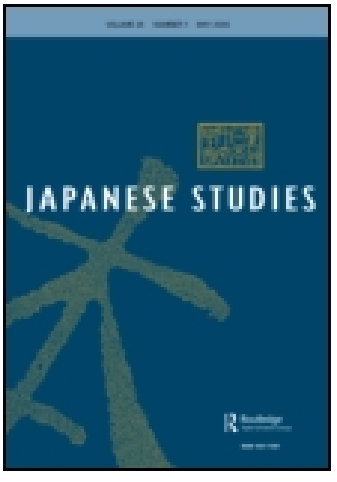

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Fuchikami Hakuyō and the 'Manchukuo Pastoral' in 1930s Japanese Art Photography

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Fuchikami Hakuyō and the 'Manchukuo Pastoral' in 1930s Japanese Art Photography

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The art photography of Fuchikami Hakuyō and his circle in Japanese Manchuria is commonly and benignly treated as hybridized modernism, a product of the bending of conventional 1930s Japanese styles (pictorialist, constructivist, realist) through contact with the unfamiliar and the exotic. As such it is deemed reflexive in relation to the stimuli of a new land and peoples, but disconnected from the political, economic, and social processes of imperialism and colonialism in Northeast China. The following article uses both structuralist and post-structuralist theoretical approaches to challenge this interpretation, arguing that through the skilful erasure of colonial violence and disruption, the lyrical images of villages, agriculturalists, and factories produced by Fuchikami and his Manshū Shashin Sakka Kyōkai (Manchuria Photographic Artists Association) participate directly in processes of state construction in Manchukuo. The development of a quasi-documentary pastoral aesthetic by Fuchikami and the Manchuria photographers is given close attention in the analysis, particularly as it relates to the influence of French Barbizon school painting on late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Japanese art.

Fuchikami Hakuyō's extraordinary photographic vision of the northeastern Chinese landscape as an idyllic and exotic society, in which age-old agricultural rhythms and ethnic traditions coexist harmoniously with grand industrial development projects, defined Japanese *geijutsu shashin* (art photography) in Manchukuo in the 1930s. During this period of vigorous and often violent Japanese expansion into the vast hinterland north of the Liaodong Peninsula, Fuchikami's camera transformed this 'frontier' into a place of heroic farmers and epic happenings, a landscape steeped in history and myth; yet, at the same time, one that was 'familiar', unthreatening, and open to colonization. By recruiting a talented group of expatriate amateur photographers to help him develop a distinctive style of Japanese-Manchurian art photography, and using his powerful position as head of the South Manchuria Railway (SMR) Company's public relations department to disseminate the group's work through international

Abbreviations used in the footnotes
HOM = *Hikaru oka* monthly
HOQ = *Hikaru oka* quarterly
MG = *Manshū gurafu*
MSSK = Manshū Shashin Sakka Kyōkai
NSZ2 = Ozawa et al., eds, *Nihon shashin zenshū* 2: *Geijutsu shashin no keifu*
NS6 = Nagano et al., eds, *Nihon no shashinka* 6, *Fuchikami Hakuyō to Manshū Shashin Sakka Kyōkai*
OED = Oxford English Dictionary
SMR = South Manchuria Railway Company

exhibitions and a variety of publications, Fuchikami came to exert an important influence upon the visual representation of what was then the newest space of Japanese colonial expansion.[1]

The distinctiveness of Fuchikami's aesthetic[2] is best appreciated by comparing the art photography produced by his Manshū Shashin Sakka Kyōkai (Manchuria Photographic Artists Association, hereafter MSSK)[3] to other photographic renderings of Manchuria during this period.[4] Such comparisons reveal that the seemingly random and candid glimpses of farmers, factories, and 'ordinary' folk that Fuchikami preferred, and that at the dawn of the documentary age in the 1930s would have seemed to be faithful replications of the visible, were in fact ingeniously reductive selections of reality that function as deflections of reality. Through careful choice, bounding, and framing of the scenes or subjects, particularities and details were obscured or concealed, and context removed, to produce startlingly thin documents of time and place. Rather than privileging the inventory-taking or detail-rendering capabilities of the camera, Fuchikami and colleagues like Baba Yoshio, Okada Chūji, Sakakibara Shōichi, and Yoneki Zen'emon emphasized mood through meticulous attention to lighting, contrast, and texture.

The following article examines the content, style, and contexts of both Fuchikami's own depictions of Manchuria, and those of his MSSK peers, in order to investigate their efforts to organize a totally integrated style of Japanese art photography in Manchuria. The images and descriptive captions that constitute my source material were found in three special issues of the SMR's propaganda magazine *Manshū gurafu* (Manchuria Graph, 1933–44), which Fuchikami edited until he left Manchuria in 1941, and in the MSSK's own coterie magazine, *Hikaru oka* (Shining Hills), of which 12 issues were published between 1937 and 1939.[5] The catalogue produced for the Nagoya City Art Museum's 1994 exhibition of Manchukuo photography, which includes many previously unpublished MSSK photographs, was also invaluable.[6]

The article asserts that despite manifesting such classic documentary qualities as anonymity of viewpoint and frontality of the motif, MSSK imagery does not strive to 'capture' reality in strict accordance with the original, but rather imposes upon it a vision of a utopian society in which Japanese and Chinese, agriculture and industry, and

[1]Fuchikami Hakuyō was head of the SMR's public relations department from 1929 to 1941. The SMR had a pavilion at the 1933 Chicago World Fair at which 100 photographs by members of the MSSK were exhibited. The exhibition was entitled *Manshū fūbutsu shashin ten* (Exhibition of Anthropological Photographs of Manchuria), and it subsequently toured 23 US cities. MSSK photographs were also exhibited in Paris in 1936, after which they toured various European cities. Takeba and Miura, *Ikyō*.

[2]'Aesthetic' is used here and subsequently in the article to mean 'the distinctive underlying principles of a work of art or a genre, the works of an artist, the arts of a culture, etc.' *OED*.

[3]The MSSK was established by Fuchikami in December 1932 and grew to comprise approximately 40 members (no definitive figure is available). It held a virtual monopoly over organized photographic activity in Manchuria until Fuchikami returned to Japan in 1941, after which it was integrated into the wartime Manshū Shashinka Kyōkai (Manchurian Photographers Association).

[4]See for example the photographs illustrating the following articles/publications: Simpich, 'Manchuria'; Lattimore, 'Byroads'; Asahi Graph, *Manchuria*; Nippon Kōbō, *NIPPON* 19.

[5]MG 4:6, 5:6, and 7:1; HOM 1-11; HOQ 1:1. Over its 11-year history MG had a print run of between 500 and 1000, was priced at ¥0.15, and circulated widely within the Japanese empire. In contrast, HOM and HOQ were produced in runs of 120 or less, and sold for ¥1.00 – mainly to MSSK members. Takeba and Miura, *Ikyō*.

[6]Takeba and Miura, *Ikyō*.

tradition and modernity, are harmoniously reconciled. This broadly unifying characteristic or quality, which I tentatively term the 'Manchukuo Pastoral',[7] was achieved by emphasizing the compositional qualities of the pictures over their representational features, often through the appropriation and adaptation of pastoral forms and motifs from nineteenth-century French art and, occasionally, stylistic elements from early Stalinist-era Soviet constructivist photography. I contend that, by developing a richly coded pictorial vocabulary and carefully controlled visual syntax, Fuchikami created pseudo documents of northeast China[8] in which historical time is replaced by a kind of mythic simultaneity whose spiritual force encompasses all human activities there, including Japanese colonial transformations of the landscape.

Two central and interconnected questions arise in the pursuit of a better understanding of the production and dissemination of MSSK imagery. Firstly, assuming a connection between Fuchikami's creative activity as a photographer, photography group organiser, and magazine editor on the one hand, and political formation in Manchuria on the other, what were the intended meanings of these depictions, and what function or role might they have had in creating or rationalizing notions about the landscape of northeast China, its 'settlement' by the Japanese, and the construction of a new, Japanese-led multiethnic society there? Secondly, what kinds of processes were involved in the utilization by Japanese photographers of artistic forms and conventions 'borrowed' from other traditions to interpret and translate the landscape and peoples of northeast China in the context of Japanese colonialism?

