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# The honbako is bare: what's become of Japan/ Australia fiction?

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**THE *HONBAKO* IS BARE: WHAT'S BECOME OF JAPAN/AUSTRALIA  
FICTION?<sup>1</sup>**

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Complementary opportunities seemed to favour Australia and Japan at the outset. A shared modern history of 150 years might be expected to be long enough for the two antipodal countries to have seeded and cultivated their relationship, and watched it flourish, bear fruit, and multiply. Opposites could be expected to attract, empathy would be stimulated by difference, and cultural interchange should thrive spontaneously without the need for frequent applications of official fertiliser. The harvest should be plentiful, not only for government, business, education, and tourism, but for the two cultures.

The extent to which that is true is surprisingly limited.

Some Australians, including artists and scholars, always found Japan fascinating, and some Japanese, particularly business people, were quick to see Australia's potential. But Australian suspicions of Japan's intentions and Japanese resentment of Australia's immigration restrictions built up early and poisoned the atmosphere. Negative

perceptions persisted for long after the Pacific war, in spite of gestures of reconciliation on both sides. Fluctuating economic interests, rather than the growth of cultural affinity, determined the climate.

Japan lost interest as Australia lost significance. Australia in the 1980s (and not for the first time)<sup>2</sup> was seen as ‘semi-advanced’ and displaying *kataomoi*, ‘unrequited love’ – the disdainful response of a superior to an inferior’s persistent advances. Japan was vying to be ‘number one’ in the world, yet some Australians still presumed to behave as if they were Japan’s equals. Both countries had always been obsessed with how they rated themselves internationally, but while Japanese wanted to match and outdo other countries in as many fields as possible, Australians seemed merely concerned about falling behind, being found wanting, or being left out. The Japanese media rarely included Australia in lists of advanced countries against which they rated Japan, while the Australian media usually cited the Anglophone US and UK as the most relevant comparators, even when Japan was Australia’s biggest trading partner, and Australia was Japan’s main supplier of several commodities. That, instead of generating mutual admiration, tended to reinforce mutual stereotypes. Australian business people surveyed in the mid-1980s thought Japanese xenophobic and inscrutable.<sup>3</sup> In 1997 a Japanese observer asserted that Australia and Japan had less a relationship than a series of transactions.<sup>4</sup> A year later, another Japanese Ambassador declared that what Australia had with Japan was not even a relationship.<sup>5</sup>

One transaction that flourished in the 1980s was tourism, but claims that brief visits by Japanese in guided groups would create mutual understanding were far-fetched. Another growth area, Australian students taking Japanese language, shrank when Japan’s bubble economy burst. When Pauline Hanson rose to prominence, a *manga* magazine with 1.5 million circulation, that had previously been enthusiastic about Australian multiculturalism, extrapolated that Australia was declining into ‘a third-rate country’ (two ranks, that is, below Japan).<sup>6</sup> Images from the past recurred in Australian reporting and cartooning about Japan as they did in Japanese school texts’ representations of Australia. Their origins were not in fresh observation but in fossilized perceptions on

both sides. Japan's modern success rendered such Australian representations inappropriate, but in Japan, similarly fixed views about Western countries were not uncommon, including about Australia.

Many Japanese continued to believe in *kokutai* and *Nihonjinron*, Japanese uniqueness, that meant no-one else could become Japanese and Japan could never be properly appreciated by others.<sup>7</sup> This latter view seemed to be confirmed by an EC working paper in 1979 that described Japanese as workaholics living in rabbit hutches. It was denounced as racist in Japan, and widely in the West as well. In 2002 however, a Sydney-based *Asahi Shimbun* journalist deplored the persistence of such media stereotypes and then went blithely on to assert that British reporters deliberately ignored the facts, Americans were too arrogant to check the facts, and Australians were too lazy to find out the facts.<sup>8</sup> In 2010, senior politician Ozawa Ichiro declared he disliked British people and Americans were 'simple'. Such national stereotypes had changed little in a century, but being based on objective comparisons with the unique, unappreciated Japanese, could not be racist stereotypes.

