

# Constructing Identities



Constructing Identities:  
The Interaction of National, Gender and Racial  
Borders

Edited by

Antonio Medina-Rivera and Lee Wilberschied

**CAMBRIDGE  
SCHOLARS**

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P U B L I S H I N G

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# INTRODUCTION

ANTONIO MEDINA-RIVERA  
AND LEE WILBERSCHIED

The basic concern of border studies is to examine and analyze interactions that occur when two groups come into contact with one another. Acculturation and globalization are at the heart of border studies, and cultural studies scholars try to describe the possible interactions in terms of conflicts and resolutions that become the result of those possible encounters.<sup>1</sup> The present book is a peer-reviewed selection of papers presented during the IV Crossing Over Symposium at Cleveland State University (October 7-9, 2011) and it is a follow-up to our discussion on border studies. The main focus of this volume is historical, [inter]national, gender and racial borders, and the implications that all of them have in the construction of an identity.

The notion of identity can be complicated, controversial, and challenging. A more homogenous group or culture tends to perceive its identity as fixed and attached to a specific tradition that in many ways stays intact throughout many generations. However, migration, border-crossing, globalization and even the media bring to our attention the dynamicity of an identity. Identity flows and changes based on the experiences of the individuals of a society. Today, it is difficult to think about a group that is totally isolated. Popescu<sup>2</sup> explains that borders still help to establish (non)membership in a group, but a change has occurred in “the type of Othering, which has moved now beyond fixity to include flexibility and multiplicity, that is, network membership.”

Consideration of issues of identity becomes even more compelling, as van Houtum notes, because borders of the past used to mark the beginning

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<sup>1</sup> Antonio Medina-Rivera and Lee Wilberschied, *In, Out and Beyond: Studies on Border Confrontations, Resolutions, and Encounters* (Newcastle Upon Tyne, United Kingdom: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2011), ix.

<sup>2</sup> Gabriel Popescu, *Bordering and Ordering the Twenty-first Century: Understanding Borders* (Lanhan, Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield Publishing Group, Inc., 2012), 93.

and end of a territory, but now the form of borders may include detention centers and airports. Furthermore, our movement in public space is frequently tracked, and our fingerprints or irises may be scanned: "Our bodies have become the passports and maps that we carry."<sup>3</sup> With the use of biometric data, the body has thus become a precise instrument of identification, especially during border-crossing, but the notion of identity requires further exploration, including gender representation.

The first part of the book focuses on gender representation and identity. The discussion regarding gender and identity borders connects us with the complexities of human nature, personality, sexual orientation, and the different facets experienced by individuals throughout their lives. Takao Hagiwara, in his chapter entitled "Feminism, Modernity, and Premodernity in Japan and the West: Fumiko Enchi's *The Waiting Years* and Henrik Ibsen's *A Doll's House*" establishes the parallelism between a western and an eastern literary work and the idea of the discomfited wife. Hagiwara explains the values of premodernity and modernity and how other cultural and societal factors interact in the development and endings of both literary works, establishing similarities and differences between the worlds and the role of women in society. Jaclyn Salkauski in "I Am My Mother: Mother-Daughter Relationships and Identity Formation in the Anglophone Caribbean" examines the relationship between mother and daughter within a postcolonial context and the construction of a female identity. The daughter's search for and development of a female identity conflicts with the strong presence of a patriarchal society and the mother's need to transgress firmly-established societal norms. Sorina Ailiesei, in "Gender-crossing as Cultural and Identity Construct in Maxine Hong Kingston's *The Woman Warrior and China Men*," analyzes the role of gender in a Chinese-American context. The roles of male and female for people of Chinese heritage in the contemporary United States contrast with the past of Chinese immigrants who arrived with different traditions. First, the immigrants experienced discrimination, and second they had to adjust to the standards and cultural practices of a new society. Female representation in all three chapters deals with tradition and the expectations of family/society and opens the discussion of women's role and empowerment in the world.

Race, Stereotypes and Identity comprise the central topic of the second part of the book. As in the previous section, issues regarding identity are central in the examination of human conflicts, but this time the focus is on

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<sup>3</sup> Henk van Houtum, "The Mask of the Border." In *The Ashgate Research Companion to Border Studies*, Thomas M. Wilson and Hastings Donnan, eds. (Malden, Massachusetts: Wiley Blackwell, 2011), 58.



racial perceptions and generalizations. Yusha Pan, in the chapter entitled “Intention versus Reception: The Representation of the Chinese in *Ah Sin*,” explains the failures of a play written by Bret Harte and Mark Twain in 1877. The play creates an anti-Chinese sentiment and promotes mockery of Chinese people. In addition, the use of yellow paint on the face to represent a Chinese person in theater intensifies the ridicule and leads to stereotyping and racism. In the second chapter, Diana Palardy examines in “The Metaphorical Consumption of the Racial Other in Spanish Advertising” another case of racial stereotyping and mockery, but this time with a Black person as the element for entertainment. Palardy guides us in reflecting upon the idea of cultural appropriation and the consumption of the Other, in order that we may arrive at a better understanding of the stereotypes and derogatory racial profiles that are ingrained in our culture through advertisement. This theme is further developed in Victoria Bolf’s essay, “Mestizaje Revisited: Cherrie Moraga, Mixture, and Postpositivist Realists,” which introduces us to the complex narrative of race and identity in the United States. “Mestizaje” is represented as an issue that not only affects or influences the individual, but also as process or mixture that has repercussions for society as a whole. Finally, Nina Tucci in “A Multi-faceted Experience of the *Other* in Michel Ocelot’s Fairytale, *Azur & Asmar: The Princes’ Quest*” takes us to the world of an animated fairy tale. The story shows people of different genders and ages, religious beliefs and socioeconomic backgrounds interacting together and connected in a symbolic dance. Mullen explains, “Groups of people sometimes form ‘communities of meaning’ constructed on selected aspects of various social categories. These communities can either construct social boundaries or act as an interface to cut across social networks and thus allow for change or innovation.”<sup>4</sup> The first three chapters of this part are an invitation to contemplate racial conflicts and frictions, and to re-examine those stereotypes that have been perpetuated in our collective psyche. The last chapter brings out the differences among individuals, but at the same time engages us in an encounter of celebration, freedom and equality.

