

“A Spectacle of Infinite Sadness”:
Decoloniality, Affect, and Postwar Japanese Calligraphy

by

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Certificate of Approval

This is to certify that the accompanying thesis by Jesse Clyde Moneyhun has been accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for graduation with Honors in Rhetoric Studies.

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Abstract

Coming from a decolonial standpoint, this project argues that rhetoricians must actively seek out marginalized voices while shifting our approach to theories and methods to allow for more self-reflexive analyses. I analyze Japanese post-war calligrapher Inoue Yūichi's *Ah Yokokawa Kokumin-gakkō* via affect theory as an example of how rhetoricians might attempt such an analysis. We must delink ourselves from analytic practices that ignore cultural difference for the sake of maintaining the borders of rhetoric. This ignorance of cultural difference leads to its violent erasure via uninformed analyses or to the further exclusion of marginalized cultures by refusing to incorporate Other voices into the canon. Ultimately, an encounter with an Other provides the opportunity to reify conventions, on the one hand, or the opportunity to reevaluate assumptions on the other. This project's analysis advocates for the latter. Specifically, this analysis aims to open a space where conversations about methodological practice, relations to other cultures, and calligraphy can take place within the field of rhetorical studies and beyond.

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The Akakaze and Ah Yokokawa Kokumin-gakkō

In a single night during World War II, the United States Air Force dropped 585,488 pounds of oil-gel and gasoline-gel bombs on Tokyo. This became what was to be later known as The Great Tokyo Firebombing (*Tōkyō daikūshū* 東京大空襲).¹ The city was leveled by the morning. U.S. Air Force commander Curtis Lemay ordered the use of firebombs with the knowledge that most of Tokyo at that time consisted of wooden structures. Lemay stated he wanted it “burned down—wiped right off the map.”² Although the use of incendiary bombs was relatively conventional during the war at that time, the quantity of the bombs combined with the wooden structures of Tokyo led to unprecedented results. As the entire city was gradually engulfed in flames, an *akakaze* 赤風, or “red wind,” swept through the streets. This wind pushed a front of superheated vapor across the city that in places reached up to 1800 degrees Fahrenheit.³ The heat killed many Tokyo residents before the fires even reached them. The *akakaze* spread firestorms across Tokyo, incinerating people and property while simultaneously sucking away all the oxygen in the area.⁴ Analysts were later in awe of the devastation that took place that night:

The mechanisms of death were so multiple and simultaneous—oxygen deficiency and carbon monoxide poisoning, radiant heat and direct flames, debris and the trampling feet of stampeding crowds—that causes of death were later hard to ascertain.⁵

Various sources cite the firebombings as killing more than or equal to either of the infamous atomic bombings.⁶

Working late at his school during the night of the bombing, Japanese calligrapher Inoue Yūichi (井上有一) was one of the rare survivors. Inoue recovered from his wounds and later took part in the postwar resurgence of Japanese calligraphy. He produced and showed his first collection of calligraphy in 1950 and curators have included his work in prominent exhibitions ever since.⁷ Always considering himself a postwar calligrapher, Inoue produced a large amount of calligraphy directly inspired by his experiences during the war. With 2015 marking the 70th anniversary of Japan's surrender in World War II, the 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art in Kanazawa, Japan unveiled a centennial exhibition of collected works by Inoue on January 2nd, 2016.⁸ The museum assembled works dealing explicitly with his wartime experiences in a section of the exhibition named “The Horror of War and *Tokyo Daikushu* (Tokyo Bombing).” One piece, *Ah Yokokawa Kokumin-gakkō*, goes into detail about his personal experience being bombed during the night of the Great Tokyo Firebombing. The museum heavily advertised the work⁹ and various news agencies ran stories on it.¹⁰

What about *Ah Yokokawa Kokumin-gakkō* makes it so powerful? I argue that *Ah Yokokawa Kokumin-gakkō* operates via evocation of affective potential, both drawing us in and unsettling us. In discussing this object, I further argue that the field of rhetoric needs to be self-reflexive about the potentially colonial implications of its methodological practices. I necessarily take a decolonial standpoint regarding the field of rhetoric and how it interacts with objects from other cultures. We must delink ourselves from analytic practices that ignore cultural difference for the sake of maintaining the borders of rhetoric. This ignorance of cultural difference leads to its

violent erasure via uninformed analyses or to the further exclusion of marginalized cultures by refusing to incorporate Other voices into the canon. Ultimately, an encounter with an Other provides the opportunity to reify conventions or the opportunity to reevaluate assumptions. My analysis advocates for reevaluation. I suggest that affect theory is one avenue by which rhetoricians might incorporate objects like *Ah Yokokawa Kokumin-gakkō* into the field and that rhetoricians must begin to incorporate marginalized voices if we are to be serious about decolonizing our field. I aim for my analysis to open a space where conversations about methodological practice, relations to other cultures, and calligraphy can take place.

In chapter one I review relevant literature on critiques of the rhetorical canon as well as post- and decolonial theory. I then explore in more depth the problems related to analyzing Japanese calligraphy from a Western perspective. I conclude chapter one by reviewing scholarship on affect theory. In chapter two I provide an analysis of *Ah Yokokawa Kokumin-gakkō*, presenting how affect theory lends itself well to the analysis of such an affectively powerful piece. In the final chapter I will conclude with some thoughts on the implications my analysis has for rhetoric and other fields.

Decolonizing Rhetoric

The rhetorical canon is dappled with various and often contesting conceptions of where the borders of rhetoric lie, and *what* and *who* is allowed to exist in its domain. Opening up a popular anthology to the table of contents, we can find a quick history, from the classical period to the modern.¹¹ First, there are the classics: Gorgias, Plato, Isocrates, Aristotle, Cicero and Quintilian.¹² Following them are Augustine, Boethius, and Bacon.¹³ Even Nietzsche and Locke are claimed by the canon.¹⁴ Finally, we meet Bakhtin, Richards, Burke, Toulmin, Foucault and Derrida.¹⁵ More recent additions might include McGee¹⁶ and McKerrow.¹⁷ It is quite a collection of thinkers and texts, and many rhetorical theorists have leveled critiques against the assemblage of this very canon.

First, the history of rhetoric is remarkably specific in scope (Eurocentric, logocentric, heteronormative, masculinist, ableist, etc.). Yet it is only recently that theorists within the field have begun to examine these exclusionary practices with the goal of opening up the canon to post- and decolonial voices. Thomas P. Miller has noted this absence:

Given the constitution of the canon, one must conclude that for a couple thousand years the only people who used rhetoric were white male Europeans, a state of affairs that is at odds with our belief that every community uses rhetoric to put shared assumptions and values into social practice.¹⁸

Second, many of the people mentioned in the canon disagree about the concept of ‘rhetoric’ itself. This disagreement in particular challenges the concept of a rhetorical canon for Miller:

To write Demosthenes, Augustine, Ramus, Campbell, and Burke (Kenneth or Edmund) into the same history, we have to ignore, or at least simplify, the complex differences between their political, intellectual, and educational contexts... We have to pretend that when figures like Isocrates and Ramus talk about rhetoric, they are talking about the same thing.¹⁹

Miller suggests, “we need to look beyond the literary theories that have gained prestige in English departments to combine a broader historicism with our own developing understanding of rhetoric as a social practice.”²⁰ Miller offers a more historical approach, one that incorporates new voices in such a way that challenges the field’s theories and methods, rather than the theories and methods shaping how we view our objects. Because of this, Miller does not outright condemn the concept of the canon, but argues that we should move past condemning or praising the canon so that we might “develop a more dynamic relationship between historical inquiry and contemporary theory and practice.”²¹ One such way of advancing the field takes the form of a theoretical reframing. Rather than concentrate our theoretical efforts on examining the “rhetorical tradition,” Miller suggests that we “study the rhetoric of traditions—the ways that political parties, ethnic groups, social movements, and other discourse communities constitute and maintain the shared values and assumptions that authorize discourse.”²² This refocusing from “rhetorical tradition” to “rhetoric of

traditions” leaves room for previously excluded voices to take part in theoretical and historical discourse in ways previously not possible.

The emergence of postcolonial studies within critical theory in the 1980s and the 1990s provides another standpoint from which to critique these exclusionary institutional practices. Postcolonial theory examines how Western discourses and theories contribute to the global imbalance of power structures. Edward Said,²³ Homi Bhaba,²⁴ Gayatri Spivak,²⁵ Dipesh Chakrabarty²⁶ and many others contributed to the creation of this field. Coming from a postcolonial background, Raka Shome has done considerable work challenging the Eurocentric foundations of contemporary rhetorical studies. In particular, she encourages more self-reflexive practice in scholarship. She argues that

as we engage in rhetorical understandings of texts, or produce rhetorical theories, it is important to place the texts that we critique or the theories we produce against a larger backdrop of neocolonialism and racism, and interrogate to what extent these discourses and our own perspectives on them reflect the contemporary global politics of (neo) imperialism.²⁷

Shome reminds us to take to heart McKerrow’s call to “escape from the trivializing influence of universalist approaches,”²⁸ and examine how our own practices may contribute to the “backdrop of neocolonialism and racism.”

