

Public Reception and Ethical Selection in Japanese War literature for Children Written by Returnees from War and Colonies

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Abstract: More than 70 years have passed since the liberation of Korea from Japanese colonial rule. Yet, issues such as colonialism, war, and post-war settlement remain as the roots of many problems in Korean-Japanese relations; moreover, they are keywords in understanding the nature of the relationship itself. The objective of this study focuses on the public reception towards war literature for children written by Japanese returnees in order to identify the ethical perspectives of modern Japanese people on the subject of war. The novel discussed in this study, *The Rail of Stars*, was received by the Japanese public as “a story of the suffering endured by the Japanese people during war” and was reprinted countless times. With anti-Korean sentiments rapidly spreading across Japanese society, the animated version of the novel once again came under the spotlight for the same reason that it laid bare such similar negative elements. Accused of distorting and damaging the original work, the animation is being circulated on the internet as a “fabrication of the history of Japan.” This study contemplates the moral standpoint of the Japanese public on the Pacific War and the development of this standpoint by reference to Nie Zhenzhao’s “Ethical Literary Criticism.”

Key words: Ethical Literary Criticism; Japanese returnees; War Literature for Children; *The Rail of Stars*; historical revisionism; Netouyo

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标题: 日本归还者战争儿童文学的大众受容与伦理选择

内容摘要: 韩国迎来解放的曙光已达 70 年。但殖民地、战争、战后调整等依然是韩日关系中出现问题的主要原因，是理解两国关系的关键词。本研究旨在关注与此紧密相关的归还者的战争儿童文学，并从大众受容的观点理解现代日本人对于战争的伦理意识。本研究中所涉及的《星星的轨迹》讲述了日

本人因战争而遭受的灾难，备受日本大众的喜爱，已多次发行改正版。但由于日本社会中高速掀起的厌恶风潮，由互联网右翼制作的动画《星星的轨迹》备受关注并在网上广泛流传，但此动画却损坏了原本毫无问题的原作，包含着一些被捏造的日本历史。因此，本研究将采用聂珍钊的文学伦理评论对日本大众对战争的这种伦理态度和改变进行考察。

关键词：文学伦理学批评；日本归还者；战争儿童文化；星星的轨迹；历史修正主义；互联网右翼

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I

By August 1945, there were nearly 1 million Japanese inhabitants in Korea. After the Japanese Emperor's declaration of defeat, the confused Japanese were forced to face the reality that colonial "Joseon" was no longer a place that they owned. Consequently, the Japanese citizens began to return to their homeland. Narratives reliving this episode of history have appeared in diverse forms since the end of the war. Official documents, autobiographies, records of personal experiences, and literary works etc. on the procedures of repatriation have been produced, consumed, and enjoyed under the great framework of war and defeat.

Literature about returnees has been consistently produced in Japan since the surrender. The works are usually based around the self-recognition of the Japanese who undergo hardships and privations in the wake of their defeat in World War II and their return to their homeland thereafter. This was the ethical line with which the returnees, who had lived in the colonies, perceived the war and defined their identity as being Japanese. And yet, the acceptance of the returnees as Japanese citizens was unsettled because they were often perceived by many compatriots in the Japanese archipelago as "those who were directly involved in the colonial rule." Accordingly, for a considerable period after the war, they could only voice their needs and opinions amongst the isolated community of returnees.

The period around 1970 is abundant with autobiographical records of the Japanese returning to their home country. These records communicate the sociopolitical atmosphere of the time, interlaced with Japan's restoration of diplomatic relations with Korea and China, as well as the returnees' settlement in Japan. The publications encompass such topics as the difficulties the returnees suffered in the colonies after Japan's defeat, the stories of war orphans, the educational issues for returning children, the family members left behind in the old colonies, economic hardship, and the difficulties of re-adapting to Japanese society.

Among the literary works based on this reverse exodus, the following literary works of the “returning expatriates” have attracted scholarly attention for research: *The Living Star Flowing* by Tei Fujiwara, *The Grave of the Fireflies* by Akiyuki Nosaka, *So Far from the Bamboo Grove* by Yoko Kawasima Watkins, and works by Kobo Abe.

