

GODS ARE CRUEL: FAULKNERIAN SOURCES OF ENDŌ SHŪSAKU'S LITERATURE

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*Abstract: The purpose of this essay is to put Endō Shūsaku, a well-known Japanese author for his work *Silence* (1966), on world literature map by focusing on diaries he kept during his stay in France (1950-1953). The study of Endō has focused on the influence of French authors, particularly Catholic writers, represented by François Mauriac, Georges Bernanos, and Julien Green. However, in his diaries, Endō repeatedly refers to American authors and it is clear that William Faulkner was one of the writers who had significant impact on his writing. , Yet, the scholars of Faulkner in Japan have overlooked his influence on Endō. This paper will highlight new perspectives in researching Endō's texts by expanding the frameworks of existing studies and recognize his writing as a contribution to Faulkner studies in Japan.*

*There is no such thing as was—only is. If was existed, there would be no grief or sorrow. I like to think of the world I created as being a kind of keystone in the universe; that, small as that keystone is, if it were ever taken away the universe itself would collapse. My last book will be the *Doomsday Book*, the *Golden Book*, of Yoknapatawpha County. Then I shall break the pencil and I'll have to stop.*
--William Faulkner

Faulkner is not the writer you should read in autumn. Nor should he to be read on peaceful spring days or during the cold winter days. I feel that I can understand some of the world of perplexing writer such as Faulkner when I read his works on a hot summer day, my body covered in sweat in the full sunshine.
--Endō Shūsaku

I. Introduction: Shift of Influence from France to America on Japanese Literature

The works of William Faulkner occupy a special place in the history of post-war Japanese literature. Widely researched and discussed, translated and interpreted, his powerful narratives and unique literary techniques (whose linguistic specificities cannot be fully rendered in Japanese language), set direction for the development of post-war literature. This statement, however, may seem as an overcomplication, if not too redundant: “global Faulkner”, as suggested by the authors of the study on the

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writer's legacy in global age published in 2009, much exceeds the frameworks of existing research, whereby the reader is no longer constrained to national boundaries. In accordance with this line of thinking, George Handley argues that such approach offers a new debate on the writer's relevance to "New World cultures" and "makes the boundaries of one's community tenuous since the reader is brought out of bounds, beyond the confines of accepted knowledge and into the uncertain terrain of calls and echoes between and among the communities" (Hadley, 2009: XII). In other words, what Hadley aims to point out, is "the recognition that this knowledge is produced between author and reader, between revelation and translation" (Trefezzer, 2009, XII). Global approach places the great value on cultural translation that conditions the process of reading, rereading and appropriation of literary texts from distant lands and will remain important for the analysis in this paper.

As already noted, any attempt to properly outline the processes of formation of post-war Japanese literature, requires the recognition of two spheres of influences and interactions: first, French literature, predominantly, the existentialists (Sartre, Camus), but also the popularity of works by Mauriac, Gide, Bernanos, followed by the *nouveau roman* (Alain Robbe-Grillet) and the works by Françoise Sagan, just to mention few. Ōe Kenzaburo, Abe Kōbō, Mishima Yukio, as well as some of the members of *Daisan no shinjin group* (The Third generation of writers), including Endō Shūsaku, remained under the strong influence of French literature.¹ Critics and literary historians, for instance Katō Shūichi² and more recently Michael Emmerich observe that French impact spanned from the late 1940s and lasted approximately until the 1970s, after which the presence of American literature in Japan become more evident. As Emmerich points out, the proposed time caesura could be associated with the debut of younger generation of the writers, notably with Murakami Haruki.

Yet, it must be pointed out that the proposed differentiation does not fully cover, and these two cultural spheres of the influences (French/American) need to be acknowledged as overlapping and in constant interdependence. There are number of present-day writers and intellectuals, including Furukawa Hideo, Kazufumi Shiraishi,

¹ Ōe Kenzaburo, Abe Kōbō and Endō Shūsaku received university degrees in French literature.

² A comprehensive overview of French-Japanese literary and artistic encounter is explored by Katō Shūichi in his chapter 'Thinking Beyond Parallel Traditions: Literature and Thought in Postwar Japan and France' in *Confluences: Postwar Japan and France*, ed. Doug Slaymaker, 2002, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, p. 49-68.