Janice Radway, echoing Shome’s and Miller’s critiques, identifies our “listening practices” as one such practice that serves to tacitly support Eurocentric regimes of power.²⁹ She aims for theorists to “enlarge our notion of voice”³⁰ in order to

recognize narratives that have been muted by exclusive theoretical practices. She disagrees with the logic that suggests an absence of voices is an absence of speakers, and instead suggests that it is our theories and methods that need to change in order to better receive their stories:

There are people ‘out there’ who have voices. They speak in languages and practices that we don’t ordinarily try to hear. The problem is our ability to hear different speech. The issue is that they’re already speaking—with actions, with fury, with anger, and we don’t know how to hear them yet.³¹

It is our practices and methods that need to change in order to perform the kind of recognition and reception of underrepresented voices for which Radway calls. For example, Shome points out that the field is institutionally biased toward certain lines of inquiry or objects of study:

In the pursuit of our scholarly goals, we often do not stop to think or ask questions about why, for example, research agenda A seems more important to us than research agenda B? ...What does it mean, for instance, when I am told that there is a market for research agenda A but none for research agenda B? Or that if I did pursue research agenda B I would have to do it in a way that would make it marketable?³²

Institutional bias privileges some projects over others, and more often than not, projects that do not support the Eurocentric foundations of certain departments are not funded or published. Our task, then, is to challenge this Eurocentricity by choosing artifacts that call into question the validity of “universalist approaches;” to publish

pieces that directly critique the institution's Eurocentric proclivities; to question how these proclivities have affected our understanding of cultural Others.

However, it's not enough to simply add underrepresented voices to the canon for the sake of diversity. Shome warns us against this as well:

[E]ven when we do sometimes try to break out of the Eurocentric canons informing contemporary academic scholarship by including alternate cultural and racial perspectives in our syllabi, we often do not realize that instead of really breaking free of the canon, all that we do is stretch it, add things to it. But the canon remains the same and unchallenged.³³

The addition of these voices to the canon cannot simply "stretch" the canon. They must call into question the very idea of the canon itself. They must demonstrate the inadequacy of a Eurocentric canon in an ever more globalized, hybridized world. They must aid the shift from centralizing a "rhetorical tradition" to centralizing a "rhetoric of traditions" in our scholarly research.

Decolonial studies is a field that has directly responded to this call for action. While one of postcolonialism's primary concerns is the dismantling of imperialism and neocolonialism, decolonial theorists are further concerned about "the ways in which theories themselves... reinscribe coloniality in our present era."³⁴ Decolonial practice seeks to more directly interact with marginalized subjects in order to drastically change the theoretical landscape. Take for example the project of Emma Perez's *The Decolonial Imaginary*, which "is an archaeology of discursive fields of knowledge that write Chicanas into histories."³⁵ Perez does not merely add Chicana history to the field of preexisting knowledge in order to expand it. She incorporates Chicana history into

the current imaginary in such a way that it challenges its foundation and changes its landscape. Decolonial studies evolved out of Latin@ studies³⁶ and vernacular rhetoric, especially that of Sloop and Ono.³⁷ It seeks to be “more attentive to delinking from modern/coloniality.”³⁸ The approach provided by decolonial studies is precisely that for which Miller, Shome, and Radway call. Darrel Wanzer has discussed the driving force and implications behind the decolonial method:

On a practical level, this means that rhetoricians (who both theorize and critique) must begin *hearing* those voices excluded from our theorizing and the discourse communities we study, *internalizing* their thought, and *seeking* ways to delink from modern/coloniality.³⁹

This “delink[ing] from modern/coloniality” takes the form of altering the theoretical framework or method by way of interacting with marginalized voices. The foundations of the theories are challenged and then altered in order to come to terms with its Eurocentric specificity. For example, when Wanzer uses McGee’s fragmentation thesis to analyze modernism among colonized peoples, the theory itself is changed by the analysis and we gain new insights about the effects of modernity.⁴⁰ Or when Wanzer cites McGee’s concept of “the People” to analyze the Young Lords’ church offensive, he challenges “the People” as a concept by “joining ideographs and social imaginaries.”⁴¹

It is in this decolonial tradition of critique that I would like to situate my work on the Japanese post-war calligrapher, Inoue Yūichi 井上有一. By neglecting to publish any scholarship on calligraphy and challenge the current Eurocentric foundations directing the field, rhetorical studies has not recognized calligraphy as a

legitimate rhetorical tradition. The field has, to its own detriment, ignored the complexity and sophistication of calligraphy as a culturally situated communicative form. We all must welcome decolonial rhetoricians in order to counter neocolonial undercurrents present in our field and to start the work of self-reflexive methodological reevaluation. In the next section, I will describe in more detail some of the dangers associated with analyzing objects from other cultures. I will then provide suggestions for approaching an object like *Ah Yokokawa Kokumin-gakkō* via a combination of literary theory, postcolonial theory, decolonial theory, and calligraphic theory.

Coming to Terms with Difference

In December of 1998, the University of California, Los Angeles hosted a three-day international conference titled “Japanese Hermeneutics: Current Debates on Aesthetics and Interpretation.”⁴² The presenters were an arrangement of “aestheticians, philosophers, and art and literary historians”⁴³ from Japan, the United States, and Europe. The mission of the conference was ostensibly simple: to examine “the role played by interpretive models in the articulation of cultural discourses on Japan.”⁴⁴ Each presenter dealt with this topic of interpretation in their own way as dictated by their various backgrounds, but each was guided by a similar question: how can we interpret an Other? In the introduction of the book published after the conference, organizer and literary historian Michael F. Marra explains how our methods of interpretation, or hermeneutics, interact with structures of self and Other:

Our ability (or inability) to deal with difference will determine the course of future events. Hermeneutics calls attention to the danger of reducing the other

to the self and keeps reminding us of the difficulty of decreasing the tension between the other and self while at the same time avoiding its erasure.⁴⁵

The conference demonstrates how complicated an endeavor it is to come to terms with difference. How do we conduct analysis in such a way that chips away at the structures sustaining Otherness? How do we then avoid commandeering our object and using it merely as fodder for our own theoretical projects? And how do we respect the integrity of the object in such a way that reflects its unique cultural situation, not making it a simple reflection of ourselves?

Here I find literary theorist Zahi Zalloua's concept of "unruly" objects helpful. Zalloua posits that in the process of interpretation, we are subject to "two competing injunctions"⁴⁶: first, to "make sense of the work's aesthetic otherness"⁴⁷ by relying on the familiar; but second, to avoid "reducing it to the familiar."⁴⁸ Zalloua defines the way literature forces upon us the responsibility of navigating this double bind as literature's fundamental "unruliness."⁴⁹ This formulation mirrors the problematic previously described by Marra; an object from another culture forces upon Western scholarship a strong sense of unruliness. However, what Zalloua offers is a different way of approaching this double bind:

Unruliness, indistinguishable from the *experience* of unruliness, does not exist outside interpretive communities, but is generated by them and contributes as well to their "engine of change," compelling unsatisfied readers to think with and beyond their existing protocols of interpretation and current norms of readability.⁵⁰

Zalloua argues that Marra's formulation of "decreasing the tension between the other and self" is not a teleological practice but rather an ongoing process. Our jobs as critics should not be to eliminate this tension but to embrace it in order to fuel our "engine of change,"⁵¹ challenging "existing protocols of interpretation and current norms of readability."⁵² Otherness is then not a challenge to be overcome but an invitation to reevaluate the terms by which we 'other' something. I find this perspective in line with the late Foucauldian project of self-improvement⁵³ as well as Barbra Biesecker's position on the function of rhetoric,⁵⁴ Sloop and Ono's vision of a materialist rhetoric,⁵⁵ and decolonial practice writ large. The work of these theorists underscores the importance of studying not only objects but also our own interpretive methods. To quote Marra, "hermeneutics might well become an art of survival."⁵⁶

In what follows, I will draw attention to certain dangers regarding the interpretation of objects from other cultures if we are to undertake the project of analyzing with attention to cultural context. Specifically, I will detail the violence of reducing calligraphy to "writing" or "painting" for the sake of analysis. I conclude by arguing that we must find ways of analyzing objects from other cultures that respect the integrity of their cultural situation. I posit affect theory as a less epistemically violent method of incorporating *Ah Yokokawa Kokumin-gakkō* into the field of rhetoric.