These questions are first addressed through an exploration of Fuchikami's formative experimentation with pastoral forms in Manchuria in the 1920s, and consideration of the constitutive elements of MSSK imagery. The article then examines how the common formal and compositional qualities of the photographs under study, repeated iconographic motifs, and their carefully assembled and ordered presentation as thematic collections unite them into meaningful and coherent narratives. Here the analysis is guided by Northrop Frye's theoretical writings on the 'romantic mode', according to which a landscape is regenerated and transfigured through external 'heroic' intervention.[9] This framework is helpful as a heuristic device in exploring the constructed nature of Fuchikami's Manchurian landscapes, both as expressions of individual artistic creativity, and as transformations of ideologies. Jacques Derrida's writings on the contextual process of signification are also used to consider, in a more specific way, the possible meanings of the above-mentioned 'borrowed' pastoral forms.

I

Fuchikami's earliest photographs of Manchuria – romanticized rural scenes that bear a strong formal likeness to the tender representations of the Japanese countryside that

[7]For the purpose of this article, 'pastoral' is used as a noun to signify a rural and idyllic scene or picture that carries the implied narrative of idealized or romantic lifeways, and as an adjective to denote the conventionalized qualities of such imagery; *OED*.

[8]These were occasionally described as '*fūbutsu*' or 'anthropological' documents (see note 1) with 'anthropological' being used in the broad, non-academic sense of 'relating to the natural history of mankind'; *OED*.

[9]According to Frye's broad notion of romance as a central mode of literature, foundational Japanese mythic/lyric tales like the *Kojiki*, *Ise monogatari*, *Taketori monogatari*, and *Genji monogatari* can be characterized as romances. See his *Anatomy of Criticism*, esp. 186–206 and 303–14 and *The Secular Scripture*. After 1870 the romantic tradition established by these and other Japanese (and Chinese) works was enriched by the importation of Western literary and artistic 'romances'. See Miller, *Adaptations of Western Literature in Japan*, esp. Introduction and Chapter 3.

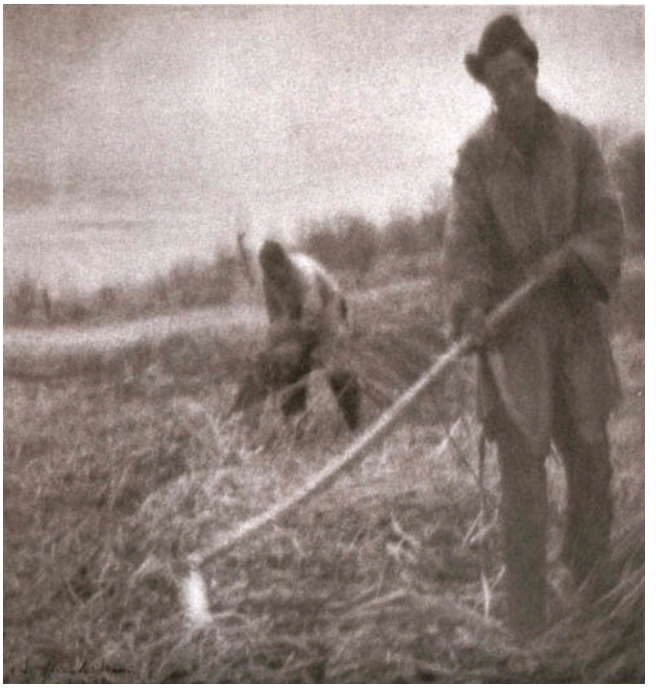

FIGURE 1. *Kōsaku* (Cultivating), Fuchikami Hakuyō, 1928. The Nagoya City Art Museum.

proliferated among Japanese amateur photographers in the 1920s[10] – were the foundation of the Manchukuo pastoral. They are soft-focus landscapes containing shadowy human subjects who are well integrated into their bucolic environments, and come across as having been 'caught' by the camera performing the rhythmic agricultural tasks that governed their lives. These images express a highly idealized view of the Manchurian countryside that is modest, traditional, and pure. For example, *Yūhi* (Setting Sun) and *Kōsaku* (Cultivating, Figure 1), both made in 1928, show, respectively, a single silhouetted shepherd surrounded by a flock of sheep, and two men harvesting what appear to be soybean plants.[11] The grind and want that were the condition of northeastern Chinese peasants in this era are invisible in these images.[12] Both are executed and printed in the 'painterly' pictorialist style that was Fuchikami's mainstay, and the land and sky in each is rendered with a sense of deep space. Through such acts of refined photographic gilding, scenes and individuals that existed dimly in the very distant background of the Japanese colonial enterprise were transformed into 'art'.

[10]On this point see the landscape photographs reproduced in Tōkyōto Shashin Bijutsukan, *Nihon no pikutoriarizumu*. It is noteworthy that in the early 1920s Fuchikami published many idealized representations of rural life in his photography magazine *Hakuyō*, a national monthly he ran out of a small office in Kobe between June 1922 and September 1926, published by Nihon Kōga Geijutsu Kyōkai. See for example Fuchikami, *Kuregata* (Sunset) in *Hakuyō*, 2:2, and Kataoka Kōyō, *Haru no chikurin* (Spring Bamboo Grove) in *Hakuyō*, 2:6.

[11]NS6, plates 7 and 11.

[12]See Gottschang and Lary, *Swallows*, 58–59, Myers, 'Socioeconomic Change in Villages', 611–18, Kung and Li, 'Commercialization as Exogenous Shocks', 11–12, and Eckstein et al., 'The Economic Development of Manchuria', 253.

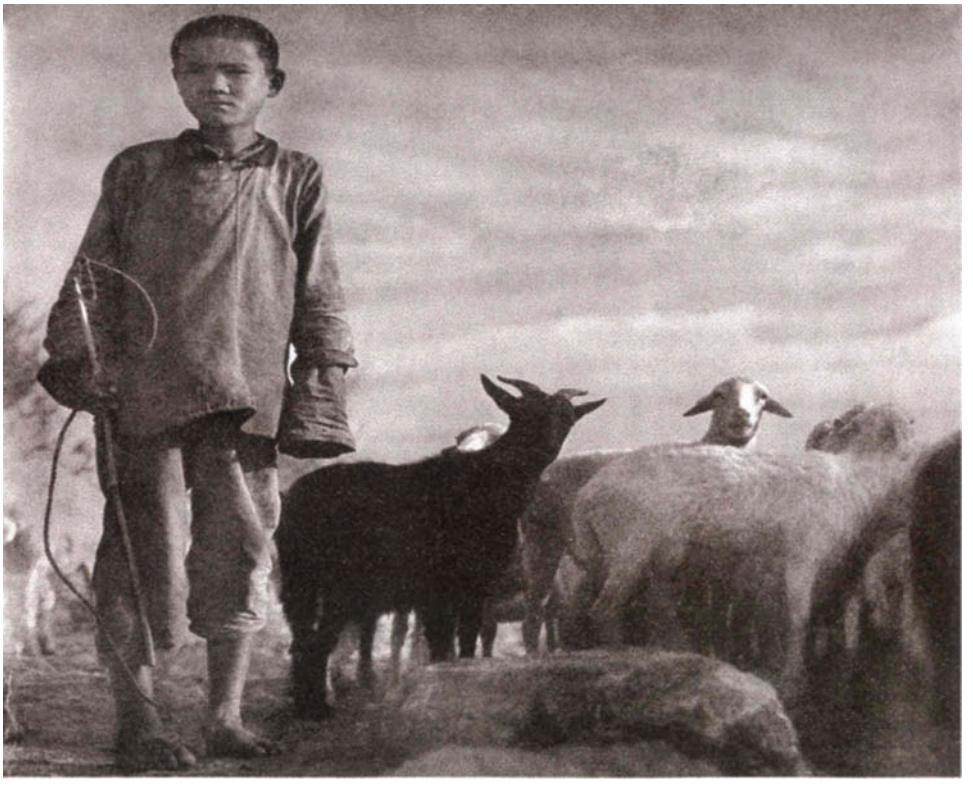

FIGURE 2. *Hitsujikai no shōnen* (Shepherd Boy), Sakakibara Shōichi, 1935. The Nagoya City Art Museum.

