

*My Idealed John Bulleses* is Markino's dedication to the beauty and strength of English women. "John Bulleses," as he calls them, were his "teachers in many ways and shall be in the future" (Markino 1912, 53). Markino lived in England during the suffragette movement which was his main reason and one of his main sources of inspiration in writing this book. Suffragettes and other women not affiliated with the suffragette movement enlightened Markino to another way of seeing the world and in doing so prompted him to think about what it meant to be a woman in London society, and, on a larger scale, what it meant to be a woman in the world, especially in Markino's home country of Japan. The book is his reflection of all that they had taught him through their direct instruction and by his observations of them. It is clear that he ardently holds these "John Bulleses" to be some of the most beautiful creatures on earth, not because of their looks, although he admires that too, but because they are compassionate, strong, wise, intelligent, and persevering individuals. Much of the book is written in a series of anecdotes coupled with his own thoughts and cultural interludes, creating a complicated web of both narrative and philosophical thought. Markino laughs at the anti-suffragist claims that women do not possess the intelligence or have the civility to participate in the government, noting, "What an awfully bad memory [the anti-suffragettes] have. Have [they] already forgotten the late Queen Victoria who was most gracefully reigning till ten years ago" (Markino 1912, 135). Through it all, he comes to the understanding that women are empowered and should have and have the ability to vote and participate in government and legislation in productive ways. Another apt name for the book could have been "An Ode to English Women".

## **References**

Markino, Yoshio. 1912. *My Idealed John Bulleses*. London: Constable.

This series of quotes centers around the lessons that Markino learned from his interactions with English women, many of these contributing to larger, more complicated social questions. Due to the anecdotal nature of the book, it can be difficult to understand context through short quotations, but contextual information will be provided in the annotations.

~“When the men get older they become more generous and more philosophical. The women are reverse. Those young girls are very ‘charming and have broad minds, ready to forgive anything. But when they get older seven out of ten become very selfish... I told this to one of my young John Bullesses. She was very indignant.’ We women never change our mind by age. It is your own part which is changing according to the age of women...When a charming young girl speaks to you, you listen to her very eagerly. Even when she says really rude things, you always accept her with a jolly good heart. And if an elder lady opposes against you about a trifle thing, immediately you change your countenance.” (Markino 1912, 63-64)

In My Idealed John Bulless, Markino has a habit of admitting to a prior belief or way of thinking that gets changed because he is able to listen to an opposing voice. One of the main modes of facilitating understanding is simply to listen. He originally errs by assuming that it is the other person and not his own perceptions that is creating issues, but through a simple conversation he is able to gain a new perspective. He even admits to feeling shame about his previous convictions and undertakes a new challenge to cut through appearances in order to gain a truer understanding of another human being, to see women not as picturesque portraits but as a complex people.

~ “[Publishers] won't pay us what they ought to. Don't call us more fortunate than you, because we have work. I work hard from morning until late night, but the payment is not enough to keep myself.” (Markino 1912, 129)

These sentences are actually Markino quoting one of his female friends, discussing the issues of working as male and female artists. Publishers, during this time period, often refused to hire men to illustrate newspapers. Markino came to her angry that he was not being hired; however, it is explained that publishers hire women because they are cheaper. Here, the underbelly of London society is shown, where women are less valued and where society itself cuts them off at the knees from being able to support themselves.

~“But once a John Bulless wanted to try on my hakama (a sort of skirt). I put it out for her. Immediately she put it on over her head. As you know, hakama looks very much like skirt, but it is divided in the middle. It is more like trousers, only the both sides are quite full. That John Bulless was entangled with hakama, and I had to release her breathing by pulling off hakama from her head. Until this time I did not know that ladies put on their skirt over their head. It was an amazingly new lesson for me.” (Markino 1912, 37)

A humorous interaction between Markino and one of his women friends, offering a lighter touch that exhibits the barriers between cultures and genders. While Markino does not necessarily gain a direct lesson by the experience, it can be argued the he is continuing the lesson of keeping an open space for communication and sharing of different life experiences.