In recent years, ample scholarship has been devoted toward shedding light on the innate epistemic violence that Western scholarship commits when analyzing non-Western cultures. Much of this violence is committed when the goal of analysis is to either gain knowledge of another culture or to represent subaltern voices. These two practices are supported by and in turn perpetuate a strict divide between the studying

subject and the object of study. Rey Chow examines how area studies as a field belongs to the same episteme as the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and current strategic bombing tactics employed by the United States' government.⁵⁷ After the Second World War, certain cultures became targets for analysis and were studied as "fields of information retrieval and dissemination that were necessary for the perpetuation of the United States' political and ideological hegemony."⁵⁸ This mindset imposes strict boundaries between the self and Other and does not challenge the ideological underpinnings of analytic practice, mirroring the separation and security that aerial bombing tactics afford pilots. There is an associated violence with crafting representations of non-Western cultures for Western eyes. These representations, however well-meaning their intentions, invariably produce reductive essentializations in the process of being made intelligible to the West. This is precisely the act of "reducing the other to the self" of which Michael F. Marra cautions. This reduction is viewed as a violent but necessary component of traditional analytic practice, and is particularly damaging when performed without self-reflection regarding this violence. This critique is the basis for Gayatri Spivak's "Can the Subaltern Speak," wherein studying "the *authenticity* of the Other" is far less critically productive than studying "the sustained and developing work on the mechanics of the constitution of the Other."⁵⁹ Following this, scholarship should be devoted toward examining "the constitution of the Other" in Western discourse rather than toward the direct study of Other cultures. The act of representing or interpreting non-Western voices almost invariably leads to reductionist essentialization, and is often motivated by the desire to

“render the world as a knowable object”⁶⁰ without any thought to the structures upon which that rendering relies and sustains.

The epistemic violence that such scholarship performs by reifying strict subject/object, self/Other distinctions takes many forms. One form is the previously mentioned necessity of essentializing Other cultural practices and contexts into terms familiar to the critics. Even seemingly innocuous, universal terms like “writing” or what constitutes a “book” are surprisingly specific concepts native to Western modes of understanding.⁶¹ Therefore, when Western scholars interpret an object as “writing,” this designation applies various metrics of analysis to the object that allow for an evaluation to occur. Such evaluations often lead to conclusions regarding the object’s sophistication or primitiveness, but these conclusions are based upon methods of analysis developed for “writing.” Decolonial theorist Walter Mignolo states that this unreflexive practice of essentialization “does not take into account the etymological meaning of words”⁶² and therefore ignores “the social function related to those traditions in the respective languages.”⁶³

As a consequence, the ideas associated with the object designated by those words are suppressed and replaced by the ideas and the body of knowledge associated with that word in the lexicon and the expressions of the culture into which the original is translated.⁶⁴

Mignolo argues that we must conduct analysis in a way that is more attentive to culturally situated difference. He does not suggest that we can *overcome* difference or essentialization, but that we must stop producing scholarship that relies on simplified essentializations as prerequisites for analysis. Such scholarship renders Mexica *amoxtli*

as “books” or calligraphy as “writing” before analysis per se even begins. This rendering process allows critics to analyze these objects with methods and theories tailored to “books” or “writing.” Mignolo takes issue with this practice for two reasons. First, practices derived from insensitivity to cultural difference narrowly curate how critics can interact with objects. Scholarship then overlooks specific aspects of the object that offer opportunity for other interpretation. Second, this essentialist practice is unreflexive. It is a practice whereby cultural difference is “replaced by the ideas and the body of knowledge” native to the critic. Unreflexive essentialism leads precisely to the “erasure” against which Michael F. Marra cautioned;⁶⁵ it does not decrease the “tension between the other and self,”⁶⁶ but simply erases the Other by inserting the self. Furthermore, this practice does not encourage theorists to reevaluate their interpretive methods because it erases cultural difference. Indeed, it erases the cultural difference that would prompt such a reevaluation in the first place. With these insights in mind, I would now like to turn to the example of Japanese calligraphy to better situate these arguments.

Situating Japanese Calligraphy

Calligraphy inhabits a different cultural space in Japan than writing or painting in the West. How are we to understand why Japanese prime minister Shinzo Abe recently gained a cult following in China because of the brief thank-you note he left a cleaner at a hotel?⁶⁷ Or when being “a fifth-degree master of traditional Japanese calligraphy” is cited as proof of recently crowned Miss Japan’s Japanese heritage, amidst controversial claims that she’s half-Indian?⁶⁸ Or, when an exhibition can be comprised entirely of Japanese Emperors’ calligraphy from official to the mundane?⁶⁹

Calligraphy often accompanies momentous occasions and is a popular gift even in contemporary Japan, especially if the calligraphy is done by an acquaintance or a celebrity,⁷⁰ and when the imperial family attends an event in a city, all the signage is done by calligraphers. Calligraphy in Japan is not a practice reserved only for special situations, however; it is ubiquitous in Japanese everyday life. Japanese calligraphy scholar Cecil H. Uyehara notes that calligraphy “adorns[s] monuments, [is] used in textiles, ceramics, banknotes and in the home as an interior decoration.”⁷¹ With roughly sixteen million active calligraphers⁷² and around 400 calligraphy exhibitions every year,⁷³ calligraphy is not a fringe art form in Japan. Japanese art historian Winther Tamaki states that Japanese calligraphy has “no clear counterparts in the United States.”⁷⁴ Instead, defining calligraphy as “the art of writing,” he continues, “The relative autonomy of calligraphy vis-à-vis Europe and America is simply a reflection of the fact that there is no American practice that corresponds to the art of writing in Japan.”⁷⁵ In what follows, I will describe in more depth the cultural practice and philosophy regarding calligraphy in Japan, provide a history of Western reactions to Japanese calligraphy and the subsequent Japanese justifications of calligraphy as a culturally situated art form, and how the refusal to study calligraphy due to its complexity leads to its exoticification and commodification.

The modern word for Japanese calligraphy, “*shodō* 書道,” is often translated as “the art of writing,”⁷⁶ but it is also translatable as the “way of writing” and the “way of the brush.” This first translation hurdle should cue unfamiliar readers that learning about Japanese calligraphy entails learning about a multitude of culturally situated historical and philosophical concepts. To start, in Japan there is not one universal “way”

of practicing calligraphy nor is it a free-form art devoid of guiding structure. There are three main styles of calligraphy: *Kaisho* 楷書 (Block Script), *Gyosho* 行書 (Semicursive script), and *Sōsho* 草書 (Cursive Script).⁷⁷ Each of these styles evolved out of various historical conditions and there are hundreds of schools that subscribe to or emphasize different aspects and philosophies regarding calligraphic styles. There are, however, certain features intrinsic to Japanese calligraphic practice in general. I use this “in general” cautiously. There are always variations to the rule, but I would like to solidify a baseline of knowledge from which readers unfamiliar with Japanese calligraphy can differentiate it from Western concepts of writing and painting.

First, the stroke order for any given character is set and codified.⁷⁸ This includes the order in which each stroke is performed, but also includes the starting point and ending point of the stroke, as well as the pressure of the stroke throughout its writing. Second, calligraphy is done with a brush.⁷⁹ The brush is so important to calligraphic practice that it is designated as one of the “Four Treasures of Calligraphy.”⁸⁰ Brushes come in various shapes and sizes, are made from various kinds of animal hair, and are used for various purposes.⁸¹ In the West, the concept of “writing” is closely linked to the act of pressing a sharp object like a pen or pencil against paper; “writing” with a brush is then at risk of being labeled “painting.” Walter Mignolo notes that the etymological root of “to write” came from “the Anglo-saxon *writan* and meant ‘to scratch’ marks with something sharp; in Icelandic it was *rita*, ‘to scratch’; in Swedish *rita*, ‘to draw, to trace’; in Dutch, *rijten*, and in German *reissen*, ‘to tear.’”⁸² A brush interacts with paper differently from a pen or pencil and allows for different

modes of visual expression. Perhaps this realization is what prompted Japanese novelist Tanizaki Jun'ichirō to write on the power of the brush in 1933:

I wrote a magazine article recently comparing the writing brush with the fountain pen, and in the course of it I remarked that if the device had been invented by the ancient Chinese or Japanese it would surely have had a tufted end like our writing brush... [With this invention], our thought and our literature might have pushed forward into new regions quite on their own. An insignificant little piece of writing equipment, when one thinks of it, has had a vast, almost boundless, influence on our culture.⁸³

Third, calligraphy is an embodied practice. There are endless instruction manuals detailing the importance of body posture to proper calligraphic practice.⁸⁴ Some go as far as prescribing the proper number of centimeters between the calligrapher's face and their paper.⁸⁵ Calligraphers show up physically on the page via their calligraphy⁸⁶ so it is of the utmost importance that they are in control of their bodies. Fourth, calligraphers write words. This might seem simple, but it is also what many theorists and art curators cite when differentiating calligraphy from painting. Japanese aesthetician Ueda Makoto notes that "This is indicative of the basic nature of calligraphy, an expressive art superimposed on a representative art."⁸⁷ Calligraphy that falls outside these lines is usually categorized as abstract calligraphy⁸⁸ or ink painting.⁸⁹