These highly conventionalized photographs of seeding, herding, and reaping in Manchuria, produced by one of Japan's best known and most distinguished art photographers,[13] had a strong influence upon Fuchikami's MSSK peers. For example, Terashima Banji's *Nanman no aki* (Autumn in South Manchuria, 1934), Sakakibara Shōichi's *Hitsujikai no shōnen* (Shepherd Boy, 1935, Figure 2), Yoneki Zen'emon's *Nōfu* (Farmers, 1936), Isshiki Tatsuo's *Bohyō* (A Grave Post, 1939), and Yagi Akio's *Asa no hikari* (Morning Light, 1939) all conform seamlessly to the pastoral mode described above.[14] In the world they construct, rustic folk like Sakakibara's shepherd boy and Yoneki's farmers appear as integral parts of the landscape and come across as having attained a state of spiritual unity with it. The photographs function like pastoral poems that affirm the honest virtues of everyday life and create an idealized image of pre-industrial, pre-consumerist society.

Despite the impulse to perpetually reproduce a well-loved photographic sub-genre, during the 1930s two important factors can be argued to have led to the emergence of distinctive Manchukuo variations of the timeless rural idyll photo. The first was the lure

[13]On Fuchikami's seminal influence on art photography in 1920s Japan, see the writings of Iizawa and Takeba listed in the references, and Nagoya-shi Bijutsukan, *Kōsei-ha no jidai*.

[14]The references for these images, in sequential order, are: MG 7:1, 1 (for a discussion of this photograph see Tamanoi, *Memory Maps*, 1–3); NS6, plate 32; MG 4:6, 7; MG 6:10, 11; and MG 7:1, 9.

of the documentary exotic, the photographic equivalent of the big game trophy, which was fostered by the colonial context in which cameras were being wielded by adventurous men in the far reaches of Japan's expanding empire. The stimulus to 'conquer' or 'master' the frontier by 'shooting' it was strengthened by the semi-autonomous Japanese Guandong (Kwantung) Army's vast territorial acquisitions of 1931–33, and the corresponding desire on the part of military, bureaucratic and economic advocates of colonial aggrandizement for photographic support for their project.[15] Seitoku Nobuyoshi's 1935 portrait of a Mongolian woman and a camel, Yoneki Zen'emon's documentation of an ancient Buddhist tower in the recently seized Jehol Province, and Tanaka Seibō's aerial photograph of Baekdu Mountain, which straddles the border between northeast China and the Korean peninsula, are bold examples of where the desirability of achieving 'closeness' and 'clarity' challenged the blurry pictorialist approach, while curiosity and the survey modality activated by Japan's acquisition of 'new' lands transcended the narrow preoccupation with agriculturalists.[16]

The second disruptive influence upon the prevailing pictorial/pastoral form was Fuchikami's on-again-off-again attraction to new visual styles, particularly the skewed angles and sharp formal contrasts characteristic of contemporary German and, especially, Soviet 'New Photography'.[17] Here the rigid conventionality of the pictorialist method, its displacement of immediate experience in favour of conformity to well-established representational norms, proved restrictive. Such formalist roaming disrupted the proclivity towards promoting sameness that was the pastoral mode's magnetic north.

Under the influence of the first of these factors, what Bernard Cohn has termed in another colonial context an 'investigative modality' preoccupied with establishing 'a repertoire of images and typifications',[18] Fuchikami and the MSSK photographers moved their cameras ever closer to their subjects, playing with the boundary between landscape and portraiture, and thereby creating a variation of the pastoral form which might be termed the scrutinizing pastoral. Fuchikami's *Hitobito* (People, Figure 3) of 1930, a tight close-up of two women and two children against a wall in bright winter sunshine, was the archetype of this format.[19] In such photographs the subjects, while presented to the viewer as 'types' within idealized painterly 'scenes', nevertheless are individuated to the extent that the generic nature of the pictorialist form is strained. The disruptiveness of these photographs derives not only from the subjects' closeness and clarity, but also from the way their look and bearing bring to the fore the corresponding presence of the photographer: a man with a camera is watching, but he is also being watched. Like the shadow of an unseen person falling inside the picture space, this evidence of photographic intrusion adds a supplementary narrative – that of the boundary-crossing act of a documentarist who is equipped with knowledge and technology that outstrips that of his subjects – to the conventionalized pastoral one.[20]

As an extension of the aforementioned colonial-investigative pursuit of close observation or 'touch', the MSSK photographers also explored ways of edging up to their subjects

[15]See for example the heavily illustrated serial publications produced by the Manshū Tetsudō Gaisha, *Report on Progress in Manchuria*, and *Contemporary Manchuria*.

[16]Seitoku Nobuyoshi, *Rakuda no taishō (Jehol) 1* (Caravan [Jehol] 1), Takeba and Miura, *Ikyō*, I, C-21, 1935; Yoneki Zen'emon, *Tō* (Tower), MG 4:6, 11; Tanaka Seibō, *Fuyu no Hakutōsan* (Mt Hakuto in Winter), ibid., 18.

[17]On Fuchikami's experimentation in the mid-1920s with what has been termed 'constructivist' or 'art deco' photography, see Iizawa, '"Hakuyō" to sono jidai', 163–4, and Nagoya-shi Bijutsukan, *Kōsei-ha no jidai*.

[18]Cohn, *Colonialism and its Forms of Knowledge*, 5–7.

[19]NS6, plate 8.

[20]This is quite literally the case with Nakasawa Akio's *Inu no iru fūkei* (Scenery with a Dog), HOM 2:9.

FIGURE 3. *Hitobito* (People), Fuchikami Hakuyō, 1930. The Nagoya City Art Museum.

obliquely, through metonymy and synecdoche. In the case of the former, Chinese farmers are 'described' by their plain and time-worn hand tools, metal buckets, kettles, carts, houses, and also by their sturdy, heavy-coated dogs, sheep, mules, cows, pigs, and horses.[21] With the latter, the purity of Manchuria's fields, cart paths, marketplaces, and kitchens are shown through glimpses of the leathery hands, furrowed brows, and lean, sinewy-fleshed limbs of those who inhabit them.[22]

These inventory-like images of people, objects, and domestic animals do not reveal, as we might expect of bodies or possessions shown up close, telltale evidence of much relating to the immediate social, economic, and political facts of real lives.

[21]See for example from HOM: Seitoku Nobuyoshi, *Rojō seibutsu* (Street Still Life), 1:2; Nakada Shiyo, *Hitsuji* (Sheep), 1:2; Fuchikami, *Seibutsu* (Still Life) *E*, 2:1; Endo Ichini, *Aki yuku koro* (Late Autumn), 2:2; Yagi Akio, *Kōri* (Ice), 2:5; Baba Yashio, *Baketsu no seibutsu* (Still Life with Bucket), 2:6; Unoki Bin, *Rojō* (Street), 2:7; Kuwabara Kenjirō, *Asa* (Morning), 2:7; Matsuoka Ken'ichirō, *Seijitsu* (Quiet Day), 2:10. See also Shibuya Shōyō, *Buta* (Pigs), HOQ 1:1; and Nakada Shiyo, *Mōko no hito* (Mongolian), MG 7:1, 5.

[22]See for example from HOM: Mizuma Tetsuo, *Kurisuchenie* (Christian), 2:4; Matsuoka Ken'ichirō, *Baba* (Old Woman), 2:10. See also Okada Chūji, *Rōba* (Old Woman), HOQ 1:1 and Fuchikami, *Tanemaki* (Sowing), MG 5:5, 1.