Ono Masatsugu, Wakamatsu Eisuke who openly point to French literature as the sources of inspiration. As I intend to demonstrate, the explicit time caesuras in literary studies may be misleading: Japanese literature has remained under the strong influence of both literary traditions, which on various levels constantly complement each other.

By treating the works of Endō Shūsaku (1923-1996) as the case study, I aim to propose the new paradigm of thinking on the issue of literary influences within the post-war Japanese literature, but also establish (where applicable) the context, background and the relevance of examining the impact of American literature, especially the works of William Faulkner, in the process of the formation of Endō Shūsaku's literary texts.

II. Reading William Faulkner in Japan

A considerable amount of literature and critical studies have been published on Faulkner in Japan, some of which are worth mentioning here in order to outline the dominant tendencies and topics of research questions that address the critical evaluation of Faulkner's works. As the deeper and more insightful assessment on the topic remains beyond the scope of this paper and does not exhaust the complexity of Faulkner's lasting legacy in Japan,³ here I focus on just few scholarships.

One of the most significant study is *Faulkner Studies in Japan* (1985), edited by the leading specialist on Faulkner, Ohashi Kenzaburō, and the professor of American literature from Chiba University, Ono Kiyokuki. The study was designed not only as an overview of critical and scholarly texts but contains writers' testimonies on inspirations they took from Faulkner's novels (Ōe, Oba Minako, Kagawa Otohiko, Fukunaga Takehiko). Ohashi Kenzaburō began editing *The Complete Volumes of Faulkner's Works* (Fōkunā Zenshū) in 1967. In the 1995 edition, the critic Karatani Kōjin contributed to the volume by making a very telling comment, saying that "Over the thirty years since the first edition of Ohashi's volume, the intellectual and cultural climate in Japan have changed completely. These changes are reflected in Ohashi's editions on Faulkner's works. Once, there had been much expectations towards these

³ It should be noted that William Faulkner visited Japan with series of lectures in 1955. Though his works had been known in Japan prior to his visit, but there were no proper translations and most of the novels were read either in original or in French translation.

editions. I don't think it still lasts. I don't even know if there are people who still read Faulkner" (Karatani, 1995: 357; quotation from Suwabe, 2019, 86). Despite Karatani's pessimistic predictions regarding the reception of Faulkner's works in Japan, his unique narratives are, nevertheless, still appreciated by the Japanese readers. This was proved by Ikezawa Natsuki, who included *Absalom, Absalom* in *Ikezawa Natsuki's Bugaku Zenshū [A Collection of Ikezawa Natsuki]* and devoted one of the chapters in the collection William Faulkner. Also, Ono Masatsugu and prominent critics, Toko Kōji and Sasaki Atsushi, point to Faulkner as the contributing force in Japan's coming into contact with world literature. Numano Mitsuyoshi proposes yet another interesting view on Faulkner (as an example of global writer). In the essay *Atarashii sekai bungaku no sōzō* (The creation of new world literature), we read that:

If we want to find out what characterizes the language expression for the twenty first century, we need to go to Faulkner's Yoknapatawpha, then we need Garcia Lorca's Macondo, followed by The Abhasia of Fazil Iskander, Ōe's fields in Shikoku, Shinjuku-district as portrayed in Hideo Levy's novels – we need to maintain the characteristics of all these places around the world while making it the common place for all of us. I call this utopian place *a new world literature* (Numano, 2001/2012, 240).

Apart from the above studies, we should also mention The William Faulkner Society of Japan and journal *Fōkunā* (Faulkner). In May 2018, the special edition focused on Faulkner and Japanese literature, whereby scholars like Suwabe Kōichi, Abe Masahiko, and Nitta Keiko outlined comparative perspectives, from diverse angles and cognitive perspectives, including the comparison between Faulkner's modernism and the modernist movement in Japan, the problem of historicity and memory depicted by Faulkner and in Mori Ōgai's novels, or subjectivism and relativism in Tanizaki's *Sasameyuki (The Makioka Sister)* and Imamura Natsuko's fiction as seen from the perspective of Faulkner's novels. Yamashita Noboru in his online article "William Faulkner and Three Japanese Novelists: Affinities and Parallels" extended the existing scholarship by making an interesting comparison between the American writer and Akutagawa Ryūnosuke, Dazai Osamu and Murakami Haruki,"⁴ whereas Tanaka Takako in the chapter "The Global/Local Nexus of Patriarchy: Japanese

⁴ The article by Yamashita was published in online version of the website Center for Faulkner Studies.