These rules may at times seem restrictive to someone unfamiliar with calligraphic practice, but as Ueda reminds us, rules provide "a basic framework within which each artist [can] display his individuality."⁹⁰ It is within the framework of these

previously mentioned “rules” or traits of Japanese calligraphy that the art emerges. For example, that each stroke is set and codified provides an opportunity to follow along and recreate the rhythm of the artist’s strokes. Indeed, “an experienced onlooker would be able to follow calligraphic lines with all their different speeds, thus reproducing in his mind the rhythm with which they were originally drawn.”⁹¹ Calligraphy historian Wen C. Fong echoes this when he says that for many, “To appreciate calligraphy is to relive the physical action in one’s mind.”⁹² He suggests that when we sense that “calligraphy embodies an artist’s identity, and its gestures form a projection of the artist’s body language, we may begin to understand the relationship between the presented structures of calligraphy and what they express.”⁹³ What this intense intermingling of factors expresses is not a semantic meaning but an externalization of the calligrapher’s emotions, personality, and presence.⁹⁴ It is in the struggle of balancing all these factors that a sense of the artist emerges and asserts itself. If we simplify calligraphy down to concepts more digestible for Western analysis and refuse to interact with its intricacies, rhetoricians are at risk of erasing the value of calligraphy as a culturally situated, embodied practice and of erasing the presence of the calligraphers themselves.

This erasure is not only a danger in Western scholarship; it has precedent in the historical interactions of the West and Japan. Education policies in Japan still bear the marks of modernization during the Meiji 明治 (1868-1912) era and policy enforcement during the Occupation (1945-1952). Both these events affected Japanese calligraphic practice in significant ways. With the arrival of Matthew Perry and his “black ships” ushering about the end of the Edo period, the Meiji era brought about great cultural

changes, especially for education. Before the Meiji era, writing was practiced at both *terakoya* 寺子屋 (temple schools) and *hanko* 藩校 (government-sponsored schools),⁹⁵ but it consisted of copying sutras and famous poems; writing pedagogy did not include the composition of original content.⁹⁶ In order to promote efficient modernization, Meiji era policies separated Japanese language learning into three categories, “reading, composition, and calligraphy.”⁹⁷ As the Meiji and Taishō 大正 (1912-1926) periods progressed, the need for rapid, efficient conveyance of meaning superseded the value of aesthetics.⁹⁸ “Writing” (*kakikata* 書き方) was taught in Japanese classes while calligraphy was taught as an independent subject. This supersession of aesthetics for the sake of functionality and speed became the basis for a long and heated letter exchange between Japanese painter Koyama Shōtarō and Japanese aesthetician Okakura Kakuzō. In “Calligraphy Is Not Art,” Koyama states that calligraphy cannot and should not be considered an art because it does not prescribe to Western ideals of aesthetics and therefore is preventing Japan’s modernization.⁹⁹ Okakura’s response, “Reading ‘Calligraphy Is Not Art,’” makes a case for aesthetics:

In striving as much as possible to consider contextual balance, by taking into account the construction of each character, and pursuing cultivation, our calligraphy reaches the domains of art. It differs greatly from the writing of the Europeans, for whom it is enough merely to convey meaning.¹⁰⁰

Despite Okakura’s efforts, this bifurcation of “writing” as functional and “calligraphy” as an independent practice continued all the way into the Second World War.¹⁰¹ After Japan’s surrender the United States reformed the Japanese education system, banning calligraphy in 1947¹⁰² along with “Japanese history, geography, and ethics.”¹⁰³

Although it was later reinstated, it was under the condition that it be taught as a practice independent of “writing,” and the education program has maintained this distinction to this day.¹⁰⁴

I should be clear that I am not advocating for a return to a Japanese calligraphic practice unbifurcated by Western influence and policy. I do not think that is possible, nor is it my goal. Instead, I lay out this history to demonstrate the danger of reducing something so historically complex as calligraphy to “writing” or “painting.” To analyze calligraphy without considering its culturally situated position would not prompt us to reevaluate our own interpretive assumptions and would be performing undue epistemic violence to the calligraphic work.

Is it perhaps not more ethical to avoid analyzing Japanese calligraphy at all? Would this not assure that we would perform no epistemic violence to another culture during the process of analysis? This would be the antithesis of a decolonial stance and would only serve to further exclude already marginalized voices. Zahi Zalloua additionally argues that avoiding interpretation only serves “to transform the... work into an unspeakable, unknowable, and unassayable mystical Text.”¹⁰⁵ Refusing to interact with an Other does not decrease Michael F. Marra’s “tension between the self and the other,” but instead profits from the self and the Other’s further stability. Once the Other turns into something “unspeakable, unknowable... unassayable” and “mystical,” it becomes more easily commodified and exotified.¹⁰⁶ With this in mind, I advocate that rhetorical scholars engage in a decolonial project of reevaluation through the process of interacting with other discourses and cultures. This is a necessarily decolonial project and requires us to seek out different theories and methods of

analysis—particularly those that tend to the particularities of culturally situated objects. For the purposes of engaging with Inoue Yūichi's *Ah Yokokawa Kokumin-gakkō*, affect theory offers me such a framework. Next, I will briefly summarize relevant scholarship in affect theory to provide theoretical groundwork for my analysis.

Affect Theory

Affect theory is sometimes conflated with the study of feelings and emotions.¹⁰⁷ While feelings and emotions do make up an important part of affect theory, they do not equate to affect. Affect is the “raw material”¹⁰⁸ for feelings and emotional expression. For the purposes of my analysis, it is better described in terms of intensity and potentiality.¹⁰⁹ Affect theorist Eric Shouse states that affect is “unformed and abstract” and it is this “abstractivity” that “makes it transmittable in ways that feelings and emotions are not.”¹¹⁰ Shouse continues, “it is because affect is transmittable that it is potentially such a powerful social force.”¹¹¹ Affective potential is the intensity that provokes a reaction, and this intensity arises from “hundreds, perhaps thousands of stimuli [that] impinge upon the human body.”¹¹² After coming in contact with these disparate stimuli, “the body responds by infolding them all at once and registering them as an intensity.”¹¹³ For example, Brian Massumi notes how the semantic meaning of a text interacts with visuals, either “amplifying”¹¹⁴ or “dampening”¹¹⁵ affective potential. When the affective potential is amplified, Massumi uses the term “resonance.”¹¹⁶ When something “resonates” with you, it escapes a convenient “meaning”¹¹⁷; it does not provide the comfort of comprehensibility but rather keeps you in constant “suspense.”¹¹⁸ This moment of suspense provides an impetus for emotion and reaction. However, affect can never fully be captured since it is the

potential for reaction. Therefore, this surplus of affective potential provides the “raw material” for further affective transmission.¹¹⁹

Affect theory offers a way to theorize the affective nature of something like *Ah Yokokawa Kokumin-gakkō* without requiring that it first be categorized as either writing or painting. Affect theory gestures towards the value of alternate modes of knowing, some of which are not “explainable” or “cognitive” but operate on a more embodied, affective level. Analyzing *Ah Yokokawa Kokumin-gakkō* via affect theory lets illegibility and potentiality operate as legitimate factors in my analysis. Maintaining *Ah Yokokawa Kokumin-gakkō*’s disruptive illegibility in my analysis further provokes the type of methodological reevaluation that rhetoric, if it is serious about decolonizing its domain, needs to undertake. The next chapter is an attempt at discussing *Ah Yokokawa Kokumin-gakkō* via a combination of affect theory and calligraphic theory.

“A Spectacle of Infinite Sadness”

I died in the massive air raid on Tokyo on the night of March 10, 1945, in a storeroom at the school where I worked.¹²⁰

The Inoue that died in the Great Tokyo Air Raid is present throughout *Ah Yokokawa Kokumin-gakkō*. What appears on the page is a representation of his “nature,” a method of presentation that in many ways defines calligraphy and has more parallels with painting.¹²¹ What is foregrounded is self-expression, most often translated as expression of an individual’s nature;¹²² an externalization of how the calligrapher interacts with and interprets the world. This is not a concept foreign to analyses of visual culture in Western scholarship. Harold Rosenberg famously declared that the Action Painters of New York in the 1950s shifted away from the expression of an object by way of making a “picture,” and instead towards a capturing of an “event.”¹²³ By presenting the composition as the visual representation of an “event,” the piece then serves “as an index of the creative process and the painting itself as the gestural residue of the artist’s physical performance upon the canvas.”¹²⁴ This interplay between a sense of physicality and creativity during an “event” can then be seen as “the immediate expression of the artist.”¹²⁵ There are obvious parallels between calligraphy and this interplay. Japanese scholars portray calligraphy as a form of expression that foregrounds the nature of the calligrapher. This nature presents itself on the page through the interplay of physicality and creativity present during the singular “event” of creation. But how does affective potential change when the physicality involved in creating the piece intensifies, to use Massumi’s language?¹²⁶ The intense energy behind the Action Painters’ usage of paint provoked a sense of nebulous, overabundant

meaning. It was this sense that “had the potential to affect viewers through the enactment of anxiety”¹²⁷ over the pieces’ refusal to be made legible.