This study deals with a work of war literature for children authored by a returnee from Joseon (Korea): Chitose Kobayashi’s *The Rail of Stars* (Kinnohosi, 1982). As a story that retold the experience of a renowned Japanese celebrity, the work has enjoyed a great popularity, winning numerous awards and even inspiring an animated adaptation due to its success. However, a serious study of the work is still difficult to find. The reason is that, as an ordinary narrative of the protagonist’s hardships, it has been critically received as more of a popular novel rather than one of literary quality.

A story for children often involves not only children but also adults that frequent the literary life of a child — parents, teachers, and librarians. From the ideas of Nie Zhenzhao, literary works do not exist as an entertaining pastime but rather as a source of moral nourishment (Nie 17). The issue of how the general public accepts or rejects war literature for children is of an important matter. According to Nie Zhenzhao, literary works are not abstract, nor spiritual, ideological, linguistic, or aesthetic. Instead, literature is a material object in the form of text, belonging to the social consciousness like other forms of art whilst reflecting the objective world in the realm of human thought. Literature, therefore, exists to provide moral guidance for the material and mental life of humankind as well as to offer moral experiences for the self-fulfillment of each individual (Nie 17). War literature for children can be said to be a genre that can best carry out this function of literature. With a close examination of the Japanese citizen represented in war literature for children by Japanese returnees, this study explores the ethical order and its transformation at the intersecting viewpoints of the contemporary reader.

II

The Rail of Star is a story that tells of the personal experiences of a Japanese girl who is faced with numerous difficulties in the colony of Joseon before being able to return to her homeland. This subject matter is common in other narratives that depict the Japanese returning from their colonies. This is an ethical line produced by the returnees who have experienced the defeat of war in the colonies. The ethical line to interpret the war and the Japanese citizens create an array of ethical knots

within the new sociocultural environment after their defeat. The public reception of war literature for children is critical to explaining this process. *The Rail of Stars* has the following features that would make the work a promising candidate for a reflection of the popular perception of war literature:

First of all, *The Rail of Stars* has great marketability. Firstly, the plot revolves around a protagonist that overcomes real-life hardships and adversities to eventually become a “famous actress.” The work is the story of a girl who was born in a colony and who experiences the defeat of her home country whilst living in the colony. Being forced to return from North Korea, she is faced with a greater number of challenges as opposed to returning from South Korea. Eventually progressing into her becoming a famous actor, the novel is a classic example of a narrative about the overcoming of hardship.

The second feature of this novel is that it is “a story of a child.” Such a story cannot be confined to children. In other words, those who encounter books are not only children, but also the broader public, including adults who bring books into the library, recommend, and purchase books.

The third characteristic is that by combining the topic of Japanese defeat with the story of children, the novel can avoid the issue of the Japanese as being the perpetrators of war. The work represents the themes of “war” and “children” (particularly a girl) simultaneously, turning the “problem” of war into something abstract. As the topic “war of the Japanese people” does not come to the foreground, it functions as a mere device that allows the Japanese people to recall and remember the wartime without conflicting sentiments.

Fourth, the novel is already reputed as a recommendable book. The book is not an outlier to public interest and recognition having won several literary awards: book selected by the School Library Association and the Japan Library Association, special recommended book by The Central Council of Child Welfare of the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, book selected by Children’s Books Study Group of Japan, and the 30th Sankei Children Publishing Culture Award.

Finally, adapted as an animated feature film in 1993, it has secured its public appeal as a story of a returnee. The release of this animation was also the birth of a new perception of war within Japanese society.

Despite there being countless narratives describing the experiences of the returnees from the war and the colonies, these are the reasons that lend an unquestionable appeal to the discussion of *The Rail of Stars*. To compound upon this, the importance of this novel is that it allows us to understand the ethical line drawn by the Japanese during the war and the various ethical knots that it produced.

