

# Civilising the urban other: poverty as a national problem

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## 1. Introduction

The dramatic mid-nineteenth century increase in relations with the West brought home to many Japanese intellectuals and policy-makers just how far their country lagged behind the great powers of the time economically, militarily and politically. Learning to see their country through Western eyes, many intellectuals and policy-makers reviewed their everyday environment, and found, for example, that Japanese cities compared unfavourably to those of the West. Especially problematic were urban pockets of deep poverty, which observers represented as crime- and disease-ridden zones intolerable for a state striving to recast itself as a civilized modern power.

Several narrative threads ran through the ensuing debates concerning poor areas and their denizens. Especially in the 1880s and 1890s, early nationalist writers wrote about the plight of the poor people as meriting attention because they were fellow citizens of the nation who had been the main losers in the new social order of Meiji Japan. Such writers issued numerous calls for more public attention to be directed at the question of poverty as an urgent matter of national solidarity. Their appeals for greater public concern did not go unheeded, however, detailed investigative writings about poor life tended to be sensational. The nascent press titillated its reading public with ethnographic reports indicating that the poor people were exotic savages whose home districts were dark and little-known reaches of the city that respectable people would do better to stay clear of. And unsurprisingly, the discovery of wild zones and savage people at the

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heart of cities in the emerging Japanese empire called, in the eyes of most observers, for immediate and massive intervention. Reform projects entailed boosting production of knowledge concerning the poor, to provide a basis for ever more detailed policy measures to deal with them. In this sense, the campaigns to know the poor people and their residential zones in order to enhance governmental control over them foreshadowed subsequent Japanese colonial practice.

## 2. Isolating poverty

Popular poverty had hardly been an issue that preoccupied officials or intellectuals during Tokugawa times. Indeed, their concern had been more with ensuring that the masses stayed poor. The fundamental plan of government involved taxing the common people such that they would have enough to live on, but little more. Tokugawa governance was designed to maintain people in a state of relative poverty. Furthermore, while pockets of relatively deeper poverty were not unknown in the urban landscape, they were not necessarily unwelcome to officials. Indeed, such concentrations were a kind of resource useful to the ruling strata. According to Fujimori Terunobu, 'In the Edo period, slums [referring to outcaste enclosures] were not necessarily places that detracted from a city's appearance or that needed to be reformed. There were cases where slums were deliberately placed near approaches to castles so as to create a menacing effect, while others were sometimes integrated into cities'.<sup>1</sup> He points thus to the fact that poor districts provided cheap accommodation to productive new arrivals, and constituted reservoirs of low-cost labour that could be mobilized in times of economic expansion for construction, as well as be drawn upon for the waste disposal and sanitation services that were integral to proper urban functioning.

This view, according to which poor urban districts were seen primarily as functional, was displaced during the Meiji period by a discourse that represented urban poor areas and poor people as problems to be investigated and treated in the drive towards capitalist modernity. This new discourse of urban poverty firstly set about differentiating certain poor areas and their inhabitants from the rest of the city and the general population. This was novel, given that from the

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1. 藤森照信, 「明治の都市計画の思想」, 藤森照信編, 『日本近代思想大系 第19巻 都市・建築』(東京: 岩波書店, 1990), p. 422. Many outcaste groups performed low-level policing and military duties under military-class supervision; this explains why domanial lords often had outcaste enclosures situated near their castles.

Tokugawa through the Meiji periods, relative poverty was the condition not just of urbanites in most districts but of the population generally.<sup>2</sup>

Today, urban districts tend to be fairly class-homogeneous in most modern cities. Urban areas can be mapped by wealth, with people of similar means gathering in the same areas.<sup>3</sup> But mixed living, at least in terms of class, was more prevalent prior to modern urban development. Not only in Japan, but also in the major European cities prior to modernizing redevelopment, it seems to have been common for people of disparate classes to live in close proximity to each other.<sup>4</sup> This situation changed as a result of urban restructuring and architectural changes through the modern era, under the direction of the disciplinary nation-state and impelled by the dynamics of capitalist development. These evolutions have been accompanied by what we can term a sorting-out of people, both by themselves and by external factors, such that the populations of different districts have become increasingly homogeneous.<sup>5</sup> Paris provides a case in point of this dynamic.