In the same way, the nature of Inoue’s strokes presents the opportunity to mull over the nature of his person while at the same time producing anxiety over a sense of ineffability. This represents the bombing not as a collection of numbers or narratives, but as a visual representation of the effects an event had on an individual, with a gesture towards the “infinite,” uncapturable, ineffable event of the bombing. Inoue asserts his presence via intense brushstrokes that in turn produce an abundance of affective potential. However, the brushstrokes also make up the characters that tell a firsthand narrative of the event. It would seem that the narrative power of the text would impede the affective potential of Inoue’s intensity, or that the intensity of Inoue’s presence would override the semantic value of the text. Instead, they interact with one another, constantly recirculating and reinforcing the interpretation of the work. Even more than any one component, it is this constant interaction that evokes affective potential to the extent that trying to “make sense” of the work is a traumatic experience in itself.¹²⁸



Figure 1 *Ah Yokokawa Kokumin-gakkō* (1978), taken from <http://www.unac.co.jp>.

The most immediate sense of presence is the sheer physicality on display. Inoue was known for physicality while painting, often creating works while half-clothed and covered in his own paint.¹²⁹ The characters that make up *Ah Yokokawa Kokumin-gakkō* are imbued with such physicality that they seem to jump off the page and at times they are often nearly illegible. One passage of the piece in particular demonstrates this physicality. The narrative content of the passage, transcribed and translated, reads as follows: “Like a blackened, calcified mass their bellies slashed, here and there a fetus clearly visible. A spectacle of infinite sadness.”¹³⁰ When compared to the passage in the calligraphic work itself, it becomes clear the degree to which such a transcription enacts violence by muting the effects this “scene of infinite sadness” had on Inoue. This in turn mutes his presence from the work and forecloses much of the affective potential of *Ah Yokokawa Kokumin-gakkō*. If we look at the work itself, how does this

passage illustrate the ability of calligraphic form to convey presence, and how does this intensify to the point where it creates such an abundance of affective potential?

Amongst splatters and disfigured *kanji*¹³¹ lays a bold “人” (person). The previous *kanji* (女/woman) clarifies that these strokes represent a woman. Although only two strokes, each side of Inoue’s “人” is pushed into the surface of the paper with such intensity that it brings his presence to the forefront of the character. We can see the point where he trails off on the left stroke and the hairs of the brush slowly leave the paper one by one. The right stroke does not trail off, but instead suggests firm pressure throughout the stroke while lingering slightly at the end. This follows conventional stroke order for “人” but the particularities of his rhythm, force, brush, and ink all force his presence to the front. Even the *kanji* “一” (one) that signifies the “blackened mass” is brimming with presence. Inoue starts from the left side, planting his brush down so firmly that it threatens to splatter nearby characters. However, his brush begins to lose its pressure and ink by the end of the horizontal stroke, and the *kanji* finishes off with a trail to the right. This completely goes against the codified method for writing “一,” which starts with pressure on the left, sweeps to the right, and concludes with firm pressure at the finish. Yet, this does not invalidate his expression but rather complicates it even further, and provides more insight into Inoue’s presence.

Panning out to the rest of the work, *Ah Yokokawa Kokumin-gakkō* is comprised almost entirely of similar instances that gesture towards the presence of Inoue and his interaction with his narrative. The very first line of the piece sets the scene: “アメリカ B29 夜間東京空襲 /The night raid over Tokyo by B29 bombers.” The “America” and

“B29” are barely legible. The characters are sandwiched between two long streaks of black ink on either side, and are also written with such an amount of force and ink that the “力” ka) of America has disappeared completely in the ink. There are also large swaths of text that have been violently smudged or smeared over by ink. This creates such an opportunity for affective potential, a news publication even commented, “In places, the smears of ink resemble black blood.”¹³² The characters obscured by these smudges and smears are no longer “readable” in the semiotic sense. Yet they still impart something: the nature of Inoue’s presence.

Does this suggest that the text or narrative represented by these characters is completely overshadowed by the intensity of their creation? This kind of thinking would lead to a muting of affective potential as well, and is a simplification of how calligraphy operates. The actual text of the piece is a first-hand account of the bombing. Although Japanese is much less beholden to the explicit reference of a grammatical subject, there is a subject of this firsthand account. To aid understanding, the English translation of the narrative inserts four instances of “I”.¹³³ I believe it is fair to add these subjects in the English translation, because although grammatically unnecessary in Japanese, they are suggested by the grammatical structure. Still, Inoue appears explicitly in the narrative only once during the entire Japanese transcription: at the very end, with his signature. These nebulous subject positions, reflected in the English as “I” and in the Japanese through grammatical structure, leave interpretive gaps. There is an interesting opportunity for interaction with the calligraphic presence of Inoue at this point. It is here that the linear narrative is disrupted by the possible presence of its subject. Yet, the narrative text is disrupted in such a way that it does not destroy or

overpower its semantic function. Rather, its interaction with Inoue's presence provides context for the piece's intensity. The two parts are in constant communication with one another.

The semantic force of the text is overcome by the presence of Inoue—his nature as represented by the physicality in his approach to calligraphy. Yet, the text does not fall away and become meaningless in this formulation. Indeed, “the text never goes away.”¹³⁴ His presence bursts through the semantic meaning of the characters—so much so that often the characters are barely legible—but the characters are also always vying to be recognized and read. Drawing back to Ueda's definition, calligraphy is “an expressive art superimposed on a representative art.”¹³⁵ Neither art or form of expression is reduced to the other, but rather both constantly re-inform the interpretation of the other, creating an overabundance of interpretative potential. According to Massumi, it is precisely this sort of interpretive “loop” that amplifies affective potential.¹³⁶ This mutually enforcing interaction creates a resonance between different forms that exceeds any complete capture. In the case of *Ah Yokokawa Kokumin-gakkō*, this resonance between Inoue's calligraphic presence and the content evokes irreducible affective potential. Furthermore, the underlying narrative provides some semantic context for the piece's affective potential.

In this turmoil of interpenetrating presence and narrative, *Ah Yokokawa Kokumin-gakkō* manages another feat. The intensity of the brushstrokes and paint bring to the forefront its nature as a visual representation of a creative “event,” much like the Action Painters of the 1950s. It highlights the calligrapher's presence, as opposed to plainly representing the bombing as a historical or ontological event. In this way, the

piece signals its own artifice. It calls attention to the fact that although its complexity escapes comprehension, it is still fabrication. There is no attempt to hide the fact that the piece was created by a calligrapher, and instead of weakening it, this is precisely what makes *Ah Yokokawa Kokumin-gakkō* such a powerful piece. Even though it already escapes comprehension, the piece suggests that there is still more that even it is not able to convey. More than written accounts, more than numbers, more than post-bombing photography, this is what makes *Ah Yokokawa Kokumin-gakkō* such a moving representation of the Great Tokyo Firebombing. It creates ineffable affective potential, and gestures towards still a more incomprehensible “spectacle of infinite sadness.”

Treating a work of calligraphy like *Ah Yokokawa Kokumin-gakkō* as either “writing” or “painting” would therefore entail enacting a certain amount of violence. As Robert E. Harrist notes when the “dwelling places” of calligraphers’ “words are redesigned in the medium of print, or in copies made by other calligraphers, the experience of reading... changes; the bond between the material presence of the words and their point of origin in an individual mind and body is broken.”¹³⁷ When this bond is broken, a certain sense of loss “may convince us that this bond was more complex and indirect than any aesthetic theory can explain.”¹³⁸ Treating calligraphy as “writing” erases the presence of the calligrapher and mutes the work’s affective potential. Furthermore, treating the piece as a “painting” erases the importance of the narrative created by the brushstrokes. If we treated it just as a painting, the work might only induce a vague sense of “anxiety”¹³⁹ derived from the intensity of the strokes and the feeling of incomprehensibility. Instead, this intensity is inseparable from the narrative.

The narrative serves to intensify the affective potential behind the strokes, and the strokes intensify the affective potential of the narrative.¹⁴⁰ Finally, the sense that the piece signals its own artifice via its visual representation as a creative “event” only serves to gesture towards the greater incomprehensibility of the Great Tokyo Firebombing as a traumatic, personal event. This in turn amplifies the intensity and evokes even more affective potential. As I turn toward my final chapter of this project, I will conclude, compare my methodology to other theorists’ work, and offer some final thoughts on decolonization in rhetorical studies.