What kind of significance does a popular novel like *The Rail of Stars* have as a story of a returnee's experience? Kobayashi commented on the basis of this work, "There are a lot of people in this world who have experienced more difficult and tragic experiences due to war than I did. Yet I do not want to let the children relive the pain I have experienced" (Kobayashi 170). As such, she wishes to convey a sense of consolation with her story of "suffering caused by war."

This novel handles the experience of Japan's "period of war — defeat — return to home." Life in the colony of Joseon for Chico (Miko in the animation) during the war was a very happy one. Raised in an affluent household, she and her family took walks and ate out across the border (between Joseon and Manchuria). Korean servants faithfully took care of everything that Chico and her family needed to live in undisturbed comfort and leisure. After Japan's defeat, however, the sudden loss of connection with their homeland drives the family into apprehension and unease (Kobayashi 57). The pressure beset by the Soviet soldiers and Koreans starts to torment them. The Chico family decides to escape and return to the Japan they have dreamed of together with 79 other Japanese people of the area. During their escape, the heroine's family struggles to understand why they must leave the peaceful land that they had been living on for three generations. They remonstrate, "I did not do bad things to the Koreans, but why do they afflict pain on me like this?" (Kobayashi 68, 86) Without an explanation for Japan's role in the start of the war, the novel emphasizes the tragedy of the characters, adhering to the ethical line of "the Japanese as the victims of war."

Set in the war period of Japan, the novel belongs to the genre of war literature for children in Japan. Children who read war stories are susceptible to the believing in the dichotomies of good and evil, ally and foe, our country and their country. In *The Rail of Stars*, the Japanese who wish to go home are placed to the left, whilst the people and situations that obstruct their once affluent life is placed on the right. The "victory" that children expect at the end of the novel becomes a situation in which "they have returned to Japan safely." In view of this structure, we come to realize that the "story of war" titled *The Rail of Stars*, is masqueraded as a narrative about "the suffering of the Japanese" without explaining the true nature of the war instigated by the Japanese. As confirmed by the countless reprints of the book, there is no doubt that this has served to allow Japanese readers to enjoy the novel with a clear conscience, believing it to be but a "war story of the Japanese." The true nature of the war is obscured and the ethical knots of the Japanese as "survivors of war and suffering" is created.

Another example is Skae Tsuboi's *Twenty-four Eyes* (Kobunn-Shya, 1952),

which appeared just after the war and was praised as a work of “national literature.” This work can also be understood in terms of the ethical knots of the Japanese as “survivors of war and suffering.” The novel has been revised and republished several times, produced as a film twice and made into dramas six times (the latest one was in 2013). The enduring popularity of this work is enough to suggest the views of the Japanese public on the Pacific War has remained largely unchanged to this day. Equating the war to the ordeal of the Japanese people is the ethical line that the Japanese masses have yet to cross.

On the other hand, starting in the 1960s, criticism for the tendencies of Japanese war literature for children has amassed like a murky cloud on the horizon. Those that wish to inform the public of the truth of the war have raised and continue to raise their voices. It is a call for repentance and the awareness of Japan’s role in the perpetration of war. It was actually during this period that the term “war literature for children” came into being in reference to such novels. This is a phenomenon that emerged from the contemporary concerns of the period over Japan’s indirect involvement in the Vietnam War, acceleration of the right-wing tendency in Japanese society, and the highly effective propagation of the media in its glorification of war. Additionally, in children-related industries, there was a thriller boom in children’s magazines, the popularization of war-related toys, and militarization in media (Imamura 19). In response to the situation, some writers of children’s literature argued that war literature for children should break away from being the “genre for self-consolation.” They expressed the opinion that the Japanese should re-ponder the terrible consequences of war to humankind, the motives behind such conflicts, and what warfare means to the Japanese people. This was a direct challenge to the ethical standards with which the general public perceived war and simultaneously a demand for the formation of a new ethical line.

