

A Relativistic Gaze: A Multimedial Exploration of Cultural Participation

Jordan Niver-Johnson

A thesis

submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

University of Washington

2025

Committee:

Davinder Bhowmik

Nazry Bahrawi

Program Authorized to Offer Degree:

Asian Languages and Literature

© Copyright 2025

Jordan Niver-Johnson

University of Washington

Abstract

A Relativistic Gaze: A Multimedial Exploration of Cultural Participation

Jordan Niver-Johnson

Chair of the Supervisory Committee:

Davinder Bhowmik

Department of Asian Languages and Literature

A plethora of media are readily available that paint a picture of the Ainu and their culture –a recognized Indigenous population within modern-day Japan. For instance, we can read about one of their ceremonies, the Iomante (in which a bear is ritually “killed” and sent back to the land of the gods) in *Netsugen* (Heat Source) by Kawagoe Sōichi, visualize it in the manga *Golden Kamuy* by Noda Satoru, and engage with it both auditorily and visually in the anime (and now live action) adaptation of *Golden Kamuy, The Ainu Bear Ceremony* a documentary by Gordon M. Neil in 1931, and in the modern drama film *Ainu Mosir*. No two media represent the ceremony in the same way, and after one has consumed all these disparate representations, they are left with a

multifaceted concept of the ceremony itself which is made up of various visual, auditory, and linguistic sources. This study explores how multimediality shapes our modern perception of the Iomante and by extension Ainu culture. I hope to underscore the significance of fictional characters who exhibit a non-prescriptive and ethnorelativistic relationship with culture. Non-prescription herein will mean refraining from imposing rules, expectations or specific ways of being on oneself in relation to cultural expectations. Characters with this approach to culture observe and interact with it without insisting that they themselves or other members need to conform to that culture completely. Ethnorelativism herein will mean the ability to see one's own beliefs and behaviors as just one reality among many possibilities. Characters who fit into this category approach cultural practices with a willingness to understand them from within that culture's cultural framework. Central to the current study are the following questions: what is Ainu culture, especially when viewed through a modern lens? How has multimediality shaped, albeit sometimes through negative example, our view of the Iomante ceremony as a part of that culture? And finally, what significance may this media have for those who consume it? I hope to show how media figures have been portrayed in ways that encourage us to rethink the concepts of cultural prescription and involvement. In *Ainu Mosir*, *Netsugen* and *Golden Kamuy* we connect to characters who show agency in how they navigate their culture, a model of agency which may eventually prove beneficial to modern people and how they relate to Ainu culture in contemporary settings.

Introduction

In part one, I plan to begin the current study with a multimedial discussion regarding the orthographic, literary, visual, and auditory aspects of *Netsugen* and *Golden Kamuy* that help us to understand how these story's characters are navigating their environment in terms of culture. Multimediality herein will include looking at specific characters or cultural elements across a variety of media and comparing said forms. Characters from *Netsugen*, *Ainu Mosir* and *Golden Kamuy* represent fictitious individuals who model the process of identity formation in relation to cultural contexts, and I will attempt to show how they navigate their respective cultures through personal experience and reflection as opposed to cultural prescription and a blind adherence to traditional values.

The current study will deal primarily with characters who are fictional but are navigating non-fictional spaces. In terms of the cultural divisions that will be discussed herein, interactions between the Ainu and the Japanese are the two most relevant to the current study. Encounters between the Japanese and the Ainu formally¹ began in 1604 when the Matsumae clan was granted exclusive rights by the Tokugawa shogunate to regulate trade and hunting in Hokkaido. For more than two centuries they conducted trade and business with the Ainu while upholding customs of strict cultural segregation between the Ainu and the Japanese who now occupied Hakodate at the southern tip of Hokkaido. The Ainu were among the first victims of Japan's imperial expansion during the subsequent Meiji period starting in 1868. In 1899, the "Hokkaido Former Aborigines Protection Act" was put into place, forcing the Ainu to adopt Japanese customs. After the Russo-Japanese war, Japan annexed half of the island of Karafuto (north of

¹ While trade and contact occurred between the Japanese and Ainu prior to this period. There was no governmental edict or system in place to regulate it.

Hokkaido) which also had an Indigenous population of Ainu who shared cultural values but also had their own Ainu dialect. Today, for example, there is distinct linguistic research of Hokkaido Ainu and Karafuto Ainu respectively.² The Karafuto and Hokkaido Ainu were one of the first subjects of the Japanese imperial machine. Alongside the Ryukyuans to the south in modern day Okinawa, these imperial subjects were joined by the Taiwanese and Koreans as Japan expanded in the late 1800s and into the mid-19th century. The assimilation policies begun in 1899 remained unchanged until 1997, when the “Ainu Culture Promotion Act” replaced them. This shift culminated in 2008, when the Japanese government formally recognized the Ainu as an Indigenous population. Regardless, the century between these two milestones was characterized by a precipitous decline of Ainu culture, language and populations in Hokkaido and Karafuto. The characters whom I will discuss in this study inhabit/ed the spaces of Hokkaido and Karafuto between the late 1800s and 2020, moreover they serve as fictionalized albeit “authentic” examples of Japanese Ainu interactions during this time.

In part two, I will shift focus to performances of the Iomante ceremony across a variety of media, paying specific attention to four such examples spanning the last one hundred years. This section will discuss the ceremony itself and how various depictions of it bring us closer to a better understanding of the Ainu mythos associated with it. I will then discuss various characters from these media who have unique relationships with the ceremony. I hope to show how characters from media produced in the last decade interact with the ceremony in ways that forefront the individual and background the culture that they are associated with/identify with.

² Hattori, Shirō, and Mashihō Chiri. *Ainugo Hōgen Jiten*. Tōkyō: Iwanami Shoten, 1964.

In my conclusion, I tie together these two discussions, one in relation to cross-cultural interactions (part one) and the other in relation to a variety of characters and their relationship to the Iomante ceremony as a representation of the Ainu mythos (part two.) In terms of the larger implications for modern Ainu populations, and even those who don't identify as Ainu but are interacting with this media, *The Oxford Dictionary of Parasocial Interactions* posits that these characters have the potential to become parasocial objects of attachment.³ In regard to media related to Ainu cultures, these parasocial bonds now exist as a result of medial proliferation that largely began after the Ainu were deemed an Indigenous population in 2008. In terms of contemporary Ainu communities, which have been beleaguered by over four centuries of imperialism, misrepresentation, and religious and linguistic persecution, the dire need for an evolving understanding is clear and it is my belief that multimediality is a positive force in relation to the modern Ainu. Audiences clearly want to connect with this culture and have done so through specific characters who provide agentic and individualistic examples of cultural participation.

Part 1:

Through an interplay of multimediality, dissemination, and parasocial engagement, fictional characters who inhabit historically accurate spaces possess the power to shape opinions and connect to their audiences in a meaningful way; these characters act as fictitious yet vital emissaries of the cultures, languages, and the peoples they represent. In *Netsugen*, Kawagoe relates a multicultural story that includes Polish, Russian, Japanese, and Ainu characters set from the period of the Russo-Japanese War (1904-5) to the conclusion of World War Two. *Golden*

³ *The Oxford Dictionary of Parasocial Interactions*. Pg. 128.

Kamuy, written by Satoru Noda, depicts an ex-Japanese soldier's incursion into the wilds of Hokkaido alongside a native Ainu who helps him navigate this foreign space as an outsider. Both works are fictional in that many of their characters are not based on real individuals who used to inhabit these spaces. However, the spaces and cultures themselves are real and Ainu individuals are still fighting a battle of cultural acceptance, solidarity, and mutual understanding within modern day Japan.

In the current section, I will answer the following questions in relation to these works. How are characters interacting with other cultures in each work? How are cultural lines made clearer, or in other words elucidated, through different media iterations of the same work? How does multimediality improve perceived cultural authenticity and cultural understanding?

Netsugen imbeds the reader within a Karafuto Ainu community through a clever framing device at the beginning of the novel. We start the story from the perspective of a Russian soldier who is being sent to Karafuto now that the Russians have reacquired it following World War Two. This soldier is given access to several anthropological recordings in relation to the Karafuto Ainu. Some are audio recordings of an anthropologist-based on a real figure, Bronislaw Pilsudski⁴, who lived as part of an Ainu community 30 years prior. Others are recordings of an unknown Karafuto Ainu native who is giving an account of the plight of the Ainu in relation to Japanese and Russian imperialism. These files serve two functions in terms of the impact the narrative has on the reader. First, they masquerade as historically valid primary sources from the past. We, aligned with the Russian soldier, are listening to an account of an Ainu community and discovering various things about it, such as: Who are its members? Where did they initially live?

⁴ Sato-Rossberg, Nana. *Conflict and Dialogue: Bronislaw Pilsudski's Ethnography and Translation of Ainu Oral Narratives*.

Where were they relocated and why were they brought there? What is their struggle in relation to Japanese imperialism? Second, the recording the main character is listening to is discussed in terms of its auidial quality. As such, we are encouraged not only to pay attention to the story but also imagine its auidial qualities as being central to the way it is being portrayed and received. We, along with the main character, are listening to the Tonkori (a traditional Ainu instrument similar to a guitar). We are listening to a voice that speaks both the Karafuto Ainu language, and Japanese that he learned at school as part of the government's assimilation policies. Compared to framing devices which are textual⁵, this type of device compels the reader to consider the text synesthetically⁶, as a literary text *and* audio-file. In other words, we cannot hear the story on the page, but this framing device spurs the reader to forefront auidial aspects of the work as we are perceiving it to be a recording that the main character is listening to.

In terms of orthographic choices made within the text, there are several layers of textual styles in Japanese which are used to represent local Ainu ideas, culture, and language. The Japanese writing system has three separate scripts. Kanji are characters borrowed from Chinese that represent ideas ideographically. Take for instance 木 *ki* which means tree and resembles one. If we look at two other Kanji compounds which were classically used to refer to the Ainu people, we can see how imbedded meanings can sometimes be used in a derogatory way. Take for instance the terms, 蝦夷 *ezo* and 毛人 *mōjin*. The first term, *ezo*, is a compound made from the term for shrimp and the term for barbarian, which was used classically to refer to both Hokkaido

⁵ For example: The text that the main character finds in Steppenwolf which is the diary of a lodger that was staying in his home. IE A text within a text.

⁶ A perceptual phenomenon in which stimulation of one sensory or cognitive pathway leads to involuntary experiences in a second sensory or cognitive pathway. Cytowic, Richard E. *Synesthesia: A Union of the Senses*.

and the Ainu themselves literally meaning “Shrimpish barbarians.” *Mōjin*, meaning hairy person, (a reference to how hirsute some Ainu are in comparison to some Japanese) carries a similar derogatory meaning.

Japanese is also made up of two phonetic alphabets; *hiragana* is used to represent verb conjugations, serving as the language’s native phonetic backbone, and *katakana* is used to represent foreign terms using the same phonology but different characters. In other words, the terms for Ainu in *hiragana* and *katakana* respectively あいぬ, アイヌ are the same phonetically but can be written in either script. This distinction has sweeping linguistic implications that are beyond the scope of the current study.⁷ But, it is important to note that within *Netsugen* and *Golden Kamuy*, all three scripts are used and the script we see gives us key information in terms of how Ainu culture is being discussed and treated.