Racism appears to its victims in Asian countries to flow one way, like Orientalism, from West to East. So by definition the hostility expressed by some Japanese (or others) towards Westerners can't be racist. When Ishihara Shintaro in 1991 declared Japan the country that 'can say no', and several Chinese writers also picked up the expression, they were saying 'no longer' to the West's longstanding racist condescension, manipulation, and lack of respect for their civilisations. But they did not mention racism in their own societies, nor admit their reciprocal condescension. It is said that Australian criticism of Japanese whaling practices is racially motivated (especially since Australia doesn't similarly castigate Canada, Iceland, or Norway), and that Australians are insensitive and do not understand science, cultural diversity, or mutual respect. For the visiting official who said this in 2000 that these were not racist generalizations: racism flowed eastwards (or northwards in this case), and it was Australia, lacking proper regard for Japan, that was racist.

It is clearly time to rethink 'racism' and update it with a more appropriate term, as an American scholar has recently done in her history of 'white people'.<sup>9</sup> She argues that 'whiteness' has always been a social construct, not a biological category, reliant upon false science and history and validated by distaste for and fear of anyone different. While 'non-white' people have good historical grounds to react against such prejudice, to construct all white people as guilty of it is also ahistorical, xenophobic, self-validating, and prejudiced. Race is not a useful descriptor of Japanese, and it ever was. Yet long after Japan's 'Asia for the Asiatics' campaign (in the 1930s, when Japan aimed to colonise its neighbours), the wartime internment of Japanese Americans and the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki are still widely described in Japan as racist acts. Is it possible that what Japanese call racism appears to arise from more complex and continuous processes, including a deep internal conflict over Japan's superiority or inferiority, and a long-running contest between Japan and the West, including Australia, over the deference due to their civilisational distinctiveness? Fundamentally at issue, it seems, is the respect due to Japan for its ancient traditions, racial 'purity', sophisticated culture, and modern achievements, in a word, for its uniqueness.

By contrast, Australia's short history, convict ancestry, unearned natural resources, dated infrastructure, derivative culture, dependent status, ethnic diversity, modest aspirations, love of sport, and lack of perfectionism place it somewhere close to Argentina in Japan's estimation. So when Australians fail to accept their 'proper place', calling Australia 'the clever country' for example, they inflame Japanese irritation. Both attitudes have thwarted mutual empathy for more than a century. Essentially, Japan and Australia face the same dilemma, and have done so since the nineteenth century, from opposed standpoints: whether to be an Asian or a Western country, and whether that is determined by identity or achievement. Civilisational contestation offers an analytical tool for understanding the two societies' narratives about each other, a tool that can, I suggest, be wielded more incisively than the blunt, timeworn race analysis.

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In her fine book on Australian literature about Japan and the Japanese, Megumi Kato calls this field as a ‘neglected category’. (2008: 9) She is right: in Japan, Australian literature, and Australian cultural studies generally, have always been a niche interest pursued by a few academics, historians, translators, and publishers. Kato suggests that how Australian stereotypes about Japanese are conveyed in fiction, and how they change or do not, shapes ‘structures of feeling’ in Australian society. The same can equally be said of Japanese stereotypes about Australia. An indication of the two societies’ asymmetry – the hierarchical disparity between the two civilisations – emerges from the output of narratives in each about the other. I calculate that there are about 120 works of fiction from Australia and some 30 from Japan that involve the other.<sup>10</sup> Their themes amount to a dozen or less, among which race, or what I am calling the contest over civilisation, is always recurrent. Grouped in a rough chronology from the 1880s, they are:

- ignorance and exoticism in early travellers’ tales and invasion fiction,
- encounters between men and women, that most often end unhappily,
- war, captivity, internment, and occupation, in novels and memoirs, and
- the contemporary experience of Japanese and Australians in each other’s cultures.

War and occupation have attracted more writers over time than all the rest. The fourth category, on which I will concentrate, shows a decline since the 1990s in the amount of contemporary writing of Australia and Japan in both countries, and differences between male and female writers in dealing with cultural contestation.