Despite these demands, however, the Japanese public has been more attracted to the “self-consoling” stories rather than those that dealt with the “darker side” of war. This is primarily the reason why *The Rail of Stars* has been reprinted numerous times (1982-2009) and further popularized as an animation in 1993. Unlike *Twenty-four Eyes*, however, it was not reproduced as a drama or on the silver screen. There is an ethical confusion of the Japanese public about war. The confusion can be partially identified through mindset of those that partake in the subcultures (or media cultures) in Japan. With an increase in netizen activities since the mid-2000s and an acceleration of “anti-Korean” sentiments (Kim 17) since 2010, such subcultures have channeled their discontent with the differences between the animation and the original work.

III

The animated adaptation of *The Rail of Stars* was directed by Tosio Hirata with the screenplay by Tatsuhiko Urahata and Hideo Asakura. The animation inserts several scenes into the storyline that were not part of the original novel. Particularly controversial is the addition of the episode of the Korean boy named “Yongil.” This detail broke the taboo against mentioning the actual victims of the war. There has been no way of obtaining a written statement verifying the director’s or scriptwriters’ view of the war regarding the added scenes.

New additions to the first part of the animation are the scenes in which Yongil is subjected to bullying by Japanese boys. He does not conform to the forced adoption of a Japanese name (the policy of the Japanese Government General for the colonized Korean people). Yongil tells Chiko his name, and he reveals his sorrow for the loss of his country and his will to fight for its independence. However, these scenes cover less than 5 minutes of the full 77 minutes and 56 seconds of the animation. Furthermore, Chiko does not reflect upon the colonial rule or war, nor does she show any repentance as a citizen of the country that has perpetrated crimes. We only see the will of Yongil. In short, the Yongil episode is isolated and disparate from the flow of the story. The characterization of the Japanese as the victims of torment in their escape to Japan is unaffected. Nonetheless, a quick search of *The Rail of Stars* on the internet of Japan at this present moment will uncover an abundance of content related to the “added scenes of Yongil” and “distortion of historical understanding.” The point these web forums are geared towards is that the animation falsified a decent original novel. The appearance of a Korean with a Korean name uttering a single line declaring his will for independence was enough to disorient the Japanese public on the ethical line(standpoint) on war the media had indoctrinated them with until today.

One blog devotes four threads to the discussion of the added scene and argues that the animation is problematic because it is “propaganda expounding Korean viewpoints”¹. The blog accuses Urahata and Asakura, who wrote the script, of being “anti-Japanese.” As for the episode where Yongil appears, it is interpreted as follows:

“This scene brainwashes the Japanese youth into believing that the Japanese people forced the Koreans to adopt Japanese names, and that even Japanese

1 「The Rail of Stars」 (1)(2)(3)(4) <<http://ameblo.jp/3892328/entry-11174072572.html>>(Registration date 2012.2.4, Search date 2016.07.09)

middle school students harassed Koreans. (. . .) The novel does not mention this at all.”

“Koreans are a nation without independent spirit who have done nothing for the independence of their own country under Japanese rule. Nevertheless, the scene concerned is intended to brainwash the young audience in Japan with a lie that many Koreans rose in revolt at the end of the war. If you are Japanese, you do not have this kind of idea. It’s clear who is involved in the planning of the animated version.”

“The animation is a fabrication of the novel, misleading the thoughts of children who have yet to develop clear judgment.”¹

On top of this, the blog posts resent the fact that there are no Korean characters in the animated version that attempt to commit fraud against the Japanese during the latter’s escape from Korea.

Another web page states, “I can only say that this is a covering up of the truth. It does not convey the true history of Japan.”² And it emphasizes in bold type, “Unfortunately, Japan lost the war, but I am angry that it depicts Japan as having committed some evil, rather than focusing on Japan’s contributions.” This website also condemns the animation on the grounds that it emphasizes the idea that “Japan is an evil perpetrator and Joseon is a righteous victim.”³ Comments are generally in favor of this argument. For instance, some of the comments state that they also feel angry and are grateful for the posting of the article⁴; they state that Japan has waged a Sino-Japanese War for the independence of Korea, and that even the Japanese annexation of Korea amongst other things was certainly a great contribution to Korea⁵.

