

**WENDY JONES NAKANISHI: AN AMERICAN RESIDENT IN JAPAN
HER LIFE AND WORK THROUGH THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND
LITERARY CREATIVITY**

Nataša Potočnik

Abstract

Wendy Jones Nakanishi is a professor of English Language and Comparative Cultures at a small private college located in the south of Japan: Shikoku Gakuin University in Kagawa prefecture. It is a life far removed from her roots. She grew up in a tiny town in the northwestern corner of Indiana and spent her childhood holidays at her grandparents' farm in the central part of the state. She received graduate degrees in Indiana, in England and in Scotland and she also spent a year in France and half a year in Holland.

Nakanishi has published widely in America, Japan and Europe. Her academic research ranges from eighteenth-century English literature to the analysis of contemporary Japanese and British authors to sociological topics related to Japan. She was an Associate Member of the Ruskin Programme, based at Lancaster University in England, and currently belongs to the Iris Murdoch Society of Japan.

She has published a considerable body of academic work – critical monographs, articles and book reviews – and, in recent years, has embarked on writing short stories and 'creative non-fiction' pieces based on her experience of living in Japan for the past twenty-seven years as an American 'ex-pat', as a university professor, and as the wife of a Japanese farmer and the mother of three sons. Her stories have been published in various literary magazines in Japan and abroad and reflect her 'life story' as a foreigner residing in that country. In this article, I will focus on her 'creative non-fiction' stories.

Key words: Wendy Jones Nakanishi's short stories and her biography, portrayal of Japanese and American societies in her works, as a woman and a foreigner in Japan

INTRODUCTION

The ability to exhibit tolerance and to live in peace with others is a key to leading a happy life. It may be that the cultivation of this virtue is especially recommended for literary-minded expatriates – people who decide to write about different cultures on the basis of their life experiences in the countries they have chosen to inhabit.

The importance of such literature penned by creative emigrant writers, whether it takes the form of poetry or prose, is that it offers an intimate perspective on a country and culture perceived as foreign to the writers: a viewpoint that is both personal and

objective. The author pens his own feelings and reactions while remaining distanced from what he describes. His work thus becomes a source of information that can entertain and instruct his readers.

Important literature has been written by Slovenian emigrants living abroad and especially by those residents in the United States. Among Slovene priests who went to the United States as missionaries (the best known are M. A. Kappers, Friderik Baraga and Andrej B. Smolnikar) who were followed by thousands of emigrants in the 19th and 20th century. Many of them wrote autobiographies, prose works, poetry and plays. They published their works mainly on Slovene, although the best known author among them, Louis Adamic (1898–1951), wrote all of his works in English.

Wendy Jones Nakanishi is an American who is a long-term resident of Japan. Her life experiences in her adoptive country are vividly expressed through her short stories, often taking the form of autobiographical fragments. I believe she is an author worth mentioning. She is a good observer of the mysteries and contradictions inherent in Japanese culture. I have been fortunate enough to become personally acquainted with her this article. I would like to analyse briefly her work.

GROWING UP IN THE UNITED STATES: INDIANA AND HER EDUCATION

Wendy Jones was born on June 21st, 1954, in Goshen, Indiana. She lived in the small town of Syracuse in northern Indiana until she was three. Her father was an assistant cashier at the only bank in that town. Her mother was a farmer's daughter from central Indiana. Nakanishi had an older brother and two older sisters. When she was two her father contracted polio. He had been a very keen athlete, fond of baseball and tennis and of swimming in the area's numerous lakes, but polio struck suddenly and left him with a slight limp, a disaster, in Nakanishi's opinion, that affected him mentally as well as physically:

Certainly, he never really recovered from losing his ability to walk easily. He could walk, with or without using a cane, but it really made him rather bitter and he left off playing sports altogether. (Potočnik 2010: n.pag.)

When she was three, her family moved seventy miles north, to a tiny town in the northwestern corner of Indiana called Rolling Prairie that had a population of only 500, and her father became the manager of the Rolling Prairie Bank. It was a 'new start' for them all, but their happiness was to be short-lived. When Nakanishi was seven, her father left the family home forever; when she was nine, her parents divorced. Shortly afterwards, her father married a local girl from Rolling Prairie who used to work at his bank and moved back to Syracuse, where he had become president of the bank.

Wendy then experienced a sad period of her life, as she explained in the course of an interview I conducted with her:

This situation was pretty catastrophic for my brother and sisters and me because our mother sank into a deep depression after Dad left and, although

we lived in quite a nice house, she just couldn't summon up enough energy sometimes even to leave her bedroom. Things fell apart. It was a sort of schizophrenic existence: my family had had social status, had joined the kind of 'elite' of the town when my father was with us but, when he left, our house became shabby and dark and we felt quite poor in a way. We didn't have nice clothes and our mother rarely got up to prepare our breakfasts or our lunches for school. I was very depressed actually, and I felt life was very grey and that there was little to be hopeful about. (*Ibid.*)

Until Wendy was about thirteen, she was doing badly academically as well as personally. She knew that things must change when she entered junior high school and came to the realization that if anyone was going to change her life, it had to be her. She started working harder at school and became a top student. In her final year of high school, when all her siblings had already left home, she experienced a sense of liberation, changing from being a shy girl with few friends to a popular student who was the editor of the school year book and the president of its French club. Just before graduating she learned that she had been awarded two scholarships, making possible her plan to study at Indiana University with few financial worries. She left Rolling Prairie at the age of eighteen never to return for any length of time. She would only go back for short visits. As she later recalled:

I think it was probably a kind of inspiration. I felt that I had to make a change, and that I needed to escape from my own background. (*Ibid.*)

At Indiana University she was thrilled suddenly to be immersed in an interesting, challenging environment, rubbing shoulders with students of all backgrounds, from all over the world. She had left behind, forever, she thought, a tiny, occasionally claustrophobic environment, landing in a lively and vibrant intellectual community that she loved.

On graduating from high school she had embarked on a tour of Europe, courtesy of her father. She feels he was stingy emotionally and financially with her throughout his life, but she would always be grateful for the one wonderful life-changing present he had bestowed on her, as she recollected in my interview:

One thing my father did do for me and my two sisters was to treat us to a trip to Europe as a high school graduation present. The trip lasted about two months, and I was with a lot of other high school students from all over the States. When the plane landed at O'Hare, I was the last person off; I just wanted to stay on the plane and return to Europe. (*Ibid.*)

Wendy realized then that she wanted travel and adventure. At Indiana University she eventually settled on English literature as her major, and this would enable her to return to England on a 'Junior Year Abroad' program. She went to Lancaster and, again, was reluctant to return to America, but she needed to go back to graduate from Indiana University. She did her senior honors thesis on the topic of marriage in three of Jane Austen's novels. After graduating from Indiana University, she went to Paris and got a job as an au pair, working for a family in a tiny town called L'Etang-la-Ville on the

outskirts of Paris for three months. Her short story "One Day" appeared on the Internet Short Story Forum and is based on this experience.

