carol Gluck emphasizes the significance of 1989 as a historical question.²⁴ She first points out that the year 1989 and the post-Cold War transition cannot be simply described as a "turning point." While she echoes the narrative that the collapse of the Soviet Union had a global impact, she stresses how the outcome of the supposed "turning point" has never been clearly defined. In other words, the events that followed 1989 are categorized as "post-Cold War" but the character of this new era remains ambiguous. In addition, she describes 1989 as a potential turning point that embodied various possibilities for the coming era. There was a shared optimism for change around the globe, though those hopes and imaginations were soon absorbed into the acceleration of capitalism and narratives of neoliberalism. Even though these optimistic possibilities included a radical redefining of national, political, economic, and social structures, they were short-lived. Nevertheless, Gluck asserts that these possibilities imagined at the time are worth examining because they reflect the various contradictions of the global and domestic society we see today.

²⁴ Ibid., 6-21.

Although Japan is not often considered an immediate actor in the Cold War, Gluck notes that it was not an exception to experiencing this turbulent age of post-Cold War transition.²⁵ Like many other countries, Japan's national subjectivity and post-Second World War politics were largely defined by the Cold War global system. Namely, American hegemony shaped the bases of Japanese domestic and international politics, and the dependence on America as a guardian state passed as an unquestioned fact. However, the collapse of the Soviet Union meant a potential end to this relationship, opening the space for Japan to rename, redefine, and resituate itself. Gluck notes that this unnamed sense of optimism for change was shared amongst many countries that were previously caught up in Cold War politics. However, most of the Japanese historical scholarship of this era lacks the consideration of this opening for various possibilities and narrates 1989 only in terms of their long-term outcome. Specifically for the Japanese case, 1989 is simply taken as a turning point that led to the collapse of the socialist left and gave way to the rise of hyper-nationalism in the 1990s. While Gluck does not go far to examine Japan's circumstances in this period, she makes clear the need to consider Japan's 1989 and the possibilities that opened at the moment, in the context of this global transition.

Japanese historian Narita Ryuichi echoes Gluck's observation that Japan's 1989 is worth considering but has not yet been fully studied.²⁶ In his conversation with Japanese literary critic Komori Yoichi, he points out the complexity of considering the singular historical moment of Japan's 1989. He points out that 1989 marked the end of Showa and the beginning of Heisei, which implies another layer of the opening of possibilities and potential for change. As mentioned earlier, the abdication of the emperor initiated a public reflection on the Showa period, especially on the history of imperial Japan. The emperor's death allowed for a critical

²⁵ Gluck, 17.

²⁶ Narita Ryuichi 成田龍一 and Komori Yoichi 小森陽一 et al., "Gaido mappu 80 nendai 90 nendai" ガイドマップ 80年代・90年代 [A Guidemap to 80s and 90s], *Sengo nippon sutadizu 3 戦後日本スタディーズ 3* [Postwar Japan Studies vol. 3], (Tokyo: Kinokuniya Publishing, 2018), 9-24.

examination of his responsibility in the Second World War, which opened an opportunity to reexamine Japanese wartime atrocities. Furthermore, discussing the history of imperial Japan encompassed not only what happened during the war but also its postwar legacy. Japan's contemporary history cannot be separated from the outcome of imperial history, namely the American occupation and the continued hegemony. Japanese war responsibility and the postwar dependency on the US had not been publicly questioned until 1989. In order to consider 1989 as a historical moment, there is a need to take into account the interplay of the end of Showa and the collapse of the Cold War system that informed the questions around Japanese history and national identity.

The reflection on the long Showa is further complicated by the enigmatic nature of Japan's postwar. Narita points to how the conventional narrative of Showa is dominated by the ambiguous term "sengo [postwar]".²⁷ He claims that what "postwar" entailed was never defined for the Japanese public, let alone when and how the war ended or what the war was about. These questions were often debated amongst intellectuals throughout the latter half of the 20th century, but there was never a national consensus. He asserts that the ambiguity itself defined the "postwar," shaped by a mixture of elements such as war memory, ideas of peace and democracy, and complex sentiments against the American hegemony. Narita points out that these unspoken questions over "sengo" came into the open and shifted in 1989. Japan's "sengo" or postwar sentiment eventually disappeared beginning with the emperor's abdication in 1989, the fall of the Cold War system, and then the Gulf War in 1991.²⁸ While Narita does not explain in detail how "sengo" had disappeared, he suggests that events that followed 1989 revealed into the open the question of "sengo" and an opportunity for closure with the past on global and domestic levels.

²⁷ Ibid., 8.

²⁸ Ibid., 11.

As both Gluck and Narita suggests, it is significant to keep in mind that this national question of history and identity in Japan emerged through increasing transnational interactions through the 1980s and 1990s. For instance, 1989 saw the establishment of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), which is a regional economic forum focused on Asia. With the increasing economic development and integration in Asia, an awareness of “Asia” as a bounded region emerged in deviation from the Cold War geopolitics.²⁹ The awareness of a new geographical identity was one of the factors that pressured Japan to reflect upon its history of aggression in the Asian region. At the same time, the relationship with the United States worsened with the peak of US-Japan trade friction, reinforcing the awareness of Japan as an independent nation.³⁰ Furthermore, in the intellectual and political sphere, the politicization of memory had become an important topic of global discussion since the 1970s. The trend accelerated further with the emphasis on nation-building projects in peripheral regions in the immediate post-Cold War.³¹ In the Japanese case, the controversies around wartime atrocities including sexual slavery by the Japanese imperial army heightened from the late 1980s. 1989-1991 was in the midst of the moment when the issue of history and memory increasingly became a platform for diplomatic disputes.

Shaped by multiple local and global events, 1989-1991 can be considered as a critical transitional moment in which it held the possibility for the narratives around the nations’ past and future to be reconfigured. Especially for the Japanese case in which postwar state-building had been closely entangled with foreign influence, the historicization of this period must consider these transnational aspects. The “Statement from ‘literary persons’ in opposition to the Gulf War” arises from such complex positioning of national and transnational concerns. There were visible changes happening in the everyday of 1989-1991. The Gulf War, despite it

²⁹ Gluck, 12.

³⁰ Ibid., 12-13.

³¹ Ibid., 15-17.

happening in a distant region from Japan, held a considerate influence on the thinking of Japanese intellectuals at the time. While the “Statement” alone did not hold significant historical influence, it can be situated as a response to these changing contexts and allows evaluation of what its discussions have left for the contemporary and future public sphere.

1.2 Japan’s Intellectual sphere in the postwar

In his renowned work *Sengo-chi to Rekishigaku*, Japanese historian Yasumaru Yoshio describes the development of the Japanese intellectual sphere since the post-Second World War.³² He conveys how the Japanese intellectual sphere since the Second World War has been significantly shaped by responses to the experience of war and defeat, and the critiques to those responses. He proposes the term “Sengo-chi” as a wholistic term to describe the intellectual thinking that encompasses “Sengo-shiso [postwar thoughts]” and “Gendai-shiso [contemporary thoughts].”³³ The “Sengo-shiso” refers to the intellectual explorations in the early postwar dealing with their immediate experience of the postwar, while the “Gendai-shiso” is an attempt to distance and historicize the war and the postwar experience. Yasumaru stresses that while the distinction between the two approaches should be acknowledged, they should be considered in continuation, across time and discipline.

Historian Narita Ryuichi expands on Yasumaru’s frameworks to historicize the intellectual thinking that emerged in response to the Japanese experience of the Second World War.³⁴ In the immediate postwar, intellectuals, especially those who already held high social status preceding the war shared a sense of guilt that they were part of the technicians of the

³² Yasumaru Yoshio 安丸良夫, ed. Shimazono Susumu 島園進 et al. *Yasumaru yoshio shu 5: Sengo-chi to Rekishigaku* 安丸良夫集 5 : 戦後知と歴史学 [Collected works of Yasumaru Yoshio 5: Postwar-knowledge and historiography] (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 2019)

³³ Narita Ryuichi 成田龍一. *Rekishiron-shu 2: ‘Sengo-chi’ wo rekishika suru* 歴史論集 2 : <戦後知>を歴史化する [Essays in history 2: Historicizing the “postwar knowledge”] (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 2021), iii-viii.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 19-27.

national agendas that led the country to war and aggression. “Intellectuals” here were not limited to academic historians, literary scholars, and political scientists but also writers, poets, and journalists who were involved in the literal medium of “writing.” Commonly known as “Sengo-shiso [postwar thoughts],” the older generation that experienced the war either shared a sense of collective guilt and a drive to reconsider the role of public intellectuals under the values of Western liberation.³⁵ The younger generation also followed this thinking with optimism towards American-led “liberation” and acceptance of Western values.³⁶ At the same time, Narita acknowledges how some of the intellectuals who participated in the battlefield were hesitant to immerse in the atmosphere of liberation.³⁷ He also pays particular attention to Yoshimoto Takaaki, who shared experiences with those on the battlefield. In contrast to his contemporaries, Yoshimoto immediately showed skepticism toward the atmosphere of postwar liberation that celebrated Western modernity. Nevertheless, these intellectuals in the immediate postwar who composed the basis of the postwar Japanese intellectual sphere all found themselves associated with the questions of the role of public intellectuals, the questions of nation-building and their proximity to Western values, arising from the experience of defeat.

Narita illustrates how “Sengo-shiso [postwar thoughts]” shifted in approach in the 1970s and 80s, and then experienced a complete change to “Gendai-shiso [contemporary thoughts]” in the 1990s.³⁸ In the vibrant atmosphere of social activism in the 1960s and 70s, reflections on the American occupation brought the Western style of postwar democracy and war responsibility under examination. Furthermore, the intellectual sphere itself was criticized for its elitist and masculine exclusivity. Voices of women, Zainichi, Okinawans, and war victims

³⁵ Narita describes this generation as “prewar generation” and refers to Maruyama Masao, Kato Shuichi, and Tsurumi Shunsuke as examples.

³⁶ Narita describes this generation as “wartime patriotic children-generation” and refers to Oe Kenzaburo and Inoue Hisashi as examples.

³⁷ Narita describes this generation as “mid-war generation” and refers to Mishima Yukio and Hashikawa Bunzo as examples.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 22-30.

became more visible in the 1970s, and these reflections on the war and the postwar by those outside the original sphere of collective guilt began to flourish alongside “Sengo-shiso [postwar thoughts]”.³⁹ For instance, Ishimure Michiko’s *Paradise in the Sea of Sorrow: Our Minamata Disease* raised public awareness of chemical pollution and questioned modern development and industrialization. Morisaki Kazue revealed the repressive structure of Japanese modern society by writing about the traditions in Japanese society from a woman’s point of view. The research on Zainichi positionality also revealed the exclusivity of the “Japanese” identity. These works did not directly address the experience of war and defeat but their questions involved acknowledging the repressive wartime structures and reconsidering the Western-oriented postwar recovery. Ultrationalist thoughts also emerged as reactionary to the Western-oriented “Sengo-shiso [postwar thoughts].” Their presence was a cause of common anxiety to the those that have fully or partially supported “Sengo-shiso [postwar thoughts].” Furthermore in the 1980s, postmodern approaches to “Sengo-shiso [postwar thoughts]” by Yamaguchi Masao challenged the idea of “intellectuals” altogether, criticizing the authoritative influence of the knowledge produced by this intellectual solidarity. Yet, Narita reminds us that these thoughts focused on interpreting the “Sengo-shiso [postwar thoughts]” in their contemporary in their search for postwar identity.