Rather, and herein lies their distinctiveness, they deploy new documentary methods (smaller, lighter cameras, 'faster' film) and influences (*National Geographic*, as well as the social reportage featured in mass-circulation European picture magazines like *Vu* and *Ropf*)[23] while remaining solidly within the artified pictorialist-pastoral genre. Individual people, and the specifics of their lives, are presented as evidence that the Manchurian pastoral 'paradise' is for real – nothing more. Thus the narrowly framed glimpses that are provided of forms, textures, manufactures, and moments connected to human toil and endeavour are made, by means of their 'artiness', to be suggestive of mythical time and tradition rather than serve as entry points to specific individual narratives. The latter direction would have risked showing what Japanese colonial officials knew only too well: that the rapidly increasing commercialization of agriculture brought about by railway construction and the establishment of food-processing plants were disrupting traditional farming patterns and village life.[24]

Once established, the close-range anthropological-pastoral style developed by Fuchikami and the MSSK was applied in a validating way to two immigrant communities in Manchuria whose relationship with the land and 'tradition' was more tenuous than that of the predominant Han Chinese. The most exotic of these were the Russian émigrés, in particular the Old Believers of 'Romanofka Village' in present-day Heilongjiang Province, and the Cossack peasants of the Trekhrech'e (Three Rivers) region in the distant northwest Mongolian borderland. With the former, although the much-photographed village of approximately 150 people was only established in 1936, its biblical-looking inhabitants conveyed the impression of having adapted their purest of pure Russian agricultural lives in perfect harmony with the new place.[25] As to the Cossacks, the bleak remoteness of their communities and coarse, rustic nature of their dwellings suggested the heroic spirit and resourcefulness of the pioneer enterprise. As described in *Manshū gurafu* in 1938, although the Trekhrech'e region was previously a desolate, wind-swept steppe, the steadfast-looking Russian migrants (shown in the pictures) overcame historical and natural obstacles to build a community in which they 'live in peace and contentment, raising horses, cattle and honey bees, and growing wheat, oats and other crops on lands which are so rich that no fertilizer is required'.[26]

The second immigrant group to be assimilated into the Manchukuo pastoral form was the Japanese who took part in the establishment of the quasi-agricultural 'Railway Guards Settlements' (*senro gikei son*) and the 'Village-Division Campaign' (*bunson undō*) settlements of the 1930s and 1940s. While the photographs of the Russians are notable for their closeness and clarity within the genre that has been described, those of the Japanese colonists are conspicuous for the use of shadows and sidelong perspectives to conceal the specific identities of the subjects.[27] Here it would seem that a different and quite distinct visual style was required to document exotic figures who were

[23]This point is based upon comparisons between MSSK imagery and photographs published in American and European picture magazines of the 1920s and 1930s. On *National Geographic*, see Hawkins, 'Savage Visions', 33–63. On *Vu* and *Ropf*, see Fernández [accent over a, not n] 'Introduction', 12–37.

[24]Myers, 'Socioeconomic Changes in Villages', 595–96.

[25]See the photostory by Baba Yashio in MG 7:6, 17–18 and the photographs in MG 9:3, 11–12.

[26]MG 6:10 special issue on Trekhrech'e (pages 1–16). The quotation is from page 2 (English translation from original). See also MG 7:4, 19–20.

[27]See for example Shinohara Minoru's *Nora ni okeru* (In The Field), MG 7:1, 12. See also Baba Yashio's *Hokuman no aki – iminchi • Senshinkyō* (Autumn in Northern Manchuria – Frontier • Senshinkyō) and Hirayama Hideo's *Hokuman no aki – iminchi / Senshinkyō*, both in MG, 7:1, 10 and 11 respectively.

nevertheless not Other.[28] Also, there would appear to have been the concern that the provision of too much detail about an immigration program that rested upon an untruth (namely, the attainment of security and independence in a 'virgin' land of opportunity) might betray the reality of ongoing struggle and hardship for citizens stuck on the lowest rungs of Japan's social ladder.[29]

The Manchukuo pastoral was also stretched to include urban figures whose profession or work was humble, 'honest' and 'pure' in the sense that they were seemingly uncorrupted by the materialism and competitiveness of the modern world. Yoneki Zen'emon's respectful portrait of an affable shoemaker, Baba Yashio's glorification of a humble flower girl in Harbin, Mizuma Tetsuo's close-up of a Russian Orthodox priest conducting a baptism, and Okada Chūji's tight close-up of a dark-skinned man engaged in manual work, are not conventionally pastoral, but are presented to the viewer as natural and worthy extensions of Manchuria's sanctified villages.[30] As such, they are one of the most strikingly distinct elements of the MSSK's enlarged conceptualization of the pastoral in the Manchukuoan context.

But what of subjects that are destructive of native places and traditional ways of life? Beginning in the early 1930s Fuchikami and some of his associates introduced into the MSSK portfolio dissonant images of industrial technology that suggest noise, smoke, fire, and the scarring of the landscape. Subjects included the huge dock cranes on Dalian wharf, the blast furnaces and smokestacks at the Shōwa steel works at Anshan, the gargantuan strip-mining machinery at Fushun (Figure 4), and the powerful steam locomotives operated by the SMR. In these images, the machines are the principal subjects; the human figures who attend to them, when they are shown, appear minuscule and insignificant by comparison. Their faces are usually covered, indistinguishable, or turned away from the camera.[31]

The immediate inspiration for this countertype image-making appears to have been the contemporary Soviet chronicling of the huge industrialization projects of the early Stalin era. The photographs in question, conceived under the direction of El Lissitzky, Alexander Rodchenko, and other artists of the Soviet constructivist school, emphasize

[28]This viewpoint was that of fellow Manchurian-based Japanese who shared a stake in the Manchukuo project. As Lori Watt shows, metropolitan Japanese may have looked upon the agricultural colonists as lesser Japanese. They certainly did after 1945, when those that survived the war were repatriated to Japan. See Watt, *When Empire Comes Home*, chapters 1–3.

[29]See Young, *Japan's Total Empire*, ch. 7; Wilson, 'The "New Paradise"', 271–2, 275, 280; Smith, *A Time of Crisis*, 348; Tamanoi, 'Knowledge, Power and Racial Classifications', 266; McCormack, 'Manchukuo', 118.

[30]Yoneki Zen'emon, *Kutsuya* (Shoemaker), MG 4:6, 8; Baba Yashio, *Gaito no hana uri* (Flower Seller), MG 4:6, 10; Mizuma Tetsuo, *Kurisuchenie* (Christian) *B*, MG 4:6, 12; Okada Chūji, *Otoko* (Man), NS6, plate 29.

[31]See in particular the images in MG 5:6, 1–8. See also: Azuma Tomofusa, *Kemuri* (Smoke), HOM 2:3; Ezaki Aritame, *Seitetsu sagyō* (Steelmaking), HOM 2:4; Fuchikami, *Kurēn to kūriki* (Crane and a Coolie), MG 4:6, 13; Seitoku Nobuyoshi, *Shōwa seikōsho* (Shōwa Steel Works), MG 4:6, 15; Sera Shōichi, *Seiyu kōjō* (Oil Refining Plant), MG 4:6, 16; Itō Kiichirō, *Kikansha* (Locomotive), MG 7:1, 17; Fuchikami, *Kōjō* (Factory), MG 7:1, 18.

FIGURE 4. *Sekitan* (Coal), Nakada Shiyo, 1937. The Nagoya City Art Museum.

unusual or extreme angles, dramatic contrasts in scale and tone, and dynamic diagonals. They were the centrepiece of the new, extravagantly creative international propaganda magazine *USSR in Construction* (1930–41) that was closely studied by SMR public-

relations experts, and appears to have encouraged Fuchikami's interest in constructivist-style experimentation.[32]

As in the early issues of *USSR in Construction*, the MSSK photographs of industrialization in Manchukuo depict the machines, plants, and mines of southern Manchuria as autonomous wonders that have no narrative; they are beneficent 'God Machines'[33] that function according to their own schedules, priorities, and logic. Interestingly these images, which reflect the rapid expansion of Manchuria's industrial base in such areas as iron and steel, chemicals, and precision engineering, and concurrent displacement of traditional skills, technologies, and patterns of life, were presented in many MSSK portfolios alongside pastoral imagery in such a way as not to disturb or undercut the message that Manchuria is an 'agricultural country'.[34] 'In this place', the storyline seemed to go, 'lions and lambs can co-exist, side-by-side, on their own terms'. The fact of their juxtaposition, in a unified atmospheric style, made it true. They were two sides of the same coin, two halves of one whole; progress without destruction, modernity without loss. Thus in the phantasmagorical space of the thematic magazine portfolio, Manchukuo could be the exception that disproved the rule.[35]

There was, nevertheless, a limit to the reconciliative magic of the MSSK assemblage. While images of factories and fields could be graphically harmonized in magazine space, they could not be integrated into each other. Each required its own frame, and the framing needed to be carefully executed in order to hide the 'dead' space in between the two realities, the empty, stripped, fenced, and guarded, 'safety' zones surrounding the new factories, mines, and railway depots; the evidence that industrialization was neither organic nor benign.

