

# How Does He Embrace the Defeat?

## Questions on Community in Shōhei Ōoka's *Taken Captive: A Japanese POW's Story*

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### Introduction

*Taken Captive: A Japanese POW's Story* (Furyoki, 1952, translated into English in 1996) is a novel in which the author, Shōhei Ōoka, narrates his experience in a prisoner-of-war camp of the U.S. forces in Leyte Island. The chapters of this book were originally published in nine different journals between February 1948 and January 1951 and brought together as a unified book in December 1952. The author-narrator depicts his experiences, from capture by the U.S. forces in Mindoro Island to life in the camp in Leyte Island to his departure and return to Japan, in the style of a recollection. Because of its extremely precise and detailed description of a prisoner-of-war's mentality, it has gained a reputation as one of the most important works in Japanese post-war literary history.<sup>1</sup>

In this paper, I will examine the narrator's sense of community, reading his novel in the context of post-war Japan. Although critics such as Kōichi Isoda, Kim Jiyoung, and Shōji Hidaka have already presented the interpretation of this novel as a representation of occupied Japan,<sup>2</sup> they don't delve into the narrator's views enough. Their interpretations are strongly influenced by the author's explanation of the relationship of the text to its social context. Ōoka states in his memoir that he noticed the great similarity between a condition of the prisoner-of-war camp and that of Japan under occupation while writing a piece named "Living as POWs" and that it then became his intention to satirize occupied Japan through the

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description of life in the camp (*Sensō* 162-63). Taking into consideration this comment, Isoda, Kim and Hidaka attempt to extract the author's critical view of occupied Japan in *Taken Captive*. While their examinations are meaningful because they help us to place the novel in the social context of the occupation period, they are also problematic in that they postulate that the author-narrator criticizes the social situation from a transcendent position. It is true that the narrator is an astute critic of occupied Japan, but it is also true that, in a way, he cannot go beyond its situation. Therefore, we cannot understand the true nature of his involvement in the post-war situation unless we take into consideration his limits as a critic of that situation as well as his achievements. As is discussed below, we can comprehend it by focusing on his sense of community. While the narrator calls his sympathy towards the Japanese casualties "visceral" when he recounts Japan's defeat, he excludes non-Japanese people from the object of mourning. This indicates that he is so strongly controlled by national consciousness that he cannot call into question the nationalistic framework of mourning. On the other hand, he envisions a community that invalidates nationalistic fervor via the lack of any principle that might regulate its members' lives. By focusing on the problems on community that he is forced to confront, we can understand this novel as a record of a man's experience of post-war Japan as well as that of his life in the camp.

As the object of analysis, I will focus on a chapter called "August 10," where Japan's surrender is narrated, and then on a chapter called "Theatricals," where the corruption of prisoners after the surrender is described. By reading these chapters, we can glimpse the complexity of the narrator's sense of community that reflects his life in post-war Japan.

## Memory of Japan's Defeat and Question of War Responsibility

In "August 10," the narrator tells of his memory of the ten days from August 6th, the day of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima, to August 15th, the day of "Gyokuon Hōsō" ("Jewel Voice Broadcast"). The originality of this chapter in comparison with other chapters are apparent from this opening: "It is virtually impossible to remember precise dates when living in a prison camp, but these ten days in August were the exception" (223). What he confesses here is that he regards the ten days from August 6 to 15 as a set that is especially worth remembering. In contrast to the description of uneventful days in other chapters, in "August 10," the narrator recounts the ten days around Japan's surrender using a set of news reports on the war situation which he received at the time. The narrator's intention to narrate the surrender in such a way is significant.