It was only in the post-Cold War transition, at the timing of the “Statement from ‘literary persons’ in opposition to the Gulf War,” that “Sengo-shiso [postwar thoughts]” began to be spoken about as the past. Narita writes that “the Cold War global system collapsed, and a clearly different sense of time period emerged.”⁴⁰ He describes this intellectual change as a shift from “Sengo-ron [postwar theories]” to “Sengo-shi [postwar history].”⁴¹ What came out of “Sengo-

³⁹ Zainichi is a term referring to foreign migrants often associated with Japan’s former colonial subjects residing in Japan. Okinawans is a term referring to people in Okinawa which was occupied by the United States after the Second World War until 1972, long after Japan gained independence in 1952.

⁴⁰ Narita Ryuichi 成田龍一. *Kingendainihonshi to Rekishigaku*. 近現代日本史と歴史学 [Modern and Contemporary Japanese History and Historiography] (Tokyo: Chuokoron-Shinsha, 2012), 263.

⁴¹ Narita, *Rekishiron-shu 2: ‘Sengo-chi’ wo rekishika suru*, 27-30.

shiso [postwar thoughts]” were “Sengo-ron [postwar theories],” the examinations of the contemporary moment through reflection about the postwar within the framework of postwar, or Cold War, values. In contrast, “Sengo-shi [postwar history],” informed by the approaches of “Gendai-shiso [contemporary thoughts],” treated the postwar as history, detached from the contemporary sense of identity. This detachment became possible with the collapse of the Cold War binary and the end of Showa, which allowed the postwar to end in formality. Nevertheless, it is important to keep in mind that the sense of the postwar is still continuing in some forms to this day, given how the expected changes at the end of the Cold War did not take place and American hegemony has been maintained into the 2000s.

In retrospect, the “Statement from ‘literary persons’ in opposition to the Gulf War,” released in 1991 was situated in the midst of these intellectual changes. It was a moment that on one hand, “Sengo-shiso [postwar thoughts]” was still prevalent, and many in the intellectual sphere identified with its value. Even for those that were critical of “Sengo-shiso [postwar thoughts],” their thinking reflected the teachings of intellectuals in the immediate postwar. They shared questions about Japan’s postwar, national identity, and proximity to the West. The end of the Cold War did not signify an immediate change in how these questions were discussed, but the increment of changes stirred anxiety and restlessness. On the other hand, visible changes occurring around the world were a cause for optimism. The idea of “Post-Cold War” was discussed with sentiments of hope and expectations. Intellectuals like Karatani Kojin, one of the leading figures that drafted the statement, were fast to respond to this changing environment. Building on Benedict Anderson’s *Imagined Communities*, Karatani reconsidered the question of Japan as a “nation” through the examination of prewar and wartime Japan in the context of global economic history, pointing to the association between capitalism and imperialism.⁴² Narita comments that Karatani, alongside Marxist feminist thinkers like Ueno Chizuko, opened

⁴² Ibid., 26.

future-oriented paths for criticism against the knowledge defined by Cold War binaries.⁴³ Karatani particularly emphasized the function of literature in the making of Japan as a nation from the early modern state to contemporary times. His participation in the “Statement from ‘literary persons’ in opposition to the Gulf War” can be aligned with his attempt to reconsider and redefine the position of Japan as a “nation” in the global context.

Furthermore, the emergence of these post-Cold War thoughts was accompanied by postcolonial approaches. The postcolonial approaches by thinkers like Sakai Naoki, Nishikawa Nagao, and John Dower highlighted the significance of Japan’s colonial pasts and the postwar relationship with the victor United States that underlies the idea of “Japan.”⁴⁴ American historian Dower examined the question of Japanese identity by examining the co-dependent relationship between the United States and Japan under the US occupation from 1945 to 1952. He points out how the Japanese effectively internalized American ideals and its language and strove to rebuild the country on those foundations.⁴⁵ Sakai questioned the development of Japanese national identity and the Japanese language, pointing to the nation’s historically transnational path of development. Through literary analysis and historicization, Sakai reveals the dynamics of imperialism that have shaped Japan, as a colonizer of East Asia and as a colonized state of the United States. His book *Kibou to Kenpo* 希望と憲法 [Hope and Constitution], published in 2008 almost twenty years after the moment of 1989-1991, begins with the exploration of the current definition of “Japanese people” under the current Japanese constitution.⁴⁶ He points out how the positionality of Japanese national sovereignty wavers between the Japanese people, the state as symbolized by the Emperor, and the United States.

⁴³ Ibid., 26-27.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 27.

⁴⁵ John Dower. *Embracing Defeat: Japan in the Aftermath of World War II*, (London: Penguin Books, 2000)

⁴⁶ Sakai Naoki 酒井直樹. *Kibo to Kenpo: Nihonkokukenpo no hatsuwashutai to otou* 希望と憲法：日本国憲法の発話主体と応答 [Hope and Constitution: The Agent-speaker and response to the Japanese Constitution] (Tokyo: Ibunsha, 2008)

Despite the complex relationship, Sakai seeks the possibility of overcoming the status quo in the contradictions itself. He stresses how the acknowledgment of what lies outside and on the borderlines of conventional categories allows for redefinition and reinterpretation. Building on various aspects of “Gendai-shiso [contemporary thoughts]” and beyond, the postcolonial approach to thinking about “Japan” attempts to overcome the boundary of area studies and follows the global intellectual trends of postcolonialism.

In these ways, the intellectual sphere in postwar Japan until today has been significantly shaped by the Cold War and a critical response to that system. Especially in the immediate postwar, many intellectuals willingly took on the role of internalizing American, Western ideals. Identifying with liberal and progressive ideas, they made up the predominantly left-leaning intellectual sphere. Preceding the end of the Cold War, their works were also situated close to left-wing, mass-based parties including the Japan Communist Party and Japan Socialist Party. In close association with the political sphere, they maintained their role as active inquirers and public speakers of Japan’s national identity. However, this character shifted with the emergence of “Gendai-shiso [postwar thoughts]” and even more so with the end of the Cold War. The “Statement from ‘literary persons’ in opposition to the Gulf War” can be located in the lineage of this shift from “Sengo-shiso [postwar thoughts]” to “Gendai-shiso [contemporary thoughts],” embodying the sense of intellectual instability that accompanied the change.

1.3 Participants of “Statement from ‘literary persons’ in opposition to the Gulf War”

It must be noted that the participants of the “Statement from ‘literary persons’ in opposition to the Gulf War” consist only a fraction of the Japanese intellectual sphere. The statement employs the term *bungakusha*, or “literary person” in direct translation, to describe the signatories as a collective. In his report of the press conference for the release of the statement, Koyama Tetsuro lists the names of the signatories and describes the *bungakusha* as

a collective of writers and literary critics.⁴⁷ He also observes that these intellectuals positioned Karatani Kojin at the center of the collective and that those who participated in the statement are Karatani's contemporaries. Naturally, most of them belonged to the younger generation at the time, born after the Second World War. Considering Karatani's significant role in actively engaging with the questions of the post-Cold War, other participants of the statement can be situated as directly or indirectly aligning their attitude with Karatani. This also explains the participation of Iwai Katsuhito, who is not associated with literature but is an economics scholar in close proximity to Karatani. Subsequently, *bungakusha* may be a generalizing category employed for the convenience of releasing the statement. Nevertheless, *bungakusha* is a term historically employed to refer to writers, poets, and literary scholars and critics, especially in the context of discussing intellectuals' war responsibility under Imperial Japan.⁴⁸ The sphere of *bungakusha* has developed in close association with the sphere of historiography in the postwar, sharing the concern of the role of intellectuals, literature, and history in nation-building. Together with historiography, they consisted the Japanese intellectual sphere. The choice to employ the term *bungakusha* can be interpreted as an acknowledgment of such legacies of discussions. It is significant to keep in mind that though the participants of the statement were active intellectuals engaging with the questions of Japan as a nation, they were not representative of all sects of the Japanese intellectual sphere.

Conclusion

The "Statement from 'literary persons' in opposition to the Gulf War" situates in the lineage of intellectual debates in postwar Japan, shaped by the values of the West and the Cold War. 1989-1991 was a moment of opportunity to reflect upon the postwar intellectual heritage

⁴⁷ Koyama, 174-177.

⁴⁸ Narita, *Rekishiron-shu 2: 'Sengo-chi' wo rekishika suru*, 115-128.

and to move beyond these values. The following chapters examine the arguments of those who participated in the statement and those who responded in criticism of the statement. As a scope of analysis, I build on the postcolonial perspectives like Sakai Naoki and John Dower who also situate in the lineage of Japanese historiography. Speaking from the point of view of the American academia, their perspectives involve some distance from the actualities of domestic intellectual discussions. While the statement is retrospectively narrated as a “useless” political action by intellectuals, I aim to demonstrate how the statement was a desperate attempt by intellectuals to directly respond to the changing historical and intellectual context as described in this chapter.⁴⁹

⁴⁹ Ko, 142-155.

Chapter 2

The absence of a Japanese principle: “Japan” in the *Bungakusha*’s response to the Gulf War

The current Japanese Constitution was established in 1946 under the direction of the American occupation forces after the end of the Second World War in 1945. Replacing the former Meiji constitution that allowed for imperialism and aggression, the 1946 constitution embodied the ideals of peace and democracy. Particularly, it condemned Japan from participating in any future wars.⁵⁰ As historian John Dower interprets in his renowned work *Embracing Defeat*, the language of “peace and democracy” were “given” to Japan by the US and then “internalized” by the Japanese people.⁵¹ Some articles of the constitution including the first eight articles affirming the Emperor system and Article 9, the Renunciation of War clause, have been controversial throughout the postwar. As discussed in the previous chapter, the controversy over the constitution was a common theme of intellectual debates in relation to the problem of postwar Japanese national identity. In retrospect, Sakai Naoki observes that the general ambivalence towards the Japanese Constitution’s historical roots reflected a shared “twisted” feeling amongst the Japanese public, which had long resulted in the absence of a solid identity that defines Japan as a nation.⁵²

Preceding the outbreak of the Gulf War in 1991, the limitations of the Japanese Constitution had already been widely discussed in the political sphere. Following the escalation of crises in the Middle East, Iraqi forces invaded Kuwait in August 1990. The US government requested the Japanese government for military aid in case of military intervention. There were voices within the leading Liberal Democratic Party that there is a need for urgent reinterpretation of the constitution to allow the Self-Defense Force to be deployed.⁵³ However,

⁵⁰ Dower: 374-404.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 374-404.

⁵² Sakai, 3.