Thus the stretching of the pastoral form to accommodate the colonial exotic, the new migrant, the urban dispossessed, and finally, the new industrial, led to the creation of a body of photographs that stands apart and alone in relation to both Japanese and world photographic history. That they cohere stylistically despite their varied and dissonant constitutive elements, and construct a beguiling artificial world in which modernity brings only positive change, is evidence of artistic talent and creativity flourishing in distinctive ways in marginal colonial environments. One cannot but marvel at the ingenuity and pliancy of the MSSK's pastoral vision while simultaneously abhorring its carefully contrived artificiality and glaring untruthfulness.[36]

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[32]On Soviet photography of the era, see Buchloh, 'From Faktura to Factography', and Tupitsyn, *The Soviet Photograph*. On *USSR in Construction*, see Kozloff, *The Utopian Dream*. On Rodchenko's influence on Fuchikami, see Takeba, 'The Sun of a New Nation', 8. The strong, angular compositions of Fuchikami's early Manchurian photographs *Kurēn to kūriki* (Crane and a Coolie, 1929) and *Ressha bakushin* (Rushing Train, 1930) would suggest that this variant line of pictorialist photography in Manchuria was as much happened upon through place-specific experimentation as learned from others. For the former image, see MG 4:6, 15. For the latter, see NSZ2, 100.

[33]The expression is from Bedard, 'Weird Science', esp. 31–32.

[34]The expression is from MG 1:1, 3. For examples of these portfolios, see MG 4:6; MG 5:6; and MG 7:1. See also HOM 2:3 and 2:4. After 1931 economic development priorities shifted from agriculture to heavy industry, railway construction, and commercial expansion. See Eckstein et al., 'The Economic Development of Manchuria', 252–3; Nakagane, 'Manchukuo and Economic Development', 133–57; Myers, 'Creating a Modern Enclave Economy', 143–4.

[35]SMR films of the 1930s display a similar tendency of presenting oppositional socio-economic states and processes as 'complementary'. See Kramer, 'Film Forays', 104–105.

[36]For a countervailing reading of MSSK images as manifesting 'an uneasy coexistence of contradictions' relating to the colonial project in Manchukuo, and occasionally functioning in subversive ways relative to it, see Culver, *Glorify the Empire*, 102–106.

FIGURE 5. *Manchoukuo: The Sun of a New Nation*, Fuchikami Hakuyō, 1932. The Nagoya City Art Museum.

II

In 1932, the year Manchukuo was proclaimed, Fuchikami created the now well-known image of two smiling farmers standing shoulder to shoulder in an open field at sunrise (Figure 5).[37] Although the nationality of the figures is not indicated, the clean, tidy kimono, traditional Japanese rake cultivator, and front-centre positioning of the man on the left (hereafter referred to as 'Farmer 1') would suggest that he is Japanese. In contrast, the second figure ('Farmer 2') wears a shirt that looks somewhat soiled, and is standing to the side and slightly behind the first. While Farmer 1 directs his attention at the camera, Farmer 2 looks admiringly at Farmer 1. Beyond the different dress and positioning of the two men, which suggest Farmer 1's superior status, Farmer 2's unmistakably 'foreign' hoe identifies him as non-Japanese.[38] The image, which was made during Fuchikami's brief stint in the public relations bureau of the Guandong Army from March to June 1932, became the basis of a poster, which carried the words 'Manchoukuo: The Sun of a New Nation' across the sky, and 'Manchoukuo' again in the bottom right-hand corner. [39] This text, which makes clear the appropriation of the image for propaganda purposes, transforms the two good natured 'farmers' into

[37]NS6, 65.
[38]On the 'Manchu hoe' as a marker of cultural difference, see Tamanoi, 'Knowledge, Power and Racial Classifications', 267.
[39]Takeba, 'The Sun of a New Nation', 5.

idealized Japanese and 'Manchurian' agricultural 'types', whose easy older brother – younger brother relationship will provide a solid foundation for the fragile and contested new 'nation' forcefully created by the Guandong Army. It is surely no coincidence that the men carry their agricultural implements like rifles, implying that they are ready to cooperate in the armed 'defence' of 'their' state if necessary.

On one level, this poster seems to have been designed to impart a precisely delineated message about the constructive and friendly nature of Japanese leadership in Manchuria. However, reading it also as a romance opens up additional possibilities of interpretation, and creates a meaningful way of relating it to the bulk of MSSK photography, which did not circulate as overtly or directly as propaganda.[40]

According to Frye, romantic narratives extend an invitation to the reader (or viewer) to suspend disbelief and enter a notional setting that, despite its conventionality and ritualized nature, satisfies longings widely experienced across a variety of cultures. At the most fundamental level, romance is organized around a conceptual opposition between good and evil wherein a hero comes from some upper world, and, through a series of admirable deeds that are opposed by an enemy, produces the regeneration and transfiguration of a lesser one.[41] Applying this structural framework to Fuchikami's poster transforms Farmer 1 into a kind of archetypal Japanese colonist-hero, Farmer 2 into the Manchurian 'enemy' whose 'corrupt' leaders were defeated, and the Manchurian landscape behind them into the 'lesser world' that has been reconstituted in a new and improved form under the invigorating influence of Japanese colonialism.[42] The point in the narrative illustrated by the photograph would seem to be what Frye refers to as the final phase of romance, the so-called 'revival' stage, after the conflict has ended and what remains is a safely delivered world on the point of rebirth and renewal.[43] Frye argues that 'the central theme of this phase is that of maintaining the integrity of the innocent world against the assault of experience'.[44] Because it is based upon a documentary-like photograph suggestive of a report or record of an actual event, Fuchikami's poster resists being easily dismissed as a mere fable or as bogus symbolism. Yet, close study of the photograph reveals that its empirical or evidential value has been pared back to the point where little of substance remains, clearing the way for the maximization of its connotative power as an idea.

It is noteworthy in this regard that Fuchikami locates his characters unambiguously in a rural setting, but nevertheless omits all details of their location. Farmers 1 and 2 seem to be engaged in the first phase of the agricultural cycle, and the feeling of expectation and optimism conveyed by their smiles is enhanced by the nature of the composition: the middle and background spaces of the image are simple and uncluttered, and slightly blurred. They are surprisingly shallow, and suggest deep space rather than illustrate it. The figures were photographed in such a way as to create a dramatic contrast between foreground and background, earth and sky, so that the viewer experiences the sensation of looking into the sun. As such, the figures and the field behind appear at first glance more as outlines or shapes than well-exposed elements of the picture.

[40]Propaganda is defined here as the systematic dissemination of information designed to produce certain types of actions. It differs from persuasion in its appeal to emotion rather than logic. Kushner, *The Thought War*, 4–6; Jowett and O'Donnell, *Propaganda and Persuasion*, 16.
[41]Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism*, 186–206.
[42]See McCormack's description of how the Guandong Army justified its overthrow of Zhang Xueliang's government in his 'Manchukuo', 110.
[43]Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism*, 200–01.
[44]Ibid., 201.

The romance of a new beginning for both Japanese and 'Manchukuoans' in a 'pure' landscape protected by Japanese military power, and yet uncompromised by violent conflict or the disruptive forces of modernization and industrialization, is a mode that can be applied to much of the imagery produced by the MSSK: any Japanese male could assume the role of Farmer 1, and all Manchurians had been transformed – through the Manchurian Incident and subsequent creation of 'Manchukuo' – into Farmer 2s.[45] Although no MSSK imagery pushes the fiction of Japanese-Chinese brotherhood to the extent, as in 'Sun of a New Nation', that colonizer and colonized are shown sharing the same photographic space, unequal co-existence is nevertheless always implied by the colonial nature of the photographic enterprise: though unpictured, Farmer 1 can be considered inferentially present through the immense power tied up with the photographic process. This was the power to own and wield a camera, to safely travel to the site of photographic production, to make photographic subjects of complete strangers, and to control the manipulation, presentation, and circulation of the captured images. This power was not exclusive to the MSSK photographers concerned, but was shared with a broad network of soldiers, administrators, functionaries, and go-betweens that collectively supported such acts of artistic production in an environment of political domination. As long as they were Japanese, anyone could potentially step into the enviable shoes of the MSSK photographers. If they were not Japanese, then their natural place was before the camera rather than behind it. This is perhaps why depicting Japanese immigrant farmers photographically was a somewhat tricky affair in that it confused the power relationship underlying the mode.