### *Women in Japan and Australia*

Elizabeth Kata followed her three early novels with *Kagami* (*Mirror* 1989), a saga of her distinguished Japanese family and the impact on them of Westernisation in the late Tokugawa period. Her novels of Japan may be the first by an Australian in which the characters are exclusively Japanese.<sup>11</sup> (Kata’s successor in this respect is British-born

Australian Lian Hearn, with nine historical novels, the latest being *Blossoms and Shadows* (2010). Also informed by Japanese history and cultural interaction, Nancy Corbett's *Floating* (1986), moves between the eighteenth century Yoshiwara and the pleasure quarters of twentieth century Kings Cross, creating intimacy with both. Corbett, a Canadian who lived and wrote for a few years in Australia, merges Hanatsuma the geisha and Hannah the dancer into one Janus-faced woman, performing overlapping routines and providing evenhanded comment from two women on both periods and both cultures. Linda Jaivin, a China specialist, recreated Tokyo and Yokohama of the early 1900s in *A Most Immoral Woman* (2009), in which the woman of the title is not Japanese, but a young American heiress having an affair with the Australian journalist George Ernest Morrison.

In the 1980s British-born Ann Nakano was briefly married and worked as a journalist in Japan before moving to Australia. Her novel *Bit Parts* (1985) doesn't display the historical awareness of Kata, Jaivin, and Corbett. Instead, her troubled protagonist inhabits the *gaijin* periphery of inner Tokyo that, eight decades after Morrison's time, is still an Illicit Space for foreigners, devoid of values or constraints.<sup>12</sup> In this 'social vacuum' another woman, the Australian protagonist of Geraldine Hall's *Talking to Strangers* (1982), finds a site of liberation when a few weeks away from her husband offer novel experiences and opportunities for affairs (all with *gaijin*).<sup>13</sup> But her search for personal meaning is more important in the story than the society where she seeks it: Japan itself is mere wallpaper. Not so for Australian-born Dianne Scott Highbridge (her nom-de-plume is a transliteration of her husband's name, Takahashi), whose home has been Japan since the 1980s. In her second novel, *In the Empire of Dreams* (1999), she drew together some of the observations of Japanese society from her articles and short fiction. Among a group of foreign women friends, some become deeply immersed in Japan, while others use it merely as a way station. Through them, she observed the foreigners' restricted circle and disparaged their one-dimensional view of Japan, an enduring phenomenon of which Sofia Coppola's film *Lost in Translation* (2003) was a prominent later example.

By 1999, Australian women's fiction about Japan was no longer a rarity, nor were fictional female detectives. In Caroline Shaw's fiction (*Cat-Catcher* 1999, *Eye to Eye* 2000), a Melbourne woman with a damaged past, Lenny, seeks comfort in Buddhism and consults a Japanese psychiatrist/Zen instructor, Dr Sakuno. He has come to believe that Australians are not superior foreigners but slobs, and guides Lenny towards becoming Japanese, 'surely the highest form of life on this planet'. (1999:15) Shaw, who visited Japan with a writer's grant, places Japan firmly in the cultural ascendancy, a place where dis-Oriented Australians can seek superior wisdom, tradition, and time out. After working in Japan as a copywriter and translator, Paddy O'Reilly's expertise was of a higher order, and she applied it confidently and flexibly in stories whose Australian narrators include a male graduate student in Hitachi ('The Rules of Fishing') and a part-Indian woman married to a Japanese in Sendai ('Women's Trouble') (both in *The End of the World* 2007). In O'Reilly's novel, *The Factory* (2005), a young Australian woman who speaks Japanese takes her friend, who doesn't, to a remote peninsula where a 1960s commune is regrouping in the 1990s under its autocratic director. O'Reilly deploys her evident familiarity with such folk-culture groups as Kodo and Aum Shinrikyo. Cultural contestation is a recurring theme, not only between Japanese and foreigners, but between Japanese, involving complex hierarchical intricacies. Gail Jones' first Japan-related narrative was her third novel, *Dreams of Speaking* (2006). In Paris, another young Australian researcher, Alice Black, who is an enthusiast for all things wired, meets the much older Mr Sakamoto, who is researching Alexander Graham Bell, and they form an unlikely friendship around their mutual love of transportation and communication technology. Visiting him later in Nagasaki – the dying Sakamoto is a *hibakusha* – Alice recognizes the havoc that modern inventions can also create. She and Sakamoto are global individuals, the first in Australia-Japan fiction whose relationship thrives in email, but only in English.