In *Netsugen*, *kanji*, *katakana*, and *hiragana* work together to point to cultural differences between characters from the text. First, we see *kanji* terms being given alternate readings in the ruby⁸(accompanying reading). In this way the imbedded meaning of the *kanji* is both employed and subverted while sharing local terms written in *hiragana* or *katakana*. To explain the impact of this ruby, take for instance the *kanji* 長待所 ちょうしょうじょ (read as *chou shou jo*) which has the imbedded meaning of “long waiting place.” If in the ruby we include the following 長待所 (D · M · V) we are supplying the reader with a novel way to read the *kanji*. In other words,

⁷ Schubert, Teresa, Roderick Gawthrop, and Sachiko Kinoshita. *Evidence for Cross-Script Abstract Identities in Learners of Japanese Kana*.

⁸ Tranter, Nicolas. *Nonconventional Script Choice in Japan*.

the imbedded meaning of “long waiting place” and the new reading given in the ruby, DMV, work together to discuss what the place and its qualities are.

Additionally, in Japanese literature, we often see *katakana* alone being used to express foreign ideas, names, and concepts. However, the direction of linguistic judgement or othering that *katakana* usage implies is not always clearly demarcated. If, for example, I am listening to Japanese as a non-native speaker, and I hear the phrase “*arigatō gozaimasu.*” If my hearing of this phrase is represented in text as アリガトウゴザイマス (*katakana* version of the phrase) this may signal to the reader that I am either hearing a fellow foreigner say the phrase with an accent or even that I do not understand the phrase and am merely hearing the syllables and representing them with *katakana*.

In *Netsugen*, we see all these various orthographic choices in the excerpts translated below. In this section of the story, we are thrust inside the account of Yayomanekufu, a Karafuto Ainu who has been relocated to Hokkaido after Karafuto has been ceded to Russia prior to the Russo-Japanese War in the Treaty of Saint Petersburg⁹:

Sentences	Japanese original	English translation
1	母譲りの、二重瞼の大きな目をくりくり動かしながら言う太郎治は、まだ十歳だ。元はサムライだった和人(Ruby:シーサン)の父の言いつけか、それともアイヌの母の心づくしか、恰好だけはいつも、	Said Tarōji, a boy of no more than 10 years whose round eyes were adorned by heavy lids-a maternal trait. Whether it was through the encouragement of his former samurai and Shisan (1) father or the loving attention of his mother, for some reason he was always wearing a

⁹ Ratified in 1875 and taking effect in 1877.

	<p>ぴしっと折り目のついたサムライのような袴姿をしている。 (p. 22)</p>	<p>samurai-esque and precisely wound hakama (2). (1) The Ainu word for Japanese (2) a type of traditional Japanese garment resembling skirt-like pants that is worn over any type of kimono</p>
2	<p>同じくらいの年頃の少年たちが通りすぎた。</p>	<p>A group of boys around the same age were passing by.</p>
3	<p>“ケンカダ、ケンカダ、”と和人 (no ruby) の言葉で色めき立っている。</p>	<p>“It’s a fight!”” They’re fighting!” The air became rife with <u>Shisan (Ainu term for the Japanese)</u> voices. * Shisan in association with the kanji 和人 (normally read as wajin) was introduced previously in the ruby but is only expressly written intermittently throughout the novel</p>
4	<p>シシラトカが気を取られた瞬間、ヤヨマネクフは滑るように一歩踏み出す。腰から上体を捻る。</p>	<p>As Shishiratoka remained stock-still, taken by surprise, Yayomanekufu slipped forward, punching Shishiratoka’s torso from the hip.</p>
5	<p>右腕の先で握りしめた拳が理想的な軌道で飛び出す。</p>	<p>A clenched fist, terminus of his left arm, arced out in a perfect circle.</p>
6	<p>「“あ、犬 (いぬ) 、、か” その時、和人 (no ruby) の一人がすっとんきょうな声を上げた。</p>	<p>“Ha! <i>I knew it!</i> Just a couple of dogs!” It was the thoughtless voice of one of the Shisan onlookers.</p>
7	<p>聞こえた瞬間、体じゅうの血が沸騰するかと思った。</p>	<p>And from the moment he heard it, Yayomanekufu felt as if his blood would boil over.</p>
8	<p>こういうときに学校 (no ruby) で和人 (no ruby) の言葉を習ったことを後悔してしまう。</p>	<p>It was times like these that made him regret ever learning the Shisan language at school*.</p>

9	<p>「よお、山辺安之助さん」 シシラトカが、からかうように 呼んできた。旅券を取る時に作 ったヤヨマネクフの日本名だ。 生まれ育ったヤマベチから名字 を、下の名は最初の音だけ元の 名前に合わせて作った。「不 思議なもんだ。生まれ故郷に帰 るのに、別の名前と旅券がいる んだからな」</p> <p>川越 宗一. 熱源 (文春文庫) (Japanese Edition) (p. 97). 文藝春 秋. Kindle Edition.</p>	<p>“Hello there, if it isn’t Mr. Yamabe Yasunosuke!” Shishiratoka called out mockingly. It was the Shisan name Yayomanekufu had had to acquire as part of his application for travel. The family name came from where he was raised- - <i>Yamabechi</i> in Karafuto--and the first name merely shared the first syllable of his original one. “It’s certainly a weird feeling. I’m heading back to where I was born and raised but need a foreign name and travel permission to do it.”</p>
---	---	--

First, the use of the *kanji* for Japanese person 和人 “*wajin*” in sentences 1, 3, 6, and 8 begs discussion. In sentence 1 (pg. 22) we encounter this *kanji* and the Ainu word “shisan” in the ruby for it written in *katakana*. This ruby shares the Ainu equivalent of “*wajin*” with the reader and is repeated twice following the *kanji* before going away until pg. 182. This is important in that the reader is initially instructed how to read it in an Ainu way but may, depending on their linguistic background, eventually revert to the more standard reading of the *kanji* “*wajin*” as the story progresses. When the ruby does reappear in the text it is in a sentence that emphasizes distinct cultural groups.¹⁰

¹⁰ アイヌ、ニクブン（ニヴフ。当時はギリヤークとも）、オロッコ（ウィルタ）、ロシア人、和人（シーサン）。様々な恰好と背景を持つ人々がいま、村に続々と集まっている。Ainu, Nikubun, Oroikko, Russians, Shisan. People of all different kinds of dress and background, had continuously been assembling in the village. Pg. 182.

If we look at the audiobook for *Netsugen* narrated by Keisuke Aigasa, we can verify whether or not the voice actor uses *Shisan* to read the *kanji* throughout the story. We encounter this in Chapter One at minute 14:05-14:15.

Text from the Japanese original:

~漁で足繁く訪れる和人(ruby:シーサン)は樺太と呼ぶ。和人(no ruby)たちの国で暮らすうちに対雁村でも、樺太と呼ぶようになった。Pg. 27

Transcript from the audiobook in hiragana and katakana, followed by romaji:

~りょうであししげくおとずれるシーサン・わじんはカラフトとよぶ。わじんたちのくにでくらすうちにツイシカリでも、カラフトとよぶようになった。

~ryou de ashi-shigeku otozureru shisan/wajin wa Karafuto to yobu. Wajin-tachi no chikaku ni kurasu uchi ni tsuishikari demo, Karafuto to yobu you ni natta

English translation:

~called Karafuto by the Shisan (Ainu word for Japanese) who came there as part of their fishing industry. And even in these Japanese lands, in the village of Tsuishikari, it too had started to be called Karafuto by everyone.

We can see in the underlined portions above that the term *Wajin* in *kanji* is read as “*Shisan*” only in textually specified circumstances. In other words, it is only read as *Shisan* in the audiobook when there is *katakana* in the ruby that specifies this reading. When there is no *katakana* provided in the ruby, this term is read with its conventional reading throughout the

voice actors' performance of the text. More research is necessary to determine whether this is a subconscious choice of the voice actor or a performance choice that came about between discussions between the author and the voice actor. Through this multimedial lens we see how orthographic qualities of the text are represented in an auditory form. We are also forced to question from what perspective the story is being told. Harkening back to the framing devices that surrounds the story: a Russian soldier listening to recordings who then is either listening to them alongside the audience or transmuting the recordings into her own narrative. If it is the former, and we are meant to take Yayomanekufu to be the narrator, it would make more sense in the text and audiobook for the *kanji* “*wajin*” to be always read as “*shisan*,” as Yayomanekufu is an Ainu and is relating his story from an Ainu perspective. If the latter is true, the more conventional reading for the *kanji* “*wajin*” would revert to this reading as the narrator is the Russian soldier who assembled audio files and first-person accounts into a work of historical fiction— in other words, a story written from a well-informed, but still an outsider's perspective. It is not clear what the answer is, but this multimodal comparison allows us to start a discussion in regard to orthography as it relates to cultural interactions in Japanese.

Another signifier of cultural differences being drawn between Yayomanekufu and his surroundings can be seen through the *katakana* employed in sentences 3, 4, and 8. In sentence 3, the Japanese sentence for “it's a fight,” “*kenka-da*” is written in *katakana*. Kawagoe may be doing this to represent how Yayomanekufu is hearing or interacting with the Japanese around him. We also see this in relation to a reading of the term 学校 *gakkou* which is accompanied by *katakana* in the ruby when it first appears in the text on pg. 23. As it is usually read in *hiragana*, as it is not a foreign concept in Japan, this choice to purposely put a *katakana* reading in the ruby may signify that Kawagoe wants us to read it from an Ainu perspective or with an Ainu

understanding of the term. In either case, *katakana* used in this way has the potential to be othering in terms of pronunciation, comprehension, and usage¹¹ and it is not clear in which direction this othering is meant to be inferred. For example, does Yayomanekufu hear “*kenka-da*” in *katakana* because Japanese sounds foreign to him and he hasn’t studied it enough or does it sound like *katakana* to him because he is using his own agency to not put in the mental effort to qualify the word in its proper form? In other words, is he actively othering the Japanese boys by recasting their speech in his own way? I don’t believe we are able to answer this question in the text, especially as it is written in the third person, but it too, much like the iteration of this phenomenon in the previous paragraph, represents an orthographic quality that is possible in Japanese and multicultural stories written in Japanese.

More simply, the Ainu names of Yayomanekufu and his friend Shishiratoka are represented in *katakana* throughout the excerpt above and the whole novel, underscoring their difference from “typical” Japanese names represented in *kanji*. This is true for Yayomanekufu’s friend, a half-Japanese half-Ainu boy called 太郎治 “Tarōji.” The significance of names is discussed later in the novel when Yayomanekufu adopts the Japanese name of *Yasunosuke*. This distinction between *katakana* and *kanji* names is connected to the assimilation policies that the Japanese had in relation to the Ainu, whom they forced to take Japanese names as part of the Aboriginee Protection Act. We see this in sentence 8 above. In this excerpt, Yayomanekufu is called by his foreign name, and this leads him to consider his cultural position in Hokkaido as an Ainu. In this way, Yayomanekufu is actively considering his identity throughout the novel.