⁵³ Ishikawa and Yamaguchi, 170-171.

the cabinet pushed forward with the decision to provide financial aid to the United Nations coalition forces. They initially proposed a cost of 1 billion dollars at the request of the United States, then increased the aid to a total of 13 billion dollars at further pressure from the United States in the outbreak of the Gulf War. Struggling to respond to the demands of the international community while navigating within the restrictions of the constitution raised the question about the validity of Japan's Peace Constitution.

This chapter examines how the "Statement from 'literary persons' in opposition to the Gulf War" responded to the long-discussed issues of the Japanese Constitution and the question of Japan's national identity. The discussions on the use of the Japanese Constitution in the statement consisted of most of the writing published in support of and in criticism of the statement. Intellectuals on both sides shared a common anxiety that the conventional understanding of the Japanese Constitution does not serve as an effective principle for Japan in navigating the post-Cold War world. However, while resembling the familiar discussion of the constitution, the emperor system, and postwar history, the discussions gesture to a possible path away from the conventional discussion of defining Japan and the application of the Japanese Constitution.

As a perspective of analysis, I build on the postcolonial approach of Sakai Naoki. In his 2008 book *Kibou to kenpo*, Sakai Naoki reflects upon the long-debated relationship between the Japanese people, the Japanese constitution, and Japan's national identity.⁵⁴ He argues that temporarily taking on the identity of being "Japanese" and its historical responsibilities, opens up dialogues with the external actors that make up the identity. It leads to the imagination of possibilities that overcome the contradictions and voidness of the nation and its history. I illustrate how the "Statement from 'literary persons' in opposition to the Gulf War" was an

⁵⁴ Sakai, 3-84.

attempt by a trope of intellectuals to temporarily take on the “Japanese” identity to respond to the demands of the 1991 context.

2.1 “Japan” in the “Statement from ‘literary persons’ in opposition to the Gulf War”

In the “Statement from ‘literary persons’ in opposition to the Gulf War,” the text emphasizes significant identification with “Japan.”⁵⁵ As a statement responding to an international crisis and targeting an international, primarily Western, audience, there is a strong consciousness of Japan as a nation and the rest of the world as the outside of this national boundary. Terms such as the “Japanese state,” “Japanese people,” and the “Japanese Constitution,” immediately bring the long-discussed questions of Japan’s national identity to the forefront of the statement. At a glance, the subject of both clauses, “I” and “We,” assumes that the speaker of the appeal identifies with “Japan.” The subject resonates with the Japanese constitution’s “Renunciation of War” clause and expresses a stance that Japan should not participate in “the Gulf War and any possible future wars.” However, the relationship between the subject and “Japan” remains unclear. The subject does not directly identify as one of the “Japanese people” by referring to “Japan” and the “Japanese people” as a third person. This undefined relationship between the subject and “Japan” reflects the complex proximity between intellectuals and nation-building throughout the postwar. Sakai Naoki describes that the Japanese intellectuals throughout the latter half of the 20th century had a difficult relationship with “Japan” because their work and thinking were entangled with the actual practice of nation-building.⁵⁶ Hence it is impossible to separate the idea of “Japan” as a nation from the thinking of the intellectuals.

⁵⁵ See introduction or the appendix for full text.

⁵⁶ Sakai, 284.

Nevertheless, or perhaps because of this complicated relationship, there is a strong presence of “Japan” that prevails in the statement. The statement recognizes the Japanese Constitution as a reflection of a “voluntary choice of the Japanese people,” based on the “remorse (reflection) of the Japanese people.” The “Japanese people” is situated as distinct from “Asian nations” and “Western peoples.” Literary scholar Ko Hwa-Jeong writes in his 2003 essay “*Bungakusha* after the Gulf War” that this distinction highlights a skewed, centralized image of the dominant “Japanese people” that does not take into consideration of the Japanese population that belongs outside of the dominant ethnicity.⁵⁷ Ko argues that this distinction neglects that wartime Imperial Japan attempted to build a multiethnic nation spanning across Asia and removes “Japan” from its war responsibility altogether. Following this logic, the centralized term “Japanese people” is also ignorant of the contemporary context of 1991, when Japan was rapidly becoming more diverse and those who have diverse ethnic roots that identify as “Japanese” were increasing. Subsequently, the emphasis on the “Japanese people” raised questions about how to talk about the “Japanese people” in 1991 and whether the reference to “Japanese people” is valid in the context of the statement.

One of the signatories of the statement, Japanese literary scholar Suzuki Sadami cunningly points out in a panel discussion for the literary magazine *Gunzo* in May 1991 that Japan’s nation-building seems to conflate ethnicity, nation, and literature, and that there is no defined “nation” that dictate the three concepts.⁵⁸ However, he claims that the transition to the post-Cold War world, including the Gulf War, was a historical moment that globally reinforced national boundaries. The vagueness of “Japan” became more visible, and anxiety permeated those aware of the global trend. Throughout the postwar, the vagueness of the idea of the “Japanese people” could be left as is under the guidance of Cold War binaries. However in

⁵⁷ Ko, 142-155.

⁵⁸ Suzuki Sadami 鈴木貞美, et al. “Bungaku to minzoku, soshite kokka” 文学と民族、そして国家 [Literature, ethnicity, and the nation-state]. *Gunzo* 群像 5 (1991): 246-272.

1991, in the face of an opportunity for redefinition and reconsideration, there was a sense of desperation and anxiety in disentangling “Japan” and building a new path to think about the nation. Subsequently, the gesture of emphasizing “Japan” in the anti-Gulf War statement itself can be read as an assertion, an attempt, to reclaim and redefine “Japan” as a nation.

2.2 Kato Norihiro vs Kawamura Minato

As early as two months after the “Statement from ‘literary persons’ in opposition to the Gulf War” was organized, literary critic Kato Norihiro began to criticize the statement in literary magazine platforms.⁵⁹ Known for his 1985 book *Amerika no kage* アメリカの影 [The Shadows of America], which discussed Japan’s unspoken dependency on American hegemony, Kato had been a vocal actor in the literary circle concerned with the relationship between politics, literature, and Japan’s national history.⁶⁰ It is noteworthy that despite his strong criticism, Kato repeatedly came back to the questions raised to the “Statement from ‘literary persons’ in opposition to the Gulf War,” finally leading to his renowned work *Haisengoron* 敗戦後論 [The Postwar Theory] in 1997.⁶¹ Many of the questions that the Gulf War and the “Statement from ‘literary persons’ in opposition to the Gulf War” revealed were directly in line with Kato’s concerns, especially the discussion of the role of the Japanese Constitution.

⁵⁹ Kato Norihiro 加藤典洋. “Korewa hiho dewa nai” これは批評ではない [This is not criticism]. *Gunzo* 群像 5 (1991): 198-226.

⁶⁰ Kato Norihiro. 加藤典洋 *Amerika no kage* アメリカの影 [The Shadows of America], (Tokyo: Kawade Shobo, 1985)

⁶¹ Kato Norihiro. 加藤典洋 *Haisengoron* 敗戦後論 [The Postwar Theory], (Tokyo: Kodansha, 1997)

In his 1995 essay published on *Gunzo*, Kato straightforwardly describes his criticism of the “Statement from ‘literary persons’ in opposition to the Gulf War.”⁶² Kato had written about the statement in euphemistic terms in the immediacy of the Gulf War, but he had focused on the question of the role of literature and literary persons then. The 1995 essay was a more direct response to the political and historical questions that the statement raised. He writes:

Three years ago, when the Gulf War broke out, there were various “anti-war” voices in this country, but what struck me the most was that in all cases, to a greater or lesser extent, the discourse seeking the “anti-war” rationale was grounded in the existence of the Peace Constitution. I thought to myself: Is that so? Does that mean that without the Peace Constitution, they wouldn’t be against the war?⁶³

What he means by the “‘anti-war’ voices” in this phrase directly refers to the “Statement from ‘literary persons’ in opposition to the Gulf War.” In his 1991 essay, Kato mentions that he received an invitation to discuss the statement, but he maintained a mocking stance and ignored the message.⁶⁴ The phrase above explains his stance that arguing based on the Peace Constitution is not worthwhile. Indeed, the statement’s reliance on the “Renunciation of War” clause in the constitution was taken as a bold message that was controversial even amongst those signing the statement. This explains the gap between those who agreed to sign both clauses of the statement and those who chose only to sign the first clause simply asserting the anti-war stance. Kato further clarifies his thinking in the same essay:

Firstly, this text uses a conniving rhetoric that conceals the fact that the “Renunciation of War” clause in the post-war constitution was forcibly imposed immediately after Japan’s defeat, under the threat of the military’s power and the atomic bombing. The text does not explicitly state the process of formulating and maintaining the “Renunciation of War” clause. Instead, it is written in a way that makes it seem as though we, the Japanese people, actively formulated and maintained this constitution on our own.⁶⁵

⁶² Kato Norihiro 加藤典洋, “Haisengoron: Sengo 50 nen no jikukan kara <tokushu>” 敗戦後論：戦後50年の時空間から<特集> [The Postwar Theory: From the temporal space of 50 years after the war -feature], *Gunzo* 群像 50, no.1 (1995): 252-294.

⁶³ Kato, “Haisengoron: Sengo 50 nen,” 255. Translated by author.

⁶⁴ Kato, “Korewa hihyo dewa nai,” 198-226.

⁶⁵ Kato, “Haisengoron: Sengo 50 nen,” 257. Translated by author.

Here, Kato describes his concern that employing the “Renunciation of War” clause overlooks the Constitution’s historical roots. He argues that the constitution, especially the “Renunciation of War” clause was “forcibly imposed” by the American occupation government upon Japan’s defeat and does not necessarily mean that the Japanese people had adopted the constitution willingly. In his 1997 book *Haisengoron*, Kato describes the complex historical roots of the constitution as a “twist/knot” that resulted in a complicated sense of the nation in Japan’s postwar.⁶⁶ Even though the constitution had been maintained under Japan’s democracy, Kato stresses that there was significant external pressure from the United States. Hence, he expresses frustration towards the “Statement from ‘literary persons’ in opposition to the Gulf War” for falsely presenting the constitution as a representation of the Japanese people’s justice. He calls out that this approach is “self-deceptive,” and that the statement only serves as an escape for the intellectuals to avoid embracing the long-lasting questions about the nation since the postwar.

In response to Kato’s strong criticisms, literary scholar Kawamura Minato, one of the central actors that drafted and signed the statement, responded by referencing the contemporary historical moment. In 1993 Kawamura Minato published a short essay titled “Wangansengo no hihyokukan” 湾岸戦争後の批評空間 [The space of critique after the Gulf War]. Kawamura casually reflected on his own motivations for signing both clauses of the statement.⁶⁷ He writes:

If I may speak freely, I would say that I agreed and signed “Statement 2,” pretending to believe in the clause of “Renunciation of War” in the “Peace Constitution.” Even among us [that signed the clause], we knew that the post-war Japanese Constitution was imposed on us forcibly and we reluctantly accepted it. But, what if we tried to believe in it? Whether our feelings are true or not?⁶⁸

⁶⁶ Kato, *Haisengoron*.