Later Wendy rented an apartment in nearby St. Germain-en-Laye and set up her own private language school with an English friend. She stayed in Paris for about nine months and easily made a living by catering to the large number of French people eager to learn English. After her year in France, she returned to Lancaster and got her MA in 1978 with a thesis on the topic: 'The Familiar Letter in the Eighteenth Century, with Special Reference to Horace Walpole and to Swift's *Journal to Stella*'. She graduated with first-class honors, and Dr. Clive Probyn, her favorite professor at Lancaster University, urged her to continue her studies. But her father had refused to help her financially with her postgraduate studies, so she needed to return to America to work to repay the loan she had taken out for her year at Lancaster. She worked as a secretary in Chicago, employed for six months by Rotary International and then for six months by Northwestern University's mathematics department. When she had nearly repaid her loan, an English friend urged her, as she recalled in the course of our interview, to 'Just give it all up and come and join him'. (*Ibid.*)

Wendy joined him in Groningen for six months. She knew that her friend was applying to do a doctorate at Edinburgh University and, during her time working as a secretary in Chicago, she had typed up an application for Edinburgh for herself, sending it off with a copy of her MA thesis. When she returned to America from Holland to find work for the summer, she was amazed and delighted to discover that she had been awarded a full scholarship at Edinburgh University. On the advice of her tutor she devoted her research to a study of the letters of Alexander Pope and, under the guidance of another tutor wrote her doctoral thesis on the contemporary context of his correspondence.

But fate did not intend for her to rest comfortably on her laurels in Britain. It so happened that, in her last year, she saw a notice posted by a certain Professor Tanizaki from Japan who wanted to create a link between his new university, Tokushima Bunri, in Kagawa prefecture in Japan, and Edinburgh University. So he put up an advertisement for a position there for an Edinburgh graduate starting in the spring of 1984. Knowing that her prospects for obtaining a teaching position were bleak in America or Europe, as there were few spots open for eighteenth-century scholars, Wendy decided to apply for the job. To her surprise, she got it. This is the story of how and why Wendy first ventured to Japan, a country, she admits, she knew nothing about at that time and had little interest in.

Wendy arrived in Japan in March 1984, having just completed her doctorate at Edinburgh University. After first teaching for five years at Tokushima Bunri University, she got a tenured position at Shikoku Gakuin University in Zentsuji, and has been teaching there for the past twenty-two years.

She had only meant to spend a short time in Japan, but two years after her arrival in Japan, she happened to meet the Japanese man whom she would marry a year later. She now lives in Kinashi, a western suburb of Takamatsu on the island of Shikoku, with her husband and their three sons. As she recalls in one of her stories, she had felt initially dismayed by her new life in Japan, but meeting her future husband changed her feelings:

Never mind, I thought. It's only for a few years. But a chance encounter with a farmer changed all that, diverting my future in a direction I never could have predicted, let alone sought. (Nakanishi 2005b: 290)

AS A WOMAN AND A FOREIGNER IN JAPAN

Wendy Jones Nakanishi thinks that Japan remains a fundamentally chauvinistic society, with men routinely accorded higher social status and better salaries than women. Japanese women continue to suffer gender discrimination, although the situation has improved somewhat in recent years.

When Wendy first arrived in Japan, she felt that she was treated extremely well even though she was a woman. She believes that this was partly attributable to her being an Edinburgh graduate with a Ph.D. In her writings, she has fondly recalled those early days of being a 'pampered pet':

I'm occasionally nostalgic for the days of special privileges. When I applied for a driver's license over twenty years ago, for example, I was escorted into a special room at the license center, plied with tea and cakes, and treated like an honored guest while my papers were being processed. (Nakanishi 2007c: 16)

She had a very nice life as a single woman, a professional, but she thinks she never really understood the Japanese experience until after she had been in the country for three years and got married. Then she began to comprehend what it really means to live in Japan and to be not only a foreigner but also a woman. For one thing, as a westerner she had been raised with the idea that gratifying personal desires is natural, not reprehensible. This notion of 'treat yourself, you're worth it' needed to be discarded when Wendy began living in Japan as a woman married to a Japanese. She came to realize that, in Japan, the individual is seen as rather unimportant compared to the group: whether that group represents the family unit or society at large. She learned that individual desires often have to be sacrificed and that privacy is not much valued in Japan. This meant that a kind of personal transformation was required:

It was a really painful self-education and I am afraid that I inflicted my own spoiled personality on my in-laws. However, I have managed. I often think of the words of a famous pop song by the 'Rolling Stones': "You don't always get what you want, but sometimes you get what you need". And I think I needed to grow up in ways that I probably couldn't or wouldn't have been forced to do in America or England, where that kind of self-education isn't required in daily life. Living here, with my husband and children, I have had to learn the meaning of self-sacrifice, and this was especially true in raising my boys and in trying to help my in-laws and to adjust to their ways. (Potočník 2010: n.pag.)

Nowadays men and women are still unequal in Japan. Women continue to suffer from discrimination, Nakanishi believes, or, as she has remarked:

I didn't want a daughter unless she could live abroad because I felt women still had so many obstacles to overcome in Japan, so she would be constantly struggling. My husband and I have two nieces who live nearby, two really bright girls, and I feel they have had to work hard to find personal fulfillment, more than if they had been boys, perhaps. (*Ibid.*)

In the 'old-style' Japanese marriage, the husband is the principal wage-earner. The wife is in charge of all the finances and of the children and their education. In this respect, Nakanishi believes that Japanese women are brave and capable: they manage the household and the household money. It is the custom for the husband to turn over his paycheck to his wife, and she doles out a small allowance to him for living expenses. The Japanese woman also faces a difficult challenge in, as tradition dictates, shouldering the huge responsibility of taking care of any children and their education. In Japanese society the strongest tie within the Japanese family is between a mother and her son. The father is usually employed full-time, works long hours, and does not spend much time at home with the family, as noted in sociological studies of the Japanese:

The Japanese mother traditionally has been idealized as a self-sacrificing, angelic soul "devoted to her children", [who] always shows them affection, and is willing to sacrifice her own plans and desires on their behalf. (Ohinata 1995: 205)

What is the nature of the post-war Japanese nuclear family? The modern-day Japanese family has been characterized as a "father-absent system". Given the long hours he must work, the dedication to the firm he must display, and the lack of holidays or personal leave he is allowed, the Japanese full-time employee is usually male and expected to put his duties as a worker above any responsibilities as a husband or father. The wife and mother also has a prescribed role to play. She is expected single-handedly to manage the household and its finances and to take care of the children. (Nakanishi 2010a: 3)

According to one of Nakanishi's students, and her own research about Japanese and American husbands, the average Japanese man does six per cent of the family's housework and the American husband, forty-five per cent:

I know my own husband does more than most of his friends: he washes up the dishes every evening, he helps the children with their homework, he washes the cars, and, in winter, he keeps the log-burning cast-iron stove supplied with wood. (Nakanishi 2008c: 118)

In conservative old rural areas of Japan, a woman who consents to marry the *chonan* or oldest son of a farming family is expected to move in with his parents. Many such families still exist in Nakanishi's neighborhood. These families retain the custom of the eldest son of a farming family continuing to inhabit the family home into adulthood. It is the place to which he will bring his bride, and it is where they will raise their children. It is his wife's duty to look after his mother and father as they grow

older and to nurse them through any illnesses. The farmer's wife also is supposed to assist her husband with the agricultural labor. Nakanishi comments on all this in one of her stories:

I suspect I have only found it bearable because again, as a foreigner and one who holds what is considered a high position in society as a university professor, I have been exempted from some of these expectations. I rarely help with the farm work, and my husband and I have been able to construct our own home ... Still, we are expected to join in memorial services for Kenji's ancestors, ... My husband is required to assist his parents on a nearly daily basis. ... (Nakanishi 2008b: 131)

In general, however this old 'generational' system is now breaking down in Japan. Even in rural areas, many women are working, often at part-time jobs requiring a forty-hour working week, but they are still expected to manage their family's finances and the children's education, with the children attending day-care centers until they are six and can enter the regular school system. The common perception is that those privileges once attached to being male in Japanese society have largely vanished, with now only the responsibilities remaining.