¹¹ Dahlberg-Dodd, Hannah E. *Mock Foreigner Speech and the Reification of Mediatized (White) Foreignness in Japanese Media*.

I will now unpack the pun that is being made in sentence 6. The Japanese boy is using the Japanese pause word for surprise あ”ah” coupled with the Japanese word for dog (written in *kanji* with its standard reading) いぬ *inu* which is a play on words that forms the compound *ah-inu* here meaning both “ah it’s a dog” and “ah it’s an Ainu.” In my translation “I knew it” is the pun in English (Ainu it) and the expository sentence “just a couple of dogs” performs the same function that the interplay of *kanji* and *hiragana* perform in the original. It is important to note that Japanese and its multiple scripts allow for the pun to be much more seamless in the original while the English requires additional expository elements to convey the entire meaning originally implied. More importantly, the scene between the Japanese and Ainu boys, as a result of orthographical differences, represents a situation in which two cultures are interacting while both sides hold conceptions and prejudices about the other.

Finally, the title of the story itself plays an immense role in representing the deeper meaning of the text itself in relation to culture. Specifically, we are introduced to several characters throughout the story who discuss the topic of *Netsu* “heat,” or its absence, “cold,” and their relation to it. Before we are inserted into the main framing device of the story, the Russian soldier discussed in the beginning of the novel shivers from the cold as she sails for Karafuto.¹² This introduces the topic of heat that is central to the novel’s final message. Yayomanekufu, too, references this heat on countless occasions throughout the text and it is consistently linked with his deepest memories. The following excerpt introduces the possibility that “*netsu*” alludes to something beyond its typical meaning:

¹² As I faced the cold, one which seemed to be freezing me in place, I made my way to a new battlefield. Pg. 20.

“No” Yayomanekufu answered. “I’m burning up.” And it wasn’t because he didn’t know another way to say this more plainly like, ‘I’m hot.’ It had come out like that because he actually felt a sort of burning sensation. (Pg. 35)¹³

Above, we are directed by the author to consider the term *netsu* which I have translated into English as “burning up,” “fire,” and “burning sensation.” Yayomanekufu uses the term *Netsu* in connection to his memories and for him it is clearly connected to his identity as part of an Ainu community. For example, when he hears the sound of Kisarasui playing the *Tonkori* and confesses his love for her:

He started to feel a burning sensation (*netsu*). And for him, this feeling was synonymous with memories of home. (Pg. 28)

The next memory was a bit more clear. He was surrounded by snow and was steeped in this same burning sensation (*netsu*). (Pg. 36)

Yayomanekufu saw fire (*netsu*) within Chikobiro’s gaze. So... *his homeland wasn’t merely a memory after all*, Yayo thought. “Shall we head back?” Yayomanekufu nodded at Chikobiro’s low and hospitable voice. His chest was in knots as a sense of powerlessness and inability to do anything rose up within him. “It’s nothing to shed tears over.” Chikobiro said softly. (Pg. 77)

Netsu is used in this same way on over a hundred pages out of the 463-page text. As a plot device I believe *netsu* is implying something vital about cultural participation. Feelings of heat, or the origin of warmth may be the reason we seek a community and by extension participate in

¹³ All translations are my own, unless otherwise stated.

culture. “Netsu-gen” 熱源 means the source of heat. In other words, Kawagoe is implying that the source of heat is one’s will to connect with one’s community. Through Yayomanekufu, he depicts a character invested in forming, reclaiming, and preserving his community. What motivates Yayomanekufu to pursue this mission is the burning sensation? The feeling of warmth that is connected to his will and passion to live (*netsu*=passion for life.) Throughout the work, as he loses his wife to smallpox, as he faces discrimination, as he navigates the assimilation policies created by the Japanese government, he is continually remembering and searching for this warmth. Kawagoe enhances this equation with the further implication that human nature is as synonymous with *netsu* (a passion for life) as it is with connections made with one’s community.

Yayomanekufu hoped beyond hope that even if the rituals were forgotten, followed by the languages they were performed in, that his people would not lose the fundamental humanity-their ainuness-that remained as long as they kept on living (*netsu*.) He hoped beyond hope that he wasn’t wrong about this fundamental rule of nature, of humanity.

This equation is what qualifies *Netsugen* as an ethnorelativistic work. *Netsu* is being discussed as a human quality that functions across and within a variety of cultures. We are seeing how *netsu* is connecting Yayomanekufu to his Ainu community, but the larger implication is that this *netsu*-being an inherent human quality- relativizes individual motivations for cultural participation. Yayomanekufu feels this passion for life and throughout the story he chases this feeling with agency and asks the reader to consider whether we participate in culture for a larger innate reason that is connected to our humanity.

Pivoting to a discussion of the manga *Golden Kamuy*, we are introduced textually and visually to two characters who gravitate around their respective cultures at varying distances.

First, we are introduced to Sugimoto, an ex-Japanese soldier who fought in the Russo-Japanese war. We find Sugimoto in Hokkaido, having gone there as part of the gold rush that brought many Japanese citizens to the island during the early to late Meiji period (1868-1912). Through the story of a drifter, Sugimoto learns about a treasure that had been assembled by Ainu tribal leaders to finance their fight against the Japanese colonizers,¹⁴ and a mysterious man who stole the treasure and hid it away. This man was captured and imprisoned, but the location of the treasure remains a secret. Sugimoto has been tasked by his childhood friend and fellow soldier to take care of his ailing wife and to pay for her medical care after he died in the war. As Sugimoto listens to the drifter's story, he realizes how the treasure can help him achieve this objective. Sugimoto later finds out that the drifter is in fact one of the prisoners who the mysterious man tattooed with a map leading to the treasure; prisoners, who, if assembled, could form a complete map to the treasure. It is important to note that Sugimoto possesses goals and qualities that differentiate him from other "typical" Japanese citizens throughout the story.

When he first encounters Ashiripa whom he recognizes as an Ainu, he shows a genuine interest her culture. This is during a time when the official Japanese policy in regard to the Ainu was defined by cultural erasure, ethnocentrism and an underlying imperialistic assimilation policy towards the Ainu and their way of life. In 1899, the Hokkaido Former Aborigines Protection Act was enacted, forcing the Ainu to adopt Japanese customs while prohibiting the use of their language and traditional practices, including ritual lip tattooing, and their nomadic

¹⁴ Ito, Rika. *Please Take Her as Your Wife: Mediatizing Indigenous Ainu in the Japanese Anime, Golden Kamuy. Language, Culture and Society* 6, no. 1 (2024): 80–104.

Translation from Ito, Rika's article "Please take her as your wife."

"Around that time, some of the Ainu were storing up tons of the gold to fight the Japanese who even after the Meiji Restoration were oppressing them by forbidding them to hunt salmon or deer and stealing their lands."

hunter-gatherer way of life. Therefore, the fact that Sugimoto shows a neutral, unbiased interest in Ashiripa's heritage runs counter to the Japanese political policies of the time. Sugimoto does not represent the ideal soldier that the Japanese empire was trying to create, either. On the contrary, he shows open disdain when a man at an *onsen* comments about the soldiers and their valor in the recent Russo-Japanese conflict. It is implied from Sugimoto's reaction that he is not only against participating in the Japanese empire as a soldier but is against functioning as an agent of Japan's imperial mission in Hokkaido.¹⁵

When Sugimoto first runs into Ashiripa, she saves him using a poison arrow and hunting techniques she employs in relation to her Ainu heritage. As we get to know Ashiripa further, we find out that among the Ainu she exists as an outsider owing to her choices; performing tasks often reserved for men (hunting, fishing etc.) rejecting lip tattoos as a signifier of having come of marrying age, and possessing bilingual qualities as a speaker of both the traditional Ainu language and Japanese, the new language of a colonizing force.¹⁶

In *Golden Kamuy*, we are aligned with protagonists, not from within cultural frameworks, but from without. Sugimoto and his motives do not fit into the framework associated with the archetypal Japanese soldier dedicated to the nation and the emperor,¹⁷ and similarly Ashiripa's

¹⁵ Noda, Satoru. *Golden Kamuy*. (Tokyo: Shūeisha,) 2015.

Vol 1 pg. 96 A merchant thanks Sugimoto for his service to Japan in the war (available in appendices: 1-A)

¹⁶ Noda, *Golden Kamuy*. Vol 2, Pg. 81. Fuchi (Ashiripa's grandmother) asks Sugimoto to marry Ashiripa (available in appendices: 2-A)

¹⁷ Mashima, Hisen, lyrics, and Kazuoki Miyoshi, composer. *Sen'yū* (戦友, *Comrades*). 1905.

We see this archetype (battle comrade) which depicts a soldier attempting to defy orders to save his friend. In contrast to GK's Sugimoto keeping to this defiance. The soldier in the song is encouraged by his friend to keep to the original mission. "A sudden breakthrough, my comrade finally lifts his head. "It's for the country, don't mind, please don't be late." with tears in his eyes."

motives do not perfectly align with the rules of her Ainu heritage. Both characters orbit these cultural identities from the outside, occasionally touching down and intermingling with them while retaining their own identities.

In terms of multimediality, manga exists as a hybrid of text and pictures that coalesce to produce an overarching story. Therefore, it is a genre that in its origin already employs these two forms of media in tandem as part of its performance. Before discussing what function the interplay of image and text plays in the piece, it is therefore important to discuss each individually. In terms of language, comparable to *Netsugen*, Noda employs ruby and original Ainu words to represent the local Ainu language (rendered in Japanese through *katakana*). Sometimes Ashiripa uses an Ainu word and then Sugimoto (following the thoughts of the reader) asks her what this word means, to which she supplies a definition in Japanese.¹⁸

It is important here to note that the Ainu are an unlettered people who never developed a writing system. Their rich language, mythologies, and culture have been passed down by word of mouth and through practices like weaving, wood carving and other craftwork. This being the case, researchers of these languages have transferred them into their own scripts. In terms of the Ainu language, this has been performed not just with Japanese,¹⁹ but with English (Batchelor)²⁰ and Polish (Bronislaw Pilsudski) among other various European languages.

¹⁸ Noda, *Golden Kamuy*. Image of Sugimoto learning about an Ainu dish called “Chitatapu” (available in appendices: 3-A.)

¹⁹ Sato-Rossberg, Nana. “Chiri Mashihō’s Performative Translations of Ainu Oral Narratives”. *Japanese Studies* 28, no. 2 (2008): Pg. 135–48.

Chiri Mashihō, known as the ‘native Ainu anthropologist’ translated several Ainu myths into Japanese including “Tales of the Karafuto Ainu” which Polish anthropologist Bronislaw Pilsudski also translated.

²⁰ Batchelor produced several translations of Ainu language and myth into Japanese and English between 1887-1905.

