Failing Foreigners: A Case Study of Wakaran Monogatari

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Chapter 1: Introduction, The Intellectual Climate of the Late Edo Period

Japan has always been heavily indebted to Chinese civilization and has remained in its sphere of influence for centuries. Not only Japan's writing system originated from China, but its cultural values reflected in literature, philosophy, and intellectual thought, as well as institutional models for governance and law flowed from the Chinese mainland. Chinese civilization exerted a significant impact on a relatively less developed and less unified Japan, profoundly shaping its culture from a very early stage. Additionally, China served as the channel for the introduction of religion and the growth of Buddhist sects. While Buddhism originated in India, its expression and organization were largely influenced by Chinese practices. Consequently, Japan owes a substantial and possibly unparalleled debt to the cultural traditions and influence of China.[1]

Until the eighteenth century, the dominant alternative to Chinese Confucian philosophy in Japan was primarily Buddhism — which was also imported from China. Consequently, the supremacy of Chinese knowledge remained unchallenged. However, as the late eighteenth century approached, a group of Japanese thinkers emerged, ready to reject the entire Chinese model, including both Confucianism and Buddhism. These thinkers were closely associated with the *kokugaku* (国学, lit. National Studies) movement.

During the eighteenth century, Japan experienced significant advancements in literary and philosophical scholarship. Confucianists reengaged with the core texts of their tradition with renewed rigor and determination. Simultaneously, specialists in Japanese poetry developed a profound interest in textual research. As they delved into the study of Japanese poetry, which held a central position in Japanese aesthetics, they grappled with defining the essence of the Japanese national character. This endeavour served as a psychological counterbalance against the dominance of Confucianism and the perceived rigidity of formal scholarship imposed by pedantic scholars. They sought the liberated spirit of a native tradition that risked being stifled by the constraints and inflexibility of borrowed foreign classicism.[2]

National scholars demonstrated a rejection of the rigid Confucian formalism rooted in Chinese tradition. However, their search for a suitable replacement yielded limited results, as they lacked alternative models to fill the void. With an emphasis on national uniqueness and essence, the scholars were unlikely to be motivated to seek more practical and beneficial approaches. Nevertheless, a different perspective on wisdom had already made significant progress. This alternative approach involved the study of Western knowledge, mediated through sources brought to Nagasaki by Dutch traders.[3]

A significant shift occurred in the Japanese worldview, which is not typically associated with a single monumental event but rather the culmination of intellectual and scholarly events that paved the way for political changes. However, this paradigm shift is perhaps best represented by the momentous decision in 1771, when the Japanese physician and scholar Sugita Genpaku witnessed the dissection of an executed criminal. This dissection confirmed the accuracy of a Dutch book on anatomy that Sugita had obtained, discrediting Chinese medical textbooks by repudiating the longstanding idea that Westerners and Orientals were anatomically different (as was previously theorised), and that rigor mortis responsible for the rearrangement of the body's parts.[4] Sugita and his colleague eventually pledged to translate the work and "seek facts through experiment."[5] They published the volume in question in 1774, marking the commencement of an era of translating Western (particularly Dutch) books into Japanese. This was a crucial event that

[1] Jansen, *Japan and its World*, 9-10.
[2] Ibid, 24-26.
[3] Ibid, 28-29.
[4] ibid, 7-9.
[5] ibid, 7-8.

had far-reaching implications and contributed to the slow erosion of the traditional Japanese view of the outside world, which was largely based on Chinese knowledge.[6]

At the same time writers such as Kaibara Ekiken reinvented the travel genre, placing a newfound emphasis on "direct observation and clear description."[7] However, as the eighteenth century unfolded, these writers expanded their ambitions and utilized their travel experiences to position themselves as knowledgeable authorities on various subjects. Their journeys extended to the farthest reaches of Japan and the remote rural areas, leading them to view their role not only as mere chroniclers but also as classifiers of the distinct and remarkable elements they encountered within their own country. These writers sought to categorize these differences within a hierarchical framework of "civilization."[8] Furthermore, their explorations went beyond documenting the variations in local flora, fauna, and products; they delved into the realm of cultural differences as well.[9]

Running parallel to the developments of the late eighteenth century in western learning and travel literature, there was a popular genre of literature called *gesaku* (戯作, playful literature), which can be characterized in several ways: it was a commercial type of literature, catering to the diverse tastes of its readership, focusing on popular and fashionable topics and reflecting the trends of the time. While it targeted readers with a basic education, it was replete with cultural allusions and references.[10] At its core, *gesaku* was characterized by a peculiar type of humour, which was expressed in various forms, including sharp social satire found in the *kibyōshi* (黄表紙, "yellow covers") such as *Ōmugaeshi bunbu futamichi* (鸚鵡返文武二道, Twin Arts, Parroted) written by Koikawa Harumachi in 1789 andselling over 15.000 copies.[11]

Considering the presence and particular development of *Rangaku* and travel writing, and the presence of a parodic medium such as *gesaku* leads to wonder how the former historical trends were transposed into such a humorous format. Although Japanese literature had previously explored themes of oddities and foreigners, it was becoming increasingly challenging to ignore the existence of other peoples in the world. Furthermore, as previously mentioned, the Japanese themselves were driven to explore and categorize the various inhabitants of Japan. It was these various foreign and physical "Others" who, through their portrayal in *kibyōshi* and other popular literary forms, were starting to influence and captivate the popular imagination of the An'ei-Tenmei (1772-1789) era in Edo.[12] A work that is unique in its depiction of foreigners is the *kibyōshi* written by Kanwatei Onitake, called *Wakaran Monogatari* [13](和漢蘭雑話, Trilateral Babble, or Sino-Japano-Dutch Miscellany). Onitake collaborated with the renowned illustrator Kakō, known nowadays as the most famous print-maker Japan ever produced, Katsushika Hokusai.

1.1 Overview of the Thesis Structure and Chapter Outlines

The aim of this thesis is primarily to show how *Wakaran Monogatari* is unique in its presentation of foreigners, most notably the two Dutch and Chinese protagonists. The question this thesis thus attempts to answer is: How are foreigners presented in popular literature of the late Edo period? In doing so, this thesis will work towards a case study of Kanwatei Onitake's *kibyōshi*, called *Wakaran Monogatari* (1803), plotting the intellectual history of the late Edo period. Accordingly,

[6] Jansen, "Rangaku and Westernization", 549-50.
[7] Yonemoto, *Mapping Early Modern Japan*, 69.
[8] Ibid, 69.
[9] Ibid, 69-70.
[10] Kern, *Manga from the Floating World*.
[11] Ibid, 53.
[12] ibid, 87.
[13] Some sources refer to it as the *Wakaran Zatsuwa.* For consistency's sake I will refer to it as Wakaran Monogatari.

this thesis will focus on the relationship between Chinese and Dutch learning; the increase in travel literature; and the function of parody in popular literature of the Edo period. The thesis aims to shed light on how this *kibyōshi* is playfully intertwined with the intellectual landscape of Edo period Japan and ultimately seeks to provide insight into the intersection of literature, culture, and history during this period in history.

First of all, it is essential to present this work in its historical context. The chief consideration at the outset of the thesis is the development of the intellectual milieu during the latter half of the Edo era, where the long-standing Chinese cultural order started to show cracks due to the influx of Dutch (i.e., Western) learning. It was increasingly becoming clear that a whole other world of knowledge existed, that conflicted with and even contradicted the knowledge of the old Chinese-Confucian cultural orbit.[14] The difference between familiar and foreign began to come to the foreground and was repeatedly emphasized. Travel writers of the time were also well aware of this difference when setting out for their extended journeys throughout Japan.[15]

During the 18th century, these writers gradually adopted their travel experiences throughout Japan to establish themselves as knowledgeable authorities in various fields, ranging from geography to medicine and 'foreign studies.'[16] These travel writers not only aimed to describe their findings but also sought to categorize the observed differences within their own country, placing them within a hierarchical framework of 'civilization.' Their focus extended beyond mere observations of local flora, fauna, and products. When encountering foreigners residing in Nagasaki, such as the Dutch and the Chinese, or encountering unique ethnic populations such as the Ainu in the far north, these writers positioned themselves as observers and interpreters of these cultures; analysing them through the medium of travel writing.[17]

By the end of the 18th century, despite the growing prevalence of travel, travel narratives still focused mainly on the themes of exploration, unfamiliarity, and difference. Through the publication of these travel accounts, readers became acquainted not only with the genre itself but also with the distinct features of foreign lands and their inhabitants. The popularity of travel literature went hand in hand with the emergence of travel parodies in fictional works, in which authors adopted the familiar concept of journeys and the structure of travel narratives and ingeniously exploited both. Liberated from the constraints of factual accuracy, writers of this era utilized satire and parody to craft extraordinary fictional worlds that shared astonishing resemblances to Japan.[18] How was this kind of satire achieved in the late Edo period?

After highlighting the two relevant historical developments of the late Edo period in chapter 2 and 3, chapter 4 will shift the focus to parody, as exemplified by *gesaku* and its offshoots, specifically *kibyōshi* in chapter 5. I will show how it takes a familiar story world and playfully twists it into an entertaining and witty parody. This serves as a final bridge towards the case study. It will become clear that the previously described historical developments (The emergence of Dutch learning *Rangaku* and the popularization of travel accounts) played a major role in shaping the subject matter of *Wakaran Monogatari.*

Chapter 6 will provide a case study of *Wakaran Monogatari* written by Kanwatei Onitake and illustrated by the renowned Katsushika Hokusai. The primary objective of this study is thus to critically examine the historical context that informed Onitake's *Wakaran Monogatari* and show how it is unique in presenting foreigners. I will argue that this work was a fascinatingly playful expression of the Japanese foreign consciousness which increasingly permeated late Edo society.

[14] Jansen, *Japan and its World*, 7-9, 24-29.
[15] Yonemoto, *Mapping Early Modern Japan*.
[16] Ibid, 101.
[17] Ibid, 69-70.
[18] ibid.

Chapter 2: Emergence of Dutch Learning

Knowledge imported from the West through the Dutch East India Company provided a group of Japanese scholars with new ways of perceiving their world,as exemplified by the watershed moment of the dissection of an executed criminal in 1771, which proved the validity of a Dutch book on anatomy and disproving a long-standing theory of Chinese medicine.