Nakanishi thinks young women in Japan have seen so many films set in foreign countries featuring helpful husbands and fulfilled, ambitious wives that they have found their own situation in Japan hard to accept. In the past men would expect women to be housewives and to take care of the children, to do the shopping, the cooking, and so on. Nowadays the situation has changed somewhat, but the writer believes the typical Japanese woman continues to lead a far from enviable life:

There is still this idea that men come 'first'. However, I think that, fortunately, the lot of even the average Japanese woman has changed very much over the last twenty years. I am so delighted to see the growth of the companionate marriage which, when I first came to Japan, was almost unheard of. My husband belongs to this 'older' generation with the old-fashioned expectations of marriage. He would never have any idea of our doing 'fun' things as a couple. The custom in our area was that men went out with male friends and women, with female ones. All that has really changed amazingly over the last ten years. I see young fathers with children and, often, the father alone taking care of his children. Twenty years ago that would have been impossible. And I see men who now do the cooking, shop, help with cleaning. I am so glad. I also think Japanese women are much more career-minded, too, nowadays. They used always to be the people who had to serve coffee and tea in the office, they were given trivial tasks, and they were expected to quit their jobs after marrying and devote all their energies to their husbands and children. If they worked after marriage, they could only get some low-paid part-time job. This job might require them to work forty hours a week, for a very low salary, and no benefits like insurance or belonging to a pension scheme. (Potočník 2010: n.pag.)

Family life and the personal relationships between family members are very different in Japan from in America. The whole idea of the family is different. In Japan the family unit is of utmost importance, and its power and significance lasts throughout an individual's life. Even on achieving adulthood, a Japanese often remains physically close to his family, and he is expected to continue, indefinitely, obediently to meet family demands and expectations. In America, on the other hand, a child achieves independence at an early age. On reaching adulthood, it is supposed he will be engaged in his own life, in new relationships he has made, often at a far remove, in terms of distance, from his parents and siblings. This contrasting view of the family's significance has proven a source of anxiety and conflict for Nakanishi, with some of her short stories focusing on her struggle to come to terms with her in-laws' proximity and the demands that were made of her:

I think I mentioned to you in one of my stories that when my husband and I thought of marrying he said that he was in a boat with his parents and that I could get in but he could not get out, and I came to realize he meant that he was metaphorically and even literally bound to his parents until their deaths or until his own. My father-in-law died a year ago, but my mother-in-law constantly needs help. My husband goes to her house nearby almost every day to ferry her to doctors' appointments or to shops. Japanese children are taught to depend on the family and that they belong to the family unit forever whereas in America, from the earliest years the children are encouraged to stand on their own feet and to be independent. The American child usually leaves home when he is about eighteen. There is such an emphasis on personal mobility in the States that very few people end up in the same town they grew up in. In Japan, on the other hand, or at least that part of it that I inhabit, generation after generation after generation of a family often remain in the same place. (*Ibid.*)

WENDY JONES NAKANISHI'S WORKING AND WRITING CAREER

Wendy J. Nakanishi has worked as a full-time professor at Shikoku Gakuin University in Zentsuji, Japan since 1988. Her teaching duties include MA classes in the Department of Language and Culture as well as undergraduate courses in basic English. Her graduate courses often focus on comparing and contrasting American, British and Japanese culture. In her classes, Nakanishi mostly speaks in English but with a smattering of Japanese. She claims always to have enjoyed her work as a professor, relishing the opportunity to share her broad knowledge of different cultures and intercultural relationships with her students. She also likes to use literature in these classes. She describes her teaching load in these terms:

After we've compared cultures in the graduate classes, we often look at short stories written by Japanese, American, and British authors and try to think of how different cultural backgrounds are manifested within their

writings. We look at English videos as well as study children's literature and short stories. (*Ibid.*)

Nakanishi's academic work and creative writing include a wide variety of writers and topics. She has published a number of articles, critical monographs and short stories that reflect her research on literature and, in her 'creative non-fiction' pieces, her life experiences in Japan. Her work on English, Japanese, and American literature ranges from the eighteenth to the twenty-first centuries, focusing on such a variety of authors as Alexander Pope and Jonathan Swift, John Ruskin, Virginia Woolf and Iris Murdoch, and Ariyoshi Sawako and Murakami Haruki. She has written not only about literature but also on such sociological topics as the nineteenth and twentieth-century arts and crafts movements in Korea, Britain, and Japan and the recent *hikikomori* phenomenon of acute social withdrawal among Japan's young people. In this article, I am only looking at her 'creative non-fiction' stories.

Nakanishi often compares the characters and values of people in those countries she has inhabited. She talks about different cultures and the importance of knowing and accepting different ways of life. She is a good observer and provides the reader with a vivid picture of her perceptions:

To me the most noticeable differences are found in the ideas of societies. Japan is very much an Asian country in which the group takes precedence over the individual whereas, especially in England, the individual is highly regarded and eccentricity and idiosyncrasy are, if not always praised, at least tolerated. In Japan, private life is not as valued as in Britain and America. I'm interested, too, in the ramifications of a country's being 'new' and 'old'. Britain and Japan are countries with very long historical traditions while the United States remains a relatively recent phenomenon as a nation state. I like to think of how this has an impact on the citizens of these countries. (*Ibid.*)

Other frequently-discussed topics in Nakanishi's writings include such problems of modern, post-war Japanese society as its "father-absent system", the high rate of suicide in the country and, again, the *hikikomori* syndrome. As for the latter, Nakanishi observes that:

Hikikomori is a Japanese term meaning "acute social withdrawal" that refers to a recent phenomenon among young Japanese, mostly male, who choose to retire completely from public life and sequester themselves at home and usually in their own bedrooms. (Nakanishi 2010a: 1)

Just as the young Japanese male is at greatest risk of succumbing to the *hikikomori* syndrome, the suicide victims in Japan are usually young adults and mostly men:

Among Japanese aged 15 to 25 and those aged 40 to 54, suicide is the second leading cause of death. It is the leading cause of death for those aged 25 to 39, with the suicide rate of middle-aged men five times that of women. (*Ibid.* 10)

Nakanishi has written several articles speculating on the causes for Japan's boasting the dubious distinction of having the highest rate of suicide in developed countries. She explains the cause of her initial fascination in the subject in this anecdote:

The reason why I got interested in suicides was that once, when writing a piece about crime fiction, I read a Japanese book that included twelve short detective stories that had been translated into English. Within these stories, the supposed 'murder' in seven or eight cases actually turned out to be a suicide. In Western literature – or life – this frequency of suicide would be remarkable and almost unbelievable. After reading this curious publication, I talked to friends, both Japanese and fellow foreigners here, and it seemed nearly everybody knew someone who had committed suicide or had heard of someone who had. This struck me as amazing. I know of scarcely anyone, nor do my American friends, of a person in the States who has killed himself. In Japan, I think, in fact, that there are many more suicides than the official statistics report. It seems to represent a traditional, honorable way of death here. (Potočník 2010: n.pag.)