Part Three of the volume considers issues related to national and international identity through the media of film and novel. Anup Kumar analyzes two films in “Bollywood and the Diaspora: The Flip Side of Globalization and Cultural Hybridity in *Kal Ho Na Ho* and *Salaam Namaste*.” Each film develops diasporic and cosmopolitan themes, both within a post-national context. Bollywood films must now depict social

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<sup>4</sup> David Mullen, ed., *Places in Between: The Archaeology of Social, Cultural and Geographical Borders and Borderlands* (Oxford, UK: Oxbow Books. 2011), 4-5.

cross-mixing for audiences of the home culture in India as well as for those who have resettled all over the globe. The films point to a transposition of the ways in which Bollywood heretofore represented power; now, local power dominates and the global culture resists. Diener and Hagan note the increasing power of diaspora to influence the domestic debates in their homelands while those in the homeland can more easily mobilize members of the diaspora, because many dispersed groups are choosing a hybridized identity.<sup>5</sup> This “de-bordering of human activity”<sup>6</sup> coincides with more stringent and intrusive border and immigration controls, but interconnectivity through global media creates links among anyone who can cross the digital divide.

The fictional narrative that Carla A. Simonini examines, in “Re-Visioning Little Italy with Italian Eyes: The Italian Immigrant Experience in Early 20th Century America as Portrayed in Melania Mazzucco’s *Vita*,” is a tale of departure and separation rather than the immigrant’s integration into American society. The uprooting of the Italian immigrant of an earlier generation as seen through the eyes of a contemporary Italian contributes to and enriches the discussion of ethnicity and identity. Manzananas and Benito point out that physical boundaries help to feed “the fantasy of a closed world,”<sup>7</sup> but the novel has helped readers, especially Italian readers, to transcend notions of both time and space. Williams points out that the creation of a space, even a virtual space, associated with a territory but not striving for sovereignty, helps to foster plurality.<sup>8</sup>

The fourth and final section of the volume, “Political and Historical Borders,” examines issues of identity of larger institutions through historical lenses. The section opens with “The Political Economy of the British Slave Trade: The Royal African Company and the Convergence and Confrontation between Private and Public Interests,” in which Jennifer S. Schiff discusses the conflicting aspects of identity that occurred when the government of England charged the Royal African Company, a private corporation, with the defense of British interests in Africa. The dual burden of profit-making in slave trade and defense of British territory and trade created an irresolvable conflict of identity that resulted in the demise of the Company. Discussion of the identity of the corporation and its role

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<sup>5</sup> Alexander C. Diener, Alexander and Joshua Hagen, *Borders: A Very Short Introduction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 86-87.

<sup>6</sup> John Williams, *The Ethics of Territorial Borders: Drawing Lines in the Shifting Sand* (New York, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 117.

<sup>7</sup> Ana M. Manzananas and Jesús Benito, *Cities, Borders and Spaces in Intercultural American Literature and Film* (New York: Routledge, 2011), 49.

<sup>8</sup> Williams, 129.

in the politics of nations continues today. Abed el-Rahman Tayyara's chapter entitled "Prophethood and the Making of Islamic Historical Identity" explains the Islamic concept of prophethood, the distinction it bears from that of other monotheistic religions and the contribution it makes in the formation of a unique religious identity. He traces the role of the Islamic view of prophethood and its role in shaping both the religious and the historical identity of Islam. In addition, it demonstrates the role of Islamic sources in shaping Muhammad's distinctly unique mission as a prophet, in comparison with the missions of his predecessors. Islam, as the last of the Abrahamic religions, has played a tremendous role in the shaping of political borders as well as national and individual identity. These considerations are important, explains Peggy Levitt, because religious communities continue to operate across borders, channeling the flow of values and ideas, and convening diverse people and practices. Such encounters "provide members with strong, intricate, multilayered webs of connections that are perfect platforms from which to live globally."<sup>9</sup>

Sylvia Mittler, in "Looking Back, Looking Forward: National Identity, Healing Historiography and Greek Humorist Nikos Tsiforos," explains how Tsiforos helped to strengthen national self-awareness and identity in post-World War II Greece. His satirical histories conveyed his distinct perspective on Greek history, identity and society at a time during which his contemporaries subscribed to an idealized view of Greekness constructed on classical and utopian themes. His unique approach was a response at a deeper level to the modernization experienced in Greece during that era and reflects current examination of the notion of nationalism and identity. Diener and Hagan note that, in the past, border studies often inferred divisions between states or other geopolitical bodies were set by historical or natural circumstances. However, "borders are essentially evolving practices," and institutions are subject to the influences of contingent events, ideas, and ideals. These may include issues regarding human rights (for example, equality in sexual orientation or reproductive rights), neoliberal economic practices (for example, outsourcing or privatizing) and new threats to security (for example, criminal cartels or terrorist networks). Thus, national identity should now be considered in light of the notion of bordering as a process.<sup>10</sup> This fourth and final section relates back to the previous three, showing the expanse of

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<sup>9</sup> Peggy Leavitt. *God Needs No Passport: Immigrants and the Changing Religious Landscape* (New York: The New Press, 2007), 134.

<sup>10</sup> Diener and Hagan, 67.

questions regarding identity and border crossing and their effect on the lives of citizens and nations alike.

The chapters in this volume help to fulfill a need for discussion of “cinematic, literary, and media border texts, since these popular and narrative representations are particularly powerful in carving out general conceptions on borders, border crossers and territorial identities.” Some chapters contribute insights into questions regarding identity migration considered under the lens of postcolonial studies.<sup>11</sup> Newman observes that common themes are relevant to the many types of border, even if such a compilation does not result in one particular model or theory. Interdisciplinary contributions such as those appearing in this volume help to create “a common language, or glossary of terms” that may facilitate “meaningful common discourse” among disciplines.”<sup>12</sup>

The chapters in this book affirm Diener and Hagan’s observation that current efforts to materialize borders physically must also operate within new realities such as cyberspace. These media help to implement new types of human connections by reducing the dimensions of distance, but at the same time they may provide an environment for confrontation, or even prejudice and hatred. “The human capacity to employ borders to filter flows into and out of territory is central to this new era of shifting spatiality.”<sup>13</sup> This collection of chapters helps to illustrate Mullin’s observation that border studies go beyond the study of border regions and relate not merely to the geographical aspects of human existence, but the social.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Jopi Nyman, “Review of *The Ashgate Research Companion to Border Studies*,” *Journal of Borderlands Studies* 26, no. 3 (2011): 373-374.

<sup>12</sup> David Newman, “Contemporary Research Agendas in Border Studies: An Overview.” In *The Ashgate Research Companion to Border Studies*, ed. Doris Wastl-Walter (Burlington, Vermont: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2011), 44.

<sup>13</sup> Diener and Hagan, 17.