In the mid-eighteenth century, Sennett writes, although there did exist working-class districts such as the Faubourg Saint-Antoine on the city's east, travellers could also see 'smears of miserable lodging houses in between the palaces, huts built on the edge of their gardens. [...] Similar ramshackle buildings surrounded the King's Louvre Palace, all crevices of poverty in the cracks between wealth.' Next to the Louvre, Sennett adds, 'the Palais-Royal housed innumerable cafés, brothels, and open-air gaming tables, as well as used-clothes shops, pawnshops, and shady stockbrokerages. [...] Rather than isolated amongst themselves, many of the poor circulated in the physical, spatial presences of inaccessible wealth.'<sup>6</sup> Whereas specific districts might be known for presenting certain attributes and features, within each district, class heterogeneity in a single space appears to have been unexceptional, with a clear move towards more

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2. 中川清,『日本の下層社会』(東京:勁草書房,1985),pp.27,38,注釈5;内田雄造,「都市下層民居住地の変容を追って」,小木新造編,『江戸東京を読む』(東京:筑摩書房,1991),pp.114-115.

3. This tendency is especially notable in the case of socio-economic elites. See, Jean-Luc Pinot, *Le monde des villes au XIXe siècle* (Paris: Hachette, 1991), p. 183.

4. In Paris, for example, it was common for the wealthy to live on the lower floors, with the poorest living in the attics and garrets at the top. See, Louis Chevalier, *Classes laborieuses et classes dangereuses à Paris, pendant la première moitié du XIXe siècle* (Hachette: Paris, 1978), p. 342.

5. Causes and consequences of this trend towards urban district homogeneity are examined in the contemporary French context by Eric Maurin, *Le ghetto français—enquête sur le séparatisme social* (Paris: Seuil, 2004), esp. ch. 1, pp. 11-37.

6. Richard Sennett, *Flesh and stone—the body and the city in Western civilization* (New York and London: W.W. Norton and Company, 1994), pp. 277-278.

homogeneity coming subsequent to Haussmann's modernizing labours of the mid-nineteenth century.<sup>7</sup> The situation was completely changed in Paris and London, as elsewhere, through urban re-design linked to capitalist development, which processes entailed re-development that in London, for example, 'consistently razed housing and shops inhabited by the very poor to create homes for the middle class or the rich.' Self-evidently, the poor became concentrated in fewer zones as the growing urban middle class out-competed them for the scarce resource of desirable urban land and housing. With continual development, poverty was more and more concentrated; '[e]arlier than Paris, more comprehensively than New York, London created a city of class-homogeneous, disconnected spaces.'<sup>8</sup>

In Japan too, it was common for wealth and poverty to reside in proximity to one another, especially during the Tokugawa years. During that time, the urban scene was, in principle, organized primarily according to status, and not class. Tokugawa Kyoto, for example, was zoned such that the mansions of the nobility lay close to the imperial palace, while across town the tenements of foot soldiers were sited to the west of the military mansions. Townspeople lived mainly in two zones to the north and south connected by a narrow corridor, with temple and shrine lands also scattered around the city. Outcaste areas lay some distance to the south and east of the city.<sup>9</sup> However, it is important to note two points here. The first is that even if people generally lived among others of the same status as themselves, their status confrères were not uniform in occupation, and nor did residents of the same status group necessarily belong to the same economic class. It would be more accurate to say that the composition of neighbourhoods where people lived tended on the one hand towards uniformity in terms of status, but on the other towards diversity in terms of class. For factors such as the development of market economies throughout the country that linked up over time, and the relative success of some and not others in market activities, the different levels of power and authority that people inherited or gained within their communities and so on, gave rise to considerable disparities of wealth within status groups as well as between them. Secondly, it is also clear that urban zoning according to

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7. Richard Sennett, *The fall of public man* (London: Penguin Books, 1974), pp. 134-135.