Nakanishi feels that there are many motives for suicide in Japan. Suicide can be seen, for example, for a bullied school child or one under terrible pressure from exams, as the only means of escaping from a situation perceived as unbearable. There is also the suicide chosen as the means of repaying a perceived 'debt' or of expiating guilt.

THE WRITER'S LOVE FOR LITERATURE AND HER CREATIVE NON-FICTION

Nakanishi loves literature and, from her early years, harbored ambitions as a writer:

I think that anyone who loves English or American literature or, of course, any kind of literature also has a longing to write it. I had this longing early instilled in my consciousness, when I was in the fifth grade of my tiny school in Rolling Prairie, Indiana. I came up with one short story called the 'The Littlest Pioneer'. My teacher praised it highly. (*Ibid.*)

She first entered Indiana University and began studying for a degree in English literature. The dream of doing some 'creative' writing herself was cherished but suppressed as she busied herself with her academic career, embarking on a master's degree and then a doctorate. When Wendy came to Japan and began a university job, she was preoccupied with lesson preparation and then, with the birth of three sons, the demands and cares of motherhood. She published academic articles and book reviews, but she longed, in that tiresome phrase, to 'express' herself as well. She began to write stories that she would classify now as 'creative non-fiction' based on her experiences as an American woman teaching at a Japanese university, the wife of a Japanese farmer and the mother of three biracial boys. This writing became not only been a source of great delight and amusement for her but also it represented a healing sort of exercise, a kind

of catharsis. She confessed that she felt she needed to tell somebody about her experiences because:

... sometimes they have been painful or confusing. Writing them down is a sort of a release and a way of understanding what's happened to me. (*Ibid.*)

Most of her creative writing has been thinly-disguised autobiography, a circumstance that she regrets, observing:

I wish I had more of an imaginative capacity, but I seem only to be able to write about what I personally have experienced. Luckily, I think I've had many sorts of 'adventures', which is probably a great advantage as a writer. (*Ibid.*)

In her short stories Nakanishi draws upon her personal history, describing her life in Indiana, Britain, France and eventually in Japan. She presents a vivid picture of these different, evolving 'life scenes', expressing the deep feelings, wishes and thoughts she has experienced in the successive stages of her life. She can achieve a number of objectives in this personal approach.

"My Mother's Daughter", for example, is a story in which her ambiguous feelings regarding her mother can be expressed. The story traces her evolving emotions, from the adoration of the child to the critical stance of the teenager, with her anger at and frustration with her mother finally resolved in love, acceptance and understanding as she became an adult. The relationship between them grew problematic when Nakanishi was seven and her father left the family home. The beautiful woman she had cherished as a little girl became a hateful figure:

After my father left, it had been easy and useful to blame my mother for everything. I blamed her for the plunge in our living standards. I blamed her for losing the rich social life she had enjoyed as a wife of the town's bank manager. I blamed her for dating men I thought unsuitable but then, inconsistently, I also blamed her for remaining single. I blamed her for the messiness of our house. Only age and experience brought forgiveness, when I could recognize that it had been depression that caused the chaos in our household, that it was misery that had made her retreat to her bedroom after my parents' separation, rarely, it seemed, to emerge for years afterwards. (Nakanishi 2008a: 10-11)

Nakanishi came to understand that her mother, in her old age, viewed her children as her greatest accomplishment and her consolation for a life less than satisfactory or fulfilling. Some of her siblings chafed at this assessment, unwilling to attribute any success they had achieved in life to a parent they remembered as neglectful and self-absorbed, but Nakanishi found it a source of solace to allow her mother this happiness, however delusional it might have been. As she grew older and entered an assisted living facility, her mother's goal was to be reunited with all her offspring. Nakanishi's mother died in 2008.

Now, with her own three boys, Nakanishi feels she can understand and respect many things she was taught by her mother. In particular, she is grateful for the unconditional

love and support her mother always showed her, which she feels is the greatest gift that a parent can give a child. Her fondest memories now are of the times when her mother was like a child herself, playing with Wendy and her siblings in the snow, stooping by a flowering bush to savor the perfume of a blossom, bidding her children to join her outside to see a particularly beautiful moon. Wendy now can see how warm-hearted her mother had been, an individual who bestowed and received love freely and, in doing so, made life worthwhile. Nakanishi recollected how her mother insisted on hugging and kissing and how she often praised her children and told them how much she loved them. Nakanishi's mother professed herself their greatest fan, as Nakanishi recalls in her story about her:

Now that I'm a mother myself, I see my own mother in a much different way than I had as recently as twenty years ago. I love her. I hope my own children will think of me as fondly. (*Ibid.* 13)

In Nakanishi's other stories the reader can also vividly picture the writer's life story and empathize with her experiences. In "The Mountain", for example, she describes the simple outlines of her life in Japan:

I have been resident in Japan for the past twenty-five years. I live in a rural area with my Japanese farmer husband, Takehito and our three boys. Our house is on the outskirts of Takamatsu on the island of Shikoku, and in an enclave of my husband's relatives: his parents, a brother and his family, his aunts and uncles. (Nakanishi 2010b: 107)

The writer describes the family life she enjoys there, her pride in her three sons, her love for her husband and her respect for her in-laws. She asserts that she and her husband could not have had a more dissimilar upbringing or been raised in a more different culture, which makes it all the more remarkable that they share a similar system of values. She says that they both love jazz, the 'simple life', and simple pleasures. They also both longed for children, and this formed part of their initial attraction when they first met, when Wendy was thirty and her husband three years older. Nakanishi describes her feelings for her 'improbable' soul-mate in "Sons and Mothers" and, in "A Life in a Day", in the former, her first impression of him and, in the latter, her feelings after many years of marriage:

I came to Japan for a job. I was already thirty when I began work at a small private university here. When I met Takehito, I was longing to settle down, and he felt the same. (Nakanishi 2009b: 34)

On our way home, I am afforded the occasional glimpse of his face as illuminated by streetlights and by stop signs. A harsh face; a kind heart. Doubly incomprehensible as a man and as a Japanese. Completely reliable. Inexpressibly dear. (Nakanishi 2008c: 119)

After her initial discomfiture at being thrown into intimate relations with her husband's family, kindly strangers divided from her by culture and by language, Nakanishi came to love and to respect her 'Japanese parents'. She was particularly intrigued by her mother-in-law, or, in Japanese, 'Okaasan', and she wrote a story about her that was subsequently published in *The Kyoto Journal*:

Okaasan has had a difficult life if one typical of Japanese women of her age and background. She was born on a farm some three miles from the one she now inhabits with my father-in-law. There were many brothers and sisters. Life was hard: an endless round of backbreaking physical labour, with holidays providing the only respite from the usual strenuous routine. (Nakanishi 2001b: 11)

Nakanishi's father-in-law was the subject of "Otoosan", a story written eight years later, dedicated to the memory of her husband's father, who had died in 2009 at the age of eighty-seven. This tale, published in a short story collection about foreigners' impressions of Japan, focuses on the story of Otoosan (Father) and the turbulent times he experienced in his lifetime, raised as the child of one of the principal landowners in his area, enlisting in the Japanese imperial army as a young man, being sent to Manchuria as a cavalry officer, his return to Japan after the war, followed by the loss of most of the family estate through land redistribution measures imposed by the postwar government, and Otoosan's life-long but financially unsuccessful dedication to growing oranges on the remaining land. The story honors him as a hardworking man whose strenuous labors only ceased with serious illness and then death.