<sup>14</sup> Mullin, 9.

## **PART I**

# **GENDER REPRESENTATION AND IDENTITY**

## CHAPTER ONE

# FEMINISM, MODERNITY, AND PREMODERNITY IN JAPAN AND THE WEST: FUMIKO ENCHI'S *THE WAITING YEARS* AND HENRIK IBSEN'S *A DOLL'S HOUSE*

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Henrik Ibsen's *A Doll's House* (1879), first translated into Japanese in 1901, influenced not only writers in Japan but also Japanese society in general,<sup>1</sup> which at that time was rapidly modernizing and Westernizing itself. Like *A Doll's House*, Fumiko Enchi's (1905-1986) novel *The Waiting Years* (1957) deals with the lives of a frustrated wife, Tomo, and her domineering husband, Yukitomo, a high-ranking government official. Tomo and Yukitomo, both from low-ranking local samurai families, married around the time of the Meiji Restoration of 1868, when Japan ended its feudalistic samurai regime to take on contemporary Western values. However, both Tomo and Yukitomo continue to follow the old samurai codes—albeit distorted by modern Western thought<sup>2</sup>—defining

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<sup>1</sup> See, for instance, Toshiko Nakamura, *Nihon no ipusen genshō: 1906-1916* (Ibsen Phenomenon in Japan: 1906-1916) (Fukuoka: Kyūshūdaigaku shuppankai, 1997).

<sup>2</sup> Kanji Nishio wrote in 1968: “However, the target of attack by the people who, in order to fight against the Japanese feudalism, advocated the Western version of modernity could not have been the feudalistic thought itself. This is because feudalism in the pure sense of the word had ended by that time [i.e., the Meiji Restoration of 1868]. They did not try to eradicate the residues of the feudalism, either. They were only fighting against the feudalistic morals distorted by Western modernity, i.e., the degenerated forms of the feudalistic morals generated and changed by their modernization” (Kanji Nishio, *Yōroppa no kojinsugi* [Individualism in Europe] [Tokyo: Kōdansha, 1968], 11). See also note 22 below. Unless otherwise specified, all the English translations in this essay are mine. In this essay, I refer to the publication of Henrik Ibsen's *A Doll's House* translated

the loyal relationship between master and servant. As he advances as a powerful official in the modernizing Meiji government and loses interest in Tomo, Yukitomo begins to find sexual relationships elsewhere. He brings young concubines into his own household, and has an adulterous relationship with his daughter-in-law; he even orders Tomo to go to Tokyo to find him a teenage concubine. Tomo obediently carries out her husband's orders, but the changes in Japanese society cause her to seethe with frustration and anger at her domineering and callous husband. However, unlike Ibsen's Nora, Tomo stays with her husband for the sake of her young children, thereby sacrificing her independence to her oppressive husband and her family. She patiently manages household matters, hoping to outlive her husband, but she dies in her sixties of a chronic kidney disease, a metaphor for the arduousness and oppression of her life. Her last request to Yukitomo is to dump her body into the sea instead of giving her a sumptuous funeral.

While *A Doll's House* likely had some literary influences on *The Waiting Years*,<sup>3</sup> Nora's and Tomo's contrasting responses to their domineering husbands also offer insights via the topics of feminism, modernity, and premodernity on cultural encounters and confrontations between the modern West and traditional Japan. In particular, the three interrelated topics of nature, religion, and narrative point of view in the literary works help to clarify the nature of these intercultural contacts and possible solutions to the problems arising from them.

According to Max Weber, modernity is a process of rationalization or disenchantment (*Entzauberung*),<sup>4</sup> a process by which humans rationally attempt to control non-rational parts of nature and its cognate worlds of non-rationalities, including magic, myth, superstition, and, by extension, religion. This process engenders a division between culture/civilization as the master, and nature as the servant or slave. This hierarchical dichotomy is also a feminist issue, as implied by Sherry Ortner's question: "Is female

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anonymously (New York: Dover Publications, 1992) and to Fumiko Enchi's *The Waiting Years*, translated by John Bester (Tokyo, New York, and San Francisco: Kōdansha International, 1987). Subsequent references to these works will be indicated parenthetically in the body of this essay.

<sup>3</sup> It is said that under the influence of Ibsen's *A Doll's House*, Enchi wrote a scenario under the same title for a TV drama that was broadcast in 1960. For more on this drama, see *The Asahi Shinbun* (The Asahi Newspaper), February 17, 1960, 5.

<sup>4</sup> See "Science as a Vocation" in Max Weber, *The Vocation Lectures*, edited and with an introduction by David Owen and Tracy B. Strong; translation by Rodney Livingstone (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 2004).

to male as nature is to culture?”<sup>5</sup> According to Ortner and other feminist critics, women have universally been relegated by men to the realm of nature or non-rationality, and men to that of culture/civilization or rationality—a perspective that gives men a pretext for dominating and exploiting women. These critics thus argue that linking women with nature is the basis of discrimination against them.

*A Doll's House* strongly criticizes this kind of sexism in its depiction of a modern bourgeois family: Nora's husband Torvald Helmer, a lawyer and bank manager,<sup>6</sup> often calls her a skylark or a squirrel, thus diminishing her while emphasizing his human dominance over her. On the other hand, while it superficially parallels *A Doll's House* in its indictment of male domination and discrimination against women, *The Waiting Years* in fact supports the relegation of Tomo and other female characters to the world of nature, suggesting that nature is an important source of empowerment for them. This contrast between the two works is evident in their images of nature, specifically in their depiction of the sea, water and plants.

While Torvald's nicknames of “squirrel” and “skylark” for Nora clearly emphasize his view that she is subservient to him, a kind of doll that lacks an independent soul and the capacity for rational thought, the sea also plays important thematic roles in this work. When Torvald was seriously ill, Nora forged her father's signature so that she could borrow money from Niles Krogstad in order to save Torvald's life. When Krogstad later blackmails her with his knowledge of her forgery, Nora thinks of committing suicide by throwing herself into the sea so that she can protect Torvald's honor. At the last moment, however, when she realizes that Torvald is an egoist who cares only for himself, she decides to leave him and her children: instead of dying, Nora determines not only to live, but also to become an independent human being. That *A Doll's House*, a three-act play, takes place during three days<sup>7</sup> around Christmas time seems to

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<sup>5</sup> The title of Ortner's article published in *Feminist Studies*, 1.2 (Autumn, 1972), 5-31.