First, we need to examine the description of his attitude towards the atomic bombing of Hiroshima, which he chooses as a starting point for his narration of Japan's surrender. When he saw the word ATOMIC in the headline of the *Star and Stripes* on August 7, he knew the bomb dropped in Hiroshima the day before had been an atomic bomb. His first reaction was "one of thrill" because he "had long held an avid interest in modern theoretical physics and had followed recent developments in research on subatomic phenomena" (226). But, in the next instant, he shuddered as it came to his mind that his "own countrymen had become the first victims of the unleashed atom" (226). He had never been shaken so much by news of a catastrophe befalling his homeland during all his months as a POW. He was so agitated that he could not do anything. Having denied sympathy towards the people of Hiroshima, patriotism towards his country, and the horrible way of dying of the people as the genesis of his agitation, he finally concluded that it was his "heart's response to the image of such massive numbers

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dying in a single instant,” and then called such response “a purely visceral reaction” (227). Subsequently, he repeatedly uses the word “visceral”:

I was quite cognizant that their reasons for starting this war had been complex, and much had taken place beyond their control, but for them to go on passing the days without action at this juncture represented a purely visceral self-preservation instinct on their part. I had every right to experience a visceral hatred for them. (227, underlines mine)

In this process, he attempts to justify his distress at the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and his hatred for the General Staff by using the word “visceral” to explain these sentiments.

From the above, it becomes clear that the word “visceral” plays an essential role in manifestation of his views on war responsibility. Now let us examine this word briefly. The original Japanese term used in the novel is “seibutsugaku teki,” which is equivalent to “biological.” While we cannot sense from the English translation the narrator’s strong personality which becomes apparent in his choice of the scientific term “seibutsugaku teki” to explain his emotions, a translator’s choice of the word “visceral” seems to highlight an important aspect of the narration. What is at issue is that the narrator puts an end to persistent reflection on his emotions by regarding them as “seibutsugaku teki.” Although he questions the rationality of the distress caused by the atomic bombing of Hiroshima relentlessly, he comes to uncritically validate his emotions once he stops the analysis on the grounds that those emotions are deeply rooted in instinct. The word “seibutsugaku teki” is used to reject a further analysis; “visceral” exposes this function of the term.

“Visceral” also appears near the end of this chapter. When he

heard the news of the shelling of Japanese troops in Manchuria by the Soviets and the bombing of several Japanese cities by planes from the aircraft carrier Nimitz on August 14, the narrator was outraged. He explains his outrage as follows:

While our leaders quibbled over the formal status of the emperor, soldiers continued to die meaningless deaths in Manchuria and civilians senselessly went on losing their homes in our cities. The indignation I felt on behalf of these fellow citizens was, once again, visceral.

I know little about the lofty debates surrounding the economic foundations of the emperor system or notions of a human emperor that smiles on his people, but based on the visceral indignation I experienced as a POW, and in the name of all those people who died purposeless deaths between August 11 and August 14, I would conclude that the continuing existence of the emperor system is harmful. (236, underlines mine)

The use of present tense (“I know little about . . .”) and the phrase “the lofty debates surrounding the economic foundations of the emperor system or notions of a human emperor that smiles on his people” indicate his narration of the story from the viewpoint of the post-war period. Especially, his reference to the emperor system casts light on the post-war situation. After the Asia-Pacific War, Emperor Hirohito was changed from the monarch of Imperial Japan into a symbol of peace and democracy. He renounced his divinity in the New Year’s address printed in newspapers nationwide on New Year’s Day in 1946, which is commonly known as his “Ningen Sengen” (“The Declaration of Humanity”). In addition, he actively toured Japan and communicated with the people, which “marked the beginning of what

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became known as the ‘mass-communications emperor system’—the transformation of the monarch into a celebrity” (Dower 330). What must be emphasized now is that he uses the word “visceral” again to explain his sympathy towards casualties as well as his hatred towards the emperor system. This word consistently promotes the division of the Japanese between those who are charged with war responsibility and those who are sacrificed by them, another sign that the narration is squarely from the viewpoint of the post-war period.