'Otoosan', the Japanese for 'father', had been seriously ill. When I married Takehito over twenty years ago, I had encountered, in his father, the traditional Japanese *hatarakimono hito*, an individual whose whole life revolved around work. (Nakanishi 2010c: 207)

One day, when her father-in-law was in his final illness, she visited him in the hospital and watched in horror as his sinewy hands, hardened by labour, the same hands that she had seen picking oranges, pruning trees, weeding the garden, and expertly fashioning rice cakes, now set themselves to their new task; it was attempting to get out of the hospital by:

gripping the bars of the bed and shaking them, or tugging at his clothes. (*Ibid.* 210)

Otoosan died and a Buddhist service was held for him. Nakanishi describes the service and the funeral in detail in her story:

We entered the hall, already crowded with mourners. Most were people unable to attend the funeral the following morning. Otoosan's coffin now occupied the central position at the front of the hall, placed below a huge array of lilies, chrysanthemums, and orchids, all white, the traditional colour of death in Japan. (*Ibid.* 212-213)

Nakanishi also often writes about her three boys. In her short story "My Half Family" she presents her close relationship with them and notes with bemusement the Japanese custom of referring to such children as 'halves' because they are biracial, a custom she finds hurtful and one that seems to diminish the individual to whom such an epithet is applied. In any case, the writer believes the relationship between her and her sons is different from that typical between Japanese mothers and their sons because of

the 'language gap', with Nakanishi only superficially fluent in Japanese and her sons, in English. This results in the necessity for more physical communication:

My boys and I are playful; we make jokes. If actions speak louder than words, we know each other profoundly but at an intangible level. (Nakanishi 2009a: 4)

When her sons were small, Nakanishi tried to take them often abroad, alternating visits to America and England every year and, when she was forty-one, she was granted a year's sabbatical leave of absence by her university, spending that time in Britain, in the town of Halton near Lancaster, where her two elder sons attended the local primary school. Nakanishi feels that through such experiences and because she, their mother, is simply of a different culture, she has imparted a sense of the larger world to her children and that they have imbibed western values they might not have encountered in a purely Asian environment. Her sons, like their mother, place a premium on privacy and independence and, perhaps most important, although raised in an insular society, can envisage a life outside Japan. She hopes that they are 'international citizens', familiar not only with the States and England but the other countries she has taken them to: Germany, Holland and France and Taiwan. When people call her children 'halves', or when her boys refer to themselves by that term, Nakanishi is in the habit of saying, "Not half, but both". (*Ibid.*)

As a writer, Nakanishi wonders if she is sometimes too critical about life in Japan, which can be a country hard to accept for a foreigner because it represents a culture so different than a western one. She hopes that any remarks in her stories that might appear negative or judgmental are more than counterbalanced by the great admiration and respect she feels for Japan. She believes her compulsion to write about Japan can be accounted for as the temptation felt by nearly every 'foreigner' after prolonged residence in Japan to 'explain' it: the desire to make sociological pronouncements about the Japanese, to 'understand' them, to analyze them and their society.

Nakanishi found Japan a difficult country, particularly in her early years of residence, and she felt she needed to accommodate herself to new expectations about nearly every aspect of her life: as a university professor, as a young unmarried and then a married woman, and as a mother. One thing she found hard to adapt to was the conformist nature of Japanese society apparent even in their clothes, as she remarks in her story *Japanese Journal*:

Perhaps it is an odd country, a strange society, which exerts subtle pressure on his citizens to dress in ways it deems appropriate for any occasion ... Japan is such a country: the Japanese comprise such a society. ...

I was shocked when I attended my first sports day at the children's school. Not only were the children all dressed the same – all wearing the obligatory 'sports' uniform of white T-shirt, white shorts, and red cap – but most of the mothers and fathers seemed to be wearing a kind of uniform as well... (Nakanishi 2001a: 33)

Nakanishi also writes about the famous Oriental inscrutability, about the Japanese as people who are very polite but indirect because they do not want to offend or, even worse, risk open confrontation or the possibility of argument:

I think it's hard to know what they think. The idea of the mask is very popular here, whether it's the makeup Japanese women lavishly apply every morning or the white surgical masks people feel compelled to wear when they are ill or actual masks appropriate to dramatic performances. There is a famous novel called *Masks* by Fumiko Enchi and, of course, masks play a large role in Noh plays and in Kabuki. I think a big theme of Japanese life is that, depending on circumstance, you adopt the mask appropriate for your age and sex and social conditions, and the person you really are is underneath somewhere, hidden away. Social interactions are based on the presumption that you know what you are supposed to do and what people expect of you and that you are willing to play along accordingly. (Potočník 2010: n.pag.)

The writer believes the Japanese do not want to engage in a frank exchange of views: the emphasis is on a smoothly functioning society, on social harmony. This harmony would be disrupted were people actually to say what they thought or do as they wanted. It is almost as a form of comic relief that some Japanese seek out the company of foreigners because, then, all those rules they labor under each day are suddenly inapplicable:

I often think that the Japanese love to be with foreigners because it's a great struggle for them to keep up this pretence all the time. They know that with foreigners they can relax and speak freely. (*Ibid.*)

On the one hand, Nakanishi is fascinated by Japanese traditions and culture, particularly by the rituals associated with the celebration in August of 'O-Bon' which, after New Year's Day, represents Japan's most important festival, admitting that she often finds herself close to tears when she participates in the Buddhist customs intended to honor the spirits of one's ancestors. On the other, Nakanishi believes the Japanese are subjected to almost unbearable stresses and frustrations in their daily lives:

In their self-discipline and concern to maintain social harmony, the Japanese are wholly admirable. But they pay such a terrible price, one which they acknowledge when, for example, my students admit that they feel "freer" when they speak English in our classes, or for those rare, darling souls willing to risk venturing abroad alone - not on a package holiday with other Japanese - who confess to feeling that a great burden has been lifted from their shoulders once they've left their own country. (Nakanishi 2002: 2-3)

Nakanishi esteems the Japanese for their self-discipline, politeness, courage, and hard work, all of which were on public display and inspired the amazement and admiration of the world during Japan's recent earthquake, when there was no looting, when, in the aftermath of the catastrophe, the Japanese worked together to alleviate the suffering

of the victims. Nakanishi thinks the Japanese are a very tough race, physically and psychically, who have triumphed over daily adversity as residents of an overcrowded, tiny nation with few natural resources, living in a place prone to such disasters as typhoons and earthquakes:

What is amazing about the Japanese is that they have had to endure the harshest of conditions but have evolved an exquisite politeness in their day-to-day interactions. Every foreigner who comes here remarks on that. But the toughness is there, and we foreigners also remark on that, with some of us feeling that, when we're old, when we retire, perhaps we'd prefer not to spend our twilight years here because of the powers of physical endurance required. Great bravery is expected, as I learned when I had my three sons here. There was no question of an epidural's being administered. The Japanese woman gives birth, at least in such rural areas as mine, with no pain relief provided at all, and Japanese women are supposed to endure childbirth in silence, without crying out in pain. I wasn't even allowed an aspirin after my third child's birth as there were fears any medication might contaminate breast milk. It's an odd paradox: on the one hand, the wonderful gentleness and courtesy, on the other, the admonition to 'gaman shinasai' – to endure any physical pain without complaint. (Potočník 2010: n.pag.)