⁶⁷ Kawamura Minato 川村湊. “Wangansengo no hihyokukan” 湾岸戦争後の批評空間 [The space of critique after the Gulf War]. *Gunzo* 群像 6 (1996): 296-315.

⁶⁸ Kawamura, 304. Translated by author.

In this phrase, Kawamura reveals his ambivalence towards the Constitution. Kawamura clearly admits earlier in the essay that on one hand, he agrees with Kato's claims about the Japanese constitution. Also in this phrase, he writes that those who signed Statement 2 "knew" about the forced nature of the Constitution. He even mentions that he cannot help praising Kato's "clear-cut logic" if he was not the one signing the clause.⁶⁹ On the other hand, he explains that he decided to "pretend to believe" in the "Renunciation of War" clause, despite recognizing the "twist/knot." He stresses the term "believe" as an irrational but valid gesture to recognize and overcome the anxiety that comes with the historical context of the Japanese Constitution. Kawamura pushes back to Kato's logical claims by urging the question "what if?" to imagine the "Renunciation of War" clause free from its history, suggesting a leap out of the complex context of the constitution. Nevertheless, Kawamura's stance wavers throughout the essay.

Kawamura's insistence on "pretending to believe" in the "Renunciation of War" clause shares similar anxiety with the statement's attachment to "Japan." Like the vague idea of "Japan" as a nation, the "Japanese Constitution" does not serve as a reliant principle. Instead of serving as the civil grounds to appeal to national and universal values, it is a complicated legacy from the past. In the essay, Kato repeats rhetorical questions echoing Kato's claims such as recognizing the historical roots of the Japanese Constitution and accepting that calls for "peace" and "anti-war" based on the constitution are merely self-serving. Through processing Kato's claims, Kawamura expresses wavering desperation to imagine what he should have done. As a conclusion, however, Kawamura criticizes Kato's approach to the text as an obsession with "overly clean" logic that does not allow for decision-making.⁷⁰ He conveys that "pretending to believe" in the Japanese Constitution was a desperate move forward, despite the fragile and baseless character of the constitution. Kawamura describes this move as a proactive decision to "re-choose" the Japanese constitution, arguing against Kato's criticism that the constitution had

⁶⁹ Kawamura, 302.

⁷⁰ Kawamura, 304.

been forced on Japan. This overlaps with the statement's stance to reclaim and redefine "Japan."⁷¹

It is noteworthy that despite their differing stances, Kawamura and Kato's thinking are both responding to the anxiety of the lack of national principles that prevailed in postwar Japan. Kato, on the one hand, calls for the need to sincerely embrace Japan's history of aggression and defeat in the Second World War to historicize the postwar. On the other hand, Kawamura argues to redefine Japan's post-Cold War stance based on the terms of the existing Japanese constitution, while acknowledging the historical context of the constitution. Kato and Kawamura's claims are not mutually exclusive. Rather, they share a sense of desperation in responding to the postwar national questions to move forward into the post-Cold War world.

2.3 Wakamori Yoshiki vs Kawamura Minato

Another literary scholar Wakamori Yoshiki also criticized the "Statement from 'literary persons' in opposition to the Gulf War" through the scope of the Japanese Constitution. Born in the immediate postwar, Wakamori was a researcher in French philosophy known for his translations of Jaques Derrida and as an active literary critic. His 1991 essay "Wangansenso, tenosei, shomei" 湾岸戦争、天皇制、署名 [the Gulf War, emperor system, petitions] in the magazine *Bungei* was cited by literary scholars retrospectively to understand the "Statement from 'literary persons' in opposition to the Gulf War" and is referred to as the explanatory text to the discussions that took place in the literary sphere at the time.⁷² Following the positive reception to this essay, Wakamori published a book that stood isolated in content from his other published works in French philosophy. Through examining the logical structure of the text in

⁷¹ Kawamura, 304.

⁷² Wakamori, Yoshiki 若森栄樹. "Wangansenso, tenosei, shomei" 湾岸戦争、天皇制、署名 [the Gulf War, emperor system, petitions] *Bungei* 文藝 2 (1991): 308-339.

the “Statement from ‘literary persons’ in opposition to the Gulf War,” Wakamori criticized the text as upholding the problematic Japanese Constitution and the Japanese emperor system.

At the beginning of this essay, Wakamori clearly states that “this appeal [‘Statement from ‘literary persons’ in opposition to the Gulf War’] says nothing at all and only the emperor’s ‘name and seal’ are placed as a signature.”⁷³ In building up to this argument, the first section of the essay discusses the political implications of making an anti-war claim. Wakamori presents his basic assumption that as an intellectual, textually repeating statements that are already shared by the wider public do not have any political meaning. He takes up Shimada Masahiko’s comments at the press conference for the “Statement from ‘literary persons’ in opposition to the Gulf War,” that Shimada could only laugh at the futility of the statement that he had signed himself. Wakamori points out how even those who had signed the statement had mixed feelings in making the statement and stresses that their action was void of meaning. With this assumption in mind, he proceeds to analyze the text itself, rather than examining its context.

Similarly to Kato, Wakamori immediately points out the vagueness of “Japan” that prevails the statement. He writes:

First and foremost, when people consider themselves Japanese, not merely as a formal or legal concept, but as something substantial, they are already placed under intense oppression. This notion of “Japan” is actually a dead end. The reason is that there is no actual entity called “Japanese” anywhere. It is void and the invisible apparatus that conceals this non-existence is what is referred to as “Japanese.”⁷⁴

Here, Wakamori points out that the term “Japanese people” often signifies “something substantial,” more than the legal concept. However, he claims that this “something substantial” is void, and the language “Japanese” functions to conceal that emptiness. Then, he moves on to analyze what this term actually signifies by examining the language of the Japanese Constitution. He points out that there is a contradiction in defining the emperor. Article 1 of the constitution states that “the Emperor shall be the symbol of the State and of the unity of the

⁷³ Wakamori, 308.

⁷⁴ Wakamori, 314.

People, deriving his position from the will of the people with whom resides sovereign power.”⁷⁵ This article delegates the sovereign power to the People, as in many democratic countries. It also conveys that it is the will of the People that holds up the emperor as a symbol. However, Wakamori notes that a contradiction emerges because the Constitution is signed by the emperor himself, creating a circular structure. He repeats the significance of this emperor’s signature and stresses how the act of the emperor signing the article that dictates him to be representative of the People subjugates the People’s identity and agency to the emperor. Wakamori claims that this circular function underneath the term “Japanese” makes the subject of the “Statement from ‘literary persons’ in opposition to the Gulf War” deprived of meaning.

Furthermore, Wakamori applies the same logic to the “Renunciation of War” clause. By justifying that the emperor’s signature delegates the national sovereignty to the emperor, he asserts that the other clauses of the constitution are also dependent on the emperor’s recognition. He refers to how the articles of the Constitution are followed by the emperor’s declaration and signature to institute the Constitution, pointing out that this structure reinforces the presence of the emperor. He claims that the logical function of the emperor’s signature discredits the “will of the People” which is supposed to have chosen the “Renunciation of War” clause. In the final parts of the essay, Wakamori considers where the authority of the emperor comes from. He explains how historically, Japan had always relied on “stranger kings” as a source of authority; including figures mythical and non-human.⁷⁶ He points out that even in the postwar constitution, the emperor serves as a “stranger king” that represses the sovereignty of the people. The place of authority and sovereignty situate outside the masses, contradicting the character of a modern democratic nation. Subsequently, Wakamori attempts to demonstrate that the claims made in the “Statement from ‘literary persons’ in opposition to the Gulf War” based on the Constitution are not credible because of its relationship with the repressive emperor system.

⁷⁵ Wakamori, 326.

⁷⁶ Wakamori, 324.

In response, Kawamura Minato describes Wakamori's claims as "defeatist" and "leftist-postmodernist" in thinking.⁷⁷ Kawamura argues that repeating the long-debated vagueness of Japan as a nation is useless. At the same time, he acknowledges how the lack of principles to define Japan's stance is a problem. Kawamura asserts how reading the statement as a "text" and analyzing its logic eliminates the possibility of further action, trapping the intellectuals in a state of loss of speech. He recognizes Wakamori's concerns about the relationship between the "Japanese people" and the Constitution but asserts the desperate need to find ways to move forward. Similar to Kato's assertion, Wakamori strongly warns how moving forward with the "Statement from 'literary persons' in opposition to the Gulf War" overlooks important discussions about Japan's postwar history and place of national sovereignty. In contrast to Wakamori, Kawamura's stance involves a certain sense of discontinuity from Japan's post-war, and attempts to "re-choose" Japan's idea of the nation in order to take immediate action.⁷⁸ Despite the stark differences, these discussions all share a sense of urgency to respond to the immediacy of 1991, on one hand through embracing the history of Japan's nation-building, and on the other hand stressing discontinuity from the postwar legacies.

Conclusion

The "Statement from 'literary persons' in opposition to the Gulf War" offers a response to the multiple aspects of long-debated questions about postwar Japan. Reading the statement in the context of these questions reveals the intellectuals' identification with "Japan" and the "Japanese people" as workable categories, despite the complicated historical and literal contexts. In other words, the statement seems to set aside the complicated postwar questions and intentionally rechooses these fragile categories to respond to the historical moment of 1991. In criticism of this approach, Kato Norihiro and Wakamori Yoshiki both pointed out how this

⁷⁷ Kawamura, 306.

⁷⁸ Kawamura, 304.

statement overlooks the complicated nuances of the category “Japan,” including Japan’s history of aggression and defeat in the Second World War and the legacies of postwar establishments under the American occupation. Wakamori expresses particular concern about employing the Japanese constitution, illustrating how the Japanese popular sovereignty is only justified in the name of the Emperor in the Japanese constitution. As one of the signatories, Kawamura Minato responded to these criticisms in a rather ambivalent tone. He explained his reluctance in signing the statement, describing that he chose to “pretend to believe” in the constitution while wholeheartedly acknowledging the need to embrace the complex roots of Japan’s postwar nation-building. Despite the differences, the three actors in this discussion are all responding to the problem of undefined “Japan” with strong emotions.

Writing from the perspective of almost twenty years after 1991, Sakai Naoki acknowledges how questions like “What does it mean to be Japanese?” or “What does Japan mean?” have persistently overshadowed the discussions about Japan’s post-war and the struggle to transition to post-postwar. Sakai approaches these questions from a critical, third-person view. As a literary scholar trained in the United States, Sakai stands separate from the intellectuals that were involved in the discussion of the Gulf War statement, while maintaining the position of a “Japanese person.” In the introduction of the book *Kibou to Kenpo*, Sakai acknowledges the need for both aspects of reexamining history and articulating an alternate future. He writes that “consideration of different hopes is also a quest for different histories,” stressing that the two aspects are not mutually exclusive.⁷⁹ In the context of Sakai’s understanding, the clash between those who supported the “Statement from ‘literary persons’ in opposition to the Gulf War” and those who were critical of the statement were in fact approaching a similar goal. They were both responding to the problem of lack of principle in Japanese identity, on one hand approaching from a historical perspective and the other from

⁷⁹ Sakai, 7.

future ideals. He argues that historicizing the contradiction of the Japanese constitution opens the imagination of alternate possibilities not limited to the conventional understanding of Western constitutional democracy.