This chapter will provide a brief history of Dutch Studies (蘭学, *Rangaku*) and aims to position it as an alternative to the traditional Chinese world of thought. Marius Jansen argues that the mindset and attitude behind the production of *Rangaku* was more significant than the actual products themselves. *Rangaku* represented a delight in the new, the different, and the difficult—even for those who found Dutch studies to be a niche interest. *Rangaku* involved the transmission of constantly evolving knowledge from the Netherlands. It was far removed from the classical knowledge of the China-centred world and provided an exciting stimulus to look beyond Chinese "patterns and postulates,"[19] resulting from the longstanding historical ties between Japan and China. Knowledge pertaining to *Rangaku* was incredibly difficult to learn and master, especially for students who did not have access to proper instruction, teaching tools, and dictionaries. In essence, the pursuit of *Rangaku* represented a willingness to embrace and explore the unknown, to challenge oneself to learn and understand something completely different from what was previously known or accepted.[20]

2.1: The Rise of Rangaku in the Latter Half of the Edo Period

The national scholars rejected the rigid formalism of Confucian tradition, but they lacked a suitable replacement and instead embraced "an unstructured naturalism and intuitive appreciation."[21] Their focus on national uniqueness and essence did not encourage them to seek alternative and more beneficial models. However, during this time, a different approach to knowledge had made significant progress. This was the study of Western ideas, which was made difficult due to the limited availability of books brought by Dutch traders to Nagasaki.[22]

Despite the restrictions on movement, commerce, and imports, small groups of Japanese scholars worked in relative isolation, with little interaction between these groups. In the eighteenth century, these scholars were divided into two main groups.[23] The first consisted of the guild of interpreters in Nagasaki, who served the official trade with the Dutch East India Company. About twenty families held hereditary rights and maintained the guild by selectively admitting capable individuals, often through adoption. The second group was a much smaller gathering of doctors who served feudal lords and resided in Edo. In the 1720s, the shogun Tokugawa Yoshimune authorized several retainers to study Dutch for the purpose of improving the calendar and also relaxed the censorship of Chinese books on Western knowledge. Around half a century later, in 1770, one doctor-scholar named Maeno Ryōtaku was permitted to travel to Nagasaki to directly study with the interpreters.[24]

Sugita Genpaku, in the first historical account of *Rangaku*, described his own experience with studying anatomy, a newly imported branch of medicine. Initially, he followed the traditional Confucian method of relying on classical books and memorization. However, he eventually rejected this approach and embraced what he considered the Dutch method of learning by observation (見習い, *mi-narai*). This type of study had previously been associated with practical craftsmen and laborers, and deemed unsuitable for scholars. Genpaku argued that observation was the only way to counter the accumulation of errors that inevitably occurred within academic

[19] Jansen, Rangaku and Westernization, 550.
[20] ibid, 549-50.
[21] Jansen, *Japan and its World*, 28.
[22] Ibid, 28-30.
[23] Ibid, 29.
[24] Ibid, 28-39.

traditions over time. He believed that precise observation formed the foundation of all learning and was the sole means of preventing the spread of falsehoods.[25]

2.2 The Popularisation of Dutch Studies

One of the most representative expressions of the proliferation and eventual popularisation of *Rangaku* can be found in Ōtsuki Gentaku's *Ransetsu Benwaku* (蘭説弁惑, "A Clarification of Misunderstandings in Theories about the Dutch"), a two-volume work published in 1799. Ōtsuki was born into a family of surgeons in the Sendai domain and moved to Edo in his early twenties to study under physician Sugita Genpaku. The first volume of *Ransetsu benwaku* focuses heavily on medical topics such as illnesses, remedies, and dietary advice. The book is presented as a reference guide, with titled entries covering various aspects of Dutch customs and culture.[26] Each entry begins with the phrase "The question is asked..." followed by a question or rumour about Holland or the Dutch to which Ōtsuki then provides an answer, correction, or clarification to dispel any misunderstandings or misconceptions.[27] However, there is more to the *Ransetsu benwaku* than just an explanatory guide on the Dutch: through Ōtsuki's work, we can catch a glimpse of the tension caused by contradictory Chinese and Dutch (i.e. Western) theories on medicine, which takes up a large portion of this work.[28] Ōtsuki describes various remedial substances, including a type of tumbleweed known as the Rose of Jericho, which he referred to both by its Dutch name, *rozū haneregо* (Dutch *roos van Jericho*), and its name in Chinese medicine, *ansanki* (lit. 'easy childbirth plant'). After examining Chinese and Dutch theories, Ōtsuki concluded that the Chinese beliefs about the plant's pain-relieving properties and its supposed toxicity were unfounded rumours.[29]

In his popular 1787 book about Europe called the *Kōmō Zatsuwa* (紅毛雑話, Red-fur Miscellany), Morishima Chūryō wrote about various aspects of European civilization. The book's name was inspired by the abundance of body hair among North Europeans.[30] *Kōmō Zatsuwa* was a best-selling publication that presented information in diverse and concise paragraphs meant to be quickly absorbed and shared. They ranged from geographical and maritime affairs of Europe and its neighbouring Ottoman Empire to intriguing inventions such as microscopes and the newly invented hot-air balloon. The book also delved into more daring subjects such as the prevalence of prostitution in the West and the criminalization of same-sex relationships.[31] Chūryō was also known as a writer of *gesaku* and the inventions described in the *Kōmō Zatsuwa* appeared frequently in his fictional works, such as the *erekiteru* and the airship (known as *ryukutosurōpu* or luchtsloep), which were frequently mentioned in relation to Dutch studies.[32]

[25] Screech, *The Lens within the Heart*, 44.
[26] Bremner, The Magic Lantern, 699.
[27] Ibid, 699.
[28] Ibid, 699-700.
[29] Ibid, 700.
[30] Screech, T. (1996). *The Lens within the Heart*, 33.
[31] Ibid, 21.
[32] Fleming, W. "The World Beyond the Walls: Morishima Chūryō (1756-1810) and the Development of Late Edo Fiction," 292-305.

Chapter 3: Travel Writing and Foreign Encounters

Keeping in mind the historical context described earlier, in which the dominant Confucian order weakened its grip due to the emergence of *kokugaku* and *Rangaku* the Japanese ventured far and wide describing and evaluating everything and everyone around them. This chapter will illustrate the development of travel writing in the eighteenth century. In doing so, we will be able to better understand *Wakaran Monogatari* as a playful positioning of Japan vis-à-vis the Chinese and Dutch foreign powers.

3.1 A Brief History of Japanese Travel Writing: Interpreting Cultures

In the early modern period, writers such as Kaibara Ekiken revolutionized the genre of travel writing by emphasizing the significance of direct observation and lucid description.[33] However, as the eighteenth century played out, a new trend emerged, wherein writers began utilizing their travel experiences to position themselves as authoritative figures; offering opinions on a wide range of subjects encompassing not only geography and medicine, but also the study of foreigners stationed in Nagasaki.[34]

For instance, Nagakubo Sekisui utilizes his journey to and from Nagasaki as an opportunity to juxtapose the 'famous places' from Japan's rich cultural past with unfamiliar locales and the foreign people residing there. Furukawa Koshōken on the other hand, sees travel as a chance to rectify the errors made by previous writers.[35]

Tachibana Nankei captivates readers with his presentation of peculiar cultural details and 'strange' phenomena, all conveyed through highly engaging and enjoyable prose, but consistently serving the author's concept of a 'civilized' life.[36] In his two-volume travel book from 1782 entitled *Tōzai Yuki* (東西遊記, "Records of Travels to the East and West"), Nankei (1753-1805) included a section on strange Dutch inventions (奇機オランダ, *kiki oranda*). The chapter begins with a general appraisal of all things Dutch: "No other country in the world can match Holland when it comes to the refinment of its craftmanship."[37] Nankei then goes on to describe a rather curious Dutch invention, the *erekiteru*[38]:

> The device called an erekiteru came to Japan twenty-three years ago. It is a machine for drawing fire from a person's body. Wheels are set within a box; it is just under a metre and an iron chain, five or six metres in length and ending in a looped handle, leads off. You have someone grasp the handle and then start the wheels rotating, so that power is transmitted along the chain. This provokes a reaction in the person, and little bits of paper brought up to them will move and dance of their own accord; if someone brings their hand close, you can hear a sound like spitting fat, and see a flame flying out. No-one who has yet to see the amazingness of this device will believe in it.[39]

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[33] Yonemoto, *Mapping Early Modern Japan*, 69.
[34] Ibid, 69-70.
[35] Ibid, 70-71.
[36] Ibid, 70.
[37] Nankei, T. (**東西遊記**,"Records of Travels to the East and West") *Tōzai Yūki* 2, 189: 細工の微妙なる事は世界の内、阿蘭陀に勝る国なし。
[38] The *erekiteru* was invented in the Netherlands as a medical device, and was brought to Japan in the mid-18th century. Hiraga Gennai (1729-1780) obtained a damaged *erekiteru* during his stay in Nagasaki, and succeeded in making a replica in Fukagawa, Edo (Tokyo) in 1776.
[39] Screech, T. (1996). *The Lens within the Heart*, 45. Original from Nankei, T. *Tōzai Yūki* 2, 189: 二三十以前エレキテイルという器物を日本にわたす。是人の身より火をとる道具なりという。大きさ三尺ばかりの箱の中に車を仕かけ、其箱の中より鉄のクサリを出だし、長さ二三間にして曲録の手につなぎ、人を

Tachibana Nankei's entry of strange Dutch inventions not only mentions the *elekiteru;* he is particularly impressed by the microscope and is startled when he discovers living beings in a drop of water. He ponders further the possibility of creatures that live in the world that are so minute that they are beyond the magnification of lenses,and vice versa: that there may be no limit to how vast things can be. This discovery prompts Tachibana Nankei to proclaim that these microscopes "will even turn into the Buddha's eyes."[40] Nankei drew a remarkable connection between seeing of the Buddha and the mechanical seeing provided by the microscope lens. The Dutch invention was in a significant way tied to changes and reconsiderations in hitherto unquestioned religious and spiritual knowledge.[41]

In contrast to Kaibara Ekiken, whose chief pursuit was to uncover the underlying order in the natural and human world, travel writers of the later eighteenth century employed narrative to fabricate order by "establishing dichotomies between insider and outsider, civilization and barbarity, familiar and foreign."[42] The next section will demonstrate how these writers reshaped the boundaries of travel writing, not only describe but also to construct a cultural understanding that reflected their own perspectives and values.[43]