To her chagrin, Nakanishi has realized that the Japanese have a very different sense of humor from her own. Hers owes a great deal to the sly wit of the English, but she has found that the Japanese can find anything approaching sarcasm, however affectionately expressed, hurtful and incomprehensible. She admits that she now adopts an approach of trying always to be sincere and emotionally supportive with her Japanese friends. But she thinks it a pity, in a sense, as these friends cannot, she believes, know her 'truest' self, which delights in teasing and irony. But this was also true, she found, in America, where words intended to be interpreted as jokes were taken in all seriousness. In this regard, Nakanishi feels most at home in Britain, where people seem to speak the English that she speaks herself.

For Nakanishi, the notion of privacy is valuable although, ironically, she often writes of herself and her family in her stories. In one of her earliest short stories she explains about the resentment she experienced when she had recently arrived in Japan and was on a ferry to Honshu Island where she attracted the attention of three junior high school girls who wanted to communicate with her because she was a foreigner. Nakanishi made hurried apologies, escaped to an upper deck, and spent the rest of the journey there, hiding from her 'admirers', while ruefully reflecting on the rudeness of her own behavior:

"I don't feel proud of myself," I admitted. "I'm sure those girls were nice, whatever that means. I just can't bear being considered public property, having complete strangers feeling entitled to come up and monopolize my time simply because I'm not Japanese." (Nakanishi 2007a: 16)

But the Japanese inquisitiveness about foreigners can also lead to comedy. In a story entitled “Imperfect Strangers” Nakanishi recalls her first presentation at an Iris Murdoch Society of Japan conference. She had hoped that her talk entitled ‘The French – and Irish – Connections: Comparing *Under the Net* and *The Red and the Green*’ might inspire a lively debate on Murdoch’s possibly delusional concept of herself as a member, like Elizabeth Bowen of the old Anglo-Irish aristocracy and the ramifications of this belief in her novels. Rather, to Nakanishi’s amusement, her talk was productive of inspiring the conference participants to a rather different area of enquiry:

An elderly professor with a polka-dot tie who had sat with impassive face during my talk leaps to my side once I have returned to my seat. He says he has many questions to ask me. My talk is never touched on; he wants to know about my personal life: do I speak English at home? Does my husband help with the cooking? Can I use chopsticks well? (Nakanishi 2006a: 36).

As we have seen, Nakanishi is a writer who values eccentricity and idiosyncrasy but thinks that, like privacy, they are accorded little value in Japan. She feels happy to inhabit Japan, however, and especially her rural area where she can admire and bask in the natural beauty that surrounds her:

I love Japan, but I would hate to be a Japanese. I like the structured nature of society here and the security it offers my family, but I dread our falling prey to its emphasis on conformity. In a place that can physically resemble a paradise, I am reminded of Sartre’s notion of hell as represented by “other people”. Here, one is constantly watched and judged, but it is possible sometimes to escape those prying eyes, to find peace in the great natural beauty by which we are surrounded. (Nakanishi 2001a: 38)

In many of Nakanishi’s short stories different people, cultures, countries and landscapes are described and contrasted, with the writer trying, but sometimes failing, not to judge one as better than another. In her stories “From Indiana to Kagawa: From Tomatoes Ripe to Oranges Sweet” and “Glimpses” she makes a humorous comparison between the American and the Japanese notion of a ‘farm’:

The country in the United States meant something quite different from the country in Japan. And when her new husband talked about their “farm”, she had to laugh. Her parents lived on a farm: acres upon acres of corn and soybeans stretching monotonously to the horizon, a barn housing livestock, a windmill and a farmhouse, while her new home consisted of a prefabricated building attached to the family house in a dusty courtyard enclosed by a concrete block wall. The orange groves were up the mountain; the carnation greenhouses, near the main road leading to an ugly, medium-sized city three kilometers away. (Nakanishi 2003: 9)

In the story entitled “Glimpses”, which she admits she intended as a kind of memorial to her beloved maternal grandfather, LaMont O’Harra, she rehearses childhood memories of happy times spent on his spacious farm, ‘The Maples’, in central Indiana.

As a little girl, the writer had had three dreams: she wanted a horse, she wanted long hair, and, finally, she wanted to marry someone like her grandfather:

In retrospect, it occurs to me that one of my childhood dreams was directly related to my Grandpa. This, of course, was the dream of marrying a farmer. (Nakanishi 2005b: 296)

Ironically, of her three girlish dreams, this was the one that came true, although a Japanese farmer is quite different from an American one. In this story Nakanishi compares her Japanese father-in-law, a thin, small, wiry individual, to her 'Grandpa O'Harra':

Sometimes I compare him to my grandfather, whom I think of as an American counterpart, but the discrepancies in physical appearance could scarcely be greater. My grandfather was a big man in every sense. ... He was a tall, commanding figure who carried his girth with dignity and authority. ... he was the most knowledgeable individual I have ever encountered. Like my grandmother, he was self-taught, ... he was especially interested in politics and history – especially the Civil War. (*Ibid.* 295)

It may be possible to say that Nakanishi has conflicted feelings about her homeland. Although she loves her many family members and friends still resident in America, in the story "Peace Beyond National Boundaries", written shortly after the terrorist attacks that destroyed New York's World Trade Center, we find the writer trying to analyze her own ambiguous relations with the United States and ways in which it inspires both nostalgia and fear, affection and dislike:

I find my native land, America, an insoluble paradox. The United States is not only the world's wealthiest nation and its single surviving 'super-power', but, of all the countries of the world, it also has the most diverse population, its citizens drawn from every nation on earth. It is a place where a great variety of cultural customs are observed, a huge number of languages are spoken, ...

America is also a country which can be vengeful and angry, as witnessed by the general reaction of its citizens following the events of September eleventh of last year. (Nakanishi 2002/2003: 1)

But despite her current feeling of disaffection for America, Nakanishi has fond memories of her childhood and her hometown, that are revived with surprising force, she finds, whenever she revisits Rolling Prairie, Indiana. On such occasions, she recalls how each tree in her yard and in her neighborhood represented a childhood friend for a little girl fond of lying under trees or of climbing them. Her parents' separation had had a devastating affect on a child who once had been sunny and sociable:

I imagine my childhood friends would have characterized me as a girl who was lonely and shy, who dreaded attracting attention. This was especially true in the difficult years after my parents' divorce. (Nakanishi 2006b: 57)

I felt increasingly alienated from my siblings, parents and from the wider world, retreating into a world of books. Only they, and nature, were reliable; only literature, plants and trees could be loved without fear or confusion. What a relief it was to leave Rolling Prairie! (*Ibid.* 55)

Now, after so many years' absence, a trip to Rolling engenders pity as well as nostalgia. Nakanishi describes these emotions in the story entitled *Home Thoughts*, in which a journey to her old home makes her realize the changes, mostly negative ones, which have taken place since her last visit:

I felt a familiar ambiguity of emotions: depression jostled with curiosity, steeled myself and glanced up. The old house looked worse each time I revisited it. (*Ibid.* 53)

In this tale Nakanishi recounts how she feels she has become a foreigner in her own country. She has been mistaken there for a German, an Australian, and a Briton. She occasionally feels the awkwardness and discomfort of a visitor in a strange land when she visits America. But she harbors a philosophy about 'home' which makes this bearable:

Home is where the heart is. If we can learn to find happiness and respect, we need never consider ourselves 'strangers', wherever we may be. My relatives live in America but most of my closest friends are in Britain and Japan. (*Ibid.* 58-59)

Nakanishi has come to realize that, in being with the family she loves, the place where she and her family were meant to be is Japan or, as she remarks in a new story, "I am in the place where I belong" (Nakanishi 2012, p. 55).