These women's novels all involve older Japanese male authority-figures. The civilizational hierarchy, with Japan on top, that is implied in Caroline Shaw's fiction and unquestioned by her investigator Lenny, is accepted also by Jones' Alice. O'Reilly's protagonist Hilda is respectful and somewhat afraid of the commune director, and



although she challenges him, she loses the contest and becomes a captive of the system that she is researching.

The historical interface between Japanese and Australians has been an enduring interest for Yokohama-based Endo Masako, whose factual accounts include *Maburoshi no Shikishi: Pursuing an elusive epitaph: a tale of early Japan-Australia contact* (1993), and *Australia Monogatari: Rekishi to Nichi Go Koryu Jyuwa: Australian Stories: ten tales of historical Japan-Australia exchanges* (2000). As a social historian, Endo had this field of early interchange with Australia almost to herself. In fiction, she was preceded by Yamamoto Michiko, who had lived in Darwin from 1969 to 1972, and whose four stories of lonely Japanese wives in northern Australia, *Betei san no niwa* (1972) appeared as *Betty's Garden: Short Stories* (1983). In the title story, which won the prestigious Akitagawa prize, the protagonist 'Betty' is isolated, her husband's captive, for twenty years in a 'foreign country' among red-faced, casual, and simple Australians, and Aborigines whom she sees as feckless. She does her best to help Japanese pearl-ers and sailors and when she is entertaining them and reading their Japanese magazines, she is her 'real self' again. Her efforts to be a dutiful, exemplary Japanese abroad are similar to those of the war brides, buoyed by a sense of the superiority of their culture.<sup>14</sup>

Australia for later Japanese women writers remained so remote and unfamiliar that it served as a non-specific site for children's fantasy, or for the climactic end of a story. In the 1990s and 2000s, when Japanese fiction reflected a society of collapsing dreams, the celebrated novelist Yoshimoto Banana (Mahoko) responded by writing of loss, nostalgia, dysfunctional families, alienation, loneliness, and an elliptical lesbianism. Her story *Honey moon* (1997, in English 2003) ends in Brisbane, where a couple who were neighbours at seven, and married at eighteen, feel far enough from Japan to try 'coming out' of their introverted relationship on a second honeymoon. But the solution is temporary: they have to resume their lives in Japan, their real culture.

*Men in Japan and Australia*

In the 1990s, Queensland academic David Myers visited Japan several times, and produced tales of his experiences that sought to be even-handedly satirical: *Cornucopia Country: satiric tales* (1991), and *Storms in a Japanese teacup: satirical tales* (1996). His inept Australians, several of who are academics, are on the losing side in the civilisational contest, not only when in Japan but also when they are the hosts in Australia. Intended compliments miss the mark; Australia is seen as a nation of sportsmen; and it is only when they all stop playing golf for a drink that ‘shell personalities cracked open and bits of core peeped out’ (1991: 107).

Always evenhandedly satirical of Australians and Japanese, Roger Pulvers has returned repeatedly in his fiction, drama, and filmscripts to the Pacific war, its consequences, and the moral dilemmas it raised. In his *Starsand Diary* (2009 in English and Japanese) a Japanese deserter, an American soldier, a 16-year-old local girl, and a fanatical Japanese militarist are thrown together on a remote Okinawan island in July 1945, with dramatic consequences. Australia is not represented, except implicitly as the ally of the United States whose military bases remain in Okinawa (and Australia) six decades after the war.