3.2 Categorization of Observed Differences within the Country

Nagakubo Sekisui was a geographer and cartographer who was among the first to include Japan on the longitude and latitude grid.[44] He created influential woodblock-print maps of Japan and Asia. In addition to his geographical and historical scholarship, Sekisui was a prolific writer and, like many intellectuals of his time, composed Chinese-style poetry (漢詩, *kanshi*). He authored two travel accounts: *Tō-oku kikō* (当奥気候,"Travels to the Far Northeast" in 1760 and *Nagasaki Kōeki Nikki* (長崎港駅日記,"Diary of Official Travels to Nagasaki") in 1767. Both accounts combine poetry and prose. In 1768, he published a series of poems that were syndicated among the Chinese residents of Nagasaki following his visit there the previous year.[45] Sekisui's travel accounts incorporate Chinese poetry alongside descriptions of local landscapes, routes, and roads. The accounts feature extended sections of straightforward prose interspersed with highly allusive *kanshi* verses and occasional diagrams or illustrations. Given Sekisui's background as a geographer and his meticulous approach to map-making, one might expect his travel accounts to be purely empirical. However, they reveal a notion of place that is intricately connected to Japan's culture and history. Sekisui employs prose, poetry, and visual elements to transform locations and individuals into icons of historical and cultural significance. He often expresses his reactions in emotive poetic musings. While these contrasting tendencies may appear to create a conflict in the mind of a poet-geographer, Sekisui's travel account demonstrates that the "mapping impulse"[46] was not solely concerned with the physical and measurable dimensions of land. Instead, as an erudite man of letters he skilfully utilized various rhetorical strategies.[47]

However, Sekisui's mode of thinking and writing undergoes a sudden shift upon his arrival in Nagasaki. Unlike the familiar places depicted earlier in his journey, Nagasaki is foreign in

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其曲録にのらせ置き、箱の車をめぐらせば、其気クサリを伝うて曲録にいたり、其人に応ず。紙をこまかに切りて其人の手に近づくれば、其紙おのれと動き舞う。又外の人の手を此人の手に近づくれば、油のはしるがごとき音ありて、火出ずる心地す。その奇妙なる事まのあたり見るにあらざれば信ずるものなし。

[40] Nankei, *Tōzai Yūki* 2, 189: 是らの虫眼鏡は仏の天眼にもかえつべし。
[41] Screech, The Lens within the Heart: 5.
[42] Yonemoto, *Mapping Early Modern Japan*, 70.
[43] Ibid, 70-71.
[44] Ibid, 70.
[45] Ibid, 70-72.
[46] Yonemoto, *Mapping Early Modern Japan*, 71.
[47] Ibid, 70-72.

numerous aspects. First, it lacks historical significance for Sekisui. Devoid of poetic symbolism, its distinct culture is entirely new to him. Consequently, his description departs from classical literary conventions, and he begins to record primarily what he observes first-hand. Sekisui adopts a perspective more akin to an ethnographer among the 'natives' and takes it upon himself to describe and analyse the unfamiliar culture in a manner that would be clear and understandable to his audience back in Japan.[48]

In Nagasaki, Sekisui displays particular interest in the city's foreign inhabitants, namely the Dutch and the Chinese, whose peculiar habits and material possessions elicit extensive commentary. As Sekisui grapples with finding adequate language to describe these individuals and their culture, illustrations play a crucial role in conveying what words alone cannot express. Consequently, while Sekisui's earlier accounts in the *Kōeki nikki* were sparsely illustrated, illustrations become more abundant once he starts describing Nagasaki. When he visits the Dutch compound on the man-made island of Dejima off the coast of Nagasaki, Sekisui carefully observes and describes the physical appearance of the Dutch.[49]

Furthermore, Sekisui also has the opportunity to meet with Chinese merchants at Nagasaki and anticipates exchanging Chinese poetry with them. However, even though the meeting was a success, the Chinese merchants failed to live up to the standards he held for Chinese learned men of the Tang or Han dynasty. He ultimately "laments the decline he perceives in the cultural attainments of the Chinese"[50]

3.3 Judging Other Cultures through Travel

Furukawa Koshōken placed great importance on accuracy in visual depiction and written description. However, his meticulous attention to the physical characteristics of the land cannot be separated from his interest in and judgments of the culture that shaped it. For Koshōken, the act of observing and evaluating go hand in hand. The portrait that emerges from his works, *Saiyū zakki* (西遊雑記, "Miscellaneous Records of Travels to the West," 1783) and *Tōyū zakki* (東遊雑記, "Miscellaneous Records of Travels to the East," 1788), depicts him as an active observer and critic who gathers information by keenly observing the various communities he encounters. One of his frequently used criteria for assessing local cultures is the people's ability to speak Japanese in a manner intelligible to him. His most commonly expressed opinion was that "the people and their language are extremely poor [in quality]."[51] Whether the local vernacular might be perfectly understandable to someone else appears to be of little significance to him. Koshōken makes it clear that his judgments are based on his own experiences and states that his standards stem from comparisons to his native region in west-central Japan, as well as other regions he has visited within Japan. However, unlike other travellers, he tends to abstract what is familiar to him into a concept of "normalcy" (平生, *heizei*)[52], which serves as a benchmark against which he evaluates the conditions—both material and human—that he observes during his travels. By labelling people as 'poor' in quality or 'not normal,' he signifies a significant shift in perspective from observer to critic, from someone who merely describes to someone who defines culture. This type of judgment represents a precursor to the discussions on civilization that start to emerge in the travel writings of Tachibana Nankei and others around the turn of the nineteenth century.[53]

Similar to Nagakubo Sekisui, Koshōken faces challenges in defining and categorizing culture when confronted with foreign and unfamiliar lands and people. Foreigners and outsiders attract Koshōken's critical scrutiny in border regions like Ezo and Nagasaki. In these places, he

[48] Ibid, 74.
[49] Ibid, 74-75.
[50] Ibid, 77-78.
[51] Ibid, 84.
[52] Ibid, 84.
[53] Ibid, 84.

evaluates the foreigners' level of civilization by simultaneously describing and judging their language, behaviour, customs, clothing, and standard of living.[54]

Koshōken describes the Chinese residence in Nagasaki as being "quite loud" and that to the Japanese "their way of speaking 'chin-pun-kan,' is funny." He also mentions that the Chinese "stop passing Japanese and say ridiculous things to them."[55] And when seeing a woman "they squirm and gesticulate in their excitement, and they say things among themselves and laugh."[56]

3.4 Relationship Between Commoners and Foreigners

Though the amount of Western knowledge in Japan was burgeoning, it is not certain to what extent the city people in Japan were interacting with foreigners at that time. However, it is clear from certain documents such as the *Hinamikiji* (1691)(日次記事, Daily Articles)[57] that the annual visit to Edo by the head of the Dutch trading post in Nagasaki was open to the public and visible to common people. Although the scenes described in the *hinamikiji* are written from the perspective of people in Kyoto when the head of the Dutch trading post passed through the city, it is not difficult to imagine that the situation would have been similar in Edo, the final destination of the Dutch captain.[58] Similar references can be seen in Hokusai's *Ehon azuma asobi* (絵本東都遊, Picturebook of the Pleasures of the East)(1802) and Tōrai Sanwa's *kibyōshi Tenkaichimen kagami no umebachi* (天下一面鏡海鉢) (1789), which depict the city of Edo during the visit of captain of the Dutch trading post.[59]

Similarly, the famous Swedish naturalist C.P. Thunberg described how the Nagasaki-ya (長崎屋) hostel in Edo attracted many visitors, including both learned and high-ranking people as well as merchants and other commoners who would shout or stare from outside as they were not allowed to enter. The hostel where the Dutch were lodged was located in a busy area of Edo and had a conspicuous signboard advertising it as the "Official Travel Lodge of the Red-furred People."[60] The Dutch had a clear view of the street, which was always full of people, especially during springtime when they could see the exotic goods of the "red-furred" men. Thunberg noted that the the people living in Edo were extremely curious and had a strong love of novelty, which contributed to the constant influx of visitors to the Nagasaki-ya hostel.[61]

3.5 Examination of the Role of Satire in the late Edo Period

The works and experiences of Kaibara Ekiken, Furukawa Koshōken, Tachibana Nankei, and other late Edo travellers exemplify their exploration of both the geographical landscape and the cultural aspects of Japan. Their aim was to observe, analyse, and document the differences they encountered. Despite their diverse intellectual perspectives and narrative approaches, they approached their study of Japan, its land, culture, and their own roles as interpreters, with a sense of seriousness. However, not all accounts of early modern journeys were equally serious; in fact, many were inherently playful. These humorous, bawdy, and light-hearted tales of domestic and foreign journeys became common conventions in comedic fiction from the mid-eighteenth to the

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[54] Ibid, 85.
[55] Ibid, 85.
[56] Ibid, 85.
[57] A commentary on public and popular annual events in Kyoto and elsewhere. Each month is divided into a volume, with daily events from the first day of the month to the last day of the year.
[58] Sugimoto, '黄表紙『三国昔噺和漢蘭雑話』について(On the *kibyōshi* 'The legend of Three Kingdoms: Sino-Japano-Dutch Miscellany.)' kibyōshi "sangoku mukashibanashi wakaran monogatari" ni tsuite, 251.
[59] Ibid, 251.
[60] Screech, The Lens within the Heart, 18.
[61] Ibid, 18-20.

early nineteenth centuries. The highly appealing comic fiction of the time was then referred to by the umbrella-term *gesaku* (戯作, lit. Playful writing).[62]

[62] Yonemoto, *Mapping Early Modern Japan*, 101.