The Decolonial Imperative

My analysis potentially poses more questions than it answers. What is it that I am analyzing? What is it that I am discussing about *Ah Yokokawa Kokumin-gakkō*? What I am analyzing and discussing is, succinctly, the work's resistance to analysis. Instead of providing an interpretation derived from a field of potential readings, I focus on how the piece provokes these potential readings. In this way, my usage of affect theory traces that of Massumi's.¹⁴¹ My discussion of this calligraphic work attempts to avoid the overdetermination of meaning that sometimes occurs when affect is equated with emotional response. I feel that this discussion is more consistent with a decolonial perspective since it steers away from a particular set of readings, colonial readings derived from interpretive methods situated in a dominant culture, and instead points to the multitude of potential ways that an object can be interpreted.

For example, when Brian Ott and Diane Keeling analyze *Lost in Translation*, their analysis relies on a certain equivalence of emotion and affect. Ott and Keeling further claim that their method does not survey "audience response," nor report "the critic's subjective, impressionistic responses," but instead analyzes "the film itself, regarding the film as a constructed invitation to a complex experience of thoughts and feelings."¹⁴² I take issue with this stance for two reasons. First: although Ott and Keeling do not claim to survey "audience response," they presuppose that certain aspects of the film induce an emotional response without acknowledging that this emotional response is located within the framework of a particular audience, namely an American audience. Ott and Keeling note that the sudden cuts and multi-angled shots disorient the viewer,¹⁴³ but the same technique has been used in Japanese cinema to

great effect by the likes of Ozu Yasujirō 小津 安二郎.¹⁴⁴ This technique refocuses visual aesthetics as the driving force behind a film's progression rather than narrative.¹⁴⁵ Western films often operate in the opposite way, so a Western audience might be understandably unsettled by this cutting technique. Yet, Ott and Keeling do not acknowledge that this reading is derived from interpretive methods situated in American culture. They instead proclaim that this jarring cutting technique, "...enhanced by the apparent lack of plot progression,"¹⁴⁶ leads a universalized to feel "disoriented"¹⁴⁷ and uncomfortable. Ott and Keeling also claim that audiences are made to feel isolated by Tokyo's "endless array of signs—many of which are unfamiliar and indecipherable."¹⁴⁸ I need not explain which audience is meant to feel that these signs are "unfamiliar and indecipherable." The analysis of the temple scene describes Charlotte as voyeuristically observing the monks, which, they argue, elicits in the audience "an embodied sense of isolation and dislocation, making it easier to identify with her alienating experience."¹⁴⁹ Who is to say that an audience would not have an embodied sense of calm and belonging as memories of incense and chants wash over them? Do these presuppositions not demonstrate "the critic's subjective, impressionistic responses"?

My second, related issue with Ott and Keeling's analysis is that it absolves the reader of a certain sense of uneasiness by putting a word to an intensity. By calling something "sad," "funny" or even "isolating," it turns affective potential into a virtual expression. This is not to say that these scenes are not read as sad, funny, or isolating for some audiences, but it does operate in a violently prescriptive way by aligning the analysis with a certain presupposed interpretive lens. This interpretive lens privileges a

Western audience by unreflexively treating the response a typical Western audience would have as a universal response, narrowly curating the way the piece can be interpreted. This interpretive methodology then provides an outlet for affective potential via a culturally situated expression, which sidesteps the interpretive crisis created by an overabundance of affective potential. By instead analyzing how *Ah Yokokawa Kokumin-gakkō* resists attempts such as these to force it into legibility, critics would avoid making universalist claims that so often enact undue epistemic violence.

This is precisely what decolonial critics Mignolo and Wanzer refer to when they speak of “delinking” from universalist, neo-colonial practices.¹⁵⁰ Delinking “requires that we better situate knowledge in its geographic and embodied specificity and resist attempts to universalize any particular episteme.”¹⁵¹ In order to avoid universalizing particular epistemes, rhetorical scholars would do well to pay attention to the culturally situated position of the objects we study. This requires developing our methods of listening so that we are better able to hear “*what has been silenced*,”¹⁵² and how these voices might only appear silent because they “speak in languages and practices that we don’t ordinarily try to hear.”¹⁵³ We must pay heed to how certain voices have been “excluded from our theorizing and the discourse communities we study”¹⁵⁴ for the sake of maintaining the borders of rhetoric. This is a project that should appeal to all critical rhetoricians¹⁵⁵ and cannot be confined to “the barrios of communications studies.”¹⁵⁶ Wanzer reminds us:

It is not enough... to leave this task to scholars of color. Such a move is dangerous insofar as it continues to relegate these important questions to the

margins of the discipline while constructing a fiction of “inclusion” that remains authorized by the hubris of zero point epistemology.¹⁵⁷

We all must welcome a decolonial project if the field of rhetoric is to promote more ethical interaction with other cultures. Relying on identity politics to decide what projects certain scholars are able to undertake functions as another form of marginalization.¹⁵⁸ Incorporating and circulating underrepresented voices with an eye towards cultural difference provides the impetus to reevaluate the terms and conditions by which we incorporate certain voices and exclude others.

In closing, I want to preserve the interpretive crisis that *Ah Yokokawa Kokumin-gakkō* provides for rhetorical scholars. It is precisely interpretive crises such as these that become the fuel for change. I encourage rhetoricians to embrace crises instead of shrinking away from responsibly addressing them. By treating crises as opportunities to embark on a self-reflective examination of rhetorical practice, the field of rhetoric would be more in line with the requests of post- and decolonial scholars. This self-reflection might entail reevaluating some of the fundamental assumptions about how humans interact with objects, about how our assumptions are culturally situated, and about the nature of living in an increasingly globalized world. This of course need not only apply to the field of rhetoric, but also to the broad range of disciplines whose goals entail the more ethical interaction with other cultures. Indeed, it would do us well to remember this self-reflective instinct in times of everyday crisis. An encounter with an Other provides not only the grounds for a crisis, but also the grounds for change.

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Notes

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- ¹ These calculations do not consider the high-explosive bombs that were also dropped on Tokyo that night. See Mark Selden, "A Forgotten Holocaust: US Bombing Strategy, the Destruction of Japanese Cities & the American Way of War from World War II to Iraq," *The Asia-Pacific Journal* 5 (May 2007): 7.
- ² Commander George Lemay, quoted by Mark Selden in "A Forgotten Holocaust: US Bombing Strategy, the Destruction of Japanese Cities & the American Way of War from World War II to Iraq," 9
- ³ *Ibid.*, 8.
- ⁴ *Ibid.*
- ⁵ *Ibid.*
- ⁶ *Ibid.*, 9.
- ⁷ Akimoto Yuji, *A Retrospective: Yu-Ichi Inoue, 1955-1985* (Tokyo: Kamimori Paper Foundation, 2016), 370.
- ⁸ *Ibid.*, 7.
- ⁹ "A Centennial Exhibition: INOUE YUICHI," accessed November 3, 2016, https://www.kanazawa21.jp/data_list.php?g=81&d=140&lng=e.
- ¹⁰ Noriyuki Tomita, "How Yuichi Inoue wrote his way into modern art's pantheon," *Nikkei Asian Review*, January 30, accessed October 21, 2016, <http://asia.nikkei.com/Life-Arts/Arts/How-Yuichi-Inoue-wrote-his-way-into-modern-art-s-pantheon?page=2>.
- ¹¹ *The Rhetorical Tradition*, ed. Patricia Bizzell et al. (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1990), ix-xii.
- ¹² *Ibid.*, ix-x.
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- ¹⁴ *Ibid.*, xi.
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- ¹⁶ Michael Calvin McGee, "The 'Ideograph': A Link Between Rhetoric and Ideology," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* Vol. 66, No. 1 (1980).
- ¹⁷ Raymie E. McKerrow, "Critical Rhetoric: Theory and Praxis," *Communication Monographs* 56 (June 1989).
- ¹⁸ Thomas P. Miller, "Reinventing Rhetorical Traditions," in *Learning from the Histories of Rhetoric: Essays in Honor of Winfred Bryan Horner*, ed. Theresa Enos (Illinois: Southern Illinois University, 1993), 27.
- ¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 27.
- ²⁰ *Ibid.*, 28.
- ²¹ *Ibid.*, 26.
- ²² *Ibid.*, 26.
- ²³ Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Random House, Inc., 1978).
- ²⁴ Homi Bhaba, *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 2012).
- ²⁵ Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak?" in *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, ed. Cary Nelson et al. (Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 1988).
- ²⁶ Dipesh Chakrabarty et al., *From the Colonial to the Postcolonial: India and Pakistan in Transition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).
- ²⁷ Raka Shome, "Postcolonial Interventions in the Rhetorical Canon: An 'Other' View," *Communication Theory* 6:1 (February 1996): 41.
- ²⁸ McKerrow, "Critical Rhetoric: Theory and Praxis," 91.
- ²⁹ Michele Wallace, "Towards a Black Feminist Cultural Criticism," in *Cultural Studies*, ed. Lawrence Grossberg et al. (London: Routledge, 2013), 668.
- ³⁰ *Ibid.*
- ³¹ *Ibid.*
- ³² Shome, "Postcolonial Interventions in the Rhetorical Canon: An 'Other' View," 46.
- ³³ *Ibid.*
- ³⁴ Darrel Enck-Wanzer, "Delinking Rhetoric, or Revisiting McGee's Fragmentation Thesis through Decoloniality," *Rhetoric and Public Affairs* Vol. 15, No.4 (Winter 2012): 656.
- ³⁵ Emma Perez, *The Decolonial Imaginary* (Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1999), xiiv.