There are also many comments encouraging people to compare the animation with the original novel as follows: “It is hard to understand why they inserted such anti-Japanese content whilst disregarding the original. This is a blasphemy

1 「*The Rail of Stars*」 (1)(2)(3)(4) <<http://ameblo.jp/3892328/entry-11174072572.html>>(Registration date 2012.2.4, Search date 2016.07.09).

2 “What is this all about!? Chitose Kobayashi *The Rail of Stars*”<http://blogs.yahoo.co.jp/heartail/62458307.html> (Registration date 2011.5.17, Search date 2016.07.09).

3 「*The Rail of Stars*」 「Top customer reviews」 <http://Amazon.co.jp> (Registration date 2013.3.28 Search date 2016.09.21) .

4 “What is this all about!? Chitose Kobayashi *The Rail of Stars*”<http://blogs.yahoo.co.jp/heartail/62458307.html> (Registration date 2011.5.17, Search date 2016.07.09).

5 “What is this all about!? Chitose Kobayashi *The Rail of Stars*”<http://blogs.yahoo.co.jp/heartail/62458307.html> (Registration date 2011.5.17, Search date 2016.07.09).

against the truth, and I feel like vomiting because of the endless evil intended to insult the author of the novel. Be sure to read the original.”¹ Online articles such as [Let’s read *The Rail of Stars* in comparison] also criticize the addition of the Yongil’s scenes and once again recommend reading the novel². After innumerable accusations, online articles return to the interest in the original novel. As mentioned earlier, the original was a classic example of “a lighthearted read on the suffering of the Japanese people.” To them, “war” was the epitome of this suffering. The inclusion of Yongil violated the taboo against mentioning “the Japanese as instigators of war.”

Are these the opinions of only a small subculture of Japan? A subculture is usually perceived as being in the fringe realm beyond mainstream understanding. Yet, it cannot be denied that the subculture in Japan is a forum that continuously expands and reproduces the historical revisionism of the Japanese public. The activities of the subculture have produced something called the “Netouyo (online right wing)” in Japan³. In the 2000s, historical issues, abduction of Japanese people, and territorial issues instigated a Korean-related xenophobia amongst the Japanese public under the frame of “neighboring countries = enemies” and “specific Asian country.” Today, this wave has been taken over by the subcultures of the youth to create a new ethical stance on the war.

IV

Netouyo inherited the historical revisionism of the conservative ideology of the late

1 「*The Rail of Stars*」 「Top customer reviews」 <http://Aamazon.co.jp> (Registration date 2013.3.28 Search date 2016.09.21) .

2 「Read and Compare *The Rail of Stars*!」 <<http://terkira.exblog.jp/20849692>> (Registration date 2013.11.15 Search date 2016.09.21) .

3 Netouyo, a coinage that emerged in 2005, refers to “a group of people who actively engage in right-wing nationalist media activities centered on web pages and who are not affiliated with existing right-wing nationalist associations or organizations.” It is a new phenomenon that is distinct from the existing right wing (HyoJin Kim, 2011:44-47).

1990s¹. In the late 1990s, reeling in the wake of the burst of the Bubble Economy, the Great Hanshin earthquake, the Aum Shinrikyo incident, the corruption of bureaucrats, and the university reform, Japan saw a sharp decline in general interest in society and politics among young people. With the turbulence of economic turmoil and confusion of social consciousness, there has been an increase in the number of right-wing small groups; and amidst the chaotic circumstances, historical revisionism has come to the fore. A typical example is found in the “Historical Liberalism Study Group,” which questioned and denied a specific view of war dubbed as the “historical view of self-abuse.” This phenomenon has extended to school textbooks. Organizations such as the “Gathering for Making New History Textbooks” have consistently pointed out and underlined that the existing textbooks tend to over-emphasize Japanese imperialist aggression, colonial rule, war responsibility, and war crime in the modern and contemporary history sections (Yi 63).