<sup>6</sup> Torvald's occupation symbolizes nineteenth-century modern Western bourgeois society in that it was governed by law (rationality) and bureaucratic capitalism. For more on relationships between rationality, bureaucracy, and capitalism in Western modernity, see such works from Max Weber's writings as *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. Constructively criticizing Weber's theory on capitalism in his *Puraton to shihonshugi* (Plato and Capitalism) (Tokyo: Hokuto shuppan, 1982), Hirono Seki points out how bureaucratic spirit in Plato's *Academia* played a crucial role in the subsequent development of modern Western capitalism.

<sup>7</sup> Besides these images related to the number three, Ibsen repeatedly uses that number throughout this play: “For a full three weeks . . . you shut yourself up every evening . . .” (5); “Yes; it is three years ago now” (6); “I have three lovely



suggest underlying Christian themes such as *felix culpa* (happy fault of Adam and Eve), because Christmas celebrates the birth of Christ, the redeemer of original sin. Thus, Christmas also implies not only Christ's birth but also his later spiritual suffering, death, and rebirth.<sup>8</sup>

There is a clear parallel between Ibsen's central theme of Nora's spiritual growth and the Christian theme of *felix culpa*,<sup>9</sup> the latter in turn supported by the dialectical<sup>10</sup> arrangement of the play's three acts: Act I (thesis: original innocence), Act II (anti-thesis: fall, or experience), and Act III (synthesis: restored innocence, or salvation). In Act I, after Torvald has been promoted at his bank, Nora is innocently happy—until Krogstad appears halfway through the act to dampen her happiness. The stage directions at the outset of Act I depict Nora's house as that of a very comfortable middle-class bourgeois family (the stove is cozily burning),

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children" (7); "The last three years have seemed like one long working day . . ." (9); "It is impossible—I have three little children" (29); "It will remain a secret between us three" (43); "These must have been three dreadful days for you, Nora" (64).

<sup>8</sup> Thus, Easter is an extension or a variation of Christmas, and vice versa.

<sup>9</sup> His strong interest in Kierkegaard and in the question of sin and egoism (see, for instance, his plays *Brand*, *Peer Gynt*, and *Emperor and Galilean*) suggests that one of Ibsen's central themes was hamartiology, especially that of *felix culpa*. In the final scene of *A Doll's House*, to her husband's question if she knows what religion is, Nora responds: "I know nothing but what the clergyman said when I went to be confirmed. He told us religion was this and that and other. . . . I will see if what the clergyman said is true, or at all event if it is true for me" (68). Nora here is Kierkegaardian in that she challenges conventional Christianity and that she wants to search for a religion that truly convinces her.

<sup>10</sup> For dialectics centering on *felix culpa* in Hegel and Kierkegaard, see, for instance, Jason A. Mahn, "Felix Peccabilitas: Fallibility and Christian Heroism in the Hamartiology of Søren Kierkegaard," Diss. Emory University, 2004. See also, A. H. Abrams, *Natural Supernaturalism: Tradition and Revolution in Romantic Literature* (New York: Norton, 1971), where Abrams discusses the themes of *felix culpa* and self-education in Romanticism and Hegel. Nora's suffering and aspiration for self-education in *A Doll's House* parallels the spirit's self-education through suffering (fall/alienation) in Hegel's *Phenomenology of the Spirit* (1807). E. M. Forster says: "Ibsen was a poet at 40 because he had that preference. He was a poet at 60 also. His continued interest in avalanches, water, trees, fire, mines, high places, traveling, was not accidental" (E. M. Forster, "Ibsen, the Romantic," *The New Republic*, 131.21 [November, 1954], 65). Nora can be seen as a romantic character in her individualistic and idealistic pursuit of an ideal romantic love. See also Errol Durbach, *'Ibsen the Romantic': Analogues of Paradise in the Later Plays* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 1982), in which Durbach explores the Romantic search for a lost paradise in Ibsen's later plays.

thereby underscoring Nora's simple joy. In Act II, however, the Christmas tree's candles have been put out, setting the scene for Krogstad further blackmailing Nora and aggravating her spiritual agonies and her contemplation of committing suicide. Yet in Act III, the last act, the lamp burning on the table in the middle of the room symbolizes life and hope for Nora, who indeed confronts her husband sitting at this table at the end of the act and decides to abandon death in order to start living a new life. Right before Nora makes this decision, Dr. Rank, the couple's dying friend, drops by and asks for a cigar, which Nora lights for him, thereby further emphasizing the connection between fire and Nora's new life and hope. Act III therefore stands for, or at least adumbrates, Nora's future maturation, spiritual growth, and salvation, a future that will incorporate her preceding spiritual sufferings. Thus, the blackmail by Krogstad that Nora suffers and eventually overcomes parallels Christ's spiritual suffering, death and rebirth. And the sea that Nora contemplates for her death seems to stand for the water of her baptism into full humanity: her spiritual suffering results in triumph. This is the main thematic role of the sea, one of two key nature images in *A Doll's House*.

As suggested above, the Christmas tree in the same work plays a similar thematic role. Nora's opening words to the maid in Act I, "Hide the Christmas tree, Helen," have multiple overtones, including an allusion to Nora's secret procurement of money through forgery and her suppressed frustration at Torvald's domineering treatment of her. When Torvald criticizes Krogstad's past forgery (an earlier event that parallels Nora's forgery) and the immoral influences that mothers have on their children, Nora hides herself behind the Christmas tree, which she started to decorate after Krogstad began to blackmail her. Her decoration of the Christmas tree foreshadows her later mending of her outfit for the fancy dress party on Christmas day. But at the outset of Act II, the Christmas tree is described as dishevelled, stripped of its decorations and its candles put out. In this way, the tree is a harbinger of Nora's eventual exposure as a forger and her consequent abandonment of her fancy dress, a facade representing the reality of her frustrating, false marriage. Thus, the Christmas tree stands for Nora herself, and like the sea it supports the play's Christian theme of Nora's spiritual death, rebirth, and growth. Nora eventually discards the decorated Christmas tree, her false self clad in the fancy dress, in order to become an independent human being. *A Doll's House* thus uses nature images, from squirrels and skylarks to the sea and the Christmas tree, to symbolize the servitude and discrimination that Nora experiences as a woman; nature is therefore something that she must separate herself from in order to grow into a full-fledged human being.

Nature images in *The Waiting Years*, however, play an almost opposite role. Starting with the first chapter, entitled “First Bloom,” and ending with the last chapter when Tomo dies in the middle of the winter, each chapter of this novel as well as the main female character in that chapter are closely associated with one of the four seasons. For instance, in the second chapter, “Green Grapes,” Suga (the young concubine Tomo found for Yukitomo) is compared to green yet sweet grapes:

She [Tomo] could see Suga and Etsuko [Tomo’s young daughter] standing face to face beneath the serrated leaves of the grapevine in the orchard. . . .