Sakai's stance also resembles closer to that of Kawamura, who supported building on the existing ideas of "Japan" and the "Japanese constitution" to make a future-oriented claim. Sakai writes that he "takes on the identity of a Japanese person, for the time being," to create a circuit of possibility of responding, or responsibility.⁸⁰ Despite the complex nuances of the label "Japanese," Sakai proposes to take on this label "for the time being" so that it begins a dialogue. He refers to his own positionality living in the United States, that he, as an individual, is innocent of Japan's history of aggression and unfinished war crimes. However, he is a "Japanese person" which inevitably makes him take on the complex history included in the idea of being a "Japanese person." Subsequently, he "takes on the identity of a Japanese person, for the time being," so that it opens a possibility for dialogue to embrace these nuances. He also notes that taking on the identity of a "Japanese person" always includes the opportunity to address those who are not a "Japanese person," conveying that it allows the imagination of the excluded other.⁸¹ Hence, Sakai seeks the possibility in opening and continuing dialogue as a way to overcome the complexities of "Japan." The statement can also be understood as such an attempt, to build on the conventional language of "Japan" and the Constitution to open discussion about their meanings.

However, in the moment of 1991, a comprehensive perspective like Sakai's was difficult to share in practice. The medium of a collective political statement and signature had limited room to expand the query on both the past and the future. As a response to an immediate international crisis with the public audience in mind, the style of communication was limited. Furthermore, the questions that the statement was responding to were itself a legacy of the

⁸⁰ Sakai, 34.

⁸¹ Sakai, 33.

Japanese postwar intellectual sphere. Responding in a way that diverged from the previous discussions throughout the postwar meant the negation of their own intellectual upbringing. With these personal interests interfering, realizing phlegmatic dialogue was a challenge. Sakai's perspective appears idealistic in the context of 1991, where those who supported the statement, like Kawamura, could not help but submit to doubt and ambivalence about taking a strong stance to affirm their political station. Nevertheless, despite the clashing arguments and unanswered questions, the fact that many intellectuals felt obliged to respond to the historical moment of 1991 and the statement itself was a significant opportunity for dialogue. This collective sense of crisis and the need to respond to both the questions from the past and the future was certainly a product of the statement and the discussions that followed.

Chapter 3

America and East Asia:

The national “Others” in *Bungakusha*’s response to the Gulf War

In politics, economy, society, and beyond, the presence of the United States is central to narrating Japan’s post-Second World War history. Beginning with the American occupation of Japan following the end of the Second World War in 1945, the Japanese government largely defined its role in the international sphere under American hegemony. Political institutions, including the democratic constitution that prohibits Japan from participating in any war, were established under American leadership. As the Cold War intensified, the US situated Japan as a strategic ally in East Asia, stationing military bases across Japan. However, this relationship shifted with the supposed end of the Cold War in 1989-1991. The Gulf War in 1991 was one of the key moments in which the US-Japan relationship came under public examination and opened an opportunity for its redefinition.⁸² The significant role of the United States for Japan in the post-Second World War had been not only that of diplomacy and politics but also of ideology and historical understanding. The Gulf War served as a platform for reflection on this relationship, especially for intellectuals that had long identified with the spirit of democracy and peace instituted by the Americans in the immediate post-Second World War.⁸³

This thesis examines the responses of intellectuals to the Gulf War and the debates that followed. It focuses particularly on the “Statement from ‘literary persons’ in opposition to the Gulf War,” which was a statement made by a group of intellectuals in the literary field that condemns Japan’s participation in the war. The previous chapter has shown how the debates that followed the statement reflect a struggle between embracing the legacy of Japan’s postwar and attempting to diverge away from it. In contrast to the focus on “national questions” in the previous chapter, this chapter focuses on the transnational aspects of the appeal, especially in

⁸² Gluck, 6-21.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 6-21.

relation to the United States and East Asia. As Sakai Naoki describes, the idea of “Japan” is constructed transnationally, with the critical presence of the “Others.”⁸⁴ I consider the “Statement from ‘literary persons’ in opposition to the Gulf War” and the discussions that followed, in light of the proximity to the “Others” that have defined “Japan”.

As a scope of analysis, I employ the postcolonial perspective of historian John Dower. In his book *Embracing Defeat*, John Dower examines the American occupation of Japan. He characterizes the occupation policy as a “neocolonial revolution” that maintained both elements of progressive change towards peace and democratization and the conservative reaffirmation of authoritarian structures in favor of the conqueror United States.⁸⁵ As reflected in the Japanese Constitution, he analyzes how the contradictions and mixed messages under American rule left the Japanese people to eventually internalize and reinforce the hegemonic relationship. Also relying on Sakai Naoki’s ideas of imperialism in Japan throughout the prewar to postwar, I will demonstrate how the “Statement from ‘literary persons’ in opposition to the Gulf War” was an attempt at reconciling the complex relationships.

3.1 “America” in the Statement from ‘literary persons’ in opposition to the Gulf War

In the “Statement from ‘literary persons’ in opposition to the Gulf War,” the presence of the United States is implicit yet critical. The statement reveals these intellectuals’ struggle to identify with and against the presence of the United States. It is noteworthy that the initial plan of the leaders of the conference was to publish a conclusive statement of the conference in the ads for the New York Times, instead of only appealing to the Japanese media.⁸⁶ While the statement did not make it to the New York Times in the end, it can be assumed that the participants of the conference, at least the initial leaders Nakagami Kenji, Kawamura Minato,

⁸⁴ Sakai, 7.

⁸⁵ Dower, 561.

⁸⁶ Karatani. “‘Wangan’ senjika no bungakusha”, 8-28.

and Tanaka Yasuo, had an American audience in mind. The choice of the New York Times, one of the most influential newspapers in the United States, also reflects their ideological leaning for left-of-center views.⁸⁷ At the time, the New York Times covered the Gulf War extensively, emphasizing Iraq as the evil and the UN forces as an effective resistance.⁸⁸ The coverage was also generally empathetic towards Republican George Bush's government and their war strategies. Although it is unclear to what extent they were aware of how the New York Times had been reporting the Gulf War, it is notable that their sense of urgency to appeal was directed to an audience that resembles the New York Times reader. Their choice to directly address an American popular audience imply an aim to make a statement about Japan's position in the post-Cold War global system. They were aware of the presence of the "world" and shared a sense that the discussion should not be limited to domestic concerns.

The text of the statement implicitly gestures to the presence of the United States in Japan's post-Second World War history. The second clause situates the Japanese Constitution as the grounds to oppose the war. It refers to the Constitution's "Renunciation of War" clause, arguing that this clause has been maintained as a proactive choice of the Japanese people. Here, there is a need to make a disclaimer that the Constitution was "not forced by other countries" because the current Japanese Constitution was in fact instated by the American occupation government after the Second World War, but no amendment has been made to it until today. The "other countries" here refer directly to the United States. Subsequently, the statement implicitly argues that the fact that the "Renunciation of War" clause in the Constitution has not been amended reflects the Japanese people's democratic support of this clause. As historian John Dower interprets in his renowned work *Embracing Defeat*, the language of "peace and democracy" were "given" to Japan by the US and then "internalized" by the Japanese people.⁸⁹

⁸⁷ David Greenberg, "The New York Times Used to Be a Model of Diverse Opinion. What Happened?" *Politico*, June 14, 2020.

⁸⁸ "WAR IN THE GULF: The Overview." *The New York Times*. Feb. 24, 1991.

⁸⁹ Dower, 374-404.

The statement seems to follow Dower's logic. Yet, these historical grounds of the Constitution have always been controversial throughout the postwar, and those who participated in the conference were much aware of the controversy. As discussed in Chapter 2, it is notable that the signatories of the second clause still chose to employ the Constitution as the bases for opposing the war and that they, as Japanese people, genuinely support the "Renunciation of War" clause. This decision will be examined further in this chapter.

While the beginning of the second clause emphasizes a particular Japanese value against wars, the third sentence seems to identify with "Western" or American ideals. The statement writes that the "Renunciation of War" clause "includes the prayers of the Western peoples themselves, rooted in their experience of two world wars." This phrasing is a direct connotation to the historical background of the Constitution, that it was initially written by Americans with a strong emphasis on Western democratic ideals. Here, the term "prayers" is an unusual term to employ in the context of the Constitution. In fact, this phrasing was criticized by Kawamura in the drafting process, who suggested changing the term to "reflection."⁹⁰ Nevertheless, the phrasing was maintained in the final draft. The term can be interpreted to illustrate how the "Renunciation of War" for Western people is not a practical ideal rooted in the reflection of the past but rather a dream that involves a spiritual leap out of their own historical context. Hence, the statement involves an ambiguous nuance that on one hand demonstrates solidarity with a part of Western ideals, but on the other hand, pushes back to the identification with the West.

Another important aspect is that the statement is making a universal claim against Japan's participation in "any wars," rather than condemning the participation in the Gulf War in specific. There is a clear awareness of foreign presence and motivation to define how Japan stands in relation to these foreign presences. While the statement is embedded in the context of the Gulf War and is easily taken as an anti-Gulf War message, it can also be read as a general

⁹⁰ Kawamura, 296-315.

declaration about Japan's future stance towards war. The statement also does not directly refer to the United States, and instead generalizes the historical connections with the United States as the "West." This generalization perhaps also reflects the future-oriented claim that attempts to depart from the dependence on the United States and the legacy of the Cold War. Furthermore, the statement argues that "the principles of the present [Japanese] Constitution are the most universal and radical," conveying that the ideals embodied by the Japanese Constitution are universally righteous. This is a strong message that seems to imagine Japan's particular role in the post-Cold War global system, independent from the United States but building on parts of its legacy.

In these ways, the presence of America in the two clauses is not explicit but is strongly felt throughout the wording of the appeal. America is a critical "other" that is integral to understanding Japan's positionality in the global context of 1991. Its importance is not limited to its role in the Gulf War as a warring state. On one hand, America is the "Other" that is tied up with Japan's past, especially the discourses of postwar Japan. America was the victor of the Second World War and the sole hegemonic actor that guided Japan's Cold War politics. On the other hand, America is also an "Other" that is representative of the West in general. There is a sustained interest in the proximity to the Eurocentric notions of peace and democracy that encompass Japan's post-Second World War and post-Cold War ways of thinking. At a glance, the phrase "Western people's prayers" serving as the basis of arguing for a universal value of peace awkwardly stands out in the appeal. However, considering the complex relationship between Japan and the United States reveals the need to present the appeal to not only target America as a warring state but also to America as the hegemonic victor to Japan and as a representative of the Western ideologies.