Furthermore, the narrator’s way of expressing his sympathy towards casualties is also worth attention. He calls both the soldiers in Manchuria and civilians in the Japanese islands “fellow citizens,” and regards his indignation at the catastrophe over them as “visceral.” In other words, he imagines those people, with whom he was not acquainted personally, as the “nation” or “imagined community,” to borrow Benedict Anderson’s well-known expression (Anderson 6). Anderson states that the nation “is imagined as a community, because, regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail in each, the nation is always conceived as a deep horizontal comradeship” (7). What the narrator does at the end of “August 10” is to imagine the Japanese as a group of people who are evenly to be mourned with “a deep horizontal comradeship.” In other words, he found “fellow citizens” whom he can express his sympathy for without any reservation by ascribing the deaths between August 11 and August 14 to the leaders of the Japanese Empire and the emperor system.

Because the narrator uses the present tense to present his conclusions, the novel should be regarded not only as a record of the narrator’s feelings at that time but also as a statement of his view on war responsibility from the standpoint of the post-war period. His sympathy towards those who died in the war and his hatred towards the system that forced that sacrifice become apparent as “August 10” goes on. Akimasa Kanno points out that the narrator of this novel tends to

suppress the grief for the casualties (311), but such emotion, exceptionally, comes to the surface in this chapter. Consequently, the Japanese are divided into those in with war responsibility and the victims, and the narrator's hatred towards the former and his sympathy towards the latter are justified as "visceral." The word "visceral" consistently functions to decide whose death can be mourned, forbidding a further question. The fact that his sympathy towards Japanese casualties are depicted as the emotion that cannot be logically explained shows national consciousness underneath his narration. And such consciousness forces him to exclude non-Japanese people such as Filipinos, Chinese, and Americans, from the object of mourning.

### **Perpetrators and Victims**

In the previous section, I pointed out the narrator's exclusivist tendency which becomes apparent when he narrates Japan's defeat. Such tendency is strongly connected with his way of understanding the relation between perpetrators and victims. He refrains from criticizing the Imperial Japanese Army while condemning a prisoner who was eager to do so. His criticism is directed towards the desire to regard oneself as a victim. While he is critical towards the Japanese people's victim mentality, his narration is also subsumed beneath the nationalistic framework of mourning when he narrates Japan's defeat, since he consistently excludes viewpoint of non-Japanese people. In this section, I will examine his attempt to call into question the relation between perpetrator and victims, and its limit, in association with the post-war situation.

The narrator's critical viewpoint towards victim mentality becomes apparent in a chapter called "Brothers in Arms." There he criticizes a man named Yoshida, who deprecated the Imperial Army "because of the way the lieutenant had railed at him when he had been nearly crippled by an infection in his ankle" as follows:

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In my own humble opinion, however, it is not only facile but utterly misguided to censure an entire institution out of bitterness arising from a narrow personal experience: facile because anyone can denounce the institution's faults while ignoring his own complicity; misguided because it focuses solely on conditions encountered in the institution while ignoring that institution's *raison d'etre*. The Imperial Japanese Army and its many feudalistic abuses are not to be denounced merely because they wrought such great suffering on the rank-and-file soldier; they are to be denounced because it is in those very abuses that we can find the cause of the army's defeat. (133)

He argues that there is a more appropriate way to denounce the Imperial Japanese Army than just doing it from personal reasons. To express his own opinion about the army, he states "they [the Imperial Japanese Army and its many feudalistic abuses] are to be denounced because it is in those very abuses that we can find the cause of the army's defeat," but it does not mean that they would have to be tolerated if the army won. He clearly notices the distortions of the army. For example, he denounces a sergeant who was reported to have proposed cannibalizing Filipinos while fleeing from U.S. forces in the mountains as follows:

Similarly, the fact that Sergeant Kurokawa was the first to think of cannibalizing local islanders even though everyone suffered the same pangs of hunger owed to the institutional culture he had assimilated from other officers while fighting in China: namely, the "anything goes" mentality that had allowed soldiers to run amok there, together with the oppressor's propensity to



dehumanize the population of the occupied territory. Once this battlefront culture had swollen within him to the point of obliterating his innate humanity, he had become a monster. (141)

In this passage, he insists that the deviation of Sergeant Kurosawa from humanity was caused by the battlefront culture which existed both in China and in the Philippines. It becomes clear from this that he thinks the Imperial Japanese Army had an evil culture which “obliterate[d] [soldier’s] innate humanity.”<sup>3</sup> Therefore, what he really means by saying “they are to be denounced because it is in those very abuses that we can find the cause of the army’s defeat” seems to be that the whole structure which produces the abuses of the army is to be denounced. In “August 10,” he puts this idea into action. There he states that he has the right to hate the leaders of the Imperial Japanese Army, who refused to surrender for self-protection, and that the emperor system which was formerly taken advantage of by them is harmful. In short, he radically criticizes the leaders and the emperor system as the symbol of the whole structure which produced an army so filled with abuses.