From a broad historical perspective, this choice of a romantic framework with a simple dialectical structure in which good and evil are clearly identifiable is not surprising given that Fuchikami was directly employed by the SMR to create images of the colony that reflected favourably upon the policies of the colonial regime.[46] Furthermore, given the contested nature of Manchukuo's sovereignty in the international system and of Japan's role there, and the fact that the Guandong Army faced a serious internal insurgency problem until 1936, Fuchikami's depoliticization of the narrative by leaving both Japanese military 'heroes' and 'bandit' 'villains' out of the frame is consistent with the indirect, behind-the-scenes approach favoured by the Japanese military and its allies in Manchuria.[47]

III

It has been argued that the pastoral mode in Manchukuo art photography was transplanted from Japan, and that certain colonial imperatives specific to 1930s Manchuria stimulated place-specific adaptations. But what of the Japanese 'original'? What pictorial traditions and discourses, what ideas and imaginings, can be reckoned to constitute the core or essence of the borrowing, the larger genera out of which grew new, smaller ones?

[45]The concept of Japan's 'civilizing mission' is conveyed succinctly in Manshū Tetsudō Gaisha, *Manshū Shashin Chō/The Photographic Album of Manchuria 1931*. See also Wilson, 'The New Paradise', 265, and Young, *Japan's Total Empire*, 366–73.

[46]On the SMR as an instrument of imperialism, see Myers, 'Japanese Imperialism in Manchuria', 125–127, and Matsusaka, 'Managing Occupied Manchuria', 98–99.

[47]On the 'bandit' problem, see Coox, 'The Kwantung Army Dimension', 412–14. On the preference of the Guandong Army for puppet-style leadership, see Matsusaka, 'Managing Occupied Manchuria', 105–107, and McCormack, 'Manchukuo', 112.

This final section of the article explores the question of provenance by means of Derrida's writings on the processes by which meaning is continuously invented, as established sign systems – like those associated with pastoral paintings and photographs – are repeatedly used by new cultural producers in ever-changing contexts.[48] Accordingly, a photograph can never be an autonomous thing only comprehensible on its own terms. Rather, it functions as a weave of subject matter, stylistic elements, and iconographies of previous images that have been consciously or unconsciously 'cited' by the photographer to become something 'new' while nevertheless being constituted of recognizable features from other (earlier) texts.[49] Sameness and difference therefore co-exist within every photographic act.

Engaging in a simplified deconstructionist exercise to track the history of the pastoral concept in Japan before it was 'picked up' in Manchuria is helpful in showing the concept's importance relative to the contemporary cultural imagination. As mentioned in Section I above, during the 1920s many amateur photographers in Japan developed a strong interest in producing romantic depictions of Japanese peasants and villagers.[50] Indeed by the early 1920s, such image-making was already beginning to trace a kind of inward spiral in which pictorialist photographs that imitated pastoral paintings were displacing those very paintings as the inspiration for new pictorialist photographs. Taking our context-mapping reverse chronology beyond the 1920s brings to the fore not photographs, but Western-style Japanese paintings (*yōga*) of the 1870s, 1880s, 1890s, and early 1900s that drew inspiration from French Barbizon school paintings of the mid-nineteenth century.[51] As few Japanese artists had the opportunity to travel to Europe to personally experience the landscapes by Jean-François Millet, Jean-Baptiste-Camille Corot, and Pierre Étienne Théodore Rousseau that were regarded as the epitome of Western artistic achievement, the influence came indirectly: from the Italian artist-teacher, Antonio Fontanesi, who transmitted the style to his Japanese students during his professorial tenure at the Kōbu Bijutsu Gakkō (Technological Art School) in Tokyo from 1876 to 1878; from copies of those originals executed by Japanese artists who underwent educational rites of passage in France; and after 1905, from monochrome photographic reproductions of both the French originals and Japanese copies that appeared in Japanese books and magazines.[52] Thus extends a long backward-pointing arrow from MSSK exhibitions in Dalian, Shenyang, and Changchun to pictorialist landscape photographs produced by photography club amateurs across Japan, to photographic copies of Barbizon works and Japanese *yōga* paintings in the Barbizon style reproduced in Japanese art books and magazines, and so forth all the way to the painting and sketching classes given by Fontanesi in Tokyo to the first

[48]Derrida terms this the 'iterability' of texts. See his *Marges de la philosophie*, 11. For a helpful explanation of principle, see Culler, *On Deconstruction*, 118–120.
[49]Derrida, *Marges de la philosophie*, 9–10.
[50]See for example Ohashi Matsutarō, *Aki no inaka* (Autumn in a Village, 1929), Masuko Aitarō, *Nōfu kōsaku* (Farmer in the Field, 1926), Okubo Kōroku, *Shimo no asa* (Frosty Morning, 1926) and *Shunpi en en* (A Relaxed Spring Day, 1926), and Hagiwara Roshū, *Kōsaku* (Farming, 1928), in Tōkyōto Shashin Bijutsukan, *Nihon no pikutoriarizumu*, 31, 36, 65, 66, and 120 respectively.
[51]See for example Asai Chū, *Shūkō* (Autumn Field, 1887), *Warabukiyane* (Straw-thatched Roof, 1887), and *Shūkaku* (Harvest, 1893); Morizumi Isana, *Fūkei (ie no aru fūkei)* (Landscape with a House, undated); Takahashi Genkichi, *Mori* (Forest, undated); Nakamaru Seijūrō, *Fūkei* (Landscape, undated), in Barubizon-ha to Nihon Ten Jikkō Iinkai, *Barubizon-ha*, 114, 115, 117, 119, 120, and 124 respectively. On the Barbizon school, see Green, *The Spectacle of Nature*, 116–20 and Adams, *The Barbizon School*, ch. 1–3.
[52]Takano et al., 'Painters of Barbizon and Japan', 19–21. See also Volk, 'Early Japanese Collecting', 59.

generation of Western-trained Japanese artists, and through those to the paintings and drawings of Millet and his contemporaries in a hamlet in north-central France, and beyond. Accordingly, particular artistic renditions or interpretations of the French countryside that served as quite specific cultural and social interventions in nineteenth-century France[53] were borrowed and resignified in the context of Meiji and Taishō era Japan, only to be differentially repeated again in 1930s Manchuria.

While the genealogy of the pastoral form in Japan is not difficult to establish, discovering the specific nature of the pastoral *idea* that any single photograph or painting extols is quite another matter. Here the contextual 'chains' or 'systems' of meaning that Derrida theorizes become more numerous and complex, so that the context becomes almost infinite. Nevertheless, certain general themes relating to pastoral imagery can be identified that connect to broad intellectual and cultural currents of the Meiji and Taishō periods. These include anxieties arising from accelerating industrialization and the fragmenting processes of modernity, nostalgic longing for traditional institutions and structures that seemed in better harmony with natural forces and tradition, and, after 1900, advocacy of humanism and egalitarianism, and agrarianist calls for the reinstatement of the countryside to the centre of Japanese socio-economic life.[54]

Reversing our time-arrow so that it points forward into 1930s Manchuria, the question becomes which of the above ideas and narratives influenced the impetus to reproduce the pastoral form in Manchukuo, and what was the dynamic of the transfer. Here it is the action at the tip of the arrow, the creation – picture by picture – of the specific Manchukuo pastoral in the ongoing moment of Manchukuo's invention, that is the focus of inquiry. Derrida proposes the following three ways to consider such motive forces of invention: firstly, 'the presence of' the photographer as the active agent in the creation of the images ; secondly, 'the entire environment and horizon of his experience'; and, thirdly 'the intention, the meaning which at a given moment would animate his inscription'.[55] Let us look at each of these in turn in relation to the collectivity of Japanese art photography in 1930s Manchukuo.