In terms of the visual media on display in *Golden Kamuy*, there are myriad benefits to being able to see drawings of the characters and how they are dressed. In the first volume of the series there are two pages dedicated to an itemized description and depiction of the characters and what they are carrying. If one looks at these two images,²¹ the Japanese qualities of Sugimoto become much clearer and stand in stark contrast to the Ainu qualities of Ashiripa, her clothes, and the tools that she carries. Take for instance the knife that Ashiripa carries, a *menokomakiri*. Since it is drawn and visible we can confirm with a quick online search whether it matches images of known Ainu artifacts.²² In short, the visual aspect of *Golden Kamuy* allows us to check the level of detail with which Noda studied and reproduced Ainu culture against other sources. This not only can give the reader a certain level of confidence in the degree of cultural authenticity on display, but it also immerses the reader in the culture in a way that print media cannot.

The relationship between text and images in *Golden Kamuy* also helps us understand traditional elements of Ainu culture. If we look again at the images provided in the appendices, we can see how the two complement one another. The picture of Ashiripa and the gear she carries instructs us in both a textual and visual manner what the Ainu used to carry, how they referred to it, and what the gear would be called in Japanese (or whatever language the story has been translated into.) The scene where Ashiripa, Sugimoto, and Fuchi (Ashiripa's grandmother) are eating together for the first time also exhibits an important pairing of visual and textual elements that deepen our understanding of the characters. In this scene, Fuchi is the only

²¹ Noda, *Golden Kamuy*. Side by side comparison of Sugimoto and Ashiripa (available in appendices: 4-A.)

²² Image of a *menokomakiri* from the Nibutani Ainu Cultural Museum (available in appendices: 5-A.)

character speaking Ainu, and we see both Sugimoto, a character that is listening to her without understanding, and Ashiripa who is purposefully replying to her grandmother in Japanese as both a protest and to hide what her grandmother is implying. We are brought inside the joke as we can see the translation of Fuchi's words (alongside her Ainu speech represented in *katakana*,) but Sugimoto is on the outside of the situation entirely as he does not speak Ainu. Visual and textual layers affect both how we feel about the characters and their motives and whether we sympathize with them. These layers of detail immerse us in the story of *Golden Kamuy* and help connect us to Sugimoto and Ashiripa. In her article, "Please take her as your wife," Rika Itō describes *Golden Kamuy* as being one of the first examples "in popular media...[where the] characters use the Ainu language."²³ Despite her other criticisms of the work, she acknowledges that it is an attempt to represent Ainu culture for a massive audience.

Through this exposure to Yayomanekufu, Ashiripa, and Sugimoto we recognize how all of them, though they inhabit their respective cultures, may not completely prescribe to said cultures in relation to their own identity. In terms of modern Ainu communities this continues to be the reality of the situation. As Anne-Elise Lewallen describes in *The Fabric of Indigeneity*, modern Ainu women have been able to interact with Ainu culture through various art forms. In her study Lewallen focuses particularly on traditional Ainu weaving techniques.²⁴ The people she describes all follow slightly different paths of identity formation.

Broadly speaking, most of the women whose stories Lewallen shares navigate this process through researching cultural practices, i.e. classical Ainu weaving designs, and then implementing them in their own individual ways, sometimes choosing to distance themselves

²³ Ito, *Please Take her as your wife*, Pg. 84.

²⁴ Lewallen, Ann-Elise. *The Fabric of Indigeneity*, 2016. Pg. 1.

from tradition in favor of personal expression freed from cultural restraints.²⁵ In part two, I will discuss one aspect of Ainu culture, the Iomante ceremony, and reactions to it by characters who populate various media. The various medial representations not only trend towards ethnorelative discussions of culture, but they also engage with the same identity formation process that Lewallen discusses in her book. In other words, medial representations of the Iomante ceremony introduce us to culture, wherein each iteration improves in its ability to represent the Ainu mythos. As part of this process, we are also introduced to characters who are exploring their own cultural identities with a sense of agency in respect to the Iomante.

Part 2:

In 1931, Gordon M. Neil, a British anthropologist, made his way to a small Ainu village in Hokkaido expecting to witness the “Iomante.” From an outside perspective, this is a ceremony in which a bear is ritually killed, eaten, and displayed on a ceremonial stave by the following morning. Neil captured the Ainu preparing the sacrificial fence, adorning it with “inau” or wooden shavings that are carved into curling strands. Neil shot the ceremony from start to finish and brought the footage back to London to cut it together. In the subsequent film, a narrator reads aloud a script that details what is happening in the footage from Neil’s point of view. And the audience now has one view of what the “Iomante” entails. Their understanding is a projection onto the Ainu people that was created through the interplay of the action of observing and the performance of an Ainu community. But early documentaries and videologues of this nature were often not good at achieving an ethnorelativistic view of cultures and peoples. In other words, questions of accuracy, bias, and projection did not come to the forefront in terms of

²⁵ Lewallen, Pg. 2.

critical reviews of these works. As a result, this process was one fraught with danger as it could lead to misconceptions, not to mention grossly inaccurate accounts, of the Ainu's lived experience, cultural heritage, and ideologies.

The action of capturing an object via media existed in human groups long before the advent of civilization. The cave paintings of Chauvet, France, which date back over 30,000 years, attest to this. The animals and human forms depicted therein establish the object portrayed and serve also as representations of how the observer felt about them. The earliest literature of Japan also had this representative quality. The *Kojiki* (712) not only exists as one of the oldest literary sources from Japan, but it also represented a rising power, the Yamato who are distant relatives of the current imperial family of Japan. In other words, the Yamato were aware of the ability a narrative had to legitimize their rule. Japan's creation as represented in the *Kojiki* is important to the current study, as it is proof of the ability of medial representation to shape popular thought.

With the advent of photography in 1822, humans had the ability to extract an image that could masquerade as an exact copy and therefore accurate depiction of an object. In their discussion of narrative space, Stephen Heath points to this when they write, (the observer's) "prime achievement is (the) impression of reality." In the same article Heath relates Edward Branigan's words in connection to this, explaining how the observer seeks to "give an ideal picture of the scene."²⁶ Both ideas relate to the process by which the observer controls the media being presented. The observer behind the lens oversees the image in terms of what they choose to capture, who they choose to show it to and the story they create to explain it just as much as the

²⁶ Heath, Pg. 31-32.

writer controls how they write and for what audience they do so. This twofold dynamic of observer and object is pertinent to every form of artistic expression, or in other words, all forms of media. It is one that Tom Gunning, regarding film, describes as the cinema of attraction which he describes succinctly as “the ability to show something.”²⁷

In the following, I will introduce three modern depictions of the Iomante ceremony that have been created in the past decade. I then proceed to contrast them to the documentary described above. This should eventually lead to a multifaceted discussion of the ceremony as a part of Ainu culture. I will also include how characters interact with the ceremony itself and what this interaction indicates in terms of each character’s relationship with their own culture. As part of this portion of the discussion, we must answer three important questions about the Iomante Ceremony: What is the ceremony and why was it performed by the Ainu? What are the differences among various media representations of it? What have we come to know about it through multimedial interaction?

The focal point of the Iomante ceremony is a bear, specifically a young bear, which has been captured in the wild and then fostered by an Ainu village for 2 to 3 years. The bear is raised, often in a wooden cage suspended off the ground, and the entire village participates in the process of caring for it before the ceremony. The goal of this process is to treat the bear as an honored guest so that when it is finally restored to its original form as a Kamuy spirit (spirit from the Kamuy realm) it will go on to express to the other Kamuy how hospitable the Ainu Moshiri or Land of the Ainu, was. If the process is successful, the other Kamuy will come to the human world in multiple forms as game, including but not limited to fish, bear, deer, etc.

²⁷ Gunning, Tom. *The Cinema of Attraction*, 1986, Pg. 63-64.

When the bear has been fostered to young adulthood and preparations have been made, the villagers assemble to “restore” the bear to its original form. Takeshi Kimura, a scholar at the University of Tsukuba in the graduate school of humanities and social sciences, explains how this final or original form is key to an Ainu-centric understanding of the ceremony:

In order to examine this issue, it is absolutely necessary to recall that human beings are called “Ainu” in this world and the Kamuy assume human (Ainu) form in the Kamuy world, while they take on animal forms when visiting the human world...in most studies of ritual, the focus has been laid upon the kinds of transformation undergone by the human participants, but in the Ainu Iomante, the ritual transformation occurs to the “bear.”²⁸

In this view, the ceremony is neither a sacrifice nor a ritual killing to celebrate a hunt but rather a release or a restoration of a spiritual entity which the Ainu hold in high esteem.

The bear is taken from its cage at the beginning of this process and walked around the village. A rope around its neck, secured at three different points, keeps it under control as it is marched before the assembled villagers. After this process has finished, the bear is tied to a pole and then shot with an arrow that contains a commonly used poison. This poison stuns the bear as it takes effect, slowly leading it towards death. After, the bear is cleaned and the meat harvested for the feast to follow, the skin and the head of the bear are left behind to serve a central role in the continuing ceremony.

The remaining bear skin is folded beneath the bear which supports its head on top. The mound of fur is carried to the center of a main hut where a feast and celebration occur. Gifts and

²⁸ Kimura, Takeshi. *Bearing the Bare Facts of Ritual*, 1999, Pg. 108.

tributes are also displayed in front of it in the center of the feasting space. These are to be taken by the Kamuy spirit to the world beyond. The Ainu belief at play here is an equal exchange of goods in contrast to a payment for goods received.²⁹ The Ainu have received the blood of the bear and its meat, and they display swords which only humans can make and offer sake, a symbol of the same. This exchange represents the unique and separate roles of the people in contrast to Kamuy. Both parties are receiving goods from the other which they cannot produce themselves. A feast then ensues where the boiled bear meat is eaten, and the village celebrates the occasion with sake and other delicacies such as millet dumplings. The following morning, the bear's head and skin are attached to a Y shaped stave that resembles a human-like standing figure. The new form of the realized Kamuy spirit, the natural form of the Kamuy, then departs for the world beyond.³⁰ The last part of the ceremony involves sending the Kamuy off so that it can bear its gifts and a message about the villagers and their kindness.

The benefits of the ceremony from the villagers' perspective are as follows. The idea is that the Kamuy spirit will tell the other gods of the villager's kindness. The rearing and the kind treatment of the bear by all the villagers is part of the ceremony, ergo the ceremony is not just occurring during the festival to release the bear Kamuy but is a part of a multiyear process. The second purpose is to motivate more of the Kamuy spirits "in the forms of animals" to come down into the human world to experience it for themselves. This is not limited to bears but includes other game such as deer, salmon, fox, etc. If successfully performed, the villagers not only have received the meat and the blood from the bear but have also established a deeper connection with the Kamuy spirits that they revere and depend on to survive.

²⁹ Kimura, Pg. 113.

³⁰ Kimura, Pg. 95.