Writers Encounter Faulkner” (published in the hitherto mentioned study *Global Faulkner*) builds the argument upon historical circumstances (the defeat of the South after the Civil War and the collapse of the Shogunate in Japan in the 19th century) as the binding and common features of Faulkner’s and Nakagami Kenji’s fiction. Focusing on the issue of transition (as the consequence of historical processes), Tanaka explores the “trauma of modernization” and the complexity of re-adaptation to new world order.

III. Overlooked Endō Shūsaku

As much as the above studies offer diverse and multi-layered interpretations of Faulkner’s literature, they do not mention or include the examination of the works by Endō Shūsaku. I attempt to fill an important gap in existing research on Endō’s texts that has overlooked the impact of American literature by focusing on French literature, predominantly the milieu of Catholic writers, represented by François Mauriac, Georges Bernanos, Julien Greene. It is therefore expected that this essay will highlight new perspectives in researching Endō’s texts by expanding the frameworks of existing studies and recognize his writing as a contribution to Faulkner studies in Japan.

Due to the limited capacity, this paper focuses on selected parts from the diary (*nikki*) which Endō kept during his stay in France as a student between 1950 and 1953 (Lyon and Paris), prior to his becoming the writer.⁵ There are number of reasons for treating the diaries as a primary source for the analysis: first of all, they have been slightly neglected and overlooked in previous research (even in Japan) whereas they constitute priceless sources for understanding the background of Endō’s writing; they are not only personal records but more importantly they can be read as the testimony of Japanese student’s (and the writer to be) coming into contact with texts of world literature. With regards to this issue, it must be pointed out that there exists a misconception that Endō’s literature was modelled (only) on French Catholic literature. The conventional image of the “Japanese Catholic Writer” (or Japanese Graham Green – as he is often identified) has significantly narrowed down the interpretative practice

⁵ Endō Shūsaku’s debut works are two novellas *Shiroi hito*, *Kiroyi hito* (White Man, Yellow Man), which in 1955 were awarded Akutagawa Prize.

excluding other literary traditions in the analysis. This tendency refers not only to the methodological approach but also to the texts that have been chosen as the object of the analyses – principally these are novels or short stories (therefore, fictional texts), whereas there exists a large body of non-fictional texts (essay and critical works) that have not been properly explored so far.⁶

The references to Faulkner in Endō's diary are numerous, and what is more interesting is the reading process itself: Endō did not read in original, his appropriation of Faulkner's novels (as well as other American writers) is mediated by French translation, which is also visible in his process of interpreting the content of Faulkner's texts. The "interference" of French offers an interesting parallel reading (not unfrequently the misreading) and shows the semantic difficulties in de-coding the essence of Faulkner's narrative. As a result, names of the characters or places (which, in Faulkner's prose, not unfrequently contain a hidden meaning) are often confused, misspelled or impossible to identify as Endō writes in Japanese katakana (phonetic writing transferring the French reading of English names into Japanese) and they significantly differ from the original. Therefore, when examining the case of Endō Shūsaku, a series of translational questions occur, taking into consideration that not only does he simply read Faulkner but also attempts to make cultural/linguistic transfers (which he records in his diary). This is strictly related to the key issue: "sources" or "influences" – how shall these be explored?

As already noted, in the existing literature on the subject of the influence of Faulkner's work on Japanese literature, the name Endō has often been neglected. Usually associated with the milieu of Catholic literature, Endō remained, nevertheless, under the strong influence of Faulkner's prose. *Taifutsu nikki (The French Diary)* is the outcome and the testimony of his encounter with the West (both physical and on more abstract level that consists in cultural, intellectual and spiritual encounter). Reading the selected passages from the diary, we notice that in the midst of large number of names, François Mauriac and William Faulkner are the authors that appear side by side, literally becoming the axis that connects the process of Endō's appropriation of Western literature. Endō reads these two writers simultaneously by making comparisons between Mauriac's *Thérèse Desqueyroux* (1927) – the novel he would

⁶ For more details on Endō Shūsaku's essays and critical texts, please refer to my monograph *Hermeneutics of Evil in the Works of Endō Shūsaku: Between Reading and Writing*.

call *watashi no aishita shōsetsu* (the novel I have loved)⁷, and Faulkner's *The Light in August* (1932) he first came into contact with while in France. The purpose of this paper is to review selected passages from the diary (mostly those parts written in the summer of 1951) in which Endō notes down his impressions and thoughts upon reading Faulkner's text or, in some cases, examining critical works (written by French on American literature, for example by Jean Paul Sartre).