THE IMPORTANCE OF WENDY JONES NAKANISHI'S WORK AND HER FUTURE PLANS

With her numerous academic publications, research projects, and short, semi-autobiographical stories about her personal experiences in Indiana, England, France and Japan, Nakanishi has made a contribution not only to world literature but to the present-day interest in multiculturalism. With her vivid descriptions and deft narrative style, her feeling for language and the frequent comic touches to be found in her 'creative non-fiction' pieces, Nakanishi is able to capture on paper the paradoxes of modern life, with its rootless citizens who travel the globe, charmed, amused and perplexed by the unfamiliar customs they encounter on their journeys.

Her insights into Japanese life are of particular value as she is one of the few non-native authors to stay long term in Japan and enter fully into the life of the country, working full-time since her arrival while raising a family with a Japanese husband. Nakanishi has lived in Japan for more than twenty-seven years, and her non-academic work has the ring of an authenticity derived from writing based on personal experience: it is evocative of a human consciousness reacting to unusual circumstances.

Nakanishi is especially keen to try to 'translate' her life in Japan into stories, to make it accessible to others and especially to compatriots who have never ventured beyond America's borders as she recognizes that most people's perceptions of life are dictated by circumstance. Few of Nakanishi's family and friends in America have ever lived for any substantial period of time in another country, and she thinks this can limit their ability to understand or accept differences in culture:

I think that, unless you live in Japan, it's impossible to realize how different everything is here: the expectations and assumptions. Superficially the country looks Western, but the basic premises underlying ordinary life are worlds away. Though tourists may come here and spend some time in Japan, I think they often can't understand the typical Japanese at all. (Potočník 2010: n.pag.)

Nakanishi is a good narrator capable of producing short stories that often strike an emotional chord with their readers, whether she is writing of her joys and worries as a teacher, wife, mother or daughter. She is a devoted parent to her three sons and places the demands of her family life before those of her working and writing career. One of her professed dreams is "to see her boys grown up, to see them get married and to dance at their weddings..." (*Interview With Wendy J. Nakanishi*, 2007; Internet). If her writings cannot be considered 'great' literature, they are valuable in dramatically conveying the sense of a certain place and time and the feelings that adhered to them.

Yet, despite her fondness for humorous touches, there is a tangible sadness about much of her work. Her short stories about her life express, for example, her deep feelings for her family in Japan while acknowledging the barriers that separate her from them. Her composition of such tales might be construed as a kind of 'love letter' to her boys, but one they may never be able to read as she writes in English, a language that her children were, until recent years, largely unable to understand. Her work also reflects the frustration of a long-term resident of Japan who is condemned always to being an 'outsider' both because of an inadequate command of the language and because of her physical appearance. Being fair-skinned, blue-eyed and brown haired, she is always instantly recognizable as a 'foreigner' and condemned to the position of an observer who can never fully integrate into Japanese society.

But this is not an author who believes that life will be 'easy' or even that it should be. If there is a 'message' or 'moral' in Nakanishi's writing, it might be expressed in the adages of popular culture. Like David Bowie, she would counsel us to 'turn and face the strange' or, like Ann Landers, advise that if 'life offers lemons, make lemonade'. Nakanishi absorbed from her neglectful parents the helpful lesson of the benefits that can be garnered from negative example; similarly, although she might wish to have made Britain rather than Japan her home, she has been able to make the most of her new exotic homeland and to find happiness there.

In 1997 Nakanishi and her family were filmed in for a TV Tokyo program on international marriages. It was an experience that led them all to question themselves. Nakanishi found herself wondering if her relationship with her husband was more of a partnership than a romantic relationship; her husband was challenged on whether he provided sufficient emotional supportiveness towards his wife and children: the three

boys were forced to confront their biracial identity. In the end, there was a general consensus that such self-examination was fruitful however painful:

I had thought it would be 'fun'. I was wrong. But somehow it has felt like an education of sorts – perhaps in self-knowledge – however involuntarily acquired, however unwelcome the conclusions. (Nakanishi 2007b: 24)

Although she harbors doubts about the generally-accepted desirability of the unfettered movement of people and goods about the earth, the writer believes that, given current trends of globalization, with the world 'shrinking' in effect, there exists a greater need than ever for people to respect different cultures and to try to comprehend that others may hold values different than their own. She has come to the conclusion that any encounter with the 'other' leads to greater awareness both of it and of self. It may be possible to say that Nakanishi's non-fiction 'creative' writing is most valuable as a kind of representation of modern-day multiculturalism, as a plea for the understanding and tolerance of unfamiliar belief systems. In this respect, we could say that her work contributes to "the creation of a culture of peace and dialogue among civilizations and cultures". (Leskovar 2001: 461).

But this is not enough to satisfy Nakanishi. She would like to write more and, in fact, become a different kind of author altogether, as she remarked in a recent interview:

One thing, I wish I were a different kind of writer. This is something Agatha Christie also said. She knew that she could write a certain kind of story, that she was the undisputed master of the detective novel, the 'Crime Queen', but that it would be bliss if she were able to pen something quite different. My fate seems to be to write recollections of my past or thoughts about my present situation. I wish I were a writer who could write about other things. I'm hoping in future to write about other places and people and perhaps use my imagination more in my stories rather than recording something based on my own experience. (Potočnik 2011: n.pag.)

CONCLUSION

I believe emigrant literature can play an important role in our modern-day 'global' society, in which we are required to learn about and to exhibit tolerance towards different cultures. Expatriate writers can assist us in this process by recording their impressions of and their experiences in their adoptive countries. The literature they produce is a valuable testament to the human ability to accept and even to embrace change and difference. It can also amuse and entertain as well as instruct and enlighten.

Not much has been written about or by foreigners resident in Slovenia. An exception to this general rule is provided by Erica Johnson Debeljak, an American married to a Slovenian, raising a family here who, in her works, offers a vivid depiction of her experience of life in a culture foreign to that in which she was raised. In this respect, she resembles Wendy Jones Nakanishi. As Nakanishi observes, although Japan is superfi-

cially westernized, it remains, at heart, an essentially alien culture, whose customs and beliefs defy western expectations and assumptions. This makes it all the more important that voices like Nakanishi's are heard, to explain 'east' to 'west'.

I embarked on this research project concerning Nakanishi's work mindful of its importance for our multi-cultural world and also because I wish to bring her writings to a wider audience.