It is essential to recognize the relationship between the narrator’s attempts to avoid expressions of personal resentment against the army and the situation of Japan under occupation. In his memoir, Ōoka notes that disclosing the abuses of the Imperial Japanese Army was enthusiastically carried out during the occupation period and that such tendencies originated in a radio program called “Shinsō Bako” (“Truth Box”), which started under GHQ’s instruction. He felt apathy towards this tendency for two reasons. Firstly, he thought that it was impossible to understand the army as an organization with grudges caused by one’s own narrow experiences. Secondly, he held the strong belief that he must not forget the fact that he himself had accepted the army’s existence (*Sensō* 159-60). From these statements, it becomes clear that

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he understood the condition of media control by GHQ (Kim 203). In *Tozasareta Gengo Kūkan (Sealed Linguistic Space)*, Jun Etō argues that *History of the Pacific War* and the radio program “Shinsō wa kōda” (“This is Truth”)—later renamed “Shinsō Bako (“Truth Box”)—were a part of “War Guilt Information Program,” a program of propaganda which aimed to put a sense of guilt into the minds of Japanese people. According to Etō, this program’s purpose was to amplify Japanese people’s feelings of hatred towards the Imperial Japanese Army by exposing its abuses (225-39). It is assumed that Ōoka recognizes the post-war situation in the same way as Etō does<sup>4</sup> and that such awareness is reflected in the narrator’s criticism towards Yoshida in “Brothers in Arms.”

While he succeeds in avoiding a simple diagram of the army versus the Japanese people, the narrator’s insight on the war inevitably has some limits. He eliminates the possibility of sympathizing with non-Japanese people as victims. He confines objects of mourning to his “fellow citizens” in “August 10.” He can mourn for the casualties by confirming that they were sacrificed by the leaders who missed the appropriate moment for the surrender. In that process, both Japanese soldiers and citizens are grouped into a community of victims, which leads to his inability to mourn for non-Japanese people, such as Filipinos, Chinese, and Americans. But I have no intention of accusing the author of the lack of consciousness of a perpetrator. Instead, I would like to indicate that this novel should be read as the testimony of Japanese post-war history. Naoki Sakai points out that Japanese nationalism after the war is not opposed to the U.S. hegemony but a part of it because the latter made the former an ally by exempting the Japanese people from war responsibility (204). The narrator has a critical viewpoint against GHQ’s policy, but he cannot go beyond the structure of sentiments created by the collaboration of Japanese nationalism and the U.S. in that he ignores non-Japanese casualties by

using the nationalistic framework of mourning. Despite his great insight on the structure that produces violence, he can't recognize non-Japanese people as victims who he should respond to. Because he never directs his attention to the viewpoints of non-Japanese victims even when he reexamines the relationship between perpetrators and victims, it is inevitable that he will imagine an exclusive community of Japanese victims, justified by the fact of Japan's defeat. Thus, this novel becomes a testimony of "The differential distribution of public grieving" (Butler 38) in the occupation period. The narrator's repeated use of the word "visceral" is a sign for his imagining an exclusive community of Japanese victims out of nationalistic sentiments that cannot be logically explained. When reading this chapter, we need to recognize the post-war situation that allows him to ignore the existence of non-Japanese casualties even though he correctly recognizes the brutal nature of the Japanese invasion.