Since the object of the analysis is the diary it might be worth elaborating on how the genre can be approached and whether this determines the process of interpretation. According to Philippe Lejeune, known for his study on various forms of life-writing narratives, and the author of *On Diary*, where he attempted to establish the definition of *journal intime*: "diary is the point where life and literature meet; we are looking for the creativity in the most unliterary accounts", and emphasises that "diary is not a fiction" (Lejeune, 2009, 19). On the other hand, in Japan the term *nikki bungaku* consists of fiction and non-fiction. A detailed investigation into Endō's diary (*nikki*) demonstrates how the genre escapes the conventional classification into life-writing narrative. The application of Philippe Lejeune's theories of the genre (*le journal intime*) and references to Japanese tradition of *nikki bungaku* provide us with the methodological tool in order to redefine the notion of 'writing the self'. Thanks to Lejeune's extensive scholarship, various narrative features that, according to French scholar, compose diaristic writing narration timelines, detectable subgenres (travelogues, literary criticism, creative literary fiction), process of fictionalization of the writing persona can be further explored (but of course, this has to remain outside the scope of this paper).

With regards to Endō Shūsaku's diaries, we must bear in mind that the discussed texts are not the only diaries he kept: throughout his lifetime he produced a large body of *nikki bungaku* (including *shōsetsu sōsaku nikki*—diaries or journals that register the process of creation of his novels). Therefore, it could be argued that *Nikki bungaku* constitute a separate genre within his oeuvres.

Due to enormous amount of versions and editions of diary from the time he spent in France in the early 1950s, and editorial variations (some texts published in *Kindai Bungaku* or *Mita Bungaku* literary magazines), and for the clarity and coherency of

⁷ In 1984, Endō published the collection of essays *Watashi no aishita shōsetsu* (The Novel I Have Loved) on Mauriac's novel *Thérèse Desqueyroux*.

the analysis, I refer to the 2018 edition of *Sakka no nikki* (The Writer's Diary) published in *Endō Shūsaku Zennikki* (The Complete Diaries of Endō Shūsaku). The diary in question covers the period of June 1950 and August 1952.⁸

IV. Translations, Adaptations, Interpretations: Exploring Literary Influences in the Age of World Literature

Central to the discussion is the concept of “sources” whose implementation and use throughout the paper need to be clarified. In order to provide a thorough examination of the trances of American sources within Endō's literature, I propose to approach the topic from the perspective of “world literature” in order to establish a coherent mode of reading his diaries.

The popularity of world literature in today's academic discourse calls into question the relevance of researching literary sources or influences. If we want to approach the literary text as an example of world literature, the question arises whether the study of what we define as “literary sources” or “literary influences” does not lead to a tautology? We may argue that world literature itself is conditioned by multilayered processes of joint influences, interactions, inspirations. In accordance with David Damrosch's definition, “world literature” is:

a mode of circulation and of reading, a mode that is as applicable to individual works as to bodies of material, available for reading established classics and new discoveries alike [...] It is important from the outset to realize that just as there never has been a single set canon of world literature, so too no single way of reading can be appropriate to all texts, or even to any one text at all times. A work enters into world literature by a double process: first, by being read *as* literature; second, by circulating out into a broader world beyond its linguistic and cultural point of origin. As it moves into the sphere of world literature, far from inevitably suffering a loss of authenticity or essence, a work can gain in many ways. To follow this process, it is necessary to look closely at the transformations a work undergoes in particular circumstances [...] To understand the workings of world literature, we need more a phenomenology than an ontology of the work of art: a literary work *manifests* differently abroad than it does at home (Damrosch, 2009).

The dynamics of discussions, interpretations, analyses and polemics launched by world literature discourse⁹ have made the methodological or theoretical approach to its

⁸ In 2018 edition of the diary these are on the pages 9-252.

background. Researching world literature, we often face dilemma of lack of precise methodological or cognitive tools that would provide us terminology, perspective leading towards expected outcomes.