University of Maribor, Slovenia

WORKS CITED

- Debeljak, J. Erica. *Tijka v hiši domačinov*, Maribor: Obzorja, 1999.
- Interview With Wendy N. Jones, 2007; Internet: www.v20.isache4.googlevideo.com
- Leskovar, M. Darja. "Srečevanje Kultur v Ameriški Mladinski Književnosti: Multikulturalnost v Mladinskem Romanu", *Vestnik – Društvo za. tuje jezike in književnosti*, ed. by Niko Hudelja, Ljubljana, #1-2, 2001, pp. 449-461.
- Nakanishi, J. Wendy. "Japanese Journal", *Shikoku Gakuin Literary Journal*, Zentsuji, March 2001a, pp. 27-38.
- _____. "Okaasan" – a short story, *The Kyoto Journal*, Kyoto, #48, Winter 2001b, pp. 11-13.
- _____. "Relatives" and Relativity, *The Kagawa Journal*, Takamatsu, Japan, No. 64, August/September 2002, pp. 1-3.
- _____. "Peace Beyond National Borders", *The Kagawa Journal*, Takamatsu, Japan, No. 66, December 2002/January 2003a, pp. 1-3.
- _____. "Glimpses" - a short story, *Yomimono*, ed. Suzanne Kamata, Tokushima, Japan, #11, Spring 2003b, pp. 9-10.
- _____. "One Day" – a short story, *The Short Story Forum*, Internet site of Gymnasium Steglitz, Berlin, English Online Projects, June 2005a.
- _____. "From Indiana to Kagawa, from Tomatoes Ripe to Oranges Sweet", *Black Earth and Ivory Tower: New American Essays from Farm and Classroom*, South Carolina University Press, September 2005b, pp. 289-297.
- _____. "Imperfect Strangers" – a short story, *Yomimono*, ed. Suzanne Kamata, Tokushima, Japan, #12, Autumn 2006a, pp. 34-38.
- _____. "Home Thoughts", an autobiographical memoir, *Heartlands*, published by The Firelands Writing Center of BGSU Firelands, U.S.A., Volume 4, Fall 2006b, pp. 53-59.
- _____. "The American Teacher" – a short story, *The Black Mountain Review*, ed. Neil McGrath & Sonja McGrath, Northern Ireland, #14, Autumn/Winter 2006/2007, pp. 64-67.
- _____. "Privacy" – a short story, *Being a Broad*, ed. by Helen Bottomley, Tokyo, #22, July 2007a, pp. 16-17.
- _____. "Filming the Foreigners" – a short story, *The Kyoto Journal*, Kyoto, #66, Summer 2007b, pp. 22-24.
- _____. "Japanese for Beginners" – a short story, *Being a Broad*, ed. Helen Bottomley, Tokyo, #24, September 2007c, pp. 16-17.
- _____. "My Mother's Daughter" – a short story, *Mother Verse Magazine*, ed. Mayo-Laakso, Two Harbors, MN, USA, Issue 8, May 2008a, pp. 8-13.
- _____. "Mothering Sons in Japan", an autobiographical memoir, *Mothering in the Third Wave*, ed. Amber Kinser, Toronto: Demeter Press, May 2008b, pp. 126-135.
- _____. "A Life in a Day in Japan" – a short story, *Families: The Frontline of Pluralism*, ed. Heather Tosteson and Charles d. Brockett (Decatur, GA: Wising Up Press), June 2008c, pp. 110-119.

- _____. "My Half Family" – a short story, *ExPatLit.com*, Internet Journal, Spring 2009a, pp. 1-4.
- _____. "Sons and Mothers" – a short story, published in the on-line edition of *The Mom Egg*, edited and published by Marjorie Tesser, December 2009b, pp. 34-35.
- _____. "Hikikomori: a Particularly Japanese Phenomenon", *Journal, Comparative Studies of Language and Culture*, Shikoku Gakuin University, Zentsuji, Vol. 8, March 2010a, pp. 1-14.
- _____. "The Mountain" – a short story, *Forty Stories of Japan*, ed. Graham Bathgate, Fineline Press, New Zealand, 2010b, pp. 107-111.
- _____. "Otoosan: Life and Death" – a short story, *Forty Stories of Japan*, ed. Graham Bathgate, Fineline Press, New Zealand, 2010c, pp. 207-215.
- _____. "Northwest of Takamatsu (and Halfway around the World)", *Japan Down Under*, Fineline Press, New Zealand, 2012.
- Ohinata, Masami. "The Mystique of Motherhood: a Key to Understanding Social Change and Family Problems in Japan", *Japanese Women: New Feminist Perspective on the Past, Present, and Future*, ed. Kumiko Fujimura-Faneslow, Atsuko Kameda, New York: Feminist Press, 1995.
- Potočnik, Nataša. *Personal Interview With Wendy J. Nakanishi*, Zentsuji, Japan, Summer 2010.
- _____. *Personal Interview With Wendy J. Nakanishi*, Maribor, Slovenia, September 2011.

Polona Vičič

ETNIČNA PROBLEMATIKA V DELIH JOHNA STEINBECKA

John Steinbeck je avtor, katerega dela so tako pri širši javnosti kakor tudi pri literarnih kritikih izzvala nasprotujoče si odzive, vse od popolnega navdušenja do zavrnitve. Tako razdvojen odziv vsaj deloma lahko pripišemo dejstvu, da je Steinbeck v svojih delih veliko pozornosti namenil perečim družbenim vprašanjem v svoji domovini, med drugim tudi etnični problematiki, katera bo obravnavana v tem članku.

UDK 821.111(73:520)–32.09Jones Nakanishi W.

Nataša Potočnik

WENDY JONES NAKANISHI - AMERIČANKA, ŽIVEČA NA JAPONSKEM

Wendy Jones Nakanishi je profesorica angleškega jezika in primerjalnih kultur na univerzi Shikoku Gakuin University na otoku Shikoku na jugu Japonske. Svoje otroštvo je Wendy Jones preživela v majhnem mestu v Indiani (ZDA) in prejela mednarodno univerzitetno izobrazbo v Indiani, v Angliji in na Škotskem. Nakanishijeva je poleg svojih strokovnih del in člankov s področja angleške literature iz 18. stoletja, analize sodobnih japonskih in britanskih avtorjev (kritične monografije, kritike knjig) v zadnjih letih izdala tudi več kratkih zgodb, ki temeljijo na njenih lastnih izkušnjah o življenju na Japonskem v zadnjih sedemindvajsetih letih. Tako kot Američanka, univerzitetna profesorica in žena Japonca ter mati treh sinov, v svojih kratkih zgodbah, ki so bile izdane v številnih literarnih revijah na Japonskem in v tujini, izraža pogled tujke na raznolikost in velik pomen tujih kultur (predvsem Japonske), običajev in sprejemanju le- teh.

UDK 821.112.2'04–131.09:159.942

Marija Javor Briški

STRAH – ŽALOVANJE – SRD. ‚EMOCIJE‘ V PESMI O NIBELUNGIIH

Prispevek se osredotoči na prevladujoče emocije v *Pesmi o Nibelungih*: na strah, žalovanje in srd. Pričujoče upodobitve emocij so med drugim vedenjski vzorci, ki so podvrženi določenim konvencijam in katerim se pripisuje določen pomen v socialni interakciji. Avtorica jih v glavnem obravnava z vidika specifičnosti spola, v njihovem odnosu do racionalnosti in kot simbolno dejanje, odgovarja pa tudi na vprašanje, ali je