Such a claim is not limited to the existing right-wingers. It has a direct impact on the historical perceptions of generations who have not experienced the war, resulting in the right wing that thrives on the Internet today. It contributes to the formation of an inaccurate opinion of the masses. Particularly, while critical opinions are suppressed, the spread of right-wing prejudices has a negative impact on the thinking of children, adolescents, and adults who are exposed to the Internet with no alternative opinions available. In this context, the social phenomenon cannot be overlooked. As we have noted earlier, the most problematic aspect that the Japanese netizens found about the animation *The Rail of Stars* was the “historical understanding of the Japanese people.” According to these people, the animation infringes on the ethical line of the portrayal of “the Japanese as victims of war” with which the Japanese public sympathizes. The indignation boils from the question of why the Koreans interfere in the pure storytelling of the suffering endured by the Japanese. Why is the issue of Korea’s independence mentioned at all when the original novel portrayed Japanese victimization so well?

1 A liberal view of history is a historical point of view and a way of verifying the history, which was advocated by the Japanese social educator Nobukatsu Hujioaka. According to Hujioaka’s book, *What Is a Liberal View of History?* (1997), liberalism refers to “an ideology based on the individuals or the autonomy of individuals. It argues that Japan should be free from post-war historical studies and pedagogy, which have been dominated by a leftist view of history. More specifically, the liberal view of history questions and condemns the critical standpoint — what they call the historical view of self-abuse — on some major historical incidents such as the Tokyo War Crimes Tribunal and the Nanking Massacre. It is also called “historical revisionism” or “a new imperialist view of history” by some opponents.

Despite the fact that the scenes of “Yongil” do not fundamentally change the overall flow of “the wartime hardships of the Japanese,” with the appearance of a single Korean character with his own indigenous name, *The Rail of Stars* is branded as an “anti-Japanese” animation. This is an extreme reaction to breaking an ethical taboo. It exaggerates the appearance of a very short and fragmentary “Yongil” episode. With such a logic, the view of the war waged by modern Japan is also replaced by the problem of the Koreans chronically holding an “anti-Japanese” sentiment. This type of argument aims to first create the enemy, by then it leads people to the logic that the Japanese people have no choice but to defend against their enemy. This is also connected to the earnest increase in adverse reactions to Korea after the release of the drama *Winter Sonata* (2003), which generated a great “Hallyu (the Korean Wave)” boom in Japan. Putting aside the question of viewers’ likes and dislikes, the reaction to the popular Korean drama expanded into an opposition to the “anti-Japanese” sentiment of many Koreans that base the emotion on historical knowledge. Ultimately, there was fostered an atmosphere of “aversion to Korea and things related to Korea.”

The problem of this hate rapidly came to the surface in 2012 after the formation of Jaitokai (Group of Citizens Who Do Not Tolerate the Privilege of the Korean Residents in Japan) in 2007. Comments criticizing the animation *The Rail of Stars* on the previously mentioned website also came pouring out during this period. Naoto Higuchi claims that the “anti-Korean” atmosphere was influenced by Japanese subcultures. However, he also finds another basis in the changes that have taken place in the Japanese right-wing forum since the late 1990s, that is, the growing interest in historical issues and their neighbors of East Asia (Higuchi 24). The reason behind why these subcultures pay particular attention to Korea out of the other East Asian countries is found in the proliferation of news concerning China and Korea. In the case of China, the right-wing circle of commentators see problems in each area of society — politics, economy, military, and historical perspective. Korea, on the other hand, is almost exclusively mentioned in the context of historical views. In particular, the “comfort women for the Japanese military” was a major issue that prompted a backlash against the anti-Japanese sentiments. This backlash, or anti-Korean sentiment, became a major issue of historical revisionism in the right-wing debate in Japan (Nogawa 4-5). The reason why the anti-Korean protests have intensified since Abe’s inauguration (2012) can be found in the fact that the Prime Minister’s historical revisionism and Japanese people’s fear of falling behind economically met at a crossroads. To present a final analysis, this escalation is deeply related to the consciousness of the public who are

reluctant to face the idea of Japan as the perpetrator of war.