Chapter 4: Parody in *Gesaku*

As Adam Kern has pointed out: *kibyōshi* is a hybrid genre that incorporates elements from various sources such as literature, poetry, woodblock prints, storytelling, and theater. This means that the *kibyōshi* cannot be fully understood or analyzed solely from a literary perspective. Since it draws from multiple media and genres, any attempt to analyse it solely through traditional literary analysis poses limitations.[63] Through a qualitative analysis of *Wakaran Monogatari*, I hope to provide the reader an understanding of this unique *kibyōshi* in the context of the genre and the cultural climate in which this particular work was made. Besides limitations imposed by strict censorship laws, which forbade the mentioning of any government officials[64], no subject matter was sacred to writers of *kibyōshi*. Even the gods and other deities were humorously subjected to its witty antics.[65]

As mentioned previously, *kibyōshi* and other forms of *gesaku* tapped into contemporary fashions and trends, concerning itself with in-vogue topics. For example, Santō Kyōden parodied the Japanese mania for preserved samples, imagining fathers bottling their sons "to be stared at by the rest of the family as object lessons."[66]

4.1 Introduction to Gesaku

Early Western critics have long had negative opinions of Edo period *gesaku* literature. Notably, Donald Keene views *gesaku* as mere distraction for peasants—in other words, a trivial genre undeserving of serious study. Furthermore, Japanese author and literary critic Tsubouchi Shōyō believed that novels should focus on reflecting reality as it is (ありのまま *ari no mama*), rather than resort to didacticism of *kanzen-chōaku* (勧善懲悪, 'reward the good and chastise the evil'). He argues that novels should accurately depict human nature (人情, *ninjō*), and that superficial depictions of the matter should not be accepted as a "true novel." Instead, Tsubouchi believes that authors should take a psychological approach to writing characters in fiction, focusing on emotional depth.[67]

This negative perception has changed, largely because of the efforts of one of Japan's most eminent Edo period literature specialists, Nakamura Yukihiko, who was very critical toward the existing literature on *gesaku* in his own approach in the 1960s. He emphasised the importance of understanding *gesaku* in relation to the social and literary norms of the time rather than interpreting the genre through a modern frame of reference. This outlook has inspired Japanese academics to re-examine *gesaku* literary conventions, leading to an appreciation of its humour, satire, and its various erudite references. Despite these developments, there is still much to be explored in the area of *gesaku* literature.[68] Nakamura argued that it is necessary to evaluate works in their proper context, and more recently other Japanese academics have begun to do so, appreciating the deliberate and satiric aspects of many *gesaku* works. Keene's harsh assessment of *gesaku* literature most likely stems from his deliberate adherence to the standards he was used to seeing in European literature. Additionally, Leutner highlights the importance of sympathizing with or even adopting the values of a foreign culture far removed in time and space, and takes into account the tastes and expectations of its intended Edo period audiences.[69]

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[63] Kern, *Manga from the Floating World*, 23-4.
[64] Kornicki, "Nishiki no Ura. An Instance of Censorship and the Structure of a Sharebon," 153-188.
[65] Miura, "The Buddha in Yoshiwara: Religion and Visual Entertainment in Tokugawa Japan as Seen through Kibyōshi," 225-254.
[66] Thunberg, and Screech, *Japan Extolled and Decried : Carl Peter Thunberg and the Shogun's Realm, 1775-1796*, 46.
[67] Kornicki, *The Reform of Fiction in Meiji Japan*, 27.
[68] Thompson, "Kibyōshi," 2-8.
[69] Leutner, "World Within Walls: A View from Without," 234.

Leutner admitted that maintaining this attitude is rather difficult in the case of Edo period literature because the conventions of literary fiction that are so evident to us are also the product of a "long stretch of historical accidents."[70] It is worth noting the considerable difference between what would be obvious to the Edo resident when reading a work of *gesaku*, riddled with allusions to classic works and contemporary trends, and what is obvious to someone at first glance. Contemporary readers must make a considerable cognitive effort in order to make sense of and even enjoy *gesaku* works.

4.2 Gesaku Techniques

Edo period *gesaku* literature is a commercial form of literature, catering to the needs and interests of a steadily expanding literate audience. It is humorous and fashionable, covering topics that were popular and in-style at the time. It was also accessible, written in a way that was understandable to low-educated Japanese at the time, yet still filled with cultural allusions.

The techniques that define *gesaku*, a form of playful literature, were listed by Nakamura Yukihiko in his *Gesakuron* (1966). These techniques include *ugachi*, *chakashi*, *sekai/shukō*, *mitate*, *henchikiron*, *fukiyose*, *naimaze*, and *jiguchi*. Some of these techniques resemble modern humour and satire, such as punning, pointing out societal flaws, playful deception, and absurd contradictions. Others, such as *sekai/shukō*, *fukiyose*, *naimaze*, and *mitate*, involve reimagining familiar concepts in new and enjoyable ways.

Sekai/shukō is a term that originated in kabuki theatre, where actors would take a familiar story world, or *sekai*, and add an innovative twist, or *shukō*, to create new and engaging stories for their audience. The term was later adopted in the literary world as well. *Fukiyose* is another technique that involves taking many characters from different cultures and time periods and connecting them by one common trait, while *naimaze* involves combining two different story-worlds into a single story.[71]

4.3 Transformation of Familiar Story Worlds into Entertaining and Witty Parodies

When composing early modern Japanese *gesaku*, authors were tasked with taking a familiar narrative universe (世界, *sekai*) and making it unique and captivating by introducing unexpected turns of events (趣向, *shukō*). This involved manipulating something from a recognizable story world and showing it in a new light.[72] For example, publishers and writers of *kibyōshi* were particularly drawn to the character of Narihira from the Ise Monogatari [73](伊勢物語, The Tales of Ise) story world, and sought to portray Narihira in a manner that playfully challenged the conventional image of him as the *iro-otoko* (色男, amorous man). Even when not spelled out explicitly, the superimposition of a character on Narihara, a playing at Narihara, would be recognisable to any reader familiar with the term and elicit certain expectations.[74] Playing with the readers previous literary experiences is an indispensable element of *kibyōshi*.

4.4: Reflection of Language and Knowledge in Gesaku

During the late eighteenth century, Japanese *gesaku* began to reflect knowledge of the Dutch language and Western learning in various ways. On one hand, the occasional appearance of the Dutch language was used to signify exclusive knowledge, often portraying those who used it as

[70] Leutner, "World Within Walls: A View from Without," 234.
[71] Nakamura, *Gesakuron*.
[72] Ibid, 134-150.
[73] Tales of Ise is a classical Japanese work of the Heian Period (794–1185), written about 980 as *Ise monogatari*. https://www.britannica.com/topic/Tales-of-Ise
[74] Moretti, "Playing Narihira: The Ise monogatari in Eighteenth-Century Kibyōshi." 263-265

pedantic or pompous individuals.[75] In the case of the "fashion book" (洒落本, *sharebon*), a subgenre of *gesaku,* this exclusivity was turned against the characters who employed the foreign language, portraying them as unsophisticated snobs. Simultaneously, the authors of these works themselves demonstrated their sophistication by infusing their fiction with an exotic flavour.[76] In other instances, Roman letters were used as a design motif in comic books and other works, creating an intricate inside joke that only those familiar with Dutch or the authors' circle of friends could fully appreciate, thereby excluding others from understanding the hidden meanings beneath the stylish veneer.[77]

One example of the portrayal of Dutch language comes from a story titled "The Brothelgoer's Rice-Bran Soup" (女郎買之糠味噌汁, *Jorōgai no nukamisoshiru* 1778), featuring a doctor named Nomian who frequents a brothel in Nakasu. Nomian, attempting to display his limited scholarly knowledge and supposed sophistication, intersperses his vocabulary with various Dutch words such as "Zeer dronken, zeer dronken!" (Very drunk, very drunk), "wijn" (wine), and "smaak" (taste, palate).[78] In response, a courtesan named Suminoto mocks him, highlighting his ignorance and suggesting that he should travel to Nagasaki where such language might be understood, as it holds no significance in their current surroundings.[79]

Another example can be found in the *sharebon* "Mirror of the Dutch," (阿蘭陀鏡, *Oranda Kagami*, 1798) where two young medical students from Edo are entertained by *geisha* in Shimabara, Kyoto. While making considerable efforts to speak in a sophisticated manner themselves, their attempts only reveal their awkwardness and lack of refinement.[80] Similar to Suminoto's response to Nomian, the geisha demonstrates remarkable restraint before eventually expressing the absurdity of the students' affected erudition.

While these *sharebon* highlight the association of the Dutch language with pedantry, other works explore its artistic possibilities. These works treat the language as a material object rather than focusing on its linguistic aspects. Their emphasis lies in the materiality of language in its written form and its use as a design element. For instance, Keishōkyo Sōfu's "Bathrobe Competition" (*Yukata awase*, ゆかた合わせ, 1781) features a robe adorned with symbols resembling Roman letters.[81] This feature of script is similar to what Kern pointed out in the first panel of the *kibyōshi Wakaran Monogatari* (1803). The Latin writing above the Dutch character might have only been enjoyed for its foreignness and not its intelligibility. He points at the peculiar appearance Western writing must have had for nineteenth century readers, namely as a kind of code language for communicating foreignness.[82] Not so much the intelligibility of the writing was primary in this situation, although those uneducated in the Dutch language could read along phonetically with the text through glosses. Earlier, Kern also pointed to an image from *Wakaran Monogatari* of an "electrostatic generating box" (*erekiteru*) and the "shocking effect" it must have had on readers at the time.[83]

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[75] Fleming, "The World Beyond the Walls: Morishima Chūryō (1756-1810) and the Development of Late Edo Fiction," 278-279.
[76] Ibid, 276-78.
[77] Ibid, 276.
[78] Ibid, 280.
[79] Ibid, 280.
[80] Ibid, 281-282.
[81] Ibid, 279-283.
[82] Kern, *Manga from the Floating World*, 87.
[83] Ibid, 62.