As to 'the presence of' the photographer , it might be proposed that the fact or condition of engaging in photographic activity in the Manchurian countryside was circumscribed and precarious. As we have seen, it depended upon the power and resources of the Guandong Army to provide the necessary protection, and also its coercive force (whether actual or potential) to secure the co-operation of the non-Japanese photographic subjects.[56] Thus the vital company or society of the MSSK photographers, the social fact of their camera-wielding presence on the ground, was the predominant power of the Japanese military in Manchuria. As discussed in the preceding section, this made it possible for photographers like Fuchikami to enjoy convenient, safe, and wide-ranging access to the territory and people of northeast China for their art-making.[57] The 'presence' of the photographer as a factor in shaping cultural production can thereby be thought of as an extension of the broader Japanese

[53]Cachin, 'Le paysage de peintre'; Herbert, 'City vs Country'.
[54]On the marginalization of the rural sector in Japan, see Smith, *A Time of Crisis*, 43–4. On agrarianism, see Havens, *Farm and Nation in Modern Japan*, chs1 and 5; Waswo, 'The Transformation of Rural Society', 590–96; and Vlastos, 'Agrarianism', 79–94. On nostalgia for an idealized rural past, see Scheiner, 'The Japanese Village', 67–69.
[55]Derrida, *Marges de la philosophie*, 377.
[56]Details about the security required for 'safe' visits to Manchurian villages are provided in Young, *Japan's Total Empire*, 296–97.
[57]On state sponsorship of MSSK photographic activity, see Takeba, 'The Sun of a New Nation', 4.

colonial presence in Manchuria, with the pastoral form taking on new and possibly unintended meaning as a component of the evolving apparatus of control.

With regard to Derrida's second factor, that of 'the entire environment and horizon' of the photographer's 'experience', it is proposed that the radical enlargement of Japan's position in northeast China after 1931, and the imperative to consolidate and legitimate this suzerainty in the face of various kinds of opposition, was the defining circumstance. The MSSK was established only one year after the Manchurian Incident, and the group's objective of incorporating Manchurian art photography into the main Japanese photographic tradition was inevitably bound up with the Guandong Army's undertaking to fuse its colonial acquisition to the body of Japan's expanding empire. While the individual experiences of the MSSK photographers certainly transcended their shared connection to the Manchukuo project, in the context of the (mostly negative) international attention directed at Japanese expansionist initiatives in northeast China in the 1930s, making Manchukuo a success was in all likelihood the reality that framed their creative activity in the most important and sustained way.[58] If we were to call this an imperialist-secessionist 'Manchukuoan perspective' on the world, then in terms of Derrida's second factor the pastoral form can be thought of as the imposition by Fuchikami and his peers of a well-recognized and accepted vision of a 'good' and 'wholesome' place in lieu of the 'ill begotten', 'violent', 'chaotic' one that was common in international discourse.[59]

The issue of creative intention is the most complex of Derrida's three factors, particularly given the dearth of writings by Fuchikami or other MSSK photographers on the matter. Nevertheless, a number of important general points can be made. From the perspective of the photographers' artistic goals, these were heavily influenced by the institutional art photography system of the day. From the turn of the twentieth century through to the end of the Pacific War, art photography in Japan was practiced by club-based amateurs who developed a strong attachment to pictorialism. Until the late 1920s, and in some cases well into the 1930s, it was held in these circles that photographic art should resemble paintings; therefore, photographs tended to be artified by means of soft-focus lenses and multilayered printing processes, and photographic subject matter tended to imitate that of establishment-legitimated tableaux that had become well entrenched in popular culture as 'art'.[60] Here, as we have seen, the paintings and drawings of the French Barbizon school artists, as well as those of the impressionists and post-impressionists, and Japanese *yōga* paintings influenced by these styles, were some of the principal models.[61] In the 1930s this preoccupation with imitating paintings began to change under the influence of pictorialism's decline in Europe and the United States. However, the process of change was slower in Japan, in part because the rigidly

[58]On this point see Gardener, 'Colonialism and the Avant-Garde', 13. For another perspective, see Tamanoi, 'Knowledge, Power and Racial Classifications', 251.

[59]Baskett makes a similar point in relation to Manchuria Motion Picture Corporation films in his 'Goodwill Hunting', 141.

[60]On Japanese pictorialism, see Okatsuka, 'Nihon kindai shashin', 10–11 and Mitsuda, 'Shashin geijutsu', 145. On the defining influence upon the pictorialist genre of the Tōkyō Shashin Kenkyūkai (Tokyo Photographic Research Society) and the photography competitions/exhibitions it organized, see Kaneko, 'The Origins and Development', 107–108.

[61]In this regard, see the photographs reproduced in Tōkyōto Shashin Bijutsukan, *Nihon no pikutoriarizumu* and NSZ2.

hierarchical structure of the clubs and the entrenched, exclusive nature of the photography competitions encouraged traditionalism and conservatism.[62] This was certainly true in the case of the MSSK. In Manchuria the romantic Barbizon school aesthetic was preserved long after it had faded away in Japan proper, and might therefore be considered the last pictorialist shimmering of the style's long afterglow. By reproducing it in Manchuria, these photographers were striving to make art on terms which left no room for confusion about their intentions and objectives.[63]

But in reproducing the pastoral form in Manchuria to legitimize their photographic production as art, were they also seeking to legitimize their subject – rural Manchukuo – in the manner that rural France had been legitimized by Millet and his successors in the nineteenth century as a worthy subject of art? Certainly the image of Manchuria as an agrarian paradise in which the legitimacy of the state and of history was vouched for by the purity and contentment of the humble landowning farmer was not at odds with the colonial regime's orientation or developmental agenda. Quite the opposite: Manchuria's vast plains and agriculturally based economy were valued by its military administrators for the way they augmented the empire's agricultural capacity and, along with the region's raw materials, provided the basis for an alternative developmental model to the rationalist, market-driven, urban-centred one being pursued in Japan proper.[64] Its Korean and Russian villages were appreciated for the way they supported the illusion of equitable, balanced, multi-ethnic citizenship, thus cloaking the Guandong Army program of undermining Chinese nationalism in Manchuria.[65] Finally, its fabled 'spaciousness' was deemed crucially important because of the hope it held out for a radical extension of the colonial regime's continental presence through immigration.[66] The last of these points is perhaps the most important. In 1932 the Guandong Army initiated a campaign for a migration program to rural Manchuria that would help shore up its tenuous hold on the region's extensive hinterland by converting Depression-starved and 'superfluous' Japanese peasants into hardy soldier-colonists.[67] The subsequent, aforementioned Village-Division Campaign, approved by the Japanese government in 1936, was based on the promise of land ownership and bountiful harvests, but also on the fiction that the fast-disappearing 'pure', 'natural' agricultural way of life of the participating Japanese villages could be recreated in a stable way in Manchuria in harmony with traditional 'Manchurian' indigenous rhythms, structures, practices, and values.[68]

[62]These characteristics of amateur photography clubs and club-based photo competitions are by no means exclusive to pre-war Japan. They are, however, particularly prominent in the Japanese case. On the extended life of pictorialism in Japan, see Kaneko, 'Origins and Development', 113; Ross, 'Poetry of Light', 21; Fraser, *Photography and Japan*, 17.

[63]See the discussion of Fuchikami's 1938 essay 'Shashin geijutsu ni tsuite' (A Talk Regarding Photographic Art), in Iizawa 'Shashin geijutsu', 6. From this it is clear that Fuchikami was preoccupied with the acceptance of photography as a legitimate art form.

[64]On the Guandong Army's anti-capitalist orientation, see Nakagane, 'Manchukuo and Economic Development', 141–3. On Manchukuo as a potential bread basket for the Japanese empire, see Myers, 'Creating a Modern Enclave Economy', 149–50.

[65]On the disingenuousness of the multi-ethnic state idea as deployed by the Guandong Army, see Egler, 'Pan-Asianism', 229–36; Young, *Japan's Total Empire*, 286–91; Yamamuro, *Manchuria under Japanese Dominion*, 89.