In his review article of the Iomante ceremony, Kimura relates and analyzes two contrasting interpretations of the bear ceremony before positing his own. Kimura discusses the research of historian Jonathan Z. Smith and describes how Smith misconstrues the ceremony to be an analog for the perfect hunt. In other words, Smith feels as if the ritual “killing” of the bear is the core element of the ceremony and therefore skirts over the other aspects of it. Indigenous scholar Benjamin Ray’s interpretation is also discussed, along with his arguments against Smith’s. Ray describes the ceremony as being less focused on the ritual killing, and more on the celebration that occurs afterwards in which gifts are exchanged. Ray also criticizes Smith’s take on the ceremony for the way in which it forces an outside framework upon two culturally different versions of “bear sacrifices” between those of the Ainu and those of the people of Siberia.³¹ Ray warns of the danger of lumping two different cultures together and discusses how this process ignores the Ainu and their spiritual traditions. Kimura’s view of the ceremony, while being more aligned with that of Ray’s, distances itself from both. To Kimura, the main aspect of the ceremony is the ritual dismemberment of the bear and the way in which it is decorated and turned back into the Kamuy spirit beneath. In effect, Kimura’s theory is one that takes the overarching Ainu mythos into account.

For the Ainu, Kamuy represent entities that are outside of human control. This is not just limited to animals but also trees, fire, atmospheric elements, the stars, a whole list of entities that exist in the world. Animals are Kamuy spirits that have come to the human world in disguises which take a myriad of animal forms. Therefore, these are not animals in the modern sense of the word but spiritual projections from the spirit world.³² It is also important to note that the Ainu

³¹ Kimura, Pg. 95-96.

³² Kimura, Pg. 101.

did not equate the killing of an animal with the killing of the Kamuy inside said animal. In fact, great care is taken when using the gift of meat from these animals because they have been received as gifts from the Kamuy spirit that brought them (on purpose or as part of fate) to the hunter. This spirit does not “die” along with its corporeal form but returns to the Kamuy world. The Iomante is built around this ideology and is constructed in a way that honors these Kamuy spirits on which the Ainu depend for their daily survival. Kimura argues that the ritual “killing” of the bear is a vital part of the ceremony because it is the moment in which the spirit is released from its mortal form and then, due to the kindness of the Ainu, prepared for the journey back to its homeland. Kimura mentions the decorations of the bear head with Inau (curled strands of wood) and the place of honor that the bear has in the celebrations afterward as representations of the now released Kamuy spirit taking part in the ceremony itself. The critical point that both Ray and Smith miss in their analyses is the fact that the bear is turned into a being with agency during the events of the ceremony, or rather, thanks to the ceremony. It is this key difference that I will discuss in relation to contemporary media. However, it is an aspect of the Iomante that is starkly absent from the 1931 documentary.

The ethnocentrism inherent to Neil’s documentary makes it an ideal starting point for initiating a discussion of how the Iomante is portrayed in modern media. It is important to keep in mind that the Iomante existed as a practice of the Ainu long before there were anthropologists to research it (1800s-present) or film cameras or even “*Shamo*³³” (Hokkaido Ainu word for Japanese people) to observe it when the Matsumae clan started official trade with the Ainu in 1604.

³³ Alternate term for the Japanese in Ainu.

The Ainu don't have a written script and therefore the record of such rituals is only through oral transmission, but such reports mention the ceremony having occurred far in the distant past, some hundreds or thousands of years ago, according to anthropological accounts.³⁴ When we speak of performances or media produced for audiences around the world as it pertains to the current study, we must not forget that performance as an aspect of the ceremony was not always so forefronted. Performance defined herein requires an observer and an outside audience. As a result, the Iomante ceremony that we know, can know through media, has never been visible to us without performance being centrally involved.

There are several layers of performativity and cultural perception from both external and internal forces surrounding filmic representations of culture. For example, the Japanese, when they were first filmed in 1898 by a French documentary crew, were startled by the depictions of themselves that they were able to see on screen, as film scholar Yomota Inuhiko describes:

For the first time, Japanese people could see themselves from an outside perspective, objectified in the images of their own country by the gaze of the French cameraman... This screening marked the moment when Japanese people unconsciously started to learn to regard themselves through the colonialist and imperialist gaze of modernity, a gaze that grasps something different as an object that is labeled "foreign."³⁵

³⁴ Kitagawa, Joseph M. *Ainu Bear Festival (Iyomante)*. *History of Religions* 1, no. 1 (1961): Pg. 95–151.

³⁵ Yomota, Inuhiko, and Phil Kaffen. *What Is Japanese Cinema?* 2019.

I will discuss this type of objectification in the current study, paying particular attention to the way in which the Ainu are being objectified and how they are actively performing for an observer.

The least performative of the four media that I've selected for analysis is the documentary that was filmed in 1931. Its relative lack of performance lies in its purely exhibitiv aspects, and through the fact that there is little to no connection between the observer and the object. The 30 or so minute documentary opens with Professor Neil greeting the Ainu chiefs who are conducting the ceremony. The film then jumps directly into the preparations that are being made for it. It describes the "Inau," and how they adorn the "sacrificial" fence before transitioning to closeup shots of the bear's cage. The bear is drawn out and the camera follows the procession in a prolonged closeup. This eventually leads to a fatal arrow shot into the bear as well as the strangling of the bear. At this point the documentary makes one of its largest claims about the way the Ainu are strangling the bear, and how it is a moment of burlesque and fun.³⁶ This scene, of men piling on top of the bear, coupled with the diminutive tone of the narration turn it into something to look down upon or rather something belonging to a backwards and barbarian society in comparison to the observer. This air of contempt permeates the rest of the film as it goes on to depict the feasts that follow the gutting and deskinning of the bear. And while the documentary fairly represents the vital role of this now holy bear skin in the celebration hut, it falls short of an accurate representation of the transformation that has occurred. The documentary represents the bear skin as an object that the Ainu have imbued with fictitious power rather than portraying it in a way that coincides with the deeper meaning of the

³⁶ (00:12:59, Neil.)

ritual itself from an Ainu perspective. This is evident again when the documentary fails to accurately represent the final farewell ceremony of the bear skin.

I will now show how recent media has introduced us to characters who interact with the Iomante ceremony in ways that exhibit their agency and individualism as opposed to their degree of cultural prescription. In comparison to Neil's documentary, these characters encourage us to consider cultural frameworks and how characters operate within said frameworks. These depictions help us reframe the above discussion of Ainu and Japanese interaction and encourage us to focus on individuals who inhabit each culture and how they interact with both their own culture and those from other cultures. I discuss three such works, *Netsugen* (2019), *Golden Kamuy* (2015), and *Ainu Mosir* (2020) in relation to this topic.

Netsugen introduces the Iomante ceremony using the *kanji* 熊送り (read via ruby as イヨマンテ - Iomante). The *kanji* itself, meaning "bear sending," immediately presents an Ainu-relative understanding of the ceremony's primary goal. For the protagonist Yayomanekufu, the Iomante is intrinsically tied to his earliest memories and the recurring motif of *netsu* (heat), links the ceremony to a sense of home and belonging, as discussed in Part One. When recalling the Iomante from his childhood in Karafuto (38-39), Yayomanekufu's perspective is one of reverence, unclouded by the moral problematization of the bear's fate that might affect an outsider or someone more assimilated into differing ethical frameworks. In the narrative, he describes foreigners observing the ceremony and joining in chants, highlighting the performative aspect that became entwined with the Iomante once external observation began. Yayomanekufu, however, is initially too immersed in the ceremony's spiritual significance and communal celebration to critically analyze the observers' motivations.

As he matures and experiences displacement and the pressures of assimilation in Hokkaido, his view of the Iomante becomes more introspective, yet remains emotionally charged. The planned Iomante in Tsuishikari, after relocation, evokes feelings of powerlessness stemming from his marginalized status. The linguistic "othering" experienced in Japanese schools strengthens his connection to the Iomante as a means of reclaiming his heritage. This culminates in his decision to return to Karafuto (requiring adoption of a Japanese name), where he organizes another Iomante. This act is suffused with the "heat" of homecoming and cultural affirmation. In *Netsugen*, the Iomante is thus central to Yayomanekufu's active reclamation of his Ainu identity amidst assimilationist pressures.

Shifting now to a discussion of *Golden Kamuy*, in the manga, which has also been adapted into an anime and a recent live action film we see similar interactions between the Ainu and the Japanese during this same period. *Golden Kamuy* takes place after the Russo-Japanese war in a Hokkaido that is still being built by the Japanese after the start of the Meiji period. The show describes the journey of its two main protagonists, Sugimoto, a Japanese soldier looking for fortune in Hokkaido, and Ashiripa, a young Ainu girl marked by her independence and social distance from both the Ainu themselves as well as the Japanese settlers. Like the documentary, the anime uses humor as a major theme, but it never wields this humor in a diminutive manner.

Sugimoto and Ashiripa, as they interact, continually discover cultural differences in the other and these moments are meant to be comical in the story. Sugimoto marvels at the Ainu style meals that Ashiripa prepares for him, even though he is clearly disturbed by the graphic mincing of whole squirrels (*shitatapu*) to make Ainu dishes in the story. He tastes one and exclaims that *miso*, a Japanese staple, would add something key to the dish. Ashiripa looks aghast at the *miso* which in her eyes looks like fecal matter and is disturbed that Sugimoto would

eat such a thing (00:00:35, *Golden Kamuy* S1E3.) In this sense, unlike the documentary, *Golden Kamuy* presents two sides of a cultural chasm and takes the viewpoint of both in turn. Humor arises because of how ludicrous both sides feel about the other, which ameliorates the tensions inherent in cross cultural communication and understanding.

While *Netsugen* is historical fiction and *Golden Kamuy* is merely Noda's vision of a possible interaction between the Japanese and the Ainu, *Ainu Mosir* transcends this barrier both in its casting choices and its script, which depicts a young boy, Kanto, who is struggling with his dual Japanese and Ainu identities in the small tourist town of Akan in Hokkaido. Concurrently, the movie *Ainu Mosir* provides a more "authentic" performance in that it is cast with actors who are portraying themselves as ethnically Ainu citizens of modern Japan. Akan lies in the Tokachi region of Hokkaido and is a famous heritage site for the Ainu. The movie takes place in 2020, by which time the town has become a cultural tourist attraction. Announcements blare out over the main thoroughfare as the locals sell wood carvings, and other goods related to the ongoing Ainu craft tradition. Japanese and foreign tourists alike populate this space as consumers and outsiders. The film stresses the key difference between the local Ainu and outsiders in scenes with Kanto's mother and her interactions with customers in her gift shop. One old Japanese man asks, "Is this an Ainu shop? Are you Ainu?" to which Kanto's mother replies, "Yes."³⁷ Another tourist praises her Japanese language skills even though Kanto's mothers' native tongue is Japanese. The tourist goes on to request a photo with her.³⁸ The othering of the Ainu by the tourists as well as the Japanese tourist guide voice that blares out from the town speakers at various points in the movie set up a dynamic, not dissimilar to the one in *Golden Kamuy* of the

³⁷ (00:07:30, *Ainu Mosir*.)

³⁸ (00:30:18, *Ainu Mosir*.)