The sunlight falling through the vine flecked the fair skin of her face with green.

“Can you eat them as green as this?”

“They’re very good. They’re a kind of green grape they grown in Western countries.”

Etsuko’s voice came cool and clear. Suga pulled off the bunch and placed one of the grapes like a great green gem in her mouth.

“I told you so—it’s sweet, isn’t it?” (39)

About two decades later, in the chapter “Unripe Damsons,” Suga still resembles green fruit, suggesting Yukitomo’s ongoing exploitation of Suga, and by extension of other women, including Yumi, Yukitomo’s other concubine; Miya, his daughter-in-law; and Tomo.

While the plot of *A Doll’s House* is logically structured into three dialectical acts to support the themes of *felix culpa* and Nora’s spiritual growth, in *The Waiting Years* the plot is patterned on the four seasons, and Suga, Tomo, and other female characters are described as emanations of nature,<sup>11</sup> all of which fits with the story’s cyclical approach to the generations of characters. Moreover, despite the fact that the female characters in *The Waiting Years* at first seem to resemble nature in their passivity, subjugation, and exploitation by men like Yukitomo (Suga’s resemblance to green grapes or unripe damsons, for instance, suggests this association), Tomo’s eventual empowerment through her connection with nature shows that she, and by extension the other women too, actually find in nature a path to power.

Tomo’s association with nature and her resultant empowerment is suggested early in the story, when her husband Yukitomo seeks Tomo’s maternal support. Tomo indirectly refuses to provide it:

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<sup>11</sup> For instance, Miya is associated with cherry blossom (82, 92) and butterfly (96, 105); Etsuko together with Suga, with green grape (39); Ruriko, Tomo’s granddaughter, with butterfly (160, 163).

“Why don’t you change [your clothes]?” he said, directing an ill-tempered look at her. Quietly, she went out into the anteroom again. The sound of rustling fabric reached him with an odd clarity. She must be undoing her sash of stiff silk; he . . . listened to the indications of slow, heavy motion that were melancholy and monotonous yet powerful as the waves on a wintry sea in their silent suggestion of the body and the voice so familiar to his sight and hearing after nearly twenty years of marriage. They summoned up forgotten scenes that came and went as she moved, scenes of the mountain streams of his home in Kyushu and the deep snows that buried the northeastern districts of Honshu where his work had taken him. Like a shadow that he could never leave behind, Tomo would gradually age in this house, growing more and more like a family ghost till finally she died. (74-75)

Here, Tomo is depicted as an emanation of nature, especially in terms of a cold ocean: for Yukitomo, she is nature, which is heavy and slow in motion, but powerful like a wintry sea. Another example of how Tomo is associated with the sea involves a traditional Kabuki play about Oiwa, a wife who is estranged and eventually killed by her husband, Iemon. Early in the novel, Yukitomo takes his family, including Suga, to see this ghost story in which Iemon falsely accuses Oiwa of adultery and kills her, throwing her body into a river, so that he can marry a neighbor's daughter. But later, Oiwa's vengeful ghost haunts and eventually kills Iemon. Although Tomo identifies with Oiwa when she sees her on the stage, for the welfare of her children she refuses to become like Oiwa:

She [Tomo] must not become like Oiwa. Even though a madness many times the strength of Oiwa's sought to possess her, she would hug Etsuko [her daughter] to her all the more fiercely as though the act were a prayer. For if she were to become [sic] mad, what would happen to the children? (44-45)

Nevertheless, at the end of the novel, when Tomo is dying in the winter, nursed by Fujie, the third wife of Tomo's son Michimasa, and Toyoko, who is Yukitomo's niece, she becomes like Oiwa, requesting that her body similarly be dumped into the sea and indirectly conveying this request to Yukitomo as if in a trance, through the mouth of Toyoko:

She [Toyoko] had meant to present her [Tomo's] request as the delirious nonsense of a sick woman, but when she spoke her voice came out serious and shrill, as though Tomo's spirit had taken possession of her.

The veil cleared instantly from Yukitomo's eyes. The old man's mouth opened as though to say something, then his expression went blank. In the

newly bathed, watery eyes, fear stirred as though he had seen a ghost. . . . His body suffered the full force of the emotions that his wife had struggled to repress for forty years past. The shock was enough to split his arrogant ego in two. (203)

What shakes Yukitomo to the core here is his intuitive realization that he has mistreated Tomo just as Iemon mistreated Oiwa, the revengeful wife who haunts and destroys her husband. Thus, while her request that she be tossed unceremoniously into the sea might seem to suggest Tomo's acceptance of her husband's careless disregard for her humanity, his horror and the destruction of his ego actually signal her victory over him by implying Tomo's protest against the oppression of Yukitomo's pompous house.

In contrast to this scene of spirit possession where Tomo is delirious, the final scene in *A Doll's House* shows Nora's rationality emerging: in answer to Torvald's dismissive "You are ill, Nora; you are delirious; I almost think you are out of your mind," Nora replies, "I have never felt my mind so clear and certain as tonight" (69). While Nora's eventual refusal to throw herself into the winter sea shows that she is becoming independent from both nature and her domineering husband, Tomo's masochistic request that Yukitomo throw her body into the sea signals her retaliation against and defeat of her husband. Moreover, unlike Nora, who directly and logically protests her husband's treatment of her, Tomo makes her request indirectly through the mouth of Toyoko, who behaves like a medium possessed by Tomo's spirit/ghost, and whose voice, so to speak, comes from the sea with which Tomo intends to merge. Thus, whereas nature provides a false identity and is the source of enslavement for Nora, for Tomo it is her own identity and the source of her empowerment. Since Tomo, the novel's central female character, seems to share a camaraderie with other women (Etsuko, Oiwa, Suga, Yumi, Toyoko, and Fujie), Tomo's empowerment through nature can be seen to represent their potential empowerment too; in her apparent victimization by Yukitomo and her eventual victory over him, Tomo represents the others.