Despite this significant presence of the United States, it is noteworthy that much of the intellectual discussions around the appeal did not directly address "America," but were limited

to domestic themes of national history, the constitution, and the emperor system. Literary scholar Tsuboi Hideto reflects on the Gulf War debates in his 1997 essay that Wakamori's "Gulf War, Emperor System, Petitioning," written in the critique of the appeal, gained the most attention and was cited as an explanatory text to the appeal.⁹¹ As discussed in Chapter 2, Wakamori analyzes the logic of the appeal in literary terms and concludes how the appeal stands based on the justification of the emperor system. America is not referred to even once in Wakamori's essay, and his perspective was taken on by those who followed the Gulf War discussions. As a result, the presence of "America" cast a vague, yet thick shadow over the statement and the discussions that followed.

3.2 Karatani Kojin's explanation of the response

In contrast to the absence of discussions about "America" by those involved in the statement, Karatani Kojin centered his response to consider the presence of "America" for Japan in the Gulf War. As a leading literary critic of the generation that was born after the Second World War, Karatani had been an active scholar since the 1970s. Though based in Japan, he had repeatedly taken teaching positions as a professor at Yale and Columbia University in the United States and had been recognized in both Japanese and American academia.⁹² When the statement was published in February 1991, scholars that did not participate in the conference even criticized that the statement was basically led by Karatani alone, with the support of those who "are not opposed to" Karatani's ideas.⁹³ Hence, he played a central role not only in the process of the conference but also in its publicity. This section examines Karatani Kojin's essay "Wangan'senjika no bungakusha" 「湾岸」戦時下の文学者 [Persons of letters during the

⁹¹ Tsuboi, "Nanimo shinaiyori zutto... –Wangan senso to gendaishi", 334-336.

⁹² Kojin Karatani, "Karatani Kojin-Biography," Karatani Kojin Official Web Site, <http://www.kojinkaratani.com/jp/> (accessed December 19, 2022)

⁹³ Kawamura, 296-315.

Gulf War].⁹⁴ Published in the 1991 March edition of the literary magazine *Bungakukai*, Karatani summarizes the major topics of concern that he encountered in the process of releasing the statement.

Reflecting on the process in which the statement was organized, Karatani stresses that the Gulf War was a significant moment for Japan because it forced Japan to “make a decision” about wars in general. He analyzes Japan’s position as follows:

I think this is the first time the word “anti-war” has taken on meaning in postwar Japan. This is because Japan was forced to decide whether or not to participate in the Gulf War. Until now, the war had been just another person's problem. At this point in time, however, Japan finds itself in a position criticized for not participating in the Gulf War, while the Arab countries believe that it did. The United States claims that Japan only paid for the war and did nothing, though it is the United States that Japan wants to persuade that they did contribute. In this way, Japan had always wanted to hide behind the Cold War dichotomy (US-Soviet) but was this time somewhat forced into the light [of the international community]. In short, Japan had always wanted to withhold a decision about wars but ended up making one. Japan has already made this decision about wars but [many people] still want to believe that it is withholding the decision.⁹⁵

Here, Karatani points out that Japan was conveniently hiding behind the Cold War global system in the post-Second World War. However, in the Gulf War, Japan was forced to decide on whether to participate and how to participate in a war. The way that it did, however, offended both sides of the war. Because the inescapable Cold War dichotomy did not stand anymore, Japan uncomfortably found itself seen, in a negative light, in the international community for the first time since the Second World War. Karatani seems to recognize that this is a defining moment for Japan, not only because Japan decided on joining the war, but because its actions were now seen and evaluated in the light by the international community. Also, Karatani emphasizes that this significant moment came against the will of the Japanese people, that they have been forced to decide. Subsequently, Karatani seems to gesture against those who criticize the anti-war statement as ineffective by calling out that they are the ones who “still want to

⁹⁴ Karatani. “‘Wangan’senjika no bungakusha,” 18-28.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 18-28. Translated by author.

withhold” the decision. He stresses that responding to the Gulf War was a critical opportunity when Japan’s particular political stance was being seen and questioned.

Karatani further examines what the Gulf War means for the United States and considers how Japan’s position situates against the United States. He writes:

For the United States, the year 1989 was the ‘end of history’ that ended with the triumph of Western freedom and democracy. What they are doing in the Gulf War is a kind of its final stage. [...] Japan experienced World War II as the “final war.” In fact, it was a nuclear war that made any world war impossible thereafter [in the Japanese conception]. The “Renunciation of War” clause in the constitution is a result of that. [...] Americans still think there is a world war. Or they think there is an ‘end of history’ (purpose). Communists once imagined a communist society as the ‘end of history’. When their ideal apparently collapsed, the principle of the ‘end of history’ of the West began to dominate as violence. Perhaps the only thing that can counter this violence is not the East or anything of that sort, but the very thing that comes from the experience of the “final war.”⁹⁶

Here, Karatani places the Gulf War in the continuity of the Cold War. He criticizes the United States that the war that they are fighting since the collapse of communism is “violent,” one that silences all other possibilities of the future. In the case of the Gulf War, Iraq is positioned as evil as opposed to the United States as the ultimate good. The actions of the United States remained largely unquestioned by the public. Subsequently, Karatani seems to convey that the new global system under American leadership is repressive and seeks a way to counter it. Furthermore, Karatani emphasizes the sense of “final war” in the Japanese experience of the Second World War. He differentiates Japan from the United States in using this phrase and implies Japan’s potential role to counter the United States’ ideological dominance after the Cold War.

Through this idea of the “final war,” Karatani further gestures at how Japan should embrace this moment of the Gulf War. He clarifies his stance as writes:

I believe that what has been forgotten over time since the Second World War is not so much the hidden strategic intentions of the occupying forces (in the postwar), but rather the will of the Japanese people, the experience of having fought the “final war”. [...] This way of thinking was absent, rather for the left-wing circles. That was because they

⁹⁶ Ibid., 23. Translated by author.

immediately jumped onto a different “end.” [...] The late Hashikawa Bunzo thought that although Japan has no transcendent God or ideas of transcendence, the experience of this absolute war could be an opportunity for Japan to have such an existence. I believe that the Japanese should not and cannot engage in “relative” wars anymore.⁹⁷

Here, the experience of the “final war” in the Japanese experience is situated as what is lacking in perspective for the United States, and what Japanese people, especially those in left-wing circles, should recognize. For Japan, the Second World War was an “absolute” war that brought about a widely shared experience of catastrophic defeat and damage, so much so that they could no longer imagine participating in another war. Karatani points out that instead of grappling with this defeat, intellectual circles immediately jumped onto affirming the American ideas of “peace” and “democracy,” which then stood as the basis of supporting the “Renunciation of War” clause in the long postwar. Karatani seems critical of this move and stresses the significance of the experience of the “absolute, final” war. Although what he means by the sense of “final war” remains unclear, the term stands integral to the spirit of affirming the “Renunciation of War” clause in the appeal. Employing Karatani’s perspective, the “Renunciation of War” clause that serves as a basis of the appeal can be read as a reflection of the Japanese experience of the “final war,” rather than what has been an ideal strategically forced on by the United States.

In this way, Karatani approaches the presence of America as the “Other” that is tied up with Japan’s past, as the victor of the Second World War and the sole hegemonic actor that guided Japan’s Cold War politics. This is a stark contrast to the familiar discussions about “national questions” in Chapter 2, in which Karatani works off from what is happening at the present and explores ways to approach the situation. Karatani attempts to clarify what America means for Japan at the moment of the post-Cold War transition and explores how Japan’s particular position holds value in resistance to America in the case of opposing the Gulf War.

⁹⁷ Ibid., 24. Translated by author.

His reminder that Japan experienced an “absolute, final” war stresses recognizing Japan’s postwar history as distinct from America’s Cold War history. This claim seems to convey a certain principle that could potentially define Japan in the post-Cold War, though had been “forgotten.” Nevertheless, his argument justifies writing the appeal based on the “Renunciation of War” clause that the Japanese people have “voluntarily” maintained throughout the postwar.

3.3 America as representative of the “West”

In citing the “Renunciation of War” clause, the statement stresses that the clause “includes the prayers of the Western peoples themselves, rooted in their experience of two world wars.” In Karatani’s essay written in direct response to the statement, he does not address the use of the term “prayers of the Western peoples,” which awkwardly stands out in the appeal. In fact, this phrase was heavily criticized by those against the making of the statement and the supporters of the appeal itself. Literary critic Kato Norihiro writes in his 1995 essay “Haisengoron,” that the reference to the “prayers” of the “Western peoples” is an “ill-natured” use of rhetoric used intentionally to appeal to the West.⁹⁸ He also writes that this ingratiating move to align with the Western people’s self-righteous prayer for peace was forced through America’s nuclear aggression and deprivation of its once enemy country Japan’s rights to war. Kato’s frustration seems to root in the appeal’s strong identification with the West and ignorance of the historical context of America’s strategic institution of peace in Japan. It is noteworthy that Kato published this response more than two years after the release of the statement, then turned it into a book, which is perhaps a reflection of a strong feeling toward the topic.

Kawamura Minato responds to Kato in his 1993 essay that he too, even as a supporter of the appeal, felt discomfort in using the language “prayer,” but argues that Kato overlooked

⁹⁸ Kato, “Haisengoron: Sengo 50 nen,” 257.

the legacy of postwar sentiments embedded in the language “prayer.” He cites the words of Karatani describing Ueyama Shunpei, a Second World War veteran that actively debated the postwar philosophy, that Ueyama claimed that the “Renunciation of War” clause was a reflection of an ideal or a “prayer” that emerged through the experience of the two world wars.⁹⁹ Kawamura argues that Ueyama’s words reveal that this prayer for peace was recognized and shared in the early postwar, as part of the legacy of postwar ways of thinking. Kawamura writes that there is a certain carefreeness in early postwar thinking that has remained with the Constitution, that “whether imposed by the U.S. or forced under the threat of nuclear weapons, the ‘Renunciation of War’ clause can be a ‘principle’ and a ‘prayer.’ Such thinking was possible in postwar Japan.”¹⁰⁰ This carefreeness and decisiveness in early postwar thinking explains the statement’s appeal to universal values, and leads to the final claim that the “principles of the present [Japanese] Constitution are the most universal and radical.”

The difference in proximity to “Western people’s prayers” between Kato and Kawamura defines the difference between those that support the appeal and those who spoke against it. For both Kato and Kawamura, the “West” remains an “Other” that is distinct from Japan. It is also an “Other” that is recognized as closer in proximity to “universal and radical” values. In Kato’s understanding, the “Renunciation of War” clause is a part of the American imposed constitution, which not only reflects Western democratic ideals but also as rhetoric that subjugates Japan to Western values. In other words, Kato’s strong resistance to subjugate to Western ideals is further backed by Japan’s historical experience under American hegemony. On the other hand, for Kawamura, Western people’s prayers offer a common ground between the Japanese experience and the Western experience. He conveys that this common principle can potentially serve as a universal value. This means, to some extent, unseeing the historical relationship with America and being optimistic about making the Japanese experience

⁹⁹ Kawamura, 315.

¹⁰⁰ Kawamura, 313.

meaningful to the West and the world. Therefore, Kawamura envisioned a certain ideal in the statement to overcome the hegemonic relationship with the West while maintaining agency of the Japanese experience.