### **Possibility of New Community**

But now we must confirm that this novel is not a mere expression of nationalism. The narrator also attempts to invalidate a fever of nationalism. Benedict Anderson states that "Ultimately it [the nation] is this fraternity that makes it possible, over the past two centuries, for so many millions of people, not so much to kill, as willingly to die for such limited imaginings" (7). But the narrator resists this function of the nation by envisioning a community that renounces a soldier's duty to fight in war.<sup>5</sup> And such community implies the possibility that a group of the Japanese are to be opened to alterity by virtue of its uncertainty. By taking into consideration such community, we can recognize the complexity of his sense of community. I would like to suggest that such community reveals itself in the depiction of corrupted prisoners after Japan's surrender in "Theatricals."

This chapter starts with a sentence "As time passed, the inmates

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lapsed rapidly into decadence” (257), and the narrator depicts the corruption of the prisoners vividly. In previous studies, it has been valued as an incisive satire of the Japanese people under occupation. But it is worth attention that the narrator refrains from establishing a position from which he laughs at others. That fact especially becomes clear at the end of this chapter.

Theatrical production thrived in the camp, and “I” (the narrator) contributes to that phenomenon by writing a sex comedy. One night, he becomes sick of watching the obscene play that he has written and returns to his quarters. When he laughs at the other prisoners there, a seventeen-year-old boy named Yoshida appears, and then they started to drink together. However, they began to fight without being aware of the reason. The narrator describes the situation as follows:

I had no desire to fight him. We were of exactly the same mind in our low opinion of the shows. I had no idea why two men of thirty-six and seventeen who agreed with each other should have to fight, even if we were drunk.

I suppose you could say that, in our state of confinement, once we ran out of amusements, we were left with little else to do but fight.

In the distance, that night’s entries for the performing arts festival went on and on. Like the sound of a distant surf, waves of applause rolled through the sky into the darkness of the office. (278)

What is noticeable is that an exit from the theater didn’t lead to achieving a privileged position from which he could laugh at others. Because he couldn’t reject the “waves of applause” which the prisoners were giving to the play, those waves invalidated the distance between the theater and the office. Kojin Karatani insists that Ooka never points

out others' stupidity without pointing out his own because he always focuses on a human who is living in a historical "world" he cannot transcend (637). Karatani's argument is valid, but I would like to put more focus on the political unconscious of the author-narrator who narrates from the viewpoint of the post-war period. The fact that this chapter ends with "I"'s failure to keep laughing at the other prisoners seems to indicate the narrator's aspiration to avoid establishing any ideal image of the Japanese such as that of a masculine soldier.

To confirm this, we need to take into consideration Ōoka's critical view of the recurrence of militaristic sentiments in post-war Japan. He states in an essay published in 1949 that the militaristic sentiments remained repressed in a "feminized" atmosphere after the defeat, and the success of *Battle Ship Yamato* could be attributed to the fact that this novel stimulated those sentiments ("Kiroku Bungaku ni tsuite" 52). The word "feminized" is also used in "Theatricals" to describe Japanese men under occupation as follows: "It's just that men of today who have got feminized due to democracy are dreaming of hanging on women's genitals again."<sup>6</sup> The narrator derides here the Japanese men who are immersed in sexual entertainments, and he attributes such corruption to "feminization" of men after the defeat. At first glance, it seems as though he is criticizing the Japanese men on the grounds that they should be more "masculine." But, on the other hand, he renounces the privilege of laughing at others from the outside by acknowledging that he was one of those who were imprisoned at the end of this chapter. This can be considered as an attempt to offer an alternative to the recurrence of militaristic sentiments that Ōoka alludes to in his essay. If he established a privileged position at the end, it would lead to the approval of a norm with which he can pass judgement on people who look corrupt ("feminized") to him. But he evades such choice by denying a possibility of a norm itself by stating "I suppose you could say that, in our state of confinement, once we ran out of

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amusements, we were left with little else to do but fight” (278). In fact, he does not either praise or deny other prisoners. It seems that the narrator attempts to avoid arousing militaristic sentiments as a reaction to the post-war corruption by obscuring the difference between those who laugh and those who are laughed at. In such narration, the narrator doesn’t come to a conclusion on what is a good Japanese, and consequently “we” is envisioned as a community without any principle that might regulate its members’ lives. While the narrator is critical of the prisoners, he clearly recognizes that he couldn’t stand outside of the situation in the camp and chooses to live together with them by delaying the assertion of a normative framework.