Tomo's connections with these women can be seen, for instance, in how Tomo takes care of Suga and Yumi, the two concubines who should have been her rivals and enemies, to the end. Similarly, Tomo's subtle act of resetting Etsuko's comb while intimating her business of finding a young concubine (Suga) for Yukitomo connects her daughter with Suga, who is not much older than Etsuko, and with Oiwa, who in the play is combing her hair. (Oiwa in turn longs to pass "the comb that her mother had left them" [43] to her younger sister.) Moreover, when they hear Tomo's urgent request to tell Yukitomo that she wants her body be

dumped into the sea, “the unspoken feminine complicity of two women [Fujie and Toyoko] who had been married and suffered themselves” (202) also indicates that Tomo and other female characters, despite their being different individuals, share the same source of power, nature. Finally, the words of Kin’s daughter Toshi, who has uncanny, shamanistic knowledge, when she sees Etsuko’s fascination with the Sumida River, “Mind you don’t fall, Miss Etsuko” (18), suggest Oiwa’s and Tomo’s eventual falling into water. The women in *The Waiting Years*, all abused by men like Yukitomo, are unhappy. Tomo wants to protect her daughter from such misery; hence, her subconscious act of resetting Etsuko’s comb.<sup>12</sup>

While *A Doll’s House* criticizes the dominance of modern male-dominated spheres such as law and capitalism, the play ultimately promotes modern ideals—rationality, humanism, individualism, and feminism—over nature. The Christian paradigm of fall and salvation also supports the play’s modern theme of growth and progress while downplaying the importance of nature. On the other hand, religion and nature go hand in hand in *The Waiting Years*. Tomo, living in a changing Japan, at first despises her mother’s belief in the Shin sect of Pure Land Buddhism as merely irrational and superstitious:

All talk of the Buddha and Amida had come to seem [for Tomo] like a pack of lies to deceive children. The injunction in her mother’s letter to leave everything to the Buddha only irritated her: what was she supposed to leave to him, and how? If there were some noble being, some god or Buddha, who could see all that went on in the human world, why did he not make life more decent for one who tried as hard as she to live truthfully? (54)

However, as she ages and experiences hardships in life, she finds herself embracing her mother’s beliefs:

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<sup>12</sup> In connection with Oiwa’s hair-loss due to poisoning, see the following from *A Doll’s House*:

Krog. Under the ice, perhaps? Down in the cold, coal-black water? And then, in the spring, to float up to the surface, all horrible and unrecognizable, with your hair fallen out—  
Nora. You can’t frighten me. (45)

Here Krogstad and Nora are talking about the possibility that she will commit suicide by throwing herself into the winter sea. Nora eventually rejects this kind of death, whereas Tomo wishes it.

Yet why, she [Tomo] asked herself, should she be obliged to spend all her life entangled with such distasteful affairs? . . . It was a problem that admitted of no solution under any theories that her mind could conceive. . . . “*Namu Amida Butsu, Namu Amida Butsu* . . . [.]” Effortlessly she muttered invocation of the Buddha found its way to Tomo’s lips . . . (188)

Japanese Buddhism is a synthesis of indigenous pantheistic, shamanistic nature worship and abstract, theoretical Indo-Chinese Buddhism. One central concept in Tomo’s sect of Buddhism is *jinenhōni*, the idea that Buddhist enlightenment is naturalness or as-it-isness. In *jinenhōni*, the cyclical temporality-spatiality of nature’s four seasons harmonizes with the Buddhist idea of karma and transmigration. The Buddhist *jinenhōni* advocates that adherents abandon rational, logical thinking to become one with nature’s natural flow. Herein lies the theoretical, logical basis for Enchi’s association of nature with Tomo (and with other women) in *The Waiting Years*, in which nature, while appearing to be dominated by men like Yukitomo, eventually becomes the master; men, represented by Yukitomo, become its servants. On the other hand, Ibsen’s perspective on nature in *A Doll’s House* reflects both Judeo-Christian and Greco-Roman views of nature: nature is material that human beings are entitled to exploit, including via technology and science. While modern rational thinking may seem to consider Judeo-Christianity as superstition or magic, the Christian dialectical pattern of *felix culpa* (primary innocence, fall, and restored innocence or salvation) still underlies the linear-horizontal schema of modernity: failure-struggle-victory, or growth from immaturity to maturity, or the idea of progress, all of which parallel human beings’ independence from, and control of, nature. Nora grows from the soulless, non-rational doll or skylark that Torvald sees her as to an independent, rational human being. Thus, in *A Doll’s House*, the plot moves Nora from the natural to the human world, whereas in *The Waiting Years*, the reverse is the case for Tomo.

*A Doll’s House* is a realistic play that presents a scenic, objective view of the characters on the stage combined with occasional soliloquies by the central character, Nora. The play’s stage structure, with one of the walls of the room open to the audience, provides a voyeuristic look into Nora’s private family life. The spirit of realism and voyeurism seems to concur with that of the rationalism and objectivism of modern science: in modern science, one rationally, objectively, and voyeuristically examines and analyzes nature. The subject-object or mind-body dichotomy is a thematic underpinning of *A Doll’s House*, a play about Nora’s resistance against, and eventual defeat of, her husband’s attempt to objectify and subjugate her as a creature lacking human rationality and autonomy.

Superficially, *The Waiting Years* is also a realistic work. However, the work's apparent omniscient narrative point of view sometimes erratically and subtly changes from the third- to the first-person narrative voice, resulting in what might roughly correspond to the Western literary device of "free indirect speech."<sup>13</sup> One notable difference between Enchi's version of free indirect speech and that of Western writers such as Virginia Woolf and James Joyce is that because writers of Japanese sentences may omit the grammatical subjects of their clauses and relatively freely change between the past and the present tense, English translations often fail to reproduce the subtle shift in Japanese from the third- to the first-person voice, as does John Bester's translation of *The Waiting Years*. In this work, erratic shifts to free indirect speech occur especially when characters become emotionally agitated. For example, when Suga's mother finds out that Yukitomo has had the young concubine Yumi in his house, she becomes highly disturbed and emotional:

Timid and naively trusting though she was, Suga's mother could not help bridling at the malice that lurked in the latter part of the report [that Yukitomo's interest in Yumi might jeopardize Suga's role]. . . . Suga might be negative and lacking in vitality in some ways, but, even as a child, she could never have been called stupid . . . . If only *her parents* had managed their affairs properly, who could tell what an advantageous marriage she might have made? To have put her into service with the Shirakawas . . . before she was even a real woman, was the act of a mother so heartless as hardly to deserve the name. Nevertheless, Suga seemed to feel sorry for *the wretched parent* thus obliged to sell her daughter, and though she never came to the house herself, she was sufficiently mindful of her family to send *them*, via others, presents of money and things to eat. (63, italics added)

In this passage, the third-person narrative voice in the first paragraph erratically but subtly changes to first-person in the second paragraph. The change is indicated by the shift—absent in Bester's translation—from the past tense in the first paragraph to the present tense in the first and the last sentences of the second paragraph. Also, the narrator's words in the translation and italicized here ("*her parents*," "*the wretched parent*," and "*them*") respectively imply "we," "me," and "us" in the original, thereby resulting in Enchi's version of free indirect speech.