In the opposing faction, there were some protesters against hate speech and “New Conservatives” that criticized the Jaitokai (Jo 250-281). Kaku Isibasi points out, “For 70 years since the end of the war, Japanese society has never shown self-criticism on the subject of their history,”¹ emphasizing that this is the root cause of anti-Korean demonstrations. That is, at the root of this “aversion to Korea” is the Japanese perception of war-related history.

The animation *The Rail of Stars* provided suitable material for Netouyo’s activities to join the “Right Wing in Action” as a major player in the “anti-Korean” movement. In terms of genre, the narrative belongs to juvenile literature that is accessible to a wide range of generations, “anime” that specializes in promoting “Japan” more than any other media, and most of all, it is a “story of war” which is inseparable from the story of the Japanese people. It has all the essential elements for understanding Japan. When you search *The Rail of Stars* on the Internet, you will find brief descriptions as follows: “As a record of the experience of the actress Chitose Kobayashi during and after the war, a literary work for children published in 1982 and the animation based on it”; “Unlike the original novel, the animation features a boy character who was forced to change his name into Japanese.” You can find the work in categories such as “work about Koreans and Joseonjing living in Japan,” “1993 animation of the year,” “animation based on children’s literature,” “Japanese war movies,” and “Pacific War movies.”² In the order presented, “work about Koreans and Joseonjing living in Japan” comes first. Yet if you actually watch the animation, you will find that the topic of the ethnic Korean residents in Japan is far from the central theme of the story, and that there is nothing about the “war by the Japanese”; instead, the main theme is the “story of the suffering endured by the Japanese escaping Joseon.” Those who search for the work on the Internet are exposed to Japanese historical revisionism before they actually watch the novel or anime, and are eventually funneled into the drive for an “aversion to Korea.” An emphasis on contents separate from the subject, which can also be understood as the result of Netouyo’s activities, is another ethical knots Netouyo has created.

V

The literature depicting the real-life experiences of the Japanese who have returned

1 donga.com 「International」 “Japan, 70years after the war without reflection” <http://news.donga.com/3/all/20161201/81610126/1#> (Registration date 2016.12.1, Search date 2016.09.21).

2 https://ja.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Rail_of_Stars (Registration date 2016.8.20 Search date 2016.09.21).

from their life in colonies after Japan's defeat has been a medium for the emphasis on the "the history of wartime suffering," and as such, influenced the ethical mindset of the Japanese people on war. The various ethical knots generated by the ethical line "victim of war" give picture to the ethical attitude of the Japanese people to war.

The Rail of Stars, like any other stories about returning, was a literary work on war that omitted the culprit behind the war. It was a work of self-justification and consolation that avoided the truthful understanding of war. In its numerous reprints, it has served as a tool to solidify the ethical understanding of "the Japanese as war victims" in a form familiar to Japanese readers.

Despite these troubling effects, a new ethical line has been suggested in Japan by the voices of literary authors who believe that it is wrong to see the Japanese as victims. One may find such an attempt in the brief episode of "Yongil, a Korean with his own name" in the animation, a storyline unmentioned in the novel.

Unfortunately, the animation of *The Rail of Stars* was instrumental in the rise of "anti-Korean" sentiments, started from a small subculture of individuals and spiraling into the larger arena of Japanese society. The animation is being circulated online as "a story of fabricated Japanese history" claiming that it undermines "the original work which has no problem." Based on the unrepentant attitude of the Japanese toward colonial rule, imperialism, and no contrition for their execution of war, this phenomenon unfolds itself by placing the Japanese at the antipode of the "opposition to Japan" found among the Korean people. *The Rail of Stars* is the medium through which the public is exposed to historical revisionism on the Internet by being channeled through its filter of opinions, which in turn starts the cycle of creating a similar "Netouyo" through the net's culture of easy sharing.

From our discussion so far, we can confirm that the ethical attitude of Japan to war is a combined product of two factions. On one side are the ethical lines generated by returnees from war and colonies and other such people who experienced the conflict. On the other are the ethical knots created by the public readers according to different periods and situations.

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