We can also find the narrator’s direct criticism towards militaristic sentiments in the earlier part of this chapter:

One of the ironic effects of this life of ease was that it aroused feelings of nostalgia for the war among some of the men. A man named Tsukamoto, for example, was a suicide attack pilot shot down over the sea east of Leyte on October 24, 1944. As the anniversary of the Battle of Leyte Gulf approached, he spent his evenings writing a memoir of sorts and intoning it to himself in solemn voice: “Indeed does the fate of all East Asia’s multitudes lies in the balance at this moment of decisive battle!”

Hiwatashi snickered. “We lost the war long ago,” he said. “Don’t you think it’s a tad late for decisive battle?” (257)

Yasufumi Noda points out that this passage is a reflection of Ōoka’s critical view towards the popularity of war reportage in the occupation period (33). Noda’s statement is valuable in that it casts light on the criticism towards contemporaries inscribed in the narration of experiences in the camp, but it doesn’t ask what the narrator attempts to achieve through such criticism. The narrator confirms that

militaristic sentiments are completely irrelevant to the post-war period by describing Tsukamoto's behavior as "one of the ironic effects of this life of ease" and by depicting Hiwatashi's snickering. In other words, the narration implies that it is an absurd idea to imagine fighting a war after Japan's surrender.

The new community that appears at the end of this chapter is a community that lives through the post-war situation without returning to militarism. "We" includes both other prisoners and "I," and it is merely sustained by the fact that they shared the conditions of life in the camp. Such a community accepts prisoners who lacks dignity as a soldier without telling them how to live or how to die. The narrator envisions it to embrace the defeat as the opportunity to abandon militaristic sentiments.<sup>7</sup> He attempts to expose the fact that Japan's defeat makes such sentiments irrelevant by describing prisoners without judging them from a transcendent position.<sup>8</sup> The community without any principle that might regulate its members' lives, which is inscribed with the fact of the defeat, is a new community that he attempts to envision through the narration of a life in the camp.

Furthermore, we need to recognize that this community makes us glimpse the possibility that a group of the Japanese are opened to alterity. The intrusion of "waves of applause" directed at the obscene play the narrator had written into the office at the very end of this chapter implies that he cannot reject the interruption by others because his is a corporeal existence like anyone else's. In other words, the emphasis on his corporeality vis-à-vis his intellect, with which he denounces the corruption of the Japanese, suggests that his attempts to imagine a bounded community are never completed once and for all. While he imagines the exclusive community of Japanese victims in his narration of Japan's defeat, he cannot present a conclusion about how the Japanese should live after the defeat, due to the memory of his involvement with corrupted prisoners. This fact tells us that the

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exclusive community of the Japanese that he imagines on the grounds of national consciousness cannot be invariable one, and that as far as community always requires the act of imagining it, it is haunted by the possibility of other communities because of the corporeality of an agent who imagines it. Therefore, the exposure of the narrator's corporeality at the end of this chapter potentially makes the exclusive community nothing more than one of many options.

### **Conclusion**

In this paper, I have tried to interpret *Taken Captive* as a novel that addresses the question of community. As I have argued, the novel can be read as a testimony of a man's confrontation with problems of community in post-war Japan under occupation. While he clearly imagines the exclusive community of Japanese victims, he also envisions the community that invalidates nationalistic fever in virtue of the lack of any principle that might regulate its members' lives. The latter prevents this novel from being a mere expression of an ideology, that is, nationalism, by testifying to the fact that the narrator's attempt to imagine a bounded community isn't to be completed. By recognizing that the narrator's exploration of community is not concluded, we can understand this novel as one that enables us to glimpse a man's life in the occupation period and to reconsider the collaboration between U.S. and Japan which has continued since that period.