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<sup>13</sup> In this device, the first-person voice is embedded within third-person narration, as in "She stopped. How can I keep on going? But the next moment, she resumed her walk."



The same shift in narrative voice takes place when Tomo's emotional tension heightens. As noted earlier (p. xx), after viewing Oiwa's play and with her sleeping child Etsuko resting on her lap on the rickshaw, Tomo thinks "*she* must not become like Oiwa. . . . For if *she* were to become mad, what would happen to *the children*?" (44-45, italics added). "*She*" and "*the children*" in this quotation read respectively as "I" and "my children" in the original, thus realizing a shift from the third- to the first-person narrative voice.

Still another example takes place at the climax of the novel, where on her way home after visiting her grandson's baby and a maid, old Tomo slowly trudges up a long, gentle slope<sup>14</sup> in the evening snow:

Tomo felt a sudden, futile despair at herself as she stood there in the road alone in the snow, loath to go on, with her gray shawl drawn up close about her neck and an open umbrella held in the hand that was frozen like ice. . . . Was it possible, then, that everything *she* had lived for was vain and profitless? No: she shook her head in firm rejection of the idea. *Her* world was a precarious place, a place where one groped one's way through the gloom. . . . Yet at the end of it all a brighter world surely lay waiting, like the light when one finally emerges from a tunnel. If it were not there waiting, then nothing made sense. *She* must not despair, *she* must walk on; unless *she* climbed and went on climbing *she* would never reach the top of the hill (189-190, italics added).

In this quotation, the third-person narrative voice using the past tense in the first paragraph changes in the second paragraph to that of the first-person using the present tense, and the italicized words (*she*, *Her*, and *She*) respectively read "I," "My," and "I" in the original. This kind of sudden shift of narrative voice is closely related to the shamanistic spirit possession that takes place when the dying Tomo, as if possessed by Oiwa's spirit, in turn possesses Toyoko so as to use Toyoko to convey her death message to her husband.<sup>15</sup> At this moment in the story, it is as if the novel's female characters like Suga's mother and Tomo are speaking through the mouth of the novel's narrator, behind whom is Fumiko Enchi, the author. While this shift is perhaps the author's literary device for such emotionally intense scenes, Enchi, a woman herself, must have identified herself emotionally with the plights of her female characters.

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<sup>14</sup> This slope is called "*on'nazaka*" (lit., "woman's slope" or "female slope"), which is also used as the title of the novel in the original, symbolizing the suffering and frustration of Tomo's long, arduous life.

<sup>15</sup> Early in the novel, Toshi's uncanny ability to foresee things is also compared to that of a medium (9).

That *The Waiting Years* abounds with elements of Noh drama seems to be related to this kind of spirit possession and shift of narrative voice: Noh is based on animistic, shamanistic spirit possession.<sup>16</sup> Noh elements are closely associated with Tomo when she first tells Kin (Toshi's mother, in whose house Tomo and her daughter Etsuko stay while in Tokyo) of her business in Tokyo: "'Well, since I shall have to ask your help at any rate . . . [.]' Again the smile, elusive as the smile on a Noh mask, played about the corner of Tomo's mouth" (13). Also, after introducing Suga to her husband for the first time, Tomo retires to her room: "Whether the torment that seethed within her was love or hatred she could not tell, but a calm determination not to leave the crucible of doubt gave her features the tranquillity of a Nō [sic] mask in her unhurried progress along the corridor" (37). The highly stylized, unnaturally slow movements of Noh performers on both the stage and the corridor-like bridge on which they appear from and disappear into the mirror-room (the other world) is a salient feature of Noh. Thus, on one level, Tomo is the main performer (*shite*) of a Noh play, and the novel's apparently irregular changes in narrative voice come from the story's shamanistic elements of spirit possession, which in turn are related to that element of Noh.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> The Noh performers, usually male, are often either possessed by or are emanations of the spirits of the dead: male or female, gods, animals, or plants. Together with the use of masks (which muffle clear-cut logical arguments, as exemplified by Nora's conflict with Torvald at the end of *A Doll's House*), the music of drums and flutes, chorus chanting, stage structures (the bridge that connects the stage with the mirror room—the other world—by which performers appear on the stage), and the incantatory chanting of the lines delivered by the performers on the stage, Noh evokes a dream-like effect of *yugen* (lit., subtle, dark and mysterious). Buddhist chanting of scriptures influenced Noh chanting, and so old Tomo's chanting of the Buddha's name (188) further evokes Noh traditions.

<sup>17</sup> Besides Noh influences in *The Waiting Years*, another important influence on this novel is Lady Murasaki's 11<sup>th</sup> century work, *The Tale of Genji*, a story about the life of a powerful and amorous nobleman called Hikaru Genji, the shining prince, who has love affairs with many women both young and old, and of both high and low social rank. Fumiko Enchi was an avid reader of this tale since childhood and later translated it into modern Japanese, and so it is no surprise that *The Waiting Years* resembles *The Tale of Genji* not only in its inclusion of spirit possession and irregular shifts of narrative voice but in many other points as well, such as the variety of women that Yukitomo, like Prince Genji, has affairs with; the female characters being emanations of nature; the importance of the four seasons in the story's plot; young Suga being taken from her home when Yukitomo buys her, like the girl called Wakamurasaki (lit., young purple; later called Murasaki no ue [lady purple]) being abducted by Genji; Suga being associated with purple (30, 34, 35, 41, and 48), as Wakamurasaki is; the fact that Yukitomo has an affair with

In conclusion, I would like to touch on the criticism of Nora by Raichō Hiratsuka (1886-1971), a pioneering Japanese feminist who founded the short lived feminist journal *Seitō* (Blue Stockings) (1911-1916).<sup>18</sup> In this journal, Hiratsuka criticizes Nora's decision to leave her husband and children in order to become an independent, autonomous individual:

Nora, your real self-realization will occur from this point on. A second tragedy is awaiting you. It is the tragedy of discarding your false and illusionary self. . . .

Nora, after you had left your family, surrounded by cold-hearted people you must have endured every kind of hardship in order to become a human being, to perform above all your duties to yourself, and to express wholehearted sincerity to yourself. . . . And when finally you won the victory of becoming an individual, how did you feel, Nora? . . .