Chapter 5: Kibyōshi

In *Manga from the Floating World*, Adam Kern introduces *kibyōshi,* which is a 'genre' of woodblock-printed, illustrated popular literature called *kusazōshi*, produced and consumed in Edo roughly during the three decades spanning the An'ei-Tenmei period (1772-1780 and 1781-1789) to the beginning of Kasei period (1804-1829). At the time of the publication of Kern's now renowned study on *kibyōshi*, only a selection of existing works had been studied. *Kibyōshi* were around seven inches long and five inches wide, with thirty pages per title on average. They were relatively inexpensive, costing around thirty *mon* (文) per title, and some titles by Santō Kyōden possibly sold over ten thousand copies. The genre satirized and parodied anything from Chinese classics to current events and politics.[84]

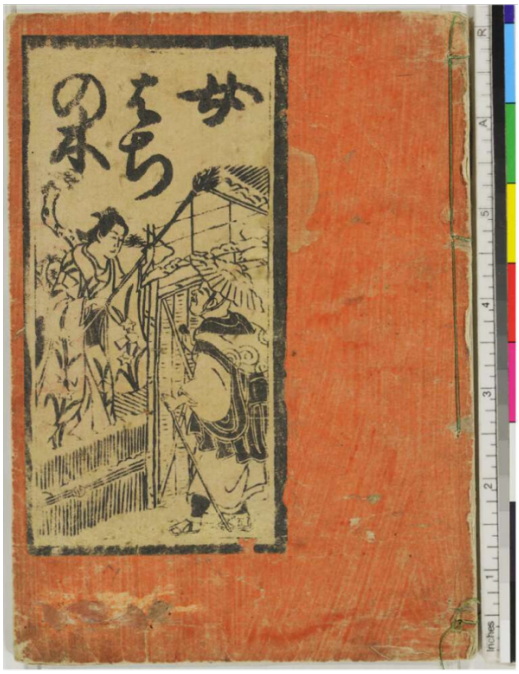

fig.1 The cover of a *kibyōshi*. Source: https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/A_1983-1004-0-2-112

Most of the early *kibyōshi* writers who created mass-produced "pulp fiction" were actually samurai, who possessed the means, education, and leisure time for such artistic pursuits. While some of the big names in *kibyōshi*, like Koikawa Harumachi and Ōta Nanpo, were from the lower echelons of the samurai class with few bureaucratic responsibilities, others, like Hōseidō Kisanji, held more prestigious positions as deputies to their *daimyō*. Despite the fact that the leading *kibyōshi* authors were censured by the chief architect of the Kansei Reforms, Matsudaira Sadanobu[85], who was one of the most powerful samurai in the land, it is believed that he himself may have written *kibyōshi* as well.[86]

According to Mori Senzō, a 'real' *kibyōshi* must meet four criteria: it must be created by the author, though it may be illustrated by someone else; it must be a form of light literature written for entertainment; it must reflect the city life of Edo; and it must use current Edo slang. An example of a work that meets these criteria is Koikawa Harumachi's 1775 classic *Kinkin sensei eiga no yume* (金々先生栄花夢,Master Flashgold's Splendiferous Dream), which is considered as the first

[84] Kern, *Manga from the Floating World*, 59.
[85] See Iwasaki's article on Sadanobu's supposed kibyōshi authorship: "Portrait of a Daimyo: Comical Fiction by Matsudaira Sadanobu."
[86] Kern, *Manga from the Floating World*, 59.

kibyōshi and highly regarded by other contemporary *gesaku* writers in the history of *kusazōshi*.[87] However, the Nihon *shōsetsu shomoku nenpyō*' (小説書目年表)list of nearly two thousand *kibyōshi,* published between 1775 and 1806, simply compiled this large booklist almost completely on the grounds of format, even when many works resembled little more than puzzle books.[88]

5.1 Kibyōshi as a Hybrid Genre

The kibyōshi genre draws heavily from various popular comical poetry genres, notably madcap verse (狂歌, kyōka), madcap Chinese poem (狂詩, kyōshi), and comic haiku (川柳, senryū), which were all closely related to gesaku in there almost nonsensical humorous approach. Of these three, the most influential form of popular poetry was the madcap verse. This humorous type of poetry typically comes in the form of short verse (tanka), which is one of the most well-known Japanese poetic forms of 31 syllables arranged in alternating lines of 5-7-5-7-7. The kyōka, as it is technically referred to, deviates from the rules, lexicon, and topics of classical poetry and instead embraces an absurd sort of humour.[89]

As such, Kern invokes characterises kibyōshi as a genre possessing "radical interrelatedness".[90] The author is well aware of the problematic nature of categorising the kibyōshi as a genre and problematizes the notion of labelling kibyōshi as kibyōshi in the first place, which invokes "a certain generic completeness."[91] To put it in more concrete terms: it is difficult to demarcate what kibyōshi is, most importantly because it underwent many drastic changes over time, rendering characterisations such as "satirical fiction", "parodist literature" or "didactic works" inadequate.[92] This problem becomes even more apparent when Kern concedes that kibyōshi is a "retrospective designation" of aohon (青本, blue books) that were manufactured with a bright viridian or bluish-green cover, which eventually faded to a shade of yellow due to exposure to sunlight. In other words, what we consider kibyōshi now was not always referred to as such at the time.[93]

5.2 Kibyōshi's Language

A key feature of the kibyōshi is that it aimed to create a sense of linguistic realism by depicting the everyday language used by different classes and types of people in Edo during that time. This portrayal of diverse speech among characters contributed to the genre's stylistic richness, despite lacking a distinct literary style. 'Lack of style' could even be considered one of the more accurate descriptions of the genre. Kibyōshi dialogue showcases a "carnivalesque" rejection of stylistic uniformity, while incorporating some stereotypical language based on established character types. The kibyōshi thus presented a glimpse of what one could have realistically heard in the streets, public baths, and teahouses of the Edo Floating World (浮世, ukiyo) in the the An'ei-Tenmei period.[94]

Little is known of the composition of mid-Edo readership and more specifically that of kibyōshi. Kern therefore only makes conjectural remarks based on the supposed evidence of numbers of published kibyōshi, which "may have been one of the most widely read forms of popular literature – if not literature in general – up to that point in Japanese literary history.[95] Kern claims that through "such artifacts as publishing catalogues, government documents, and import lists,

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[87] Mori, Senzō Kibyōshi kaidai. 2nd impr. Tōkyō: Chōū kōrōsha. 14-15
[88] Thompson, "Kibyōshi,"76.
[89] Ibid, 107.
[90] Kern, *Manga from the Floating World*, 70-79.
[91] Ibid. 75.
[92] Ibid, 181.
[93] Ibid, 191.
[94] Ibid., 80.
[95] Ibid, 56.

for instance, readers of the kibyōshi must have been exclusively uneducated women and children."[96] Visual evidence, such as figure 1.1 in the introduction of Manga from the Floating World, where a courtesan-in-training is holding a kibyōshi, appears to support this claim, though it is difficult to ascertain whether this illustration is the product of reality or fantasy.[97]
It is more likely that the actual readership was predominantly male, since the scope of allusions in the kibyōshi is so vast that it requires great mastery of the "entire literary, dramatic, and visual imagination of traditional Japan"[98], which was a privilege largely restricted to men. However, throughout his book, Kern never addresses the particularities of women, children and adults in general in Edo Japan[99]. Kern claims that kibyōshi is the first true woodblock-printed comic book that caters to exclusively adult readers.[100] However, the target audience of kibyōshi is a much-debated topic in contemporary academia, as it is not clear whether leisurely texts in general catered specifically to children or to adults during the Edo period. In his review on Kern's book, Timon Screech concludes: "the binarism of 'adult' versus 'child' is probably too simple for early-modern societies."[101]

5.3 Censorship of Kibyōshi

The era of *kibyōshi* ended due to the rising popularity of *gōkan* (合巻, lit. "Assembled volumes," or picture-books in multiple volumes) and the draconian Kansei Reforms, enacted by *daimyo* Matsudaira Sadanobu (1758-1829), dating as far back as 1788 or even 1787. These reforms permeated deeply into the culture of the late Edo period by the year 1790, they eventually succeeded—with few exceptions—at weeding out the typical couched political satire from the *kibyōshi*.[102] This, however, did not mean the demise of the genre as a whole, which still survived in alternate forms until 1806. Previous scholars have overemphasized the weight of the Kansei Reforms and "ended up conflating the termination of the protest pieces with that of the *kibyōshi* genre as a whole."[103] Regrettably, this attitude precludes any serious attempt to study *kibyōshi* after the Kansei Reforms, as it exemplifies favouritism and adherence to a perceived "golden age" of *kibyōshi*.[104]

It is still if unclear whether *kibyōshi*—under influence of the Kansei Reforms—degenerated into a purely didactical form, stripped of the couched political satire, formerly "levelled at a number of policies and politicians who were alive and, in many cases, still active in office."[105] Or, does this mean that not only commercial pressures caused changes in the genre, but also a changing readership? In any case, it is fair to say that the advocation of state-sponsored Neo-Confucian policies through the Kansei Reforms heavily regulated commercial publishing, outlawed these satirical "protest pieces, crushed several leading authors, and destroyed the joie de vivre of the Floating World way of life."[106]

5.4 Dutch Inventions in Other Kibyōshi

Besides the numerous playful variations on the world of classical works, *kibyōshi* also provide a window into coeval trends and fashions.

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[96] Ibid, 49.
[97] Ibid, 2.
[98] Ibid, 49.
[99] Ibid, 10-11.
[100] Ibid, 185.
[101] Screech, "Manga from the Floating World," 6
[102] Kern, *Manga from the Floating World*, 224.
[103] Ibid, 239.
[104] Ibid, 237-239.
[105] Ibid, 224
[106] Ibid, 237

The *kibyōshi Kogane yama Fukuzō jikki* (黄金山福蔵実記,)(1778) written by Rinshō and illustrated by Torii Kiyomasa plays with this Dutch invention and imagines a fictional "Dutch" microscope. It tells the story of Fukuzō who is the son of a *Oranda kapitan* and a Maruyama prostitute. He becomes a doctor and takes on the Dutch sounding name Tsuinaoru Kintenteesu, which is meant to impress future patients. Fukuzō has no medical training, but he has two tools that his father left him before going back to sea: "a mechanical clock and a strange lensed device."[107] The clock does not play a role in the story, but the lensed device becomes his main tool (fig. 2). When placed in the navel, it can look into the intestines. The all revealing device is not magical, but just "fiendishly *Ran* (Dutch)." With it he can look deep inside a living being without needing to dissect or turn it into a sample The tubular microscope that Fukuzō uses was technically called a "tube-type microscope" (東洋顕微鏡, *tōyō kenbikyō*), and was generally used by physicians in order to detect whether patients had microbes and other impurities in their bodily fluids such as pus or phlegm. In a comical turn it is revealed that the fictional lens can not only see the mechanical workings of the body, but also the intangible aspects of the human-being, such as intentions, aspirations and volitions. Nothing escapes the lens's gaze and all is revealed.[108] The Dutch microscope is referenced to "peep into the interior of the stomach using its holy eyes (*shōnin no manako*)."[109]

Fig. 2: Inspecting Fukuzō with a 'Dutch Lens.'[110]

5.5 Portrayal of Foreigners in Other Kibyōshi

When the *kibyōshi* became more popular, a lot of makeshift Chinese words began to appear in *kibyōshi* that represented nonsensical sounds. With the Kansei Reforms came a change in the *kibyōshi*, as both authors and readers shifted from a sophisticated, well-informed readership to a

[107] Screech, The Lens within the Heart: 203.
[108] Ibid, 203-206.
[109] Ibid, 206.
[110] Torii Kiyomasa, from Rinshō, *Kogane yama Fukuzō jikki*, 1778. National Diet Library, Tokyo.

more general public. In conjunction with this change, the perception of the Chinese language changed from one that only connoisseurs could understand to a truly unintelligible and untranslatable language that could be enjoyed by *futsū* (普通/不通 'ordinary, not understanding') people if only for its audial qualities.[111] Sugimoto notes that this was due to the admiration of one's own country and a growing contempt for China and Asia that was beginning to grow in the minds of Edo citizens. She cites *Mikenjaku san'nin namaei* (箕間尺参人酩酊)(1794) by Santo Kyōden as a *kibyōshi* that shows this attitude toward foreign languages after the Kansei Reforms.[112]

Before touching on *Wakaran Monogatari* it is worth discussing other works that deal with foreigners and foreign countries. The country depicted in the *kibyōshi Kinpira Ikoku Meguri* (金平異国遶, "Kinpira's Travels to Foreign Lands," 1779), by Gozōsa, published 20 years before the publication of *Wakaran Monogatari*, is a fictitious one, where the inhabitants speak a foreign language. They are from the "land of immortality" (*furoufushiko,* 不老不死国), and their language is described as follows:

"usu/\mofusaikimikenkurumeitakarintonnaari/\tekensannbairoukuuiroutouchinkau/\jiyaku/\"[113]

The meaning of this phrase is basically unknown gibberish. At first glance, only *uiro* and *tochin kau* are barely recognizable as intelligible. The author, however, describes the people who speak these languages as "people who speak Japanese as well, and who answer to the islanders," and he says that the islanders are surprised to see the main character Kanpei:

ヤア珍しい形の人間がなされてきたが日本人かなもしわとうない[114]
の幽霊ではないか。
"hey, a man of unusual shape has come here! Is it a Japanese person or is it the ghost from *watōnai*?"