Novels involving foreign men’s affairs with Japanese women offer little originality. They seem nostalgic for a lost prefeminist time when Australian men could do as they liked. Typical of several similar short stories, John Bryson’s, ‘Whoring around’ (1981) has an Australian businessman visiting Hong Kong and Japan seeking serial sex with subservient women. Foreign businessmen do the same in Robert Allen’s novel, *Tokyo no Hana* (1990). Between these encounters, Allen’s ignorant Australian at least makes some effort to learn about Japanese culture, although the implication is that this is for the benefit of Allen’s readers. Bryson, a Melbourne lawyer, was 46 and Allen was 65 when they wrote these stories. But *Kenzo: a Tokyo story* (1985) had already taken a different approach. Ross Davy’s people are like him, young and globalised Australians, Americans, or Japanese. Harriet is supposed to be writing a thesis on Buddhism, while Linda who ‘came to Tokyo to get away from modern narcissism’ dabbles in Zen and travels around Japan. Kenzo, who is gay, dies in mid-narrative, and at the end when the

second great Kanto earthquake brings it all tumbling down, only Linda walks away, though hardly in triumph.

Concerns about the displacement of Australian industry by the Japanese economic invasion informed Jill Shearer's play *Shimada* (1987), Peter Carey's novel *Illywhacker* (1985), and Sue Brooks' ambiguous film *Japanese Story* (2003).<sup>15</sup> Peter Corris continued the theme of postwar economic invasion in *The Japanese Job* (1992), in which a Japanese company plans to build a skyscraper in Brisbane, but its president is murdered by the 'Diggers' who are still fighting the Pacific war. In John Lynch's *The Proposal* (1995), Japanese 'economic animals' want to develop a coastal resort, until one of them comes to understand conflicted local feelings and backs out of the venture. Clive James, an Australian resident in the UK, located his polite, intelligent protagonist Suzuki among English people who, while making fun of his motorbike surname and his mistakes in English, reveal their underlying resentment of Japanese as economic *parvenus* in the home of the industrial revolution. In *Brrm! Brrm!* (1991) Suzuki, a martial artist and attractive to women, is ignorant about the war and Japanese atrocities. Although James, whose father fought against the Japanese, has claimed he is personally fond of Japan, the story reflects mutual, enduring ignorance, prejudice, and contestation.

After several narratives about ignorant Australians losing the postwar contest with Japan, readers might not expect any difference in Peter Carey's *Wrong About Japan* (2004), and most reviewers did not find it. The author, a New York resident, on arrival in Tokyo with his son Charley, in search of the 'real Japan', loses his map, communicates in hand signs, finds his ryokan room too small, doesn't understand kabuki, and so on. But Charley has an adolescent's intimacy with Japanese 'cool stuff', and has found a Japanese friend on the internet in advance. Reluctantly accepting this, Carey begins to appreciate manga and anime, without claiming any real understanding of them. Gradually however, he allows it to emerge that he has been in Japan more than once before, has done considerable research, and has excellent contacts. When in Japan, Carey doesn't do as the Japanese do, but he respects the ascendancy of Japanese civilization, and unusually among male writers, doesn't make a contest out of it.

Anomie and ennui return in Andrew O'Connor's *Tuvalu* (2006) for Noah Tuttle, eking out a living teaching English in Tokyo. He's pining for his Australian girlfriend Tilly, who he doesn't know has terminal cancer, and whose fantasy place of bliss is Tuvalu. But for Noah, Tokyo is 'the perfect place to be alone – no one pushing. You can hide out, be as selfish as you like'. (245) Japan is 'the perfect place to launch a ludicrous business', even if parts of Tokyo are deconstructing before his eyes. Noah contemplates leaving for Europe to start again in a cheap but central city, say Bratislava, but doesn't. (270)

Cultural competition arrives with Mami. She is manipulative, demanding, narcissistic, and untrustworthy, but beautiful and fascinating, much like the blind Japanese girl in one section of *Babel* (director Alejandro Gonzalez 2006). In Mami's world, 'everything is a contest'. (185) She has a wealthy father, obeys no rules, steals things, and flirts with suicide. She has lived abroad and speaks English, as do most of Noah's friends. He knows his way around Tokyo and Japan, and a visit back to Melbourne brings on an attack of culture shock, but it's unclear how much Japanese Tuttle/O'Connor can speak or understand.