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- ³⁶ Darrel Enck-Wanzer, "Race, Coloniality, and Geo-Body Politics: The Garden as Latin@ Vernacular Discourse," *Environmental Communication: A Journal of Nature and Culture*, 5:3 (2011): 365.
- ³⁷ Darrel Enck-Wanzer, "Decolonizing Imaginaries: Rethinking 'The People' in the Young Lords' Church Offensive," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* Vol. 98, No.1 (February 2012): 7.
- ³⁸ Wanzer, "Delinking Rhetoric, or Revisiting McGee's Fragmentation Thesis through Decoloniality," 652.
- ³⁹ *Ibid.*, 654.
- ⁴⁰ E.g. that fragmentation was not a universal, historical event that was brought about by modernity, but rather a fact of life that may colonized peoples have been dealing with for hundreds of years in order to survive. See Wanzer, "Delinking Rhetoric, or Revisiting McGee's Fragmentation Thesis through Decoloniality," 649.
- ⁴¹ Wanzer, "Decolonizing Imaginaries: Rethinking 'The People' in the Young Lords' Church Offensive," 17.
- ⁴² The conference was organized by literary historian Michael F. Marra and took place December 13th until the 15th. Michael F. Marra, introduction to *Japanese Hermeneutics: Current Debates on Aesthetics and Interpretation*, ed. Michael F. Marra (Hawai'i: University of Hawai'i Press, 2002), 1.
- ⁴³ *Ibid.*
- ⁴⁴ *Ibid.*
- ⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 5.
- ⁴⁶ Zahi Zalloua, introduction to *Reading Unruly: Interpretation and Its Ethical Demands* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2014), 3.
- ⁴⁷ *Ibid.*
- ⁴⁸ Derek Attridge, *The Singularity of Literature*, quoted in *Reading Unruly: Interpretation and Its Ethical Demands*, by Zahi Zalloua (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2014), 3.
- ⁴⁹ Zalloua, *Reading Unruly: Interpretation and Its Ethical Demands*, 2.
- ⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 12.
- ⁵¹ *Ibid.*
- ⁵² *Ibid.*
- ⁵³ David M. Halperin, *Saint Foucault: Towards a Gay Hagiography*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 76-77.
- ⁵⁴ Barbara Biesecker, "Michel Foucault and the Question of Rhetoric," *Philosophy and Rhetoric* 25 (1992): 350-364.
- ⁵⁵ John M. Sloop and Kent A. Ono, "Out-law Discourse: The Critical Politics of Material Judgement," *Philosophy and Rhetoric* 30 (1997): 64.
- ⁵⁶ Marra, *Japanese Hermeneutics: Current Debates on Aesthetics and Interpretation*, 5.
- ⁵⁷ Rey Chow, "The Age of the World Target: Atomic Bombs, Alterity, Area Studies," in *The Rey Chow Reader*, ed. Paul Bowman (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010).
- ⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 15.
- ⁵⁹ Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak?" 90.
- ⁶⁰ Rey Chow, "The Postcolonial Difference: Lessons in Cultural Legitimation," in *The Rey Chow Reader*, ed. Paul Bowman (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010), 27.
- ⁶¹ These examples of "writing" and "book" are drawn from Walter Mignolo's "The Materiality of Reading and Writing Cultures: The Chain of Sounds, Graphic Signs, and Sign Carriers," in *The Darker Side of Renaissance* (Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 2003).
- ⁶² Mignolo, "The Materiality of Reading and Writing Cultures: The Chain of Sounds, Graphic Signs, and Sign Carriers," 118-119.
- ⁶³ *Ibid.*
- ⁶⁴ *Ibid.*
- ⁶⁵ Marra, *Japanese Hermeneutics: Current Debates on Aesthetics and Interpretation*, 5.
- ⁶⁶ *Ibid.*
- ⁶⁷ All the note contained was his "name, title... date" and "Thanks." Agence France-Presse, "Abe's Chinese calligraphy wins plaudits in China," *PRI*, last modified September 14, 2016, <http://www.pri.org/stories/2016-09-14/abes-chinese-calligraphy-wins-plaudits-china>.

- ⁶⁸⁶⁸ Julian Ryall, “‘Just pick a proper Japanese’: Purists question Miss Japan’s Indian Heritage,” *The Telegraph*, last modified September 6, 2016, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2016/09/06/just-pick-a-proper-japanese-purists-question-miss-japans-indian/>.
- ⁶⁹ Mathew Larking, “A fine line separates calligraphy and what’s called ‘art,’” *The Japan Times*, last modified November 15, 2012, <http://www.japantimes.co.jp/culture/2012/11/15/arts/a-fine-line-separates-calligraphy-and-whats-called-art/#.WCgNiSrHhD>.
- ⁷⁰ Cecil H. Uyehara, *Japanese Calligraphy: A Bibliographic Study* (Maryland: University of Press America, 1991), 12.
- ⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 12-13.
- ⁷² *Ibid.*
- ⁷³ *Ibid.*, 13.
- ⁷⁴ Bert Winther-Tamaki, “The Calligraphy and Pottery Worlds of Japan,” in *Art in the Encounter of Nations* (Hawai’i: University of Hawai’i Press, 2001), 68.
- ⁷⁵ *Ibid.*
- ⁷⁶ Hisao Sugahara, *Japanese Ink Painting and Calligraphy* (New York: Sequoia Graphics, Inc., 1967), 15.
- ⁷⁷ Nakata Yujiro, *The Art of Japanese Calligraphy* (New York: John Weatherhill, Inc., 1973), 83, 101, 106.
- ⁷⁸ Makoto Ueda, “Yūshō on the Art of Calligraphy: Aesthetic Elements of the Line,” in *Literary and Art Theories in Japan* (Cleveland: Press of Case Western Reserve University, 1967), 181.
- ⁷⁹ When it is not done with a brush, calligraphy is usually called not 書道 (shodou) but ぺん字 (penji).
- ⁸⁰ The other three being inksticks, inkwells, and paper. Uyehara, *Japanese Calligraphy: A Bibliographic Study*, 263.
- ⁸¹ *Ibid.*
- ⁸² Mignolo, “The Materiality of Reading and Writing Cultures: The Chain of Sounds, Graphic Signs, and Sign Carriers,” 199.
- ⁸³ Tanizaki Jun’ichirō, *In Praise of Shadows*, trans. Thomas J. Harper and Edward G. Seidensticker (Connecticut: Leete’s Island Books, Inc., 1977), 7-8. It should be noted that many companies since Tanizaki’s article have actually produced pens like these, called “brush pens” in English.
- ⁸⁴ Uyehara, *Japanese Calligraphy: A Bibliographic Study*, 223.
- ⁸⁵ This is admittedly a bit extreme, but was contained in a manual in wide use before the Second World War. Raja Adal, “Japan’s Bifurcated Modernity: Writing and Calligraphy in Japanese Public Schools, 1872-1943,” *Theory, Culture & Society* 26 (2009): 240.
- ⁸⁶ Wen C. Fong, “Chinese Calligraphy: Theory and History,” in *The Embodied Image: Chinese Calligraphy from the John B. Elliot Collection*, ed. Robert E. Harrist, Jr. and Wen C. Fong (Princeton: The Art Museum, 1999), 29.
- ⁸⁷ Ueda, “Yūshō on the Art of Calligraphy: Aesthetic Elements of the Line,” 176.
- ⁸⁸ Sun Xiao-Tong, “Gutetsu,” Gallery 100, accessed October 29, 2016, <http://www.gallery100.com.tw/en/exhibition/2014/gutetsu.html>.
- ⁸⁹ Sugahara, *Japanese Ink Painting and Calligraphy*, 1.
- ⁹⁰ Ueda, “Yūshō on the Art of Calligraphy: Aesthetic Elements of the Line,” 178.
- ⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 181
- ⁹² Wen C. Fong, “Chinese Calligraphy: Theory and History, 31.
- ⁹³ *Ibid.*, 29.
- ⁹⁴ “Calligraphy is thus an expressive art as well, in which the artist puts forth his emotions in a visual form. In fact, every work of calligraphy or a piece of handwriting for that matter, reflects the maker’s personality.” See Ueda, “Yūshō on the Art of Calligraphy: Aesthetic Elements of the Line,” 185.
- ⁹⁵ Tatsuo Namba, “The Teaching of Writing in Japan,” *Journal of Asian Pacific Communication* 6 (1995): 56.
- ⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 57.
- ⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 56.
- ⁹⁸ Adal, “Japan’s Bifurcated Modernity: Writing and Calligraphy in Japanese Public Schools, 1872-1943,” 235.
- ⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 234.