As the proposed essay deals with sources/influences in Endō Shūsaku's texts, it is worth addressing the above questions. How relevant therefore is to examine "literary influences" or sources in the age of world literature? In the *The Anxiety of Influence*, Harold Bloom explains that:

"Influence" is a metaphor, one that implicates a matrix of relationships-imagistic, temporal, spiritual, psychological-all of them ultimately defensive in their nature. What matters most [...] is that the anxiety of influence comes out of a complex act of strong misreading, a creative interpretation that I call "poetic misprision." What writers may experience as anxiety, and what their works are compelled to manifest, are the consequence of poetic misprision, rather than the cause of it (Bloom, 1995, XXIII).

There remains one more aspect to be taken into consideration on the occasion of the discussed issue: it is a very broadly understood translation, and more precisely the role of a translator. With regards to Faulkner, Pascale Casanova elaborates on this matter in her seminal study *The World Republic of Letters*, "world literary space" is being created. The translator, having become the indispensable intermediary for crossing the borders of the literary worlds, is an essential figure in the history of writing. The great translators of the central literary countries are true architects of the universal, which is to say of the attempt to unify literary space (Casanova, 2009, 142).

This leads us to an important issue, namely recreating literary canon in Japan. This can be approached through the lens of *hon'yaku bungaku* (literally: translated literature; literature in translation) that designates the process of translation of works of Western literature into Japanese. In accordance with major scholarship and studies, the term is associated with the rise of modern Japanese literature in the late nineteenth century (the so-called Meiji period, 1868-1912), when the entire notion of *bungaku* (literature) was re-examined and adjusted as the consequences of social, political and

⁹ In this paper, I apply the term "world literature" although recently the term global novel has been also used.

cultural conditions in westernized Japan. The question whether *hon'yaku bungaku* is or is not a separate literary genre remains open.¹⁰

Reading the passages from Endō's diaries, we may venture: what was or what was not "the canon of world literature" for Endō", taking into consideration that he approaches the texts that are not only from distant countries but also he himself is in a distant land (in France, therefore we may presume that he somehow "projects" the French reading onto his choice of literature"). On interdependence between "world literature" and "literary canon", Zhang Longxi points out in his essay "Canon and World Literature" that:

[...] it should be the task of literary scholars to everywhere to introduce and present the canonical works they know best to the world beyond the culture of their origin. I say canonical works because these are by definition the best and more exemplary works of different literary traditions, works that have stood the test of time and proven to be valuable for generations of readers under very different social, political and cultural conditions [...] Because there are far too many books to read, we cannot afford but to read the very best of the world's numerous literary works, and the only way to know what are the best books is to depend on critics and scholars of world's different literary traditions to tell us about their canonical works, and to convince us why they are worth reading [...] World literature is the integrated body of canonical works of the world's literary traditions (Zhang, 2016, 122-123).

Zhang also stresses the significance of "time", saying, "time, it seems, is the only thing that makes or breaks a canon" (Ibid).

¹⁰ The intensive process of translations that began in the 1870s and continued throughout the early twentieth century, lead the path towards creating the notion of literature (*bungaku*) and rise of new literary forms, including *shōsetsu* (the novel). Approaching Japanese literature from the perspective of *hon'yaku bungaku* is to recognize "translation" as culture and identity forming device and, in some instances, to question the authenticity and singularity of modern Japanese literature. As Donald Keene observed, "The translations of European literature that appeared after the Meiji Restoration were the absolute condition for the creation of a new Japanese literature [...] Assessing the consequence and impact of *hon'yaku bungaku*, Keene further comments that, "Adaptations of European literary works, as opposed to translations, were of perhaps greater importance in the development in modern Japanese literature [...] By the end of the nineteenth century no Japanese writer of significance remained unaffected by a knowledge of European literature, and before long some writers were insisting that they felt closer to Tolstoy, Dostoevsky or Stendhal, all read in translations, than they did to any work of the Japanese tradition. Donald Keene, *The Age of Translation*, in *Down to the West: Japanese Literature of the Modern Era*, Vol. 3, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), 60.

I have stated above that translation constitutes an important part of formation of contemporary literature in Japan. As Indra Levy has aptly noticed “The entire modern Japanese culture is translation”. Similar comment was made by another prominent scholar, Sakai Naoki on the formation of the modern Japanese society whereby translation is perceived as the identity building tool that conditioned the shape of modern Japanese culture.¹¹

Following this line of thinking, we may ask, if *hon'yaku bungaku* should be considered as a separate literary genre? In other words, does literary translation constitute a new genre? Douglas Robinson would answer that they are, as “what the literary translator imitates is not just the source text but the source author’s strategies in creating the source text [...] translators are narrators and translations are read as narratoriality.” According to Robinson,

literary translation is a new genre of literature: it is a target language rewriting of source text that fictionally pretends not only to be equivalent to the source text but to be the source text, that achieves literariness not solely by imitating the textual contents of the source text but by imitating the literary strategies employed by the source author or similar authors in the target culture (Robinson: online source).