For Japanese storytellers, the exploits of pearl divers on the northern coast of Australia provide vivid and romantic themes. Shiba Ryotaro recreated them in *Mokuyo-to no Yakai* (*Soiree at Thursday Island* 1984). But most of the recent research and life-writing of the pearl-ers has been by Japanese women, Kato Megumi, Hokari Minoru, and Mayu Kanamori, as well as Australian Regina Ganter. Kanamori and a descendant of Japanese and Aboriginal people in Broome, Lucy Dann, together visited Taiji, Broome's sister-city, and created a slide documentary, *The Heart of the Journey* (2000) about Dann's warm encounter with her distant Japanese relatives. Cultural contestation later entered the relationship with Broome, however, because of Taiji's dolphin fishery. Similarly in Paddy O'Reilly's short story, underlying contention over killing and eating endangered fish eventually undermines the enjoyable exchange between Mr Kato and a young Australian man ('The Rules of Fishing'). Only Japanese, who have lived by fishing for centuries, 'could comprehend the principle of this act', Mr Kato tells him.<sup>16</sup>

Whether they were pearl divers in the past, adventurers among indigenous people in later years, or contemporary visitors, all the central figures in the narratives by Japanese men involving Australia are male Japanese. Short stays enable them to relate to Australians fleetingly and then, just as several of the fictional male Australians in Japan do, they either walk away, or die. These resolutions are terminal; possibilities of staying forever, of continuing visits, or of a merged identity, do not arise. For both Australians and Japanese in much of this fiction, each other's country is a borrowed stage set, a separate, singular space on which to enact an individual's story. There, for a brief while, freed of conventional constraints, self-absorption needs to know no bounds, but nothing of great moment is revealed, and little lasting impact remains.

In 1980 Hiyama Takashi cycled across Australia from East to West and in 'Australia is a Free Country' recorded his impressions of Australians: free, healthy, egalitarian, and generous, people for whom having 'a fun life' was the most important thing in *Saikuru Yarō Chūō Toppa (My Escape to Become a Bicycle Fanatic: 5000 km crossing of Australia 1980)*. Several Japanese anthropologists have lived among Aboriginal people and written novels as well as scientific reports about them, in which the comparison with Japan's Ainu is more or less explicit (Nakano Fujio, Nakai Hideo). A novel of adventure by Kawabata Hirohito, *Hajimari no Uta o Sagasu Tabi (Journey in search of original songs 2004)* appears to draw on Bruce Chatwin's *Songlines*. The remote inland, so unlike Japan's crowded islands, has attracted other writers, like Katayama Kyōichi. In his *Sekai no Chūshin de, Ai o Satebu (Crying Out Love in the Centre of the World 2004)*, later highly successful as a film, a man recalls his teenage correspondence with a girl who, dying of cancer, has said she wants to go to Uluru. Australia provides a remote, romantic setting for the final scenes when he goes there and climbs the rock in her memory. In the film *Tasmania Monogatari (Tasmanian Story, director Yasue Orihara 1991)* a biologist who has left his job in Japan is searching for the thylacine, and Tasmania's natural beauty leads him to reject his former company's unsound practices. But his visiting son has trouble accepting his emigration.

The celebrated writer Murakami Haruki visited Sydney for three weeks during the Sydney Olympic Games in 2000, and recorded his first experiences of Australia in *Shidonii (Sydney 2001)*. For Murakami, as for others in the tourism genre, says Leith Morton, Australia is ‘a source of exotica... a mythic land of exotic beasts located at the end of the Earth’.<sup>17</sup> Although the high standard of the main stadium surprises Murakami, the Sydney suburbs he passes through to get there are faded and crumbling, and the opening ceremony is no more than ‘bucolic mummery’. Most of the games events are boring, apart from the men’s and women’s marathons (the latter won by Japan). He is irritated by the barracking of boorish, boozy young Australians at whom, in his view, the games are aimed as an official exercise, to make them oblivious of their convict ancestry and the displacement of Aborigines, and validate the nation. For Murakami, the games are one bright moment in resource-dependent Australia’s slow terminal decline. He concludes a summary of Australian history by observing that Australia clings to Western nations for security because of racial anxiety and failure to articulate its independent identity.