Sugimoto puts forth a provoking theory regarding the language of the foreigners: "They can also make themselves understandable in Japanese. What we see here is a kind of longing for foreign languages and a fear of 'languages that cannot be understood,' or, to put it another way, a sense of security in being able to 'understand' Japanese. In this story, people who speak a language that seems foreign are not ridiculed, but are even valued as people who can communicate in Japanese."[115]

It is worth noting the characteristics that Koshōken has attributed to the Chinese in his travel accounts: their talkativeness, incomprehensibility, and a somewhat immature and unrestrained fascination with women. The seemingly Chinese term "Chin-pun-kan" represents a general imitation of foreign languages as meaningless chatter, highlighting the role of language as

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[111] This is a wordplay on the homonym *futsū,* which can be written 普通 or 不通.

[112] Sugimoto, kibyōshi "sangoku mukashibanashi wakaran monogatari" ni tsuite, 252.

[113] Gozōsa (1779), (**金平異国遶**, "Kinpira's Travels to Foreign Lands,") *kinpira ikoku meguri,* quoted from Sugimoto (1998), p. 252.

[114] The Japanese name of the main character Coxinga from Chikamatsu Monzaemon's famous play *The Battles of Coxinga*. Source: *Kōjien*.

[115] Sugimoto, kibyōshi "sangoku mukashibanashi wakaran monogatari" ni tsuite, 252: "彼らは日本語にも通じているのである。ここに見られるのは外国語へのある種の憧れと「通じない言葉」への怖れ、逆に言えば日本語が「通じること」への安心感である。ここでは外国語らしき言葉を話す人間はばかにされはしないし、むしろ日本語にも通じる人間として重宝がられさえするという描かれ方がなされている。"

a significant factor in distinguishing cultural differences, not only for Koshōken but also potentially universally.[116]

5.6 Dutch Material Culture in Kibyōshi

Morishima Chūryō employed western material culture in a clever and parodic manner, allowing him to present his unique perspective on Japanese literary works. His works can thus be situated within a broader examination of the influence of the Dutch language and material culture on popular fiction in Edo. As we have seen previously, some works were perceived as using Western learning to create a sense of exclusivity, but Chūryō's *kibyōshi* served as a fictional complement to his popular essays on Dutch studies, such as the previously discussed *Kōmō Zatsuwa,* enabling him to make the exotic accessible and relatable.[117]

In contrast to the enigmatic nature and unintelligibility of the Dutch language, Western material culture possessed an immediacy which possessed a vibrant appeal. It is within this context that Morishima Chūryō, created two *kibyōshi*, skilfully navigating between popularizing Western knowledge and crafting *gesaku*. These two works, "Old Chikusai's Treasure, Golden Hued" (竹斎老宝山吹色, *Chikusai-rō takara no yamabuki iro*) and "A Treasury of Loyal Chinamen," (中華手本唐人蔵, *Karadehon tōjingura*) showcased Chūryō's ability to transplant Dutch studies into *kibyōshi*, utilizing visual elements to enhance accessibility and understanding.[118] For contemporary readers, the novelty lay in the unfamiliar being presented within well-known storylines, resulting in thought-provoking questioning and defamiliarization.[119] We will see later on that *Wakaran Monogatari* takes a completely opposite approach by playing with the overly familiar. Ultimately, these *kibyōshi* can be viewed as companions to Chūryō's nonfiction studies, particularly *Kōmō Zatsuwa* and many of the devices mentioned there find there way into these two *kibyōshi,* most notably the frequently discussed *erekiteru* in Old Chikusai's Treasure, Golden-Hued, which Chūryō transforms into an *herekiteru*, replacing the first syllable with "fart" (*he*). This comically twisted device can subdue any illness when inserted into the patients "rear end" and "by blowing gas through the patient's innards."[120]

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[116] Yonemoto, *Mapping Early Modern Japan*, 98.

[117] Fleming, "The World Beyond the Walls: Morishima Chūryō (1756-1810) and the Development of Late Edo Fiction," 286-304.

[118] Ibid, 289, 293.

[119] Ibid, 276-277.

[120] Ibid, 292.

Chapter 6: Case Study: Wakaran Monogatari

Wakaran Monogatari written by Kanwatei Onitake and illustrated by Katsushika Hokusai is a remarkable work in which two foreigners - a Dutchman and Chinese man - strive to win over a Japanese prostitute, but consistently fail in their attempts to woe her. The chapters leading up to the case study were meant to sketch the intellectual history of Japan from two angles. First, the emergence of *kokugaku* and *Rangaku* ushered in a radically new approach to building knowledge and meant a shift in scholarship, rejecting the traditional Chinese worldview – in as far as this was possible. Second, operating within the framework of travel writing, Japanese travellers utilized their extensive knowledge to give significance to the unfamiliar landscapes they encountered during their journeys.[121]

While fiction writers had distinct objectives compared to nonfiction writers, comprehending the external world beyond Japan was never a straightforward task during the Edo period. Similar to the mapping and documentation of the Japanese islands, foreign relations and knowledge of foreign lands carried significant importance for both the government and the general populace. Authors of *gesaku* existed within an intellectual realm where certain implicit and long-established assumptions about Japan's interactions with other nations were widely accepted. When crafting fictional works, writers both adhered to and challenged the prevailing understanding of the world beyond Japan, working within and against the established knowledge.[122]Against this background we can begin to understand where Onitake took his cues from when writing the extremely well-informed yet ridiculously satirical *Wakaran Monogatari.*

The seemingly mundane title of the work was intentionally chosen to mimic the style of a *Rangaku* text that would typically be more challenging to comprehend. However, the title is meant to be entirely tongue-in-cheek.[123] In reality, the story is a playful exploration of commonly held beliefs about the cultural realms of the Chinese and Dutch, incorporating numerous puns and humour throughout. Both foreigners are assessed with equal seriousness to determine their own cultural characteristics. The story playfully presents us with a rat race between two cultures vying for the Japanese' hand. [124]

In this chapter, I will guide the reader through the humorous twists in *Wakaran Monogatari*, a work known for playing with stereotypes associated with Dutch technology and Chinese sages, in order to answer the following questions: How are the two main foreigners depicted in this *kibyōshi*?

6.1 Analysis of Kanwatei Onitake's Kibyōshi, Wakaran Monogatari

As indicated by the title of this book, *Wakaran Monogatari* [125](和漢蘭雑話 A Tale of Japan, China, and the Netherlands), the characters are from three different countries: Japan (*Wa*), China (*Ka*), and the Netherlands (*Ran*). The four foreign characters are Chin Rinten, a Chinese (唐人, *Karanin*);

[121] Yonemoto, *Mapping Early Modern Japan*, 98.
[122] Ibid, 101.
[123] Screech, *The Lens within the Heart*, 35.
[124] Ibid, 35.
[125] Onitake's work, especially when read as *Wakaran Zatsuwa,* is most possibly a humorous twist on Chūryō's popular book, *Kōmō Zatsuwa*, which is a comprehensive collection of information about Europe.

his servant Sukanpin (聚韓賓); Sunperupei[126], a Dutchman; and his servant Kurunbō[127]. The Japanese character is an ugly prostitute named Butano (豚野, lit. pig field)

In the first panel of the story (fig. 1), The illustrator presents us with a mock-up of the popular broadsheet genre, depicting different foreigners with their unique costumes and styles, along with vignettes printed above in the native script.[128] The Chinese character's words are mostly illegible due to a poorly placed library seal.[129] The text above the Dutchman is written phonetically to be readable as Japanese, and he is identified as a Holland merchant named Snpipyt (Sunperupei), who expresses his desire to go to *Jagasaki*. The ugly Japanese prostitute, Butano[130], standing between them is described as a prostitute from the *Saruyama* district of *Jagasaki*. *Jaga*, meaning snake, is combined with Nagasaki, while *Saruyama* denoting the name of the red-light district of Maruyama is combined with *saru*, meaning "monkey." Both foreign men are vying for the affection of the Japanese woman, indicating that China and Holland are competing for Japan's heart.

Fig. 3: Introduction of the three main characters in *Wakaran Monogatari* (1803).[131]

[126] The name Sunperupei could very possibly a derivation of the Japanese name Tsunberugu, a reference to the Swedish naturalist Carl Peter Thunberg's (1743-1828), whose contributions to offering a new cure for syphilis gained him recognition in Japan for several generations after his departure. The final -pei, meaning fart, has replaced the -gu in the original Japanese in order to further underscore the playfulness of the whole work.

[127] *Kuronbō* was a generic name for enslaved servants and can be translated as "black boy". This naming is in contrast with the individual naming of both the Dutchman and the Chinese man. See Yonemoto, Marcia. *Mapping Early Modern Japan*, 76.

[128] Screech, The Lens within the Heart: 35-36.

[129] Sugimoto was able to transcribe the Chinese characters beneath the seal. There we can read that Chin Rinten is the grandson of Ran Bunkan of the Tang-Dynasty.