The influence of *hon'yaku bungaku* in creation of modern Japanese literature was explored by Mizumura Minae in her novel *Honkaku shōsestu (A True Novel)*. The plot revolves around the notion of literary canon and cultural heritage in Japan since modernity. The words are spoken by the narrator, an inspiring young female novelist who plans to write the novel – her own reinterpretation of Emily Bronte’s *Wuthering Heights*. Mizumura follows the path delineated by previous generations of Japanese writers who borrowed literary patterns, motifs, characters from the West and compromises literary traditions. Mizumura’s novel is not experimental or innovative but only proves how *hon'yaku bungaku* is still present and, to a certain degree, an integrated part of creative process. As much as Mizumura’s case demonstrates certain tendencies among Japanese writers, let us briefly evaluate the status of world/global literature in present-day Japan.

¹¹ Indra Levy, *Translation in Modern Japan*, (London: Routledge Contemporary Japan, 2011) and Sakai Naoki, *Translation and Subjectivity. On Japan and Cultural Nationalism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997).

Despite the growing interest in *sekai bungaku* (world literature) in Japan and within Japanese Studies in recent years, key methodological questions still appear to be: How to locate Japanese literature on world literary map? What are the criteria or cognitive tools that lead towards establishing Japan's interconnections with literatures of the world?

Mizumura Minae devotes a considerable part of her seminal book *The Fall of the Language in the Age of English*, recreating the process of establishing literary canon in post-war Japan. The book, written as a personal account, received mixed reactions in Japan when it was published in 2008. Regarded as the book on “world literature, translation, reading, and writing”, Mizumura acknowledges the translingual formation of national languages (including the Japanese) but, at the same time, points to the negative effects of institutionalizations of literature. Taking the case of the contemporary Japanese language, she “warns against losing the precious diversity” and calls for the attention and protection of what national writings and texts, and what she considers that ultimate form—national literature. Mizumura significantly contributed to the discussion on the status of Japanese national canon in post-war era in the period dominated by constant tension between what is considered “national” and “foreign” intensified by political reality of post-war Japan.

As much as the above comment might be applicable to the Japanese literature (and to the evaluation of Endō Shūsaku's diaries), we may also conclude this section by saying that (paraphrasing Pascale Casanova's words), that “the various ways in which writers seek access to literary recognition are of a piece. No clear boundary separates them: all these solutions to literary domination need to be jointly conceived in terms of continuity and movement, recognizing that in the course of his career a writer may successively or simultaneously investigate one or more of these possibilities” (Casanova, 2009, 143). Let us now move on to the final section of the paper to examine how Endō reads William Faulkner.

V. Gods are Cruel: Endō Shūsaku and William Faulkner

The title of this section “gods are cruel”, as well as of the paper (*kamigami wa tashikani zankokoku da* : Gods are certainly cruel) has been borrowed from Endō Shūsaku's diary. It is not clear whether it was his very first encounter with the works

of Williams Faulkner, nonetheless, there are number of important comments noted by Endō that shed the light into his progressively evolving literary tastes. The majority of comments and notes were taken in the summer of 1951 when Endō was reading Faulkner's novel *The Light in August*, where he states that;

I personally think that the central topics in *The Light in August* are the depiction of human carnal desires and brutality of God. Gods are certainly cruel and human virtue is totally ridiculed by the Devil.

What seems to be an interesting in the above passage is the use of both singular and plural in reference to "God": kami and kamigami. The same pattern appeared in 1947 essay 'Kamigami to kami to' (The Gods and God), written prior to his arrival to France, when he was a student at Keiō University. The essay that opened his literary career and was later included to the collection 'Katorikku sakka no mondai' (Dilemmas of Catholic Writers, 1952), announces one of the core area of his literary (as well as intellectual/theological) investigations, notably the tensions that arise on the axis of monotheism and pantheism. At this stage, we cannot establish to what extent the application of singular or plural are deliberate, or whether they are the outcome of his interest in this topic.