When Australia was a top tennis nation, it was celebrated in an early manga, *Sports Shōjo*, by Yamamoto Sumika in 1972, whose *Esu o Nerae (Aim for the Ace!)* became a television anime series the following year. Australia later reappeared as a site of ‘wide nature’ and fresh produce in manga by Kariya Tetsu, who wrote from Sydney for *Oishinbo (Gourmet)* in 1998. His revelations about wagyu and wine may have alerted a sibling team, Kibayashi Shin and Kibayashi Yuko, to the delights of McLaren Vale in South Australia. Their manga, *The Drops of Gold* (2006), had such an impact in Japan that since then every vintage of D’Arenberg’s Laughing Magpie shiraz voignier has sold out. Now, if Japanese working holiday-makers, students, or visitors are writing narratives based on their experiences in Australia, they are more likely to be doing it in manga or online, than in conventional fiction.

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It is clear that Australians are writing fewer Japan novels than they used to and that Japanese narratives of Australia are in even shorter supply. The reasons may be sought in the declining attractions of novelty, the economics of publishing, the tensions between globalization and xenophobia, changed reading and writing habits, and new and old technology. This paper argues that a contestation over civilization and the respect due to it has always underlain interactions between Australia and Japan, including in literature. This contest, that used to be attributed to racism, is set to continue, and deserves to be better understood for what it is.

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<sup>2</sup> Africa and Australia are 'still primitive lands': Fukuzawa Yukichi, *An Outline of a Theory of Civilization*, 1875, tr. and rev. David H Dilworth and G. Cameron Hirst III, Keio UP 2008, 17.

<sup>3</sup> Neville Meaney, Trevor Matthews and Sol Encel, *The Japanese Connection: A Survey of Australian Leaders' Attitudes Towards Japan and the Australia-Japan Relationship*, Melbourne: Longman Cheshire, 1988.

<sup>4</sup> Quoted by Tada Masayo, 'Japanese representations of Australia in a national newspaper, 1970s-1990s', MA thesis, University of Queensland, 1997.

<sup>5</sup> Satō Yukio, quoted by Paul Kelly, 'So close, yet so far apart', *Australian* 2 September 1998, 15.

<sup>6</sup> Tetsu Kariya, *Oishinbo (The Gourmet)*, Tokyo 1998. See Alison Broinowski, *About Face: Asian Accounts of Australia*, Melbourne: Scribe, 2003, 173-4.

<sup>7</sup> Funabiki Takeo, *Nihonjinron (Theory of Japanese Uniqueness)*, Tokyo: Nippon hōsō shuppan kyōkai, 2003; Peter N. Dale, *The Myth of Japanese Uniqueness*, London: Routledge, Nissan Institute for Japanese Studies, 1990.

<sup>8</sup> Sakaguchi Satoru, 'Media portrayal of Japan: real and false images of Japan in the Australian media', Asialink Centre, University of Melbourne, 15 March 2002.

<sup>9</sup> Nell Irvin Painter, *The History of White People*, New York: W.W. Norton, 2010.

<sup>10</sup> Fiction here is narrowly defined as novels and short stories. I include brief references to drama and film, but do not have space for poetry or children's fiction.

<sup>11</sup> First novels: Kato Megumi, *Narrating the Other; Australian Literary Perceptions of Japan*, Melbourne: Monash University Press, 2008: 173.

<sup>12</sup> 'Illicit Space': see Alison Broinowski, *The Yellow Lady – Australian Impressions of Asia*, Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1992, 1996.

<sup>13</sup> 'Social vacuum': Robin Gerster citing Harold Stewart: *ibid*, 176.

<sup>14</sup> See Tamura Keiko, *Michi's Memories: A Story of a Japanese War Bride*, Canberra: Pandanus Books, 2001.

<sup>15</sup> Peter Mathews, 'Misunderstanding the Other: Colonial Fantasies in *Japanese Story*', *Antipodes*, December 2009, 185-189.

<sup>16</sup> Paddy O'Reilly, 'The Rules of Fishing', *The End of the World*, St Lucia, Queensland, University of Queensland Press, 2007.

<sup>17</sup> Leith Morton, 'Murakami Haruki's *Sydney Diary*', in Alison Broinowski, ed. *Double Vision: Asian Accounts of Australia*, Canberra: Pandanus Books, 2004: 93-103.

