

Open call for contributions to an edited volume “Japonism and Post-Japonism in Literature”

We are seeking individual contributions with a specific historical focus for the volume “Japonism and Post-Japonism in Literature: Nationally Coded Writing Beyond National Culture” which will be published in the CHLEL series (Comparative History of Literatures in European Languages) by John Benjamins, Amsterdam.

The confrontation with Japanese art forms in the ‘West’ after the end of *sakoku*, Japan's self-imposed isolation policy, in 1953 has led to the emergence of pivotal concepts of modernism and, at the same time, resulted in a transnational stream of ‘Japonism’. A similar tendency can be observed a century later: Today, various cultural models from Japan, now mostly from the realm of popular culture, are taken up and adapted worldwide in connection with new media and digital technologies. Since this phenomenon time and again coincides with mechanisms of postmodernism we call it Post-Japonism. In the projected volume, Japonism and Post-Japonism will, respectively, be profiled as historical epochs *and* as currents whose formative significance for European writing around 1900 and around 2000 will be elaborated. Special emphasis will be placed on the expansion of classical narrative forms into newer genres such as of film, manga, anime, and video games, among others. The volume aims to highlight how today Japan-inspired modes of writing epitomize a contemporary global culture that has left the national behind and, instead, is shaped by transcultural flows.

The projected volume of ca. 800 pages will consist of the following four parts:

Part One: Theory (Christine Frank)

In the inaugural section, we introduce, elucidate, and historically situate the concepts of Japonism and Post-Japonism as categories within the realm of comparative literary historiography. Exploring their value as heuristic categories in literary studies prompts the concurrent development of transdisciplinary perspectives. Originating from the art historical discourse in the latter half of the 19th century, the term Japonism is not only applied to literary phenomena but is also expanded to describe occurrences a century later in art, literature, everyday culture, and new media. Within the theoretical framework marked by the historical, political, and economic conditions characteristic of Japonism, these phenomena are analogously characterized as Post-Japonism.

We are seeking contributions of approximately 4.000-6.000 words on the following topics:

- Origin and early conception of the term ‘Japonism’;

- Japonism as an epochal and stylistic concept;
- Catalog of Japonisms;
- Effects of Japonism (theoretical-historical problematization);
- Japanese semiotics: Roland Barthes;
- “Cool Japan” as government-driven “Post-Japonism”.

Part Two: History (Thomas Pekar)

In the second part of the volume, the history of the perception of Japan in Europe (and vice versa) and the history of the relations between Japan and Europe, respectively, will be outlined, with special attention paid to political and economic factors as well as to technological changes around 1900 and around 2000. We are seeking contributions which

- will provide a (global) historical outline of the economic and political relations between Japan and the West (approximately 8.000 words), and
- sketch the history of Japonism from a material-aesthetic perspective (approximately 8.000 words).

We would also be happy for paradigmatic case studies (approximately 4.000s word each) as e.g. on

- the reception of Japan in Europe until 1858 (Marco Polo, Francisco Xavier etc.);
- the history of Dejima in the Japanese context;
- Dejima from the perspective of the interaction with the Dutch (historical background and literary thematizations in Western and Japanese literature);
- Dejima from the 17th to the 19th century (Kaempfer, Thunberg, Siebold and others);
- ‚First Contact‘, Perry’s arrival, the Black ships: Reports from the West and Japan and other first travel reports (e.g. Wilhelm Heine compared to Hayashi Fukusai);
- Paris as the center of Japonism (this may be extended to up to 8.000 words);
- comparison of the novel “Tsushima” by Alexei Silytsch Novikov-Priboi with the German novel “Tsushima” (1936) by Frank Thiess;
- the Russo-Japanese War (1905) and the Taishô period in the context of Modernism and Japonism;
- the year of 1923 as a ‘nodal point’ regarding global political and economic crises and the Kanto earthquake and its related incidents and international reactions;
- the novel and the film “Hiroshima mon amour” by M.Duras/A.Resnais in the context of Japonism;

- Japan's Role during the Cold War. Japan and the USA as an occupying power;
- Japan as a peaceful consumer paradise in the 1980s/1990s (e.g. Yoshimoto Banana; consumer culture).

Part Three: Discourses about 'Japan' in European Japonistic and Post-Japonistic Literature (Michiko Mae)

In this chapter, we illustrate how literary discourses influenced and inspired by Japonism since the mid to late 19th century and Post-Japonism since the late 20th century have emerged in Europe, exploring their global impact. Perspectives from contemporary cultural and gender studies, critical ethnicity theory, and transculturality are highly welcome. For this chapter we are seeking contributions on the following topics:

- an outline on Western Orientalism (approximately 6000 words.);
- the 'Zen Syndrome' or the Idea of the Emptiness of Signs in Western Discourses on Japan with special focus on preconditions and consequences of Roland Barthes' "Empire of Signs" (approximately 4000 words);
- the tendency of 'Minimizing' Japan, i.e. the identification of Japan with Haiku (approximately 4000 words).

Part Four: Genres and media (Ina Hein)

The focus here is on the question of what happens to 'Japanese' literary and other media genres (especially poetry, theater, real film, manga, anime and video games) in the process of 'Japonization': How are they taken up, reshaped and adapted by Western authors, filmmakers, mangaka etc., how does this change 'Western' literature, film etc., and what effects are produced as a result? To what extent does this introduce something new / style-forming into the European literary and media world? In this section we are looking for short surveys on the following topics:

- adaptations, reworking or other form of productive reading of Japanese literature in prose (approximately 8.000 words);
- novels (fiction, autofiction, literary travelogues) on Japan/ topics Japanese (approximately 8.000 words);
- Japanese Poetry in Western Literature / 'Japanizing' Western Poetry (approximately 4.000 words);

- a case study on ‘Western’ Engagements with Japanese Literature, e.g. James Mitchell and Murakami Haruki (approximately 4.000 words).
- Adaptions of Japanese Literary Works in Western Film (4000 words)
- Kawabata Yasunari’s “House of the Sleeping Beauties” and its Cinematic Adaptations (2000 words)
- “The Pillow Book” (Peter Greenaway, 1996) and Sei Shônagon’s “The Pillow Book” (2000 words)
- Intertextual References: Yamamoto Tsunetomo’s “Hagakure” as Structure of the Film “Ghost Dog – The Way of the Samurai” (1999) (2000 words)

If you are interested please contact one of the editors for further information:

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