It seems interesting, and to a certain degree intriguing, that Endō turns his attention to the protestant tradition of thinking: he does that especially when reconsidering the question of human destiny, or to be more precise, human free will. This is the area where Endō—the Catholic seems conflicted but nevertheless he continues to make extended study on the topic (which he later expands on to the issue of human passivity in relation to evil and sin, as explored in the works of François Mauriac).

The image of human destiny is a recurring topic in Endō's diary and his early writing, and without any exaggeration, this was the impact of American literature Endō was reading during his university years in France. However, what needs to be noted is that apart from Faulkner, it was Julien Green (bilingual, Catholic, American writer) who had huge impact on Endō, especially his novel *Moirai* (1951).

Let us see how Endō interprets Faulkner's novels in his diary. In one of his first passages, he refers to the study, *Contemporary American Writers*.¹² On December 10th 1950, he notes in his diary that: "I am so grateful, I discovered American literature. Thanks to *The Sound and Fury* and as *I Lay Dying*, I could understand the misery of modern humanity and I can totally relate these topics." Following this comment, Endō conducts an extended analysis of Faulkner's literary techniques—but since he is reading in French his examination, is based on the French translation. Already at this early stage of his interest in Faulkner's literature, Endō singles out one specific image: the misery of human desires, that in later passages of his journal he will link with human inability to escape or to make any change in the fate that has already been prescribed to every single human being. From the theological point of view, this view opens an interesting discussion on the issue of redemption and salvation (the topics that will be extensively explored in his fictional texts) but for obvious reasons, these need to be put aside.

As we continue reading the diary, we can see how gradually he immerses into Faulkner's world: "Faulkner does not spoil his readers", writes Endō, and throughout December in 1950, just couple of months after his arrival to France he continues reading Faulkner, which eventually will lead to the discovery of the complex issue of human unconscious (*muishiki*) that will in later years become a salient topic for his own writing, including in *Scandal* (1986) and in his last major novel *Deep River* (1993).

Reading Faulkner's novels (still in French translation) through the lens of human unconscious, leads Endō towards discovering the writing of Freud, and he attempts to apply the psychoanalysis method to literary interpretation. In other words, Faulkner becomes the case study for the deeper examination of key questions that particularly interest Endō in the early 1950s: what is the relation between the unconscious and human destiny (*unmei*)? Are these two related? If so, how? And why? When Endō embarks on literary career after his return to Japan in 1953, these questions will be linked to the problem of original sin (*tsumi*) and human predisposition to evil but we can already see how this interests and preoccupies Endō, and he searches the

¹² Unfortunately, I was not able to identify the name of the French author of this book as Endō provides only the phonetic (katakana) writing of the foreign name.

inspirations beyond the tradition of thinking that would be the closest to his belief and conviction (that is Catholic religion), but far beyond.

One of the most significant passages in the *Diary* appears on 31 January 1951, when he wrote down the following passage.

As I reread my diary again, I discovered that I have fallen to the violent self-hatred. This is not “me” who is depicted in the diary...I have recently been reading *The Study on American Literature*. I have particularly found interesting about the works by Steinbeck. The novel presents the ritual of desire and cruelty (I have paid attention to this while reading Marquis de Sade). When it comes to me, as I am strangely influenced by Mauriac, there is no distinction, between sin and desire, and then being influenced by Dostoevsky – sin is the biggest of the revelation of the abbey for the man, and after the wartime influence sin and brutality cannot be detached from me. I am now investigating the relationship between desire and cruelty.

Endō expands his exploration of Faulkner’s novel, reading it simultaneously with Mauriac’s *Thérèse Desqueyroux* already betraying his interest in portrayal of female characters by both writers. On completion of the novel July 15th, 1951, he comments makes the following confession,

I have finished reading *The Light in August*. I think I have paid too much attention to Joe Christmas and I need to read the novel once again. It is because, after going through the novel that is over four hundred pages long, I realized that the main character is not Joe Christmas, but Doc Hinse, who fights fierce battle with God and is eventually betrayed by God. In this sense, my interpretation of Faulkner’s novel significantly differs from the way most readers would read this work.