- ¹⁰⁰ Okakura Kakuzō, “Reading ‘Calligraphy is Not Art,’” trans. Timothy Unverzagt Goddard, *Review of Japanese Culture and Society* 24 (2012): 169.
- ¹⁰¹ Adal, “Japan’s Bifurcated Modernity: Writing and Calligraphy in Japanese Public Schools, 1872-1943,” 241.
- ¹⁰² Kenji Kajiya, “Modernized Differently: Avant-Garde Calligraphy and Art in Postwar Japan,” *M+ Matters | Postwar Abstraction in Japan, South Korea and Taiwan* (June 2014): 1.
- ¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 1-2.
- ¹⁰⁴ Namba, “The Teaching of Writing in Japan,” 60-61.
- ¹⁰⁵ Zalloua, *Reading Unruly: Interpretation and Its Ethical Demands*, 6-7.
- ¹⁰⁶ Take for example tattoos of Chinese and Japanese characters on the bodies of many Westerners. There are a few exceptions, but the amount of tattooed gibberish is breathtaking. Recently Alan Siegrist, a Japanese-English translator, investigated this phenomenon. He found that most tattoo parlors were ill-equipped to give accurate Chinese or Japanese character tattoos, and so relied on a Chinese character “font,” still produced by tattoo supplier “Natural Expressions.” Although the font consists of mostly extant characters, it has nothing to do with the meaning of the characters and instead assigns each character an alphabetic value. This font and the subsequent tattoos are the material outcomes of an unwillingness to interact with other cultures. Tattoo parlors profit off the mysticism of Japanese and Chinese language, a mysticism created by the West’s own unwillingness to engage with character-based languages. This is just one example of how refusing to interact with an Other only calcifies the position of the self/other, subject/object relationship rather than avoiding it. See Ellie Hall and Kevin Tang, “34 Ridiculous Chinese Character Tattoos Translated,” *Buzzfeed*, accessed October 31, 2016, https://www.buzzfeed.com/elliievhall/ridiculous-chinese-character-tattoos-translated?utm_term=.qy4M49K6Y#.otkYrZnva; “Gibberish Asian Font Mystery Solved,” last modified August 31, 2016, <http://hanzismatter.blogspot.com/2006/08/gibberish-asian-font-mystery-solved.html>; Natural Expressions. “‘Natural Expressions’ Chinese/Kanji & Egyptian Flash/Design Sheets,” accessed November 9, 2016, http://www.naturalexpressions.org/Tattoo_Flash_CKE.html.
- ¹⁰⁷ Eric Shouse, “Feeling, Emotion, Affect,” *M/C Journal* 8.6 (2005), accessed 23 Oct. 2016, <http://journal.media-culture.org.au/0512/03-shouse.php>.
- ¹⁰⁸ Bryan J. McCann, “Affect, Black Rage, and False Alternatives in the Hip-Hop Nation,” *Cultural Studies <=> Critical Methodologies* 13, No. 5 (2013): 409.
- ¹⁰⁹ Brian Massumi, “The Autonomy of Affect,” *Cultural Critique* 31, The Politics of Systems and Environments, Part II (Autumn, 1995): 86-87.
- ¹¹⁰ Shouse, “Feeling, Emotion, Affect.”
- ¹¹¹ *Ibid.*
- ¹¹² *Ibid.*
- ¹¹³ *Ibid.*
- ¹¹⁴ Massumi, “The Autonomy of Affect,” 87.
- ¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 86.
- ¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 87.
- ¹¹⁷ Shouse, “Feeling, Emotion, Affect.”
- ¹¹⁸ Massumi, “The Autonomy of Affect,” 87.
- ¹¹⁹ McCann, “Affect, Black Rage, and False Alternatives in the Hip-Hop Nation,” 409.
- ¹²⁰ Inoue Yūichi, quoted in *A Retrospective: Yu-Ichi Inoue, 1955-1985*, 21.
- ¹²¹ Thomas Rimer, forward to *Japanese Calligraphy: A Bibliographic Study*, by Cecil H. Uyehara (Maryland: University Press of America, 1991), 2.
- ¹²² *Ibid.*
- ¹²³ Robert Slifkin, “The Tragic Image: Action Painting Refigured,” *Oxford Art Journal* 22, No. 2 (2001): 229.
- ¹²⁴ Robert Slifkin, “The Tragic Image: Action Painting Refigured,” 229.
- ¹²⁵ *Ibid.*
- ¹²⁶ Massumi, “The Autonomy of Affect,” 86.
- ¹²⁷ Robert Slifkin, “The Tragic Image: Action Painting Refigured,” 229.

- ¹²⁸ I am of course not equating the trauma of being firebombed and the trauma of reading a text that refuses comprehension. However, I do feel that this is key to understanding why it is so important that the work resists comprehension: it creates an interpretive crisis.
- ¹²⁹ Akimoto Yuji, *A Retrospective: Yu-Ichi Inoue, 1955-1985*, 21.
- ¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, 282.
- ¹³¹ *Kanji* 漢字, literally “Chinese characters,” are one of four writing systems used in contemporary written Japanese. The others being *hiragana* ひらがな, *katakana* カタカナ, and *rōmaji* ローマ字 (“roman letters”; a writing system derived from the roman alphabet).
- ¹³² Noriyuki Tomita, “How Yuichi Inoue wrote his way into modern art’s pantheon,” *Nikkei Asian Review*, January 30, accessed October 21, 2016, <http://asia.nikkei.com/Life-Arts/Arts/How-Yuichi-Inoue-wrote-his-way-into-modern-art-s-pantheon?page=2>.
- ¹³³ This would of course depend on the translation. I’m using one of the only published translations, in *A Yu-Ichi Inoue Retrospective*. Yuji, *A Retrospective: Yu-Ichi Inoue, 1955-1985*, 282.
- ¹³⁴ Robert E. Harrist, Jr., “Reading Chinese Calligraphy,” in *The Embodied Image: Chinese Calligraphy from the John B. Elliot Collection*, ed. Robert E. Harrist, Jr. and Wen C. Fong (Princeton: The Art Museum, 1999), 17.
- ¹³⁵ Ueda, “Yūshō on the Art of Calligraphy: Aesthetic Elements of the Line,” 176.
- ¹³⁶ Brian Massumi, “The Autonomy of Affect,” 86.
- ¹³⁷ Robert E. Harrist, Jr., “The Two Perfections,” in *The Embodied Image: Chinese Calligraphy from the John B. Elliot Collection*, ed. Robert E. Harrist, Jr. and Wen C. Fong (Princeton: The Art Museum, 1999), 299.
- ¹³⁸ *Ibid.*
- ¹³⁹ Robert Sliifkin, “The Tragic Image: Action Painting Refigured,” 227.
- ¹⁴⁰ Through this exploration of *Ah Yokokawa Kokumin-gakkō*, I believe we start to see the necessity of “form” and “content” for the sake of analysis but also the fault in its ontology, especially in the analysis of calligraphy. The text and form become an inseparable unity of affective potential.
- ¹⁴¹ For example, when Massumi analyzes the success of Ronald Reagan, he focuses on how his “jerkiness” provided gaps for interpretive potential. This potential let an audience actualize and mobilize their own interpretations. Massumi, “The Autonomy of Affect,” 103.
- ¹⁴² Brian L. Ott and Diane Marie Keeling, “Cinema and Choric Connection,” *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 97, No. 4 (November, 2011): 367.
- ¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, 369.
- ¹⁴⁴ Kristin Thomas and David Bordwell, “Space and Narrative in the Films of Ozu,” *Screen* 17, No. 2 (1976).
- ¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 45.
- ¹⁴⁶ Ott and Keeling, “Cinema and Choric Connection,” 369.
- ¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 372.
- ¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 371.
- ¹⁵⁰ Wanzer, “Delinking Rhetoric, or Revisiting McGee’s Fragmentation Thesis through Decoloniality.”
- ¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 653.
- ¹⁵² *Ibid.*, 654.
- ¹⁵³ Wallace, “Towards a Black Feminist Cultural Criticism,” 668.
- ¹⁵⁴ Wanzer, “Delinking Rhetoric, or Revisiting McGee’s Fragmentation Thesis through Decoloniality,” 654.
- ¹⁵⁵ Sloop and Ono in particular. See, Sloop and Ono, “Out-law Discourse: The Critical Politics of Material Judgement.” Kent A. Ono and John M. Sloop, “The Critique of Vernacular Discourse,” *Communication Monographs* 62 (March, 1995).
- ¹⁵⁶ Wanzer, “Delinking Rhetoric, or Revisiting McGee’s Fragmentation Thesis through Decoloniality,” 652.
- ¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 654.
- ¹⁵⁸ Chow, “The Postcolonial Difference: Lessons in Cultural Legitimation,” 28.