Karatani's words reinforce Kawamura's affirmation of the "Renunciation of War" clause against the West. One of the primary concerns that Karatani discusses throughout his essays published before and after the Gulf War is Japan's lack of principles, especially at a time of crisis and change. He aligns the concern of the state of Japanese literature and Japan as a nation-state, describing how the lack of a central belief makes the people speechless and immobile. In his essay published in the context of the escalating crisis in the Middle East before the Gulf War, he writes:

The attitude of the Writers' Association is probably the same as that of the government on the issue of sending troops overseas to Iraq. They simply say, "We can't do it because of the U.S.-imposed Constitution." We don't say that is our principle. But that is why Japan's position is disappearing more and more, no matter what we do. Because we are not expressing our principles as an entity. We are just acting on-spot because that is all we can manage to do.¹⁰¹

The phrase "Japan's position is disappearing more and more, no matter what we do," conveys Karatani's sense of crisis towards the Japanese literature circles. This perspective comes from his experience in American literary circles and his essays ponder what values Japanese literature holds. At the same time, he overlaps this concern with Japan as a nation, in which the Japanese government lacks a principle to decide on its actions in the post-Cold War crisis. As a response, Karatani suggests a possible approach in another interview with Iwai Katsuhito:

It is often said that Japan has no principles to present to the West or to Asia. However, there is one principle. It is the Peace Constitution. I think it is useless for Japan to use military force now, and it will never work. Therefore, we should continue to say that we renounce war in any form. I think it is much more unrealistic for those who say it is

¹⁰¹ Karatani, Kojin 柄谷行人. "Koritsu to rentai no atashii paradaimu" 孤立と連帯の新しいパラダイム [Interview: A new paradigm of isolation and solidarity] *Subaru* すばる 3 (1991): 208. Translated by author.

unrealistic. [...] We should just keep saying that there is no “end” because the final war is over, and we have already experienced a nuclear war.¹⁰²

Karatani’s stance towards the Constitution is clearly highlighted here. Karatani’s thinking echoes Kawamura’s intentional leap in affirming the “Renunciation of War” clause and advocates others to be vocal about this stance. Furthermore, the last lines stress that “the final war is over.” It is a critical reminder that while the affirmation of the “Renunciation of War” seems like a leap from the complicated historical context, it is a legacy of a continuous history involving Japan’s aggression in the Second World War, the defeat and occupation by the United States, and the strategic Cold-War relationship with America and the West. Therefore, the statement can be read as an attempt to affirm the Japanese experience and destabilize the hegemony of the West and the United States.

3.4 Absence and presence of East Asia

Previous discussions have focused on the role of the United States as an “Other” that has long been entangled with Japan’s postwar history. For intellectuals like Karatani, the United States appeared as an obvious “Other” that posed challenges in thinking about Japan’s position in the post-Cold War. However, it is noteworthy that the United States was not the only “Other.” The statement also refers to “Asian nations,” primarily East Asian nations that Japan continuously invaded and occupied throughout its imperialist era. The statement writes:

It [The Renunciation of War clause] is based on the remorse (reflection) of the Japanese people for having fought the Second World War as the “final war,” especially for the aggression against Asian nations.

In the statement, “Asian nations” is situated as a victim of Japan’s “final war.” The memory of aggression against Asian nations serves as a basis for Japan’s “reflection,” that supposedly

¹⁰² Karatani Kojin 柄谷行人 and Iwai Katsuhito 岩井克人. *Owarinaki sekai: 90 nen-dai no ronri 終わりになき世界：90年代の論理* [World without end: the logic of the 90s] (Tokyo: Ota Publishing, 1990), 214-215. Translated by author.

motivated the Japanese people to democratically maintain the “Renunciation of War” clause. Despite this seemingly significant relationship, there little to no mention about Japan’s relationship with East Asia amongst the discussions that followed.

However, these intellectuals were living in a moment where Asia was becoming a visible presence. In the published interview *Owarinaki sekai* between Karatani Kojin and Iwai Katsuhito, the two thinkers exchange ideas about Japan and the World in the year 1989.¹⁰³ Karatani raises three events that characterized the year 1989: 1. the death of Emperor Hirohito and the end of the Showa era, 2. the acceleration of economic friction between the United States and Japan, 3. the democratic changes in Eastern Europe and its repression in China. Amongst the three events, Karatani stresses how the democratic changes in Eastern Europe were welcomed by many in Japan, applauding the victory of Western democracy. At the same time, he points out that the Tiananmen Square Incident in China, which resulted in the violent suppression of democracy, reminded the Japanese people of a certain “Asian-ness” within themselves that stood against the ideals of Western democracy. Japanese people were reminded that they chose to follow the Western path of development while sacrificing or “forgetting” their Asian roots. Karatani admits that his immediate reaction to the Tiananmen Square Incident was an “eerily feeling,” that revealed the historically repressed existence of Asia in the subconsciousness of Japanese minds. Hence, this “Asian-ness” was a presence that was difficult to speak of and intuitively unwanted.

Karatani also points to the increasing visibility of Asia’s presence in the economic sphere but the lack of discussions in the political and intellectual sphere.¹⁰⁴ He notes that since the 1970s Japan’s economic ties with neighboring Asian countries increased, but little had been mentioned about the historical relationships. However, as Japan became an economic power whilst a marriage-like relationship with the United States, the power dynamics between Japan

¹⁰³ Karatani and Iwai, 8-12.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 8-12.

and neighboring Asian countries began to resemble the oppressive relationships of the imperial Japan era. Karatani saw that this change in the relationship led to the emergence of conversations about the emperor system and Japan's aggression during the early 20 century from the neighboring Asian countries. The emperor's abdication, coinciding with the timing of the Tiananmen Square Incident was more than enough cue to remind the Japanese people of their eerily relationship with Asia. For Karatani, the three events that characterized 1989 for Japan, were all in association with Japan's complicated stance towards Asia. Nevertheless, Karatani and the others who supported both clauses of the "Statement from 'literary persons' in opposition to the Gulf War" did not go far into clarifying their stance towards Asia and stopped short of briefly mentioning its presence in the statement.

Conclusion

An examination of the "Statement from 'literary persons' in opposition to the Gulf War" and the following discussions reveals the intellectuals' struggle to grapple with the relationship with the United States and the West, and at the same time, having to build on their values and language to think about what can be done. Rather than seeing the Gulf War as a particular event, there is also a sense of urgency in seeking the grounds to stabilize Japan and the intellectuals' own political and historical understanding. The Gulf War was one of these moments that opened possibilities for change, and these intellectuals took on the challenge to propose these possibilities. By reclaiming the "Renunciation of War" clause, the appeal from the discussions by *bungakusha* reflects a possible approach to destabilize Japan's relationship with America and the West. The approach suggests embracing the history of having fought the final war and the hegemonic relationship with America. It also attempts to put forward a temporary principle for Japan to overcome the contradictions in history by building on the language of the past. Hence, the "Statement from 'literary persons' in opposition to the Gulf War" can be understood

as an experiment to generate a provisional solution to Japan's complicated search for its national principle.

In his 1999 book *Embracing Defeat*, American historian John Dower demonstrates that the Japanese experience of defeat in 1945, followed by the American occupation of Japan from 1945 to 1952 is foundational to the postwar inquiry of national identity.¹⁰⁵ Dower describes the American occupation policy as a “neocolonial revolution” that took advantage of the defeated nation in the assimilation to Cold War politics. The result was a hybrid legacy. On one hand, there were progressive changes toward demilitarization and democratization. On the other hand, there were conservative reaffirmations and institutions of authoritarian structures in favor of the conqueror United States.¹⁰⁶ Dower asserts how the contradictions and mixed messages under American rule left the Japanese people to eventually internalize the hegemonic relationship and accept the lack of an independent national identity. Nevertheless, he argues from a contemporary point of view that the progressive spirit of peace and democracy in the immediate postwar is a concrete legacy that the Japanese people have lived through and should not be discredited in the process of criticizing American hegemony. Reading the “Statement from ‘literary persons’ in opposition to the Gulf War” in Dower’s terms, reclaiming the “Renunciation of War” clause is a gesture that acknowledges the spirit of peace and democracy as a Japanese experience. Partially reviving the spirit of the early postwar, the statement was an attempt to affirm the experience of Japan’s postwar while acknowledging the complex relationship with America.

On the other hand, the absence of East Asia in the discussions reflects a challenge in speaking about Japan’s imperial legacies and its positionality in the postwar. While those like Karatani acknowledged the need to embrace the Japanese experience of having fought the “final war,” their discussions were limited to a brief mention of the Asian presence, without delving

¹⁰⁵ Dower, 19-20.

¹⁰⁶ Dower, 561.

into the details of Japan's colonialist pasts. There is no doubt that the intellectuals at this historical moment were aware of the visible Asian presence yet did not or could not integrate the perspectives on Asia in the context of discussing Japan's national questions. The United States was the obvious "Other" that required attention, and untangling and surpassing this relationship was the immediate issue. The "eerily feeling" of Asian presence reminded the intellectuals of an inconvenient truth of how modern Japan was built on the model of the Western path of development while sacrificing parts of its supposed "Asian-ness" along the way. Hence, the "prayer" for the "Renunciation of War" functioned as a way to cancel out this "eerily" feeling and make a future-oriented argument using language rooted in Western ideals.

In further understanding the absence of East Asia in the context of the US-Japan relationship, Sakai Naoki proposes an unconventional idea of imperialism and colonialism.¹⁰⁷ He suggests that imperialism in the post-Second World War has become to mean less about the legal position of national sovereignty and more about the dynamics of co-dependency. The postwar relationship between US and Japan can be read in this light, how Japan gained legal independence yet was bound to American influence. Furthermore, he extends the notion of colonialism to describe Japan's position before and after the Second World War, that Japan's position shifted from that of a colonizer to the colonized in the postwar. Sakai stresses that Japanese intellectuals and politicians shifted their role from technicians of national identity to collaborators of the US occupation. In the process, Japan effectively avoided embracing its own history of aggression in East Asia because bringing up the critique of colonialism meant also undermining the postwar US-Japan relationship. Subsequently, Japan's colonial history, or the presence of East Asia, was concealed under America and Japan's convenient co-dependency. The discussions of the "Statement from 'literary persons' in opposition to the Gulf War" failed to capture this critical role of East Asia, which was left as a haunting presence.

¹⁰⁷ Sakai, 53-84.

Coinciding with Emperor Hirohito's death and the peak of Japan-US trade frictions, the Gulf War in 1991 was a moment when the long-concealed questions emerged into the open. The "Statement from 'literary persons' in opposition to the Gulf War" reflects an attempt to overcome some of these questions, especially Japan's proximity to America and the West. The "prayer" to reclaim the "Renunciation of War" clause emerged as a provisional solution. At the same time, however, the questions surrounding Japan's history of colonial aggression in Asia were never fully embraced, despite the questions being critical to reflecting on and rethinking Japan-US relations. Sakai's retrospective point of view clearly reveals the link between US-Japan-East Asia, though this was difficult to grasp and tackle in the moment of the Gulf War. Intellectuals like Karatani saw a desperate need to overcome these questions and ended up generalizing these desires to a "prayer" for the Japanese constitution. In Sakai's words, they saw "hope" in the incomplete, contradicting state of the constitution which allowed them to temporarily fill in the void of Japan's national principle. Their approach did initiate dialogue about Japan's national identity but was limited in their scope and imagination of the others outside of America that shape Japan's identity.