To fully comprehend Ōoka as a writer who committed himself to the post-war situation, it is essential to read other important works of his which were written during the occupation, such as *A Wife in Musashino* (1950) and *Fires on the Plain* (1952), alongside *Taken Captive*. Particularly, the close reading of *Fires on the Plain* is required to develop my argument in this paper because Ōoka explains this novel as compensating for a lack in *Taken Captive*. According to him, while



he attempted to depict his experiences in a battlefield as logically as possible in the latter, he explored ways of depicting a defeated soldier's confusion in the former ("Nobi no Ito" 411). By reading *Fires on the Plain* and *Taken Captive* together, we will be able to comprehend the nature of Ōoka's confrontation with the occupation period more precisely.

## Notes

1. For example, Akimasa Kanno highly praises this novel's "style in which facts are recorded correctly and strong logicity" (312).
2. See Isoda, "Shūyōjo to shite no Senchū Sengo" ("Wartime Japan and Post-War Japan as Camps"), Kim, "Senryōki Hyōshō to shiteno *Furyoki*" ("*Taken Captive* as a Critical Representation of the American Occupation"), and Hidaka, *Senryō Kūkan no Naka no Bungaku: Konseki, Gūi, Sai (Literature in Occupied Space: Trace, Allegory, and Difference)*.
3. In another chapter, the narrator refers to Nanking Massacre. He recollects that he was surprised at calmness of a prisoner that described victims of sexual violence by the Japanese Army, and attributes that attitude to omnipresence of sexual violence in patriarchy (188-89). On the other hand, he never explains brutal behaviors of the army towards Filipinos in detail. However, he alludes to "the atrocities committed in Manila and Battan" when he recounts a conversation he had with a helmsman at a moment of his departure for Japan (294).
4. Teruo Ariyama criticizes Etō for overlooking the fact that GHQ's campaign to disclose abuses of the Imperial Japanese Army contributed to the exemption of the emperor and the Japanese people from war responsibility (250). I agree with Ariyama, but I chose to quote Etō's argument here to emphasize that the narrator

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lacks perspective on the responsibility towards non-Japanese people as Etō does.

5. We can regard the narrator's perpetual reflection on the reason why he didn't shoot an American soldier whom he found in a mountain as a representative example of his attempts to renounce a soldier's duty. The narrator concludes on the problem as follows: "Ultimately, all I can establish with certainty is the existence of a moment in which I did indeed forsake the opportunity to shoot my state-designed "enemy." I believe the most crucial determinant lay in the fact that he was not an enemy of my own choosing—which is to say, in effect, that my action had been predetermined before I ever departed for the battlefield. / The man I faced at the moment was not my enemy. The enemy existed, and still exists, in another quarter" (65).
6. A passage including this sentence in which the narrator refers to post-war Japan is eliminated in the English translation for some unknown reason. Therefore, I translated the original sentence in the Japanese edition into English. See *Furyoki* 374.
7. My view might look similar to Norihiro Katō's view that Ōoka should be valued as a writer who presents a solution to the split personality of Japan because he faces the fact of Japan's defeat properly (88), but those two should be distinguished. In my opinion, the narrator attempts to avoid presenting any norm, so his idea is incompatible with the story of recovery of Japan's identity.
8. Ōoka's criticism against militaristic sentiments needs to be considered in a context of rearmament of post-war Japan that was progressing since the establishment of Keisatsu Yobi Tai (the National Police Reserve) just after the outbreak of the Korean War in 1950. I would like to discuss the relationship between Ōoka's works and that process in another article, but now I will only quote as a hint what seems to be a comment on rearmament in *Fires on*

*the Plain*, which was written in the same period as *Taken Captive* was: “The reports in the newspaper, which reach me morning and evening even in this secluded spot, seem to be trying to force me into the thing that I want least of all, namely, another war. Wars may be advantageous to the small group of gentlemen who direct them, and I therefore leave these people aside; what baffles me is all the other men and women who now once again seem so anxious to be deluded by these gentlemen. Perhaps they will not understand until they have gone through experiences like those I had in the Philippine mountains; then their eyes will be opened” (232) (for the details of rearmament of post-war Japan, see Ara).

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