Japanese outsider and the Ainu insider. Kayano Shigeru, an Ainu cultural leader, describes this same phenomenon in an interview with the *Asahi News* in 1994. He discusses the experience of alienation generated by tourists querying him as they would a foreigner with phrases like, “you speak Japanese well. Where did you learn it?”³⁹ *Ainu Mosir*’s centralization of Ainu characters aligns us with them and exposes the objectifying behavior that some of the Japanese tourists exhibit in the movie.

Kanto’s protest about participating in the local traditions also highlights how in-group members do not always necessarily feel aligned with the groups to which they belong. At a parent teacher conference, he announces his intention to leave the town after finishing middle school and explains to his mother that he doesn’t want to be roped into the Ainu tourist machine that is surrounding him.⁴⁰ When his band is choosing a song to sing later in the film, the members of the group protest the use of traditional Ainu instruments. Here they are reacting directly to the forces around them that are cajoling them to accept their heritage as a point of principle.⁴¹

Kanto’s competing identities of Ainu and Japanese jostle against each other as Kanto’s eventual identity emerges at the end of the film. This interaction of Japanese and Ainu also mirrors the character of Ashiripa in *Golden Kamuy* and Yayomanekufu in *Netsugen*. Throughout the story Kanto struggles with cultural expectations and his role in the Iomante that the town dedicates itself to. He is caught between the love he has for his late father and the pity that he feels for the bear that must “die” as part of the ceremony. In the end of the film, he comes to

³⁹ Gerald Figal (1996) *Our Land Was a Forest: An Ainu Memoir*, by Kayano Shigeru. Pg. 86-87.

⁴⁰ (00:06:00, *Ainu Mosir*.)

⁴¹ (00:38:00, *Ainu Mosir*.)

terms with the ceremony after his spiritual reunion with his father but is still sympathetic, as an outsider would be, for the loss of the bear. This conflict does not destroy Kanto but leads to the amalgamation of his disparate identities by the time the ceremony is over. Ashiripa, too, prescribes to some traditional Ainu customs. This is evidenced by her recipes and her knowledge of Ainu traps, hunting methods, and folklore. Yet, she willfully distances herself from the Ainu by choosing her own path forward. This duality of spirit and heritage is not as apparent in the film as it is in the anime, in which Ashiripa baldly states, on multiple occasions. “I am an Ainu woman of the new age!”⁴²

In contrast to *Golden Kamuy*, *Ainu Mosir*, and *Netsugen*, Neil’s documentary invests most of its time and energy into creating an image of the Ainu as a group of primitive people who sacrifice a bear to *their* concept of God. Through the overall tone we can sense that the ceremony has gruesome aspects that are contrary to the morality of the narrator and his audience. Verbiage in relation to debauchery, gruesomeness, and burlesque are prime examples of this in the film.

Although it’s dead the bear is now ceremonially strangled between two poles. This ritual strangling involves buffoonery and burlesque and releases the tension that has built up during the slaying of the bear and the release of its spirit.⁴³

The Ainu are filmed sacrificing the bear so that the harvest will be bountiful but shots of the harvest and the village after the ceremony are neither present nor discussed. The bear, now dead

⁴² (00:19:06, *Golden Kamuy* S1E3).”

⁴³ (12:40-12:56, Neil.)

with its head atop a stave, is not represented as an actualized Kamuy spirit, but rather, a grotesque prop.

The head, with sacred shavings in place of the brain, eyes, ears, and tongue, is fixed to a forked pole. It is at this last stage that the *bear* is asked to return.⁴⁴

The goal of the documentary is to educate the viewer as to what the ceremony is and how it is carried out. But the observer does not necessarily intend the viewer to sympathize or accept the ceremony but rather to regard it as a mystical but brutal tradition surrounding a “bear.” In his review article, Kimura discusses the use of the word “bear” and its deeper meaning to the Ainu. The key mistake the documentary makes is to refer to the Kamuy spirit that has been released in the ceremony as a “bear” even at its conclusion. This mischaracterization represents a fundamental misunderstanding of the Ainu and their attitude towards the “animals” that inhabit their mythos of the world.

As for *Golden Kamuy*, Sugimoto’s and Ashiripa’s subjective realities constantly contrast. This is apparent during the comedic scenes where the two quibble over *miso* and Ashiripa’s view of it as unko (poop.)⁴⁵ This is reversed when Ashiripa shows Fuchi’s (Ashiripa’s Grandmother) mouth tattoos to Sugimoto for shock value.⁴⁶ These scenes use humor and play to help the two come to terms with their cultural differences. Noda Satoru is trying to show a new Ainu woman, Ashiripa, who has developed in reaction to Japanese influence. He consistently shows how Ashiripa is self-aware and actively chooses her own form of cultural actualization. In other words, the latent message is that each character forges a unique relationship with their own in-

⁴⁴ (26:27-27:10, Neil.)

⁴⁵ (0:00:35, Golden Kamuy S1E3.)

⁴⁶ (0:13:54, S1E3.)

group or culture. The same is true for the Japanese characters who must learn about foreign Ainu customs from an outsider's perspective; eventually adopting and in certain cases growing to love them. Sugimoto uses Ainu phrases like "*hina hina*" (delicious!) and Genjirō Tanigaki (another soldier from the war) even comes to view Fuchi as a pseudo family member. Two cultures are being discussed and characters who gravitate around and within these cultures are navigating both within and between them while maintaining their agency.

In *Ainu Mosir*, the Ainu are consistently portrayed as a tourist attraction and novelty item on display. However, the story peels back the layers of the local Ainu and their own performance gives the audience a realistic idea about their daily lives beneath this façade. They are depicted ultimately as a group of people who have "ordinary" lives from a Japanese point of view, lives that any Japanese person could relate to, while simultaneously also part of performative cycle that the Ainu people have been reduced to through nearly two hundred years of Japanese imperialism and acculturation. Like Ashiripa, Kanto is eventually able to navigate this position as a "new Ainu" while still maintaining independence and agency. He is averse to the Iomante when he hears about what will happen to the bear cub that he has helped raise, especially so after he watches a documentary displaying the ceremony in grotesque detail. In contrast to this initial reaction, he eventually is able to reunite with his father, which allows him to consolidate the competing aspects of his nature,⁴⁷ or rather the competing aspects of Japanese and Ainu morality being discussed in the film. The crux of this morality is the bear at the center of the ritual.

⁴⁷ (01:14:00, *Ainu Mosir*.)

In the documentary, this bear is part of a ritual sacrifice to the gods. In *Netsugen*, however, the bear and its role in the ceremony are revealed in greater detail through expository elements related to heat:

That night a feast was held. The bear's head, its spirit now released, was welcomed into the head elder's hut, and it was met with both prayers and a feast. A dance then began, punctuated by both songs and laughter which started to emerge. To this, the crisp notes of a *Tonkori* started to pour forth. He was burning up. It was merely there, this undeniable sensation. The feeling that he'd be forever locked in the smoldering embrace of this frozen island. (38-39)

As previously discussed, the Iomante is depicted orthographically with *kanji* that carries the imbedded meaning of bear sending which reflects an Ainu-relative understanding of the ceremony and its main goal. We also see Yayomanekufu engage with the Iomante through a feeling of (warmth = home,) which forefronts an inherently human feeling and backgrounds a cultural qualification of the ceremony.

In *Golden Kamuy*, the Iomante ceremony is first introduced in montage, which shows a series of bright and well-drawn tableaux of the bear head and skin after it has been released from its earthly form and sent back to the realm of the Kamui spirits.⁴⁸ Here, we see Sugimoto and his reaction to this ceremony as he holds a baby bear in his arms. The innocent and vulnerable bear in Sugimoto's arms and the vibrant and beautiful depiction of the ceremony set up a contrast that the story is never able to resolve (this is perhaps intentional). In other words, the audience is

⁴⁸ (0:17:26, S1E3.)

simultaneously spellbound by the mysticism presented in the ceremony *and* encouraged to sympathize with the bear.

In this respect, *Ainu Mosir* surpasses *Golden Kamuy*, and *Netsugen* in its depiction of the ceremony. In the movie, after the bear is released from its earthly form and its skin is deposited in the ceremonial hut, we are shown scenes of the Ainu villagers singing, dancing, and drinking, in scenes not so dissimilar to Neil's documentary. However, these scenes are intercut with shots from the bear's point of view. A shot which, despite its apparent impossibility (to the audience), animates the bear.⁴⁹ This animate quality is key to the deeper meaning of the ceremony for the Ainu, which, as Kimura emphasizes, is not an animal sacrifice, but rather the undressing of a deity that allows that deity to return to the holy place from which it originally came. Kanto's implied understanding of this, by his willing participation in the feast in the hut and the final farewell to the departing spirit the next day, underline how disparate aspects—the Ainu, and Japanese aspects of Kanto's characters—have now been resolved into a more contiguous whole. In the *mis en scene* we see evidence for this in Kanto's red winter jacket as he observes the final moments of the Iomante ceremony that he has willingly participated in.⁵⁰ He is surrounded by the other villagers, all in Ainu attire, and he stands out for his modern qualities while simultaneously being allowed to participate.

It is clear from the kaleidoscope of images presented in the three media representations of the Iomante and from Kimura that the ceremony itself, even when interpreted by modern Ainu, can mean different things for different people. However, I hope that the current study succeeds in highlighting key differences between contemporary representations of the Iomante and those

⁴⁹ (1:09:56, *Ainu Mosir*.)

⁵⁰ (1:17:23, *Ainu Mosir*.)

visible in the 1931 documentary. *Golden Kamuy*, as a representation of Ainu culture in post Russo-Japanese war Hokkaido, breaks down cultural barriers through humor and an unflinching attention paid to cultural differences and their implications in human relationships. Stark differences in background, culture, and point of view all work to bring Ashiripa and Sugimoto closer to one another as they navigate these differences through a myriad of hilarious vignettes. In relation to the ceremony, Ashiripa describes the Iomante to Sugimoto in precise detail; making an effort to define it as a restoration rather than a sacrifice. Regardless, she still chooses to distance herself from the bear cub so as not to become attached, which serves as an example of how she is navigating her own culture with agency.

In *Netsugen* the Iomante is intrinsically related to Yayomanekufu's childhood and his own ideas of cultural participation. His identity formation throughout the work does not involve sympathizing with the bear in the ceremony but is based on his ability to perform the ceremony in both Hokkaido and Karafuto. As previously discussed, we are queued by the ongoing theme of warmth whenever Yayomanekufu remembers or experiences the ceremony within the story.

In *Ainu Mosir*, Kanto represents an Ainu who avoids blind cultural prescriptions, this time in the 21st century. The story makes every possible effort to show how attached Kanto is to the bear cub and how its "death" is horrifying to him so much so that he attempts, unsuccessfully, to steal his uncle's keys before the ceremony so that he can set the bear free (according to his modern sensibility). During this period of emotional dissonance, Kanto's reunification with his father then allows him to bridge the gap of cultures, the gap that exists between the two identities he recognizes inside himself— one Japanese one Ainu. He then goes on to participate in the latter part of the ceremony, albeit dressed in a modern red sport jacket, in stark contrast to his Ainu relatives.