Conclusion

In May 2003, a short essay was published in the literary magazine *Gendai Shiso* in response to the outbreak of the Iraq War. The author cited the “Statement from ‘literary persons’ in opposition to the Gulf War” and commented that there have not been such collective statements made against the Iraq War.¹⁰⁸ He questioned: where are the *bungakusha* now? How was the collective anti-Gulf War statement possible? Indeed, despite the vibrant discussions, the “Statement from ‘literary persons’ in opposition to the Gulf War” has been reflected by many of those involved as a “useless” and “impulsive” action. Perhaps the ambiguity of the purpose and the audience and the strong rational criticisms by known figures eventually silenced the motivations of that moment. Yet, in the moment of 1991, there was certainly a shared urge and a sense of commitment that made the statement possible. The clash of discussions revealed the vulnerability of “Japan” and the struggle to respond to each other, acknowledging the past and envisioning possibilities for the future. The seeming leap to “prayer” for the “Renunciation of War” reflected a desperate, but future-oriented path to consider possibilities for “Japan” in the post-Cold War world.

This thesis has demonstrated how the “Statement from ‘literary persons’ in opposition to the Gulf War” and the following discussions was an opportunity to explore possibilities in responding to the sense of national identity crisis shared by a trope of Japanese intellectuals. The first chapter offered context to historicize the statement in the moment of 1989-1991. 1989-1991 was a transitional moment on national and global levels that made Japan vulnerable to unanswered questions since the postwar. This included questioning the values that were accepted as a given under the Cold War global system, largely defined by American ideals. Specific to the Japanese case was the question of “sengo [postwar],” or the historicization of the postwar. The “Statement” was an attempt to respond to these long-debated questions. The

¹⁰⁸ Ko, 142-155.

transition from “Sengo-shiso [postwar thoughts]” to “Gendai shiso [contemporary thoughts]” was especially an important question for the intellectual sphere. The intellectual upbringings of those involved in the statement were dominantly shaped by this legacy of “Sengo-shiso” developed under Cold War values. Hence, the “Statement” can be read as one of the opportunities to reflect upon the postwar intellectual heritage and to move beyond those values.

The second chapter analyzed the presence of “Japan” in the statement and the discussions that followed. Critics and scholars strongly criticized the affirmation of “Japan”, “Japanese people”, and the “Japanese constitution”. Their major concern was that the unlabored use of these categories and clauses undermine the complex, repressive histories that accompany these terminologies. The employment of Article 9 the “Renunciation of War” clause in the Japanese constitution was especially controversial. This was understood by critics as ignoring the fact that the constitution was imposed upon by the United States and that the national sovereignty is upheld by the validation of the Emperor. Those who signed the statement also acknowledged these issues yet held onto the value of “pretending to believe” in the idea of “Japan” and the “Renunciation of War” as a desperate attempt out of the repressive legacies from the past. Both sides of the argument shared a sense of anxiety over the ambiguous definition of “Japan”. They responded by on one hand reminding to reflect on the past and on the other hand attempting to build a new definition from existing terminologies. The statement resulted in clashing arguments, but these exchanges can also be read as opening paths for dialogue.

The third chapter shifts the focus to how the *bungakusha* involved in the statement understood and argued about the “Others” that make up the Japanese identity. The text of the statement and its initial setup reveal an implicit, yet critical presence of the United States. The statement on the one hand emphasizes identification with the United States and Western ideals of peace. On the other hand, it highlights the particularity of Japan, referring to the “proactive

choice” of the Japanese people to maintain the “Renunciation of War” clause and the experience of the Second World War as the “final war”. Karatani Kojin further expanded on the question of redefining Japan after the collapse of the Cold War global system. He emphasized that the Peace Constitution is both a “prayer” rooted in Western experience and ideals and a sentiment that arose from Japan’s particular experience of the “final war”. Arguing for the universality of such sentiment, Karatani proposes the “Renunciation of War” to be a principle for Japan in the post-Cold War, offering a provisional solution to the ongoing national identity crisis. At the same time, there is a lack of discussion about East Asia as an “Other”. As a reminder of the backward “Asian-ness,” the *bungakusha* perhaps hesitated to face the inconvenient history of Imperial Japan. Hence, the statement and the following discussions embodied the complex proximity to Japan’s “Others” that remained a challenge yet a necessary conversation for the post-Cold War future.

Most of the responses to the statement focused on discussing the questions that concerned Japan as a nation. Karatani made a conscious effort to situate Japan in the transnational context by bringing the United States into the discussion. However, it is noteworthy that very little is said about the actual event of the Gulf War, including the topic of oil security, exchanges between Saddam Hussein, George Bush, and other global leaders, the role of the United Nations Security Council, and casualties and damages on the battlefield. While scenes of the battlefield were aired in Japan and were visible in their every day, the *bungakusha* chose not to speak about its actuality. The closest reference may be of Kato Norihiro, who sarcastically wrote that “the war is beautiful” in the lead-up to his poetic criticism of the statement published in the immediacy of war.¹⁰⁹ What is also missing is the discussion of the actualities of Japan’s imperial pasts, as the absence of East Asia in the discussion suggests. While there are acknowledgments that there is a need to reflect on the past, primarily by those

¹⁰⁹ Kato, “Korewa hiho dewa nai,” 198-226.

critical of the statement, the “past” often refers to post-Second World War Japan under American hegemony. Subsequently, there is a lack of awareness of the period that came before the postwar. Even Sakai Naoki who argues the need to situate Japan’s shift from being a colonizer to being colonized in continuous history, does not step into the actual discussions of atrocities committed during prewar and wartime East Asia. Therefore, the statement and the discussions were perhaps limited to the scope of the privileged intellectual platform and lacked an awareness of the actualities of what was happening on the ground.

Nevertheless, the desperate effort of these intellectuals to respond to the moment of turbulent change should not be overlooked. The effort to bring together over forty signatories to a table and to build a consensus. The effort to hold a press conference to publicly release the statement. The effort to actively participate in dialogue and respond to criticisms. For those that criticized the statement, the effort to analyze and criticize the statement on public platforms. All members involved risked criticism. These efforts were made because this trope of *bungakusha* shared a sense that the issues embodied in the statement are relevant. As Sakai Naoki claims that articulating and taking on an identity, even temporarily, opens possibilities for dialogue, this statement was a political intervention into “Japan’s” public sphere.¹¹⁰ Stuck between the questions and demands of the past and the future, national and transnational, the trope of intellectuals responded in the ways that they know. Kawamura Minato’s stance was perhaps most representative of the ambiguous position that many Japanese intellectuals found themselves in 1989-1991. In contrast to the clear-cut stances of Karatani or Sakai who were trained in the United States, Kawamura swayed between “believing” in the future-oriented statement and accepting the criticisms to fully engage with the questions of the postwar. There is a sense of trying to move beyond the legacies of the postwar, but he hesitates or does not know how to move forward because he is himself a product of the legacies of the postwar.

¹¹⁰ Sakai, 35.

However, the fact that intellectuals like Kawamura chose to voice their stance with the statement reflects the sense of desperation and at the same time the sense of expectation and possibilities that they imagined in the moment of 1989-1991.

In retrospect, we know that these *bungakusha*'s hopes or "prayers" represented in the statement were eventually betrayed. Wars have continued across the globe. Japan has not found its way to overcome the Cold War system, as we still live in the undefined "post-Cold War". A public sphere has not been realized where the questions of the postwar, including the crisis of national identity, the emperor system, the history of Imperial Japan, and the proximity to the West, can fully be discussed and overcome. However, many of those involved in the discussions of "Statement from 'literary persons' in opposition to the Gulf War" continue to engage with these questions today. In considering the historical significance of the statement, questions remain about how the statement is situated in the increasing historical activism and disputes in East Asia in the 1990s. The public reception of the Gulf War in reflection US-Japan relationship also calls for research. What exactly happened that these hopes and possibilities envisioned were crushed and absorbed into the waves of historical revisionism and neoliberalism needs further clarification. The search for national identity in the post-Cold War was not limited to the experience of Japan. Many regions in the periphery, especially those that do not identify as part of the West, faced common issues of finding new national principles while reconciling with various legacies of the past. While the historicization of the statement is incomplete, I hope that this thesis offers an opening to historicize the statement and the moment of 1989-1991.

The fact that a minor essay called attention to the *bungakusha*'s statement in the face of the Iraq War in 2003 to discuss anti-war movements by intellectuals is of note. It is a sign that the *bungakusha*'s efforts held a certain meaning in continuing dialogue about many questions raised in the moment of 1989-1991. It is an inheritance and a response to the sense of urgency that was shared through the fragmented and incomplete dialogues between intellectuals. This

2003 essay is also where I encountered the “Statement from ‘literary persons’ in opposition to the Gulf War” for the first time. Therefore, I too, am attempting to inherit and clarify the sense of urgency that the intellectuals shared in 1989-1991. I too, will take on the responsibility to continue this dialogue.

Appendix

Original/Translation of “Statement from ‘literary persons’ in opposition to the Gulf War”

『湾岸戦争に反対する文学者声明』

声明 1

私は日本国家が戦争に加担することに反対します。

声明 2

戦後日本の憲法には、『戦争の放棄』という項目がある。それは、他国からの強制ではなく、日本人の自発的な選択として保持されてきた。それは、第二次世界大戦を『最終戦争』として戦った日本人の反省、とりわけアジア諸国に対する加害の反省に基づいている。のみならず、この項目には、二つの世界大戦を経た西洋人自身の祈念が書き込まれているとわれわれは信じる。世界史の大きな転換期を迎えた今、われわれは現行憲法の理念こそが最も普遍的、かつラディカルであると信じる。われわれは、直接的であれ間接的であれ、日本が戦争に加担することを望まない。われわれは、あらゆる国際的貢献をなすべきであると考え。

われわれは、日本が湾岸戦争および今後ありうべき一切の戦争に加担することに反対する。

“Statement from ‘literary persons’ in opposition to the Gulf War”

Clause 1

I oppose the involvement of the Japanese state in war.

Clause 2

The postwar Japanese Constitution includes a clause titled “The Renunciation of War.” This has been maintained as a voluntary (proactive) choice of the Japanese people, not forced from other countries. It is based on the remorse (reflection) of the Japanese people for having fought the Second World War as the “final war,” especially for the aggression against Asian nations. In addition, we believe that this clause includes the prayers of the Western peoples themselves, rooted in their experience of two world wars. At this major turning point in world history, we believe that the principles of the present [Japanese] Constitution are the most universal and radical. We do not wish Japan to be involved, directly or indirectly, in war. We believe that Japan should make every possible international contribution.

We oppose Japan’s involvement in the Gulf War and any possible future wars.

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