[130] Literally meaning "pig field." She received her name due to her looks resembling that of a pig.

[131] Courtesy of *Kokubungaku Kenkyū Shiryōkan*: https://kokusho.nijl.ac.jp/biblio/100053503/3?ln=ja

As scholars have pointed out in the past, this work is unique in its treatment of foreigners and is a playful reflection of knowledge pertaining to Dutch and Chinese culture. In her essay on Wakaran Monogatari, Sugimoto Noriko contextualises this work by situating it in a broader historical state of affairs and Japan's common attitude towards foreigners and foreign countries. Sugimoto argues that if the *kibyōshi* in fact reflects the life of the common people of Edo at the time of its creation by using the common language of Edo as it is, however fictitious it may be, then we should be able to read some kind of awareness of foreigners in the lives of the common people[132]of the time in this work as well.[133]

A significant part of *Wakaran Zatsuwa* revolves around the repeatedly failed attempts of Sunperupei and Chin Rinten trying to impress Butano with their respective arsenal of cultural knowledge. Both display several strange failures, but their failures seem to have a tendency of their own. Chin Rinten, often uses Chinese wizardry (仙術, *senjutsu*). These all fail because of their creepy (気味が悪い, *kimi ga warui*) impression. The Dutchman, Sunperupei, brings out a vast arsenal of Dutch goods, but they fail to impress, because they are not rare or useful. Sugimoto calls these "failures of boasting about one's own country" and lists a considerable amount in order of their appearance in the *kibyōshi*.[134] By striving for the love of the not-too-beautiful prostitute Butano, she shows how the Dutch and the Chinese draw from their own typical cultural arsenal in order to impress her. The Dutchman makes use of his precision craftmanship and the Chinese uses his sage-magic to win her heart.[135] Each failure is deeply tied to preconceptions the reader would have with respect to both cultures. What Sugimoto does not stress enough is why these foreigners are presented in this extremely satirical manner and how this is tied to larger trends in intellectual history.

6.2 A Overview of the Events in Wakaran Monogatari

Wakaran Monogatari revolves around the repeated failures that befall the foreigners as they attempt to impress and seduce the prostitute from *Jagasaki.* Sugimoto divides the failures of the two foreigners into two main categories. One is a failure in language or words (言葉, *kotoba*), the other is the failure of boasting about one's own country (お国自慢, *okuni jiman*).[136]

The first time that language fails to impress Butano is on page two, verso (fig. 4), when Chin Rinten brings a professional entertainer, a *taikomassha* (太鼓末社), who makes a great clamour. In addition, the servant Sukanpin performs the gestures and rapid speech of a sweet jelly seller, but because of the Tang sound (唐音, *tō-on*), it is completely unintelligible and uninteresting,"[137] and the scene ends with "no applause, no laughter, the Chinaman's gibberish is rather dreadful." Sunperupei, on the other hand (fig. 5), has his servant Kuronbō perform acrobatics, and also makes him teach an entertainer called Ranta Dutch words for his speech performance, but the prostitute has no idea what he is talking about and is again unimpressed.[138]

Sugimoto points out how rare it is that such actions of foreigners are mocked and laughed at as failures. While there are instances where the differences between Japanese and foreigners are

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[132] As I have pointed out elswhere in this thesis: it is difficult to to find out who actually read *kibyōshi*. Also, considering most *kibyōshi* were written by people from the samurai class, it is debatable whether general statements can be made about the awareness of a 'common people.' Although I have made grateful use of Sugimoto's arguments and her transcription, I am somewhat more reserved with regard to such comments. My aim is primarily to show how this kibyōshi is unique in its presentation of the two foreigners in *Wakaran Monogatari*.

[133] Sugimoto, kibyōshi "sangoku mukashibanashi wakaran zatsuwa" ni tsuite, 251.

[134] ibid, 252.

[135] Onitake, Wakaran Zatsuwa, p. 5r

[136] Sugimoto, N. (1998), kibyōshi "sangoku mukashibanashi wakarannMonogatari" ni tsuite, 252.

[137] Onitake, Wakaran Monogatari, p. 2v-3r.

[138] ibid, p. 3v-4r.

pointed out, and their characteristics are prized and considered amusing, this *kibyōshi* is unique in that it portrays foreigners as failures and are constantly made into an object of ridicule. Sugimoto claims she had never seen such a depiction before in which the writer so blatantly pokes fun at foreigners.[139]

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Fig. 4: Chin Rinten tries to impress Butano with a professional entertainer and his servant, but is unintelligible.

[139] Sugimoto, N. (1998), kibyōshi "sangoku mukashibanashi wakarannMonogatari" ni tsuite, 252.
[140] Onitake, *Wakaran Monogatari*, p. 2v-3r.

 [141]

Fig. 5 Sunperupei's servant performing acrobatics, while the entertainer speeches in Dutch.

After failing to impress Butano with their incomprehensible performances they enter the scene with their own particular bag of tricks. First up is Chin Rinten (fig. 6), using his sage magic, which he acquired through years of meditation and self-discipline. As a result, he can subdue even the most ferocious animals and make them do his bidding. Rinten impressively enters the pleasure quarter on a giant flying octopus[142] to meet Butano. Although subduing wild beasts is conventionally associated with sages, Rinten's choice of mount is rather unusual. He goes out to the brothel on his beast of choice, but carries with him an awfully fishy smell. After falling out of favour with Butano, who finds the whole matter rather tedious, he is sent away, making his attempt at courting the prostitute unsuccessful, even though his sage magic would be impressive by other standards. The talking octopus' manner of speech is rude and forward, and he annoys Butano even further with its pedantic Chinese philosophical explanation when it is ejected from the room.[143]

As we continue through the story on page 5v-6r of the *Wakaran Zatsuwa* the *erekiteru* again makes a reappearance (fig. 7), only this time in a different light. Sunperupei reaches for an *erekiteru* and tries to draw fire from Butano's head, but since the invention's novelty has worn out it is merely a rather annoying contraption: "Everybody these days knows about this kind of thing. It's not rare (めづらしい, *mezurashii*) at all, and therefore uninteresting."[144] This runs contrary to what Kern pointed out about the depiction of an *erekiteru* in *Manga from the Floating World,* stating that it must have had a "shocking effect" on its readers. As we can see from Butano's reaction the *erekiteru* could already have seemed redundant and contrived to a large part of its readership.[145]

[141] ibid, p. 3v-4r.
[142] Note that octopus, *tako*, also means paper kite in Japanese.
[143] Screech, *The Western Scientific Gaze*, 36.
[144] Onitake, *Wakaran Monogatari*, p. 5v: "ちかごろはこのくらひのことはたれもしつていることにてさつぱりめづらしくなければおもしろからず。"
[145] Onitake, *Wakaran Monogatari*, p. 5v.

 [146]

Fig. 6: Chin Rinten on a flying octopus.

[146] Onitake, *Wakaran Zatsuwa*, p.4v-4r.

Fig. 7: Sunperupei showcases his *erekiteru*.[147]

The competition continues and one amusing attempt after the other ensue: Chin Rinten whitens his face to make himself look more manly by using a miracle drug passed down in his family, but he fails, as Butano considers him creepy (*kimi warui*);[148] Sunperupei tries to bewilder Butano with his Dutch perfume, derived from a secret recipe, but fails because Butano has no sense of smell;[149] Chin Rinten, while displaying his medical techniques passed down by the legendary Bian Que[150], cuts off his finger to show the centre, and attempts to heal it afterwards, but the cut finger has disappeared. After hearing about Chin Rinten's incident, Sunperupei decides to show off his own Dutch surgical skills. In doing so he also cuts off his finger in an attempt to treat it later, but as soon as he does so, he faints.[151] Chin Rinten starts fishing for a carp (*koi*)[152] out of nowhere at a banquet and creeps out all the guests, who have lost their appetite as they wonder "from where"[153] he suddenly managed to catch that fish.[154] In the endgame of the competition Sunperupei uses the famous hot-air balloon, described as a "Oranda precision-made (オランダ細工, *orandasaiku*) hot-air balloon, referred to as *ryukuto shikippu* (luchtschip), to impress and win her over. The balloon was equipped with elegant floral wheels, but it failed to inflate properly and was swept away by the

[147] Onitake, *Wakaran Monogatari*, p.5v.
[148] Recent studies suggest that the oldest examples of skin whitening cosmetics were discovered from Chinese samples. The studies however, do not explicitly link this to manliness, *otokoburi*.
[149] Onitake, *Wakaran Monogatari*, p.6v-7r.
[150] Britannica, T. Editors of Encyclopaedia. "Bian Qiao." Encyclopedia Britannica. Bian Que, (born *c.* 5th century BCE), also called Bian Qiao, or Pien Ch'iao, was a Chinese physician, the first to rely primarily on pulse and physical examination for the diagnosis of disease. Although some facts are known about his life, Bian Qiao is also a somewhat mythical figure.
[151] Onitake, *Wakaran Monogatari*, p. 8v-9r
[152] The word *koi* for carp immediately evokes the association with its homonym *koi*, love. This double meaning is for example repeatedly emphasized in Santō Kyōden's (箱入娘面屋人魚) *hakoirimusume men'ya ningyō* (1791), where a poor fisherman falls in love with a mermaid with the body of a fish and a human head.
[153] Onitake, *Wakaran Monogatari*, p. 9v-10r: どこからつりだしたのかなんだかしれねば、きみをわるかつてくうものはひとりもなし。
[154] Ibid, p. 9v-10r.

heavy sea wind, leading an annoyed Butano to vomit over the side.[155] Hearing about Sunperupei's last failure, Chin Rinten is elated. He rides a tiger into the brothel, but this plan backfires as everyone tries to flee in a complete uproar and some people are even injured while trying to escape. The tiger further prevents people from coming and going.