You will sadly say, "When I won the freedom of my self, there was no freedom there. When I won the independence of my self, there was no independence there." You will realize that what you called the "self," an illusion which you deemed to be more important than anything else, ironically loses its freedom and independence because it exists in confrontation with other selves. . . .

Nora, what I meant by "your second tragedy" is the curse of this false and illusory self. It is a negation, a bitter struggle of self-extermination.

Nora, is it not that you can gain true self-realization only when you have completely killed without trace what you call Nora?<sup>19</sup>

Hiratsuka studied Zen Buddhism, which seems to be reflected in her criticism of Nora's modern sense of individual self, because Zen and Buddhism in general consider the independent, autonomous, and individual self to be an illusion (*ku* or emptiness). Tomo's belief in the Shin sect of Pure Land Buddhism and her natural invocation of the

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his daughter-in-law while Genji has an affair with his step-mother Fujitsubo (lit., lady wisteria), who is Wakamurasaki's aunt; and so on. For more on the narrative voice in *The Tale of Genji*, see, for instance, Takehiko Noguchi, *Genjimonogatari o Edo kara yomu* (Reading *The Tale of Genji* from the Edo Period) (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 1995). For spirit possession as a source of empowerment for the women in *Genji*, see Doris Bergen, *A Woman's Weapon: Spirit Possession in The Tale of Genji* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1997). For more on the theme of spirit possession in Enchi's works, see, for instance, her *On'namen* (*Masks*) and *Namamiko monogatari* (*The Tale of False Fortunes*).

<sup>18</sup> A title that alludes to "The Blue Stockings Society" of mid-18<sup>th</sup> century England, perhaps one of the earliest feminist organizations in the West.

<sup>19</sup> Raichō Hiratsuka, "Nora-san ni" (To Nora) in Tomie Kobayashi, ed., *Seitō serekushon: atarashī on'na no tanjō* (*Selected Writings from the Seitō: The Birth of New Women*) (Tokyo: Jinmon shoin, 1987), 26-27.

Buddha are based on the Buddhist notion of selflessness (the illusion of the individualistic self).<sup>20</sup>

In contrast to Nora's idea of the self, which her final logical argument with her husband and her emancipation from her confining and imprisoning family show to be a self-assertive and centrifugal notion, Tomo's self is centripetal because she sacrifices her self for others, remaining to the end in the restricting and oppressive family domineered by her husband. This sense of the self (or denial of Nora's type of self) in Tomo derives from the Buddhist concept of empty self, which also infuses other salient elements of the novel such as the characters' connections with nature, *jinenhōni* (synchronizing with nature's flow), spirit possession, shifts in narrative point of view, and female camaraderie. It is through these self-effacing, centripetal elements that the novel's female characters, represented by Tomo, paradoxically gain empowerment.

While *A Doll's House* critiques Western modernity, the play nevertheless accepts modernity's core elements: the humanism and rationalism embodied in Nora at the end of the play. On the other hand, while *The Waiting Years* appears to be employing modern Western values to criticize the premodern feudalistic male domination of Japanese women, the novel in fact asserts nature-oriented premodern sensibilities such as animism and shamanism, which are not only the sources of empowerment for Tomo and other women but also the basis of those feudalistic sensibilities themselves.<sup>21</sup> More precisely, then, *The Waiting Years* criticizes not feudalism per se, but its distortion, as embodied by Yukitomo and his Meiji government in their mixture of premodern feudalistic sensibilities and modern Western perceptions.<sup>22</sup> In this sense,

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<sup>20</sup> D. T. Suzuki maintains that Zen and the Shin sect of Pure Land Buddhism are essentially the same. See, for example, D. T. Suzuki, *Shin Buddhism* (New York: Harper & Row, 1970) and *Mysticism: Christian and Buddhist: The Eastern and Western Way* (New York: Macmillan, 1957).

<sup>21</sup> Pantheistic sensibilities such as animism and shamanism permeate the art forms of the feudalistic periods (1185-1868): renga (linked poetry), haiku, Noh, kabuki, sumi-e, the tea ceremony, flower arrangement, etc.

<sup>22</sup> The Meiji writer Ōgai Mori (1862-1922), one of the first Japanese to introduce Henrik Ibsen to Japan, describes a feudalistic marriage before the Meiji Restoration in his short piece entitled "Jisan bāsan" ("An Old Couple"). This story, about a young samurai and his wife describes how, soon after their arranged marriage, the two are separated by feudalistic law due to the husband's fatally wounding his colleague in a quarrel at a *sake* party. After thirty-seven years, when the husband is forgiven, the couple peacefully and happily resumes their married life as if nothing has happened. A Meiji man descended from a samurai family, Ōgai did medical research in Germany for four years; we can thus surmise that he

*The Waiting Years* depicts, on the one hand, the problems engendered by the encounter of Japanese premodernity with Western modernity, while on the other, in the life and death of Tomo, it suggests one solution to these problems.

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perhaps wrote this story to contrast marriage under Japanese feudalism with modern Western marriage, as presented in, for instance, *A Doll's House*. For more on this story in relation to Western individualism, see Nishio, *Yōroppa no kojinchugi* (Individualism in Europe), 12-15.

## CHAPTER TWO

# I AM MY MOTHER: MOTHER-DAUGHTER RELATIONSHIPS AND IDENTITY FORMATION IN THE ANGLOPHONE CARIBBEAN

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*All women become like their mothers. That is their tragedy.  
No man does. That's his.*  
—Oscar Wilde<sup>1</sup>

The mother-daughter relationship and the cultural and social influences that guide this relationship are a pertinent factor in postcolonial Caribbean female identity formation. Homi Bhabha explains the conflicted in-between nature of postcolonial individuals, indicating that one's cultural surroundings and social relations create the framework within which one must develop and access identity.<sup>2</sup> Due to the gender norms already accepted within any given society, a female individual is subjected to not only social norms through her environment, but to the much more intimate representations of these gender norms by her own mother. Judith Butler confirms that while an individual can be born biologically female, gender is learned through the norms presented to her.<sup>3</sup> Therefore, a woman is created by taking part in performatives that categorize her as such. Females are taught to be expressly dependent upon their mothers to

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<sup>1</sup> Oscar Wilde and Henry Popkin, *The Importance of Being Earnest* (New York: Avon Books, 1965), 10.

<sup>2</sup> Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (New York: Routledge Classics, 1994), 63.

<sup>3</sup> Judith Butler, "Subjects of Sex/Gender/Desire," in *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. (New York: Routledge, 1999), 3-44.