[66]Wilson, *The Manchurian Crisis*, 58; Dower, 'Ways of Seeing', 12. That the Manchurian plains had in fact been mostly settled by 1930 is shown in Eckstein et al., 'The Economic Development of Manchuria', 251–52.

[67]Wilson, 'The New Paradise', 257, 262–63, and 'Securing Prosperity and Serving the Nation', 159–62.

[68]See for example MG 4:12, 1–14; Wilson, 'The New Paradise', 275–6.

In the light of these considerations it is interesting that the borrowed pastoral forms used by Japanese art photographers to depict agricultural life in northeast China have the effect of folding the particular into the general, of merging the sharp edges of specific, sharply-contested struggles over the control of parcels of productive land into fuzzily delineated, symbolic evocations of humanity's age-old relationship with field and plow.[69] Whether or not it was their intention, the MSSK photographers' aestheticization of the Manchurian countryside, on visual terms that were well-established and admired in Japan and internationally, was a mask that sustained the falsehood that the Manchurian frontier remained 'open', safe, and impervious to the dislocating forces of modernization; it thereby lent support to the Guandong Army's controversial call for a mass-migration program. If, as Duncan and Duncan state, landscapes are inherently ideological in that they function to support 'a set of ideas and values, unquestioned assumptions about the way a society *is*, or should be organized', then the MSSK's landscapes can be interpreted as encoded texts that cite well-established features of the landscape tradition in support of the Manchurian project.[70] In other words, MSSK landscapes 'tame' the Manchurian countryside for travel and immigration by depoliticizing it and depriving the depicted Chinese communities of their historical and cultural agency. Although Fuchikami and his peers likely did not consider their pictures as propaganda, neither did they use the power of their cameras to challenge official myth-making in support of the imperialist 'regime of authenticity' in Manchukuo and Manchurian colonization.[71] Additionally, following the colonial regime's shift after 1932 to a focus upon industrialization and infrastructure development, and the concomitant evolution of the character and identity of Manchuria to one characterized increasingly by modernization and urbanization,[72] MSSK image-making did not acknowledge or account for the ways in which these changes threatened or undermined the Japanese agrarianist underpinnings of the pastoral ideal; rather, as we have seen, it simply accommodated them by creating discrete, compartmentalized 'industrial spaces' within the broader vision of the rural idyll.

Thus with respect to Derrida's three motive forces, it might be proposed that Fuchikami and his peers reproduced the pastoral form out of an imperative to conform to specific artistic standards and political expectations unique to the colonial milieu of 1930s Manchukuo. With respect to the former, the most important was the well-established Barbizon school aesthetic that was established in Manchuria by Fuchikami as the main criterion by which serious photographic art-making in the colony was differentiated from mere dilettantism and snap-shooting. By striving to meet that standard, the creative efforts of amateur enthusiasts in a distant part of the Japanese empire were connected to an esteemed artistic tradition dating back to Fontanesi and the first generation of *yōga* students in Japan, and beyond them to Millet, Corot, and the legendary artists' colony in the village of Barbizon in France. The validity of this standard in colonial Manchuria was reinforced by the tidy manner

[69]On how agricultural land was obtained for Japanese migrants, see Wilson 'The New Paradise', 267–68, and McCormack, 'Manchukuo', 119–20.
[70]Duncan and Duncan, '(Re)reading the Landscape', 123.
[71]The expression is from Duara, *Sovereignty and Authenticity*, 29–34. On myth-making in support of the Manchurian emigration project, see Young, *Japan's Total Empire*, 383–85.
[72]See note 34.

in which it dovetailed with the political expectation that art production in Manchukuo would lend support to the objectives of the regime.[73] This it did by helping to foster the illusion whose supposed authenticity underwrote the colonial nation-building project: that of tranquil villages and mild-mannered peasants; of well-integrated immigrants of various ethnicities whose successful lives vouched for the integrity of the *minzoku kyōwa* (Interracial Harmony) slogan; and of non-disruptive mining, forestry, dam-building, road and rail construction, urban development, and tourism.

IV

This study of the form, content, and cultural context of MSSK art photography has shown that in the eager, heady environment of 1930s Manchukuo, Japanese amateur photographers contributed to the colonial project in indirect but significant ways. In their photographic visits to villages and landscapes 'opened' to Japan as a result of the Manchurian Incident, Fuchikami Hakuyō and his peers utilized the well-established and respected Barbizon school aesthetic as a means of interpreting and universalizing unfamiliar peoples and settings. The photographers also boldly stretched the genre by opening it to new subjects, like urban street-folk and industrial scenery, and photographic styles – documentary, Soviet constructivist – not conventionally associated with rural lyricism. As argued in Section II above, the Manchukuo pastoral was underwritten narratively by the romantic trope of external heroic intervention to rescue and reform a lesser world.

At one level the process of transposing a well-established Western aesthetic onto 'new', 'Asian' subject matter can be thought of as consistent with Japanese artistic practice after 1868, and hence unremarkable. As shown in Section III, Millet-esque art had a long and distinguished pedigree in Japan, dating back to foundational and iconic *yōga* of the Meiji and Taishō periods, and becoming associated in some cases with reactionary responses to the destructive effects of modernization. By the 1930s, as illustrated by the publisher Iwanami Shoten's adoption in 1933 of Millet's *The Sower* as its company logo, Barbizon school iconography had become an enduring marker not only of 'good' art, but of 'culture' in the broadest sense. It is not surprising, therefore, that as inheritors of a tradition that held heroic depictions of 'disappearing' peasants in high esteem, Fuchikami and the MSSK sought to reproduce it in their photographic practice in Manchuria.

At a deeper level, just as the translation of a mid-nineteenth century French aesthetic into late-nineteenth century Japanese terms inevitably altered the original in certain ways, so its further translation into 1930s Manchurian ones changed it again. Most importantly in the latter case, the logic of colonial modernization in Manchuria, unlike that of more democratic modernization in Japan, allowed for no meaningful cultural engagement with the associated problem of destruction and loss of traditional economies and lifestyles. Rather, it required that any ambivalence about the construction of a new, urban-centred, industrially based society in northeast China be suppressed and replaced by an affirmation of the myth of a continuing, uncontaminated rural paradise. On the basis of this vital difference, made possible by widespread ignorance in Japan and

[73]Kushner's consideration of how propaganda-saturated environments are both made and become deeply embedded in the 'social psychology of a population' is helpful in understanding how the MSSK photographers might have unconsciously worked to validate Japanese imperialist propaganda in Manchuria. See Kushner, *The Thought War*, 4.

elsewhere of actual conditions in the Manchurian hinterland, it can be suggested that, however natural and mild the process of stylistic borrowing from Japan to Manchuria might seem on the surface, the deeper effect was to sever the Barbizon school aesthetic from its cultural roots in nostalgia and the management of loss. In Manchukuo, where the colonial regime based its legitimacy in part on the promise of non-destructive modernization, the archetypal sower could not be regarded as threatened with extinction as he was elsewhere; he could not be identified nostalgically with a simpler, purer, bygone age. Rather, the Manchukuo sower had to be projected as the definitive and enduring reality of northeast China even as he was forcibly being displaced from his fields by new factories, roads, railways, and Japanese migrants. This underlying deception made the 'imposition' of the pastoral form in Manchuria 'heavy' and 'violent' in a manner that was different from how it was used in Japan.

Therefore, while MSSK depictions of Manchuria were circulated as personal, artistically inflected records of actual places and situations in the region, they can now be seen as constructions of a fictitious and quite misleading colonial ideal. Like 'The Sun of a New Nation' image that Fuchikami made for the Guandong Army in 1932, the art photographs produced by the MSSK in the subsequent decade creatively manipulate Barbizon school motifs and forms in support of the Manchukuo project. While none of these photos is as blatantly deceptive or political as Fuchikami's fanciful partnering of a 'Japanese' and 'Manchurian' farmer in 'Sun of a New Nation', the systematic process of erasure involved in their production, and the total colonial context of that production, nevertheless locates them solidly within the realm of Manchukuo propaganda.

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