The three contemporary works, unlike Neil's film, delve into the internal perspectives of Ainu characters and their complex relationships with the Iomante. *Netsugen* frames it through Yayomanekufu's personal connection to heritage and the warmth of belonging (*netsu*). *Golden Kamuy* highlights Ashiripa's informed ambivalence and agency, while *Ainu Mosir* offers the most Ainu-centric visual representation of the Kamuy spirit's agency post-release. These diverse media, through their depiction of character agency and varied representational strategies, offer richer, more ethno-relativistic understandings of the Iomante and Ainu identity than Neil's documentary which is permeated by its ethnocentric and imperial gaze.

Conclusion:

This study has investigated how fictional characters within diverse media—fiction, anime, manga, and film—navigate their cultural contexts, with a particular focus on how they interact with the Ainu Iomante ceremony. The analysis of Kawagoe's *Netsugen*, Noda Satoru's *Golden Kamuy*, and Fukunaga Takeshi's *Ainu Mosir*, juxtaposed with early ethnographic representations like Neil's 1931 documentary, reveals a significant evolution in the portrayal of Ainu culture and identity.

Central to the current study is the agency with which the characters from respective works are engaging with culture. In *Netsugen*, Yayomanekufu's engagement with the Iomante is intrinsically linked to his pursuit of *netsu* – the warmth of community and heritage – driving his persistent efforts to reclaim and participate in Ainu cultural practices in both Karafuto and Hokkaido, despite systemic oppression and forced assimilation, such as adopting a Japanese name to travel. His identity formation is a proactive striving for cultural reconnection. Similarly, *Golden Kamuy*'s Ashiripa exercises considerable agency in her interaction with Ainu traditions and the Iomante. Her decisions, such as forgoing traditional lip tattoos or her measured

emotional engagement with bear cubs destined for the ceremony, stem from personal conviction and a self-defined “new Ainu” persona, rather than being solely reactive to external pressures like assimilationist policies. Sugimoto, her Japanese companion, likewise defies imperial soldier stereotypes, demonstrating individual motivations for his engagement with Ainu culture. Kanto, in *Ainu Mosir*, embodies a contemporary Ainu youth’s struggle, finding a path to participate in the Iomante on his own terms, reconciling internal conflicts and external expectations.

Multimediality plays a crucial role in deepening audience engagement and conveying nuanced cultural perspectives. *Netsugen* utilizes textual strategies, such as the framing device of anthropological recordings that immerse the reader textually and auditorily. Its orthographic choices, including the *kanji* 熊送り (*Kuma okuri*, “bear sending”) with *katakana* in the ruby (イヨマンテ, Iomante), directly imbed an Ainu-centric understanding of the ceremony within the Japanese text. *Golden Kamuy*, through the combination of text and detailed illustrations, offers visually verifiable representations of Ainu material culture, enhancing perceived authenticity and allowing for a different mode of cultural immersion. *Ainu Mosir*, through its cinematic choices, grants filmic agency to the released kamuy spirit, offering a perspective aligned with the Ainu mythos that text or static images might struggle to convey.

The implications of these evolving media representations for modern audiences, particularly individuals who identify as Ainu, are profound. As suggested by research on parasocial experiences⁵¹, media can serve distinct functions for out-group and in-group members. For non-Ainu audiences, these increasingly ethnorelativistic portrayals may fill

⁵¹ *Oxford Dictionary of Parasocial Experiences*. Pg. 128.

knowledge gaps and foster a more Ainu-relative understanding. For Ainu individuals, media interaction can assume deeper significance in identity formation, a process Lewallen describes as complex, personal, and individually negotiated. Similar to Lewallen’s findings on Ainu women connecting with heritage through evolving weaving practices, engagement with popular media can offer powerful, and more importantly private, avenues for self-exploration and connection with “Ainu-ness,” especially given historical erasure and lingering ultranationalist sentiments that may make “coming out” as Ainu a process fraught with various social risks in modern Japan.

Connecting with Ainu heritage, publicly or privately, can thus be an act of resistance and self-determination in a landscape where official recognition has opened doors but also intensified scrutiny.⁵² The proliferation of Ainu-related media signifies less a perfect restoration of historical practices and more an assertion of the right to shape identity in the present. Parasocial bonds with characters embodying navigational agency—Ashiripa forging her path, Kanto choosing his own participatory amalgam, or Yayomanekufu steadfastly pursuing his cultural roots—hold potent potential. These relationships can offer vital affirmation and validation for Ainu individuals navigating the multifaceted meaning associated with being “Ainu” today. Yayomanekufu’s thought provoking reflection at the conclusion of *Netsugen* encapsulates this enduring spirit of cultural resilience and the universal quest for belonging:

From here on in, he knew his people would continue to face a myriad of hardships.

Forced assimilation, cultural estrangement and contempt, being pitied by the world, not to mention memories of a heritage that fade as the years march onward. Yayomanekufu hoped beyond hope that even if the rituals were forgotten, followed by the languages they

⁵² Lewallen, Pg. 217. In 2009, increased public attention led to an audit of the Ainu Association of Hokkaido, which exposed several circumstances of misuses of funds.

were performed in, that his people would not lose the fundamental humanity—their
ainuness that remained as long as they kept on living. He hoped beyond hope that he
wasn't wrong about this fundamental rule of nature—of humanity.⁵³

⁵³ *Netsugen*, Pg. 408.

Bibliography

Cytowic, Richard E. *Synesthesia: A Union of the Senses*. 2nd ed, MIT, 2002.

Dahlberg-Dodd, Hannah E. *Mock Foreigner Speech and the Reification of Mediatized (White) Foreignness in Japanese Media*. *Language & Communication* 101 (2025): 58–69.
doi:10.1016/j.langcom.2025.01.001.

Figal, Gerald. *Our Land Was a Forest: An Ainu Memoir, by Kayano Shigeru*. *Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars* 28, no. 3–4 (1996): 86–87. doi:10.1080/14672715.1996.10416220.

Fukunaga, Takeshi. *Ainu Mosir*. 2020. Film.

Gunning, Tom. *The Cinema of Attraction: Early Film, Its Spectator and the Avant-Garde*. *Wide Angle*, vol. 8, no. 3–4, 1986, pp. 63-64.

Hattori, Shirō, and Mashiho Chiri. *Ainugo Hōgen Jiten*. Tōkyō: Iwanami Shoten, 1964.

Heath, Stephen. *Questions of Cinema*. Indiana University Press, 1981.

Itō, Rika. “Please Take Her as Your Wife: Mediatizing Indigenous Ainu in the Japanese Anime, Golden Kamuy.” *Language, Culture and Society* 6, no. 1 (2024): 80–104.

Kawagoe, Sōichi. *Netsugen*. Tokyo: Bungei Shunjū, 2019.

Kimura, Takeshi. *Bearing the Bare Facts of Ritual: A Critique of Jonathan Z. Smith's Study of the Bear Ceremony Based on a Study of the Ainu Iyomante*. *Numen*, vol. 46, no. 1, 1999, pp. 1-23.

Kitagawa, Joseph M. *Ainu Bear Festival (Iyomante)*. *History of Religions* 1, no. 1 (1961): 95–151.

- Leach, Rebecca, and Marco Dehnert. *Becoming the Other: Examining Race, Gender, and Sexuality in Detroit: Become Human*. *The Review of Communication* 21, no. 1 (2021): 23–32.
- Lewallen, Ann-Elise. *The Fabric of Indigeneity: Ainu Identity, Gender, and Settler Colonialism in Japan*. 1st ed. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press Published in Association with School for Advanced Research Press, 2016.
- Mashima, Hisen, lyrics, and Kazuoki Miyoshi, composer. *Sen'yū* (戦友, *Comrades*). 1905.
- Neil, M. Gordon *The Ainu Bear Ceremony*, Royal Anthropological Institute, Royal Anthropological Institute, 2001. Alexander Street, <https://video.alexanderstreet.com/watch/the-ainu-bear-ceremony>.
- Noda, Satoru. *Gōrudon Kamui*. Tōkyō: Shūeisha, 2015.
- Noda, Satoru. *Golden Kamui*. 2018. TV series. Episode: 3 (Available on Netflix)
- Sato-Rossberg, Nana. *Chiri Mashihō's Performative Translations of Ainu Oral Narratives*. *Japanese Studies* 28, no. 2 (2008): 135–48.
- Sato-Rossberg, Nana. *Conflict and Dialogue: Bronisław Pilsudski's Ethnography and Translation of Ainu Oral Narratives*. *Translation Studies* 5, no. 1 (2012): 48–63. doi:10.1080/14781700.2012.628813.
- Schubert, Teresa, Roderick Gawthrop, and Sachiko Kinoshita. *Evidence for Cross-Script Abstract Identities in Learners of Japanese Kana*. *Memory & Cognition* 46, no. 6 (2018): 1010–21. doi:10.3758/s13421-018-0818-4.

Tranter, Nicolas. *Nonconventional Script Choice in Japan*. *International Journal of the Sociology of Language* 2008, no. 192 (2008): 133–51. doi:10.1515/IJSL.2008.040.

Tukachinsky Forster, Rebecca. *The Oxford Handbook of Parasocial Experiences*. 1st ed. United Kingdom: Oxford University Press, 2023.
doi:10.1093/oxfordhb/9780197650677.001.0001.

Yomota, Inuhiko, and Phil Kaffen. *What Is Japanese Cinema?: A History*. Columbia University Press, 2019, <https://doi.org/10.7312/yomo19162>.

Appendix

Translations from Netsugen

page	Japanese Original	English Translation
34	明治十四年（一八八一年）、故郷の島を離れて七年目の春、ヤヨマネクフは北海道で、馬糞にまみれていた。	In the 14 th year of Meiji (1881,) in the seventh spring since leaving his home, Yayomanekufu found himself in Hokkaido, covered in horse manure.
29-30	同じくらいの年頃の少年たちが通りすぎた。ケンカダ、ケンカダと和人の言葉で色めき立っている。シシラトカが気を取られた瞬間、ヤヨマネクフは滑るように一歩踏み出す。腰から上体を捻る。右腕の先で握りしめた拳が理想的な軌道で飛び出す。「あ、犬（いぬ）、か」その時、和人の一人がすっとんきょうな声を上げた。聞こえた瞬間、体じゅうの血が沸騰するかと思った。こういうときに学校で和人の言葉を習ったことを後悔してしまう。	A group of boys around the same age were passing by. “It’s a fight!” They’re fighting! “The air became rife with the commotion of Shisan voices. While Shishiratoka remained stock still, taken by surprise, Yayomanekufu slipped forward lithely, punching Shishiratoka’s torso from the hip. A clenched fist, terminus of his left arm, arced out in a perfect circle. “Ha! <i>I knew</i> it! Just a couple of Ainu dogs!” It was the thoughtless voice of one of the Shisan onlookers. And from the moment he heard it, Yayomanekufu felt as if his blood would boil over. It was times like these that made him regret ever learning the Shisan language at school.
27	その両側に樹皮を葺いた家()を並べた一帯が対雁村(ツイシカリ)と呼ばれる。	On both sides, Chise with bark siding extended out in a belt which made up the village of x
27	漁で足繁く訪れる和人(シーサン)は樺太(カラフト)と呼ぶ。	To the Shisan who had made it their haunt for fishing it was known as Karafuto.
23	同い歳のシシラトカと二人、時に太郎治(たろうじ hiragana)を加えた	Whether it was with Shishiratoka who was around his own age, or sometimes the threesome including Tarōji, they lived day in