Almost every entry in 1951 is about American literature, which Endō expands to the 19th century writers, like Edgar Allan Poe and Nathaniel Hawthorne. In this sense, he examines the specificity of American literature. He makes number of references to D.H. Lawrence’s seminal study *American Classical Literature*, on which Endo comments that “According to Lawrence, America created the writers who wanted to escape from the order of the West. America is the place where everything was destructed by the chaos—this is the real spirit of the country.” This quote becomes particularly important if we take into consideration how ambiguous was the notion of the West for Endō, that does not necessarily make a clear division between Europe and America as he often uses the Japanese *seiyō* to indicate the West as the generic

term. On July 26th in 1951, Endō counts the characteristics of Faulkner's prose, as saying "The tragedy of love, the diabolic nature of woman, the tradition from Hawthorne." And, he concludes his remarks by saying that, "eventually, America is the contrast with France. In France, there is balance in everything, whereas in America crosses all boundaries and falls into diabolism."

The above quotation seems paramount for the examination of Endō's literature, especially with regards to his interpretation of female characters in Faulkner's prose. Endō also created number of expressive female figures in his fiction, women that oscillate between saints and sinners, as in case of Mitsu from *The Girl I Left Behind* and Mitsuko from *Deep River*. Although there is no unequivocal evidence that these characters were indeed modelled on Faulkner's characters, certain similarities can be drawn without any exaggeration.

Endō's analysis of American literature concludes in powerful comments that are the outcome of his thorough examination of Lawrence's study. With regards to the female characters, that become focal point in his interpretation, he pays attention to the sentence: "l homme (les femmes) vit d'amour, mais meurt s'il aime trop" (Man (the women) live in love, but they die if they love too much). Endō, as he reveals in further parts, focuses on temporarily of human desires, that, as he comments in Faulkner's novels demonstrate in ...the tragedy of love, the demonicity of women (*josei no akumasei*). These are few examples of Endō's comments on Faulkner and of course, these do not exhaust the complexity and density of topics, images and imageries, interpretations made possible thanks to Endō. His reading of Faulkner, is, unfortunately, bit chaotic, by which I mean that as in most cases, he treats the writers he reads or their works *en block*. But at the same time, we need to take into consideration, that it is the nature of these texts – diary, as much as rigorous and enlightening it could be, is always a life-writing narrative, it is a very personal, and subjective piece of literature. There is one more issue that requires our attention: the view on the humanity as depicted by Mauriac, regarded by Endō as his literary master, those in Faulkner's novels.

We should not perceive Endō's interest in Faulkner's literature (from 1950s) as something drastic transition. Contrary, we may also venture the question whether Endō does not read Mauriac and Faulkner in order to point to what is common in their writing: motionless and passivity. In case of Faulkner, this would be the peculiarity of

“was”, in Mauriac, as interpreted by Endō “the motionless eyes of Thérèse Desqueyroux”. But maybe, this is where eventually, Endō, the vivid reader of world literature, emerges as the Japanese reader and succeeds in his complex endeavour to translate the novels he reads for his readers, including the readers of his very own diary.

Conclusion

This paper was aimed to present the profile of post-war Japanese writer, Endō Shūsaku and how American literature, especially the works of William Faulkner played in the process of formation of his own texts. It is understood the paper does not entirely exhaust the topic, and there are number of issues that remained beyond its scope. By referring to selected passages from Endō’s diary, I intended to draw attention of the readers on importance of his non-fictional texts, as well as his contribution to Faulkner studies in Japan in future, or possibly on the impact of American literature in post-war Japan.

Though it was France that finally became the literary homeland (*furusato*) for Endō, his literary endeavours had no boundaries and were expanding, across languages, cultures and time. Endō Shūsaku’s arduous journey towards and through world literature is yet to be examined and rediscovered by critics and, hopefully by the translators. The diaries could become the point of departure for further research.

Besides being a compelling record of writer’s literary growth, they show us how Endō envisioned humanity and his attempt to (re) define the world (*sekai*) and the self within this world. In one of his first diary entries 1951, he writes,

For me, human life is not painful at all. However, it is not bright either. What sustains my life at the moment, is the persistent interest in the mysterious and infinite darkness of humanity. When I consider humanity, I see the body hiding from the sunlight in the depths of the swamp [...] So, what is the external world? The external world is nothing more than the pieces of broken glass. I do not have any interest or concern about the external world. Only in light and shadow of human life. I cannot help but to gaze quietly on the play between the light and shadow. Otherwise, I would have to run away.¹³

¹³ Translation slightly modified.

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