Ultimately, neither man succeeds in winning Butano's affection, and she remains unmarried, even after a last desperate attempt at buying her love with money.[156] The first to last page shows our Dutch and Chinese protagonists in a violent confrontation pitted against each other with their respective servants, before finally ganging up against Onitake and beating him up in a scene of ultimate absurdity.[157] *Wakaran Monogatari's* final scene portrays Butano ascending to the heavens as an embodiment of the merciful bodhisattva Kannon, while the infatuated foreigners remain at her side in a state of eternal devotion. Meanwhile, Onitake himself, scratching his head, appears confused by the unexpected outcome of events.[158]

6.3 Concluding Analysis of Wakaran Monogatari

Sugimoto maintains that the two suitors' failures were caused by their respective boasting, which she dubbed as *okuni jiman*. Although these scenes are depicted in a rather unrealistic manner, which, as we know by now, is a common trope of the *kibyōshi*, the actual things or information about these depictions must have been available to the Japanese common people in Nagasaki. In those days, people and cultures from foreign countries, namely China and Holland, were not as uncommon as they used to be to the Japanese common people in Nagasaki. Foreign vessels frequently sailed the coastal waters, Dutch vessels visited Japan in increasing numbers, and ships from countries with which Japan had no previous commercial relations entered Japan. The period when Chinese and Dutch goods were neither objects of admiration nor of the imaginary world, but were recognized as real, and sometimes even as not so great.[159]

On the fifth verso page of Wakaran Monogatari, this attitude is apparent in the previously discussed scene where Sunperupei pulls out an *erekiteru* to attract Butano's attention. Butano notes that "these days, everyone knows about this kind of thing, so it is hardly interesting at all,"[160] Coincidentally, the expectations around the time of this work's publication led Japan to begin opening its doors to foreign diplomacy. The eyes of the general public at that time must have begun to look outward, and a realistic awareness of foreign affairs must have begun to emerge. Sugimoto asserts that *Wakaran Monogatari* was born from such an era. The humorous failures of Sunperupei and Chin Rinten depicted in this work were the result of people's awareness at the time that foreign countries were no longer considered the outside world but the real world, and that imported goods were no longer always regarded as fascinating curiosities.[161]

Butano proclaims repeatedly how contrived and commonplace the attempts of Sunperupei and Chin Rinten are at winning her heart. Wakaran Monogatari marks a shift from the "studied and deliberate tone" with which travel writers such as Sekisui described "unfamiliar objects possessed by the Dutch."[162] Precisely because these objects were not unfamiliar anymore Onitake

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[155] Ibid, p. 11v-12r.
[156] Ibid, p. 14r.
[157] Ibid, p. 14v.
[158] Ibid, p. 15r.
[159] Sugimoto, kibyōshi "sangoku mukashibanashi wakarannzatsuwa" ni tsuite, 254.
[160] Onitake, *Wakaran Monogatari*, p. 5v: "さつぱりめづらしくなければおもしろからず."
[161] Sugimoto, kibyōshi "sangoku mukashibanashi wakarannzatsuwa" ni tsuite, 254.
[162] Yonemoto, *Mapping Early Modern Japan*, 76.

was able to take them as a referent in distinction to the Chinese referents and play with them to elicit pleasure from his audience. This possibility was in large part due to the expansion of *Rangaku* within the intellectual landscape and the venturing of various travel writers, who laid the basis for such *gesaku* works to exist. As noted in the previous chapter, it was typical of *gesaku* to tap from in-vogue topics. Although Sugimoto finds it difficult to judge whether the ridiculing of the foreigners can be linked to the praise of one's own country or not,[163] it is at least true that this *kibyōshi* shows a comical indifference towards the two foreign men and their failed attempts at even wooing an ugly prostitute with such contrived or redundant methoda. In this regard, it seems their foreign languages and cultures have seeped into the collective consciousness and are not considered to be a rarity or anything special anymore, and are instead made fun of. We can view this in contradistinction to Chūryō's *kibyōshi* where fascination or wonderment is found in the ingenious reimagining of foreign devices such as the *erekiteru*.

Another matter, that Sugimoto neglects in her analysis is the presentation of the servants and their lack of any discernible individuality. This matter also ties into the previous representations of enslaved servants to the Dutch trading company, who were also described by Sekisui. He presents the Dutch servants in pictorial form, contrasting them with the portrait of an enigmatic Dutch secretary. The illustrations depict dark-skinned servants, likely of Indonesian origin, who is displayed in a "different order of otherness."[164] The servant's illustration is labelled with the characters for "devil" (鬼, oni) and "slave" (奴, yakko), accompanied by the Japanese reading "*kuronbō*" which can be translated as "black boy." Other captions describe the colour of their clothing, specifically the red background of their shirt and headscarf. There is no individual commentary or mention of their names in the portrait. The emphasis on the appearance of their skin and clothing gives the portrait a sense of objectification more akin to descriptions of objects rather than to descriptions of the Dutch merchants themselves. In fact, Sekisui's only narrative description of the servants does not connect them to their Dutch masters but rather associates them with the domesticated animals present within the Dutch compound.[165]

[163] Sugimoto, kibyōshi "sangoku mukashibanashi wakaran zatsuwa" ni tsuite, 251-52.
[164] Yonemoto, *Mapping Early Modern Japan*, 76.
[165] Ibid

Chapter 7: Conclusion

The main objective of this thesis is to provide a new perspective on the popular literature of early modern Japan by re-examining its connection with other intellectual movements of that era. These movements include the growing interest in *rangaku*, *kokugaku*, and travel writing. By shifting the focus, this approach uncovers significant links between the literature of the time and Japan's early interactions with foreign culture. Additionally, this approach offers a new framework for understanding the transformation of knowledge from being exclusive to the intellectual elite to becoming entertainment for a broader audience.

The cultural influence of China on Japan throughout history cannot be overstated. From the Japanese writing system to cultural values, governance models, and even religious practices, China has had a profound impact on Japanese culture. However, as the eighteenth century approached, a group of Japanese thinkers emerged who rejected the Chinese model in its entirety, including Confucianism and Buddhism.

In parallel with these developments, travel writers began to redefine the genre, emphasizing direct observation and clear description. The exploration of cultural differences became an integral part of their narratives, along with descriptions of unfamiliar objects and practices. Furthermore, the popular genre of *gesaku*, with its commercial nature and humorous tone, also played a significant role in reflecting and shaping the popular imagination of the late Edo period.

Wakaran Monogatari by Kanwatei Onitake stands as a unique example in its depiction of foreigners, particularly the Dutch and the Chinese. Through parody and satire, this work playfully imagined and played with the perception of Western and Chinese culture, reflecting the intellectual landscape of the Edo period. Wakaran Monogatari offers a viewpoint significantly different from various other evaluations of foreigners in the mid to late Edo Period. It is however still rooted in the drive to formulate and discuss the position of Japan vis-à-vis other foreign powers.

Wakaran Zatsuwa played a crucial role in reimagining the common perceptions of Western material culture and its relationship to the long-standing Chinese culture. The ultimate goal was to demonstrate that late Edo fiction did not solely rely on conventional Japanese themes but constantly sought innovative ways to evolve by reaching beyond the boundaries of Japanese culture, and engaging with foreign cultures. We learned that writers of *gesaku* writers such as Chūryō were at times heavily involved in the pursuit of Western knowledge and transposed their knowledge to a satiric medium such as the *kibyōshi*. The historical approach in this thesis served to illuminate the rapid development and accumulation of new approaches to building knowledge.

Wakaran Zatsuwa was different from its past and contemporary counterparts as it not only incorporated foreign objects such as the *erekiteru* or the *ryukuto shikippu* but made foreignness itself into its topic. In previous *gesaku* works prostitutes are also confronted with the Dutch language, but show a more forceful attitude in stressing it's pedantic or barbaric aspects, still critically engaging with it, although negatively. Onitake's work was unique in that he portrayed a complete indifference towards everything associated with Dutch and Chinese culture, mediated through the Japanese prostitute. Previous *gesaku* also took the Dutch language as a topic, either association it with pedantic sophistry or using it as a fashionable pattern for robes. However, the *Wakaran Zatsuwa*, shows Butano not understanding anything at all, completely indifferent to the Dutch and Chinese spectacles.

Countless times Butano stresses the lack of novelty in the presentation of Dutch devices or the creepiness of the Chinese man's multiple attempts. In a way we could see *Wakaran Zatsuwa* as the absurdly logical conclusion of the mania for Dutch inventions and the repositioning of China as a source of Japan's culture.

In conclusion, Sugimoto's analysis highlights the concept of *okuni jiman* or boasting as the cause of the suitors' failures in the depicted scenes. Although these scenes may be portrayed in an exaggerated and unrealistic manner, it is important to recognize that the information and elements depicted in *kibyōshi* were accessible to a large readership in Japan. During that time, interactions with foreign countries, particularly China and Holland, were becoming increasingly common.

Foreign vessels frequented coastal waters, Dutch ships visited Japan more frequently, and even ships from previously unexplored nations arrived in Japan.

This shift in perception is evident in Wakaran Monogatari, particularly in the scene where Butano dismisses Sunperupei's use of an *erekiteru* as uninteresting because such devices had become widely known. Coincidentally, around the time of the publication of this work, Japan started opening its doors to foreign diplomacy, leading to a growing awareness of foreign affairs among the general public.

While the research offers valuable insights into the depiction of foreigners in late Edo period popular literature, it is important to recognize its limitations and consider additional perspectives and sources to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the topic. This thesis primarily focused on the analysis of Kanwatei Onitake's *Wakaran Monogatari* as a case study. While this provides insights into the depiction of foreigners in popular literature of the late Edo period, it may not capture the full range of perspectives and representations in other contemporary works. Further research could be done in genres ensuing after the *kibyōshi* such as the more complex *gōkan* with regard to the proliferation of intellectual trends and foreign affairs. Furthermore, the portrayal of the servants in the *kibyōshi* also deserves more attention. Yonemoto notes that these servants lack individuality and are presented as objects rather than as distinct personalities. This depiction aligns with earlier representations of enslaved servants associated with the Dutch trading company, as described by Sekisui.

Overall, Wakaran Monogatari represents a shift in the perception of foreign cultures and objects. The fascination and wonderment seen in Chūryō's *kibyōshi*, where foreign devices were ingeniously reimagined, are replaced in this work by comical indifference towards foreign men and their contrived advances. The foreign languages and cultures have become commonplace in the collective consciousness and are subject to ridicule.

These observations indicate the evolving attitudes towards foreign influences and the changing intellectual landscape leading up to the publication of *Wakaran Monogatari*. The expansion of *Rangaku* and the works of various travel writers laid the foundation for such *gesaku* to exist, tapping into contemporary topics. While the connection between ridiculing foreigners and praising one's own country remains uncertain, it is evident that the *kibyōshi* showcases a humorous disregard for foreign cultures, highlighting the seepage of foreign languages and cultures into the collective consciousness and the diminishing perception of them as rarities or anything special.

In this work Japan takes a strict and cold stance, refusing to submit to the advances of both countries. In *Wakaran Zatsuwa* we can read a unique and playful positioning of Japan and its refusal to surrender to the increasingly pervasive hegemony of these two cultures.

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