	三人で学校（ガッコウ）と野っ原の間を漂って暮らしていた。	and day out somewhere between the open fields and the SCHOOL they surrounded
22-21	三人の目の前、ちょうど頃合いの大きさの石に腰掛けていたうら若き乙女は、抱くように五弦琴(トンコリ)を弾いていた手をぴたりと止めた。乙女の、やや硬く艶やかな黒髪は幅広の鉢巻で優雅に整えられている。海豹の皮で作った銀色の衣に、飾り金具やら小刀やらを下げた帯を締めている。大人びた秀麗な眉目と入墨（シヌイエ）がないため幼くも見える口元は、何かの境界線に漂うような儚さがある。キサラスイ。当年数えて十七歳の彼女は、八百人を超える人が暮らす対雁村(ツイシカリ)でも一番の美人（ピリカメノコ）であるともっばらの評判だった。	Before their eyes, atop a stone just big enough to carry her sat a beautiful girl- almost painfully so for her youngness. As they stepped forward the sound of a Tonkori which seemed clutched almost lovingly to her breast abruptly stopped. Her thick and illustrious hair was neatly organized behind her head scarf. Her coat, made from the silver fur of a seal, was accented by bits and baubles made of gold and a Makiri which hung from a belt at her waist. Her adult like and beautifully full eyebrows, hanging paradoxically over her youthful and not yet tattooed lips caused one to dwell on something odd and impermanent which this combination seemed to exude. Kisarasui. This girl, 17 years old at the time, was known for being the most <i>pirikamenoko</i> (<i>beauty</i>) in Tsuishikari -a feat despite its scant population of 800 plus people.
	「ううん」ヤヨマネクフは答える。「熱い(セーセへ)」 暑(シセーセへ)い、ではない。言葉を知らなかったからでもない。確かに熱(*no ruby)を感じていた。 川越 宗一. 熱源 (文春文庫) (Japanese Edition) (p. 35). 文藝春秋. Kindle Edition.	“No” Yayomanekufu answered. “I’m burning up.” And it wasn’t because he didn’t know another way to say this more plainly like <i>I’m hot</i> . It had come out like that because he actually felt a sort of burning sensation.
36-37	次の記憶は、もう少しはっきりしている。やはり雪の中にあり、そして熱を帯びている。養父アツヤエークの村に、沢山の人が集ま	The next memory is a little bit more pronounced. I was in the middle of the snow, and was feeling this same burn. In the village of my god-father, Atsueyku, many people had gathered. Most were Ainu, there were also Japanese(<i>shisan</i>) people

	<p>った。最も多いのはアイヌだが、ぱりっとフロックコートや着物を着た和人(no ruby、)きりりと軍服を纏ったロシア人もいた。遠くからニクブンが屈強な犬に、オロッコが大きなトナカイに橇を曳かせてやってきた。熊送(イヨマンテ)り。熊の体を権りて現れる山神(キムンカムイ)を、たくさんのお土産を持たせて神の国(アイヌモシリ)へ鄭重にお送りする儀式がこれから行われる。前日の酒宴の興奮を残した群衆が作る輪の中に、熊が招き入れられる。熊は積もった雪を踏み散らしながら咆哮する。その一瞬だけ静まり返ったあと、群衆は声を上げる。ホウ! ホウ! ホウ! ホウ! 思い思いの騒めきが熱狂的な掛け声に合流していく。戸惑っていた和人もロシア人も、いつのまにか掛け声に和している。</p>	<p>neatly dressed in frockcoats, not to mention Russian soldiers buttoned up in military clothing. The Nikubun came from afar with their powerful sled dogs, the Orokko came with large deer carcasses, all freshly cleaned. The Iyomante. Kimun Kamuy, the god who had been borrowing the form a bear in this world had to be sent back to the realm of the Kamuy spirits and bearing as many gifts as possible. This ceremony was about to take place. In the midst of the crowd, still enlivened by the last night's festivities before the big day, a bear was led out. The bear let out a howl as it stomped out through the deep snow. The crowd quieted for a fleeting second and then raised their collective voices. "Hogh! Hogh! Hogh! Hogh! IT was impossible not to be swept up in the raucous and bracing call that was rippling fervently through the whole crowd. Even the Russians and Japanese, who at first looked awkward and out of place, found themselves shouting along before they knew it.</p>
37	<p>木幣(イナウ)(丸木の肌を薄く削って房を作った祭具)</p>	<p>Inau (a ceremonial ornament created from carving out thin strands of wood into curls</p>
39	<p>その日も宴となる。解体された熊(no ruby)の頭部が頭領の家に迎え入れられ、ご馳走と祈りが捧げられる。踊りが始まり、歌や笑い声が次々と生まれる。そして琴の凜とした音色が流れていく。熱い。やはりヤヨマネクフは感じていた。この凍てつく島の熱気</p>	<p>That night a feast was held. The bear's head, it's spirit now released, was welcomed into the head elders hut, and it was met with both prayers and a feast. A dance then began, punctuated by both songs and laughter which started to emerge. To this the crisp notes of a Koto started to pour forth. He was burning up. It was merely there, this undeniable sensation. The feeling that he'd be forever locked in the smoldering embrace of this frozen island. And this feeling persisted all</p>

に、いつまでも灼かれ続けるのだろうかと思っていた。　そうでなくなったのは、九歳の時だった。秋の海辺に、ヤヨマネクフには見たことがない数のアイヌの老若男女が集まった。まだ結氷していない藍色の沖合には火の粉と黒い煙を吐く大きな蒸気船が、浜には洋装の和人たちが待っていた。アイヌたちはほとんど荷物を持たず、小舟で沖の蒸気船に送られていく。　養父アツヤエークは和人たちとずっと話し込んでいる。ヤヨマネクフはチコビローに手を引かれて舟を待っていた。「これから、船で“ニッポン、へ行くぞ”チコビローは優しく教えてくれたが、その硬質な造りの顔は表情も硬かった。「ニッポン？」知らない言葉にヤヨマネクフは首を傾げた。「和人の国のことだ」チコビローが言うには、ロシアと日本が取り決めて樺太はロシアのものとなった。和人たちは島から去るが、アイヌも希望する者には日本への移住を世話してくれることとなった。漁の仕事や米を通して長く和人に親しんでいたからか、八百人以上のアイヌが移住を望んだのだという。島に残る者のほうが多かったが、大規模な移住となった。

the way until he turned 9. That fall, a group of Ainu -of all ages and sexes- found themselves assembled together along the shore of the island. They stared out at the still unfrozen sea at the ship that sat in the harbor, it was a steamboat which was throwing up black soot plums into the air. Japanese had come to shore to meet them. The Ainu were ferried out to the steamboat in small skiffs carrying almost no luggage or possessions. Atsuyaeyku was in the midst of heated discussion with the Japanese soldiers. Chikobiro, clutching Yayomanekufu's hand, had led them to a skiff to wait. "That boat right there is going to take us to Japan." Chikobiro was nice enough to fill me in, but his strongly constructed face was almost bereft of emotion. "Japan" Yayomanekufu tilted his head at the word he had never heard before. "it's the land where the Shisan come from." Chikobiro explained how Japan and Russia had come to the conclusion that Karafuto was the Russians. The shisan had to leave, but for those Ainu who were willing, Japan had graciously agreed to shelter them in Hokkaido. Whether due to long depending on the Shisan for fishing jobs or rice, over 800 Ainu wished to take the shisan up on their offer. The number that chose to stay on Karafuto was larger still but none the less, it was a large scale emigration.

77	<p>チコビローが誇らしげに促し、ヤヨマネクフは丸太の隙間をそっと覗き込む。黒い毛の塊が、丸くうずくまっている。熊の子供だ。「数年育てて、熊送りをやる。この村ではまだやっていないからな」チコビローの表情に、ヤヨマネクフは熱を感じた。故郷は過去ばかりにあるのではないと思った。「帰ってくるか」低く優しい声にヤヨマネクフは頷く。何もできなかった自分の無力さに胸が締め付けられる。「泣くことはないだろ」チコビローは穏やかに言った。</p>	<p>Chikobiro pushed him forward proudly and Yayomanekufu gazed through the wooden bars of the pen. A black ball of fur was curled into a ball inside. It was a bear cub. “We’ll raise him up a few years and have an Iomante. After all, we haven’t been able to perform one since coming to this village.” Yayomanekufu saw fire within Chikobiro’s gaze. So his homeland wasn’t merely a memory after all, Yayo thought. “Shall we head back?” Yayo nodded at Chikobiro’s low and hospitable voice. His chest was in knots as his powerlessness and inability to do anything rose up within him (to affect his situation or help those he loved?) “It’s nothing to shed tears over.” Chikobiro said softly.</p>
408-409	<p>これからも、同族たちにはさまざまな困難があるだろう。同化の圧力、異化の疎外、蔑視、憐憫、薄れる記憶。もし祈りの言葉が忘れられても、言葉を奪われても、<u>自分が誰かということさえ知っていれば</u>、そこに人(Ruby:アイヌ)は生きている。それが摂理であってほしいと願った。</p>	<p>From here on in, he knew his people would continue to face a myriad of hardships. Forced assimilation, cultural estrangement and contempt, being pitied by the world, not to mention memories of a heritage that fade as the years march onward. Yayomanekufu hoped beyond hope that even if the rituals were forgotten, followed by the languages they were performed in, that his people would not lose the fundamental humanity—their ainuness—that remained as long as they kept on living. He hoped beyond hope that he wasn’t wrong about this fundamental rule of nature—of humanity.</p>
97	<p>「よお、山辺安之助さん」シシラトカが、からかうように呼んできた。旅券を取る時に作ったヤヨマネクフの日本名だ。生まれ育ったヤマベチから名字を、下の名は最初の音だけ元の名前に合わせて作った。「不思議なもんだ。生ま</p>	<p>“Hello there, if it isn’t Mr. Yamabe Yasunosuke!” Shishiratoka called out mockingly. It was the Shisan name Yayomanekufu had had to acquire as part of his application for travel. The family name came from where he was raised <i>Yamabechi</i> in Karafuto, and the first name merely shared the first syllable of his original one. “It’s certainly a weird feeling. I’m heading back to where I was born and</p>

	れ故郷に帰るのに、別の名前と旅券がいるんだからな」	raised but need a foreign name and travel permission to do it.”
182	アイヌ、ニクブン（ニヴフ。当時はギリヤークとも）、オロッコ（ウイльта）、ロシア人、和人（シーサン）。様々な恰好と背景を持つ人々がいま、村に続々と集まっている。	Ainu, Nikubun, Orokko, Russians, Shisan. People of all different kinds of dress and background, had continuously been assembling in the village.

1-A



4-A



5-A