8. Sennett, *Flesh and stone*, pp. 321-322, 338. In Germany, the 'discovery' of urban class segregation during the 19<sup>th</sup> century led some social commentators to call for the construction of 'mixed housing', but such ideas were opposed on the grounds that they were contrary to market principles. See, Pinot, *Le monde des villes*, p. 182.

9. 杉森哲也「近世京都の成立—京都改造を中心に」, 佐藤信・吉田伸之編, 『新体系日本史6都市社会史』(東京: 山川出版社, 2001), pp. 275-277.

status did not comprehensively preclude the existence of diversity on the ground. As Leupp writes, 'it was not uncommon for low-ranking or unemployed samurai and labourers to reside next door to one another.'<sup>10</sup>

The situation appears to have been much the same around the 1870s, when the ruling Council of State abolished most status barriers and introduced general equality before the courts. Referring to Tokyo during the late 1860s and the 1870s, Mochida Nobuki has indicated that as many former *bushi* quit the city, their past residential zones and samurai mansions became run-down. But life in the 'low town' areas continued largely as before, with bustling stores and their relatively wealthy inhabitants fronting the main streets, and at their rear, tenement houses peopled by day labourers and so forth crowding the back alleys. That is, wealthy merchants continued to live and conduct their trades in the closest of proximity to the homes of poor labourers.<sup>11</sup> Writing in 1888, Edward Morse likewise noted about Japan that 'in the cities the quarters for the wealthier classes are not so sharply defined as with us [...]. In nearly all the cities, [...] you will find the houses of the wealthy in the immediate vicinity of the habitations of the poorest'.<sup>12</sup>

This situation gradually changed from the 1880s onwards in the major Japanese cities, as not just market forces, but also urban policy-makers concerned with crime and hygiene and urban aesthetics, began to re-make the urban environment such as to push poor pockets out to the margins of the city. The treatment of urban poverty became, this is to say, a matter of governance<sup>13</sup>, as well as a matter for public debate. To begin, I wish to suggest that what was decisive in this debate was the fact that population was no longer divided by status. This simple fact had a number of important implications. Henceforth, the itinerant poor and the outcaste poor and the artisan poor and the samurai poor were no longer segregated by status. Nor were their residential areas subject to formal differentiation. One effect of this transformation was that when people from rural areas migrated to the towns and cities, they naturally sought

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10. Gary P. Leupp, *Servants, shophands, and laborers in the cities of Tokugawa Japan* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1992), p. 148.

11. 持田信樹, 「都市の整備と開発」, 西川俊作・山本有造編, 『日本経済史 第5巻 産業化の時代 下』 (東京: 岩波書店, 1990), p. 274.

12. Edward Morse, *Japanese homes and their surroundings* (London: Sampson Low, Marston, Searle and Rivington, 1888), p. 5. A similar situation prevailed in Kobe during the mid-1880s. See 安保則夫, 「近代社会システムとしての公衆衛生」, 『歴史学研究』, vol. 703, October 1997, pp. 112-113.

13. On these trends, see my 'Making modern urban order: towards popular mobilization', *Japanese Studies*, December 2002, Vol. 22, No. 3.

accommodation where it was available cheaply—often enough in former outcaste areas—and these latter zones expanded considerably and quickly, becoming the object of public concern.<sup>14</sup> Secondly, aside from issues about law and order, in the public debate over the issue of poverty that unfolded in the wake of the elimination of status boundaries and the institution of legal equality, intellectuals began to suggest that the primary reason for giving consideration to the poor was not because they were especially problematic, or because of some shared humanity or virtue, but because of their shared nationality. An emergent sense of nation, of imagined community, was instrumental in the call to give greater consideration to poor national others.

### 3. A national issue

The *Choya Shinbun*, a popular Tokyo daily, ran the first sustained reporting in Japan on poor issues in a series entitled ‘The true state of the Tokyo prefecture poor people’ from March to April 1886. With the economic depression and consequent increases in the numbers of poor people, the anonymous authors were concerned with stimulating interest in the poor. ‘Big-hearted people should put their heads together in thought’, they stated. The lower reaches of society ought not to be forgotten, as ‘while the lowly know that there are people above them, it is human nature that the people stationed above easily forget the inferior’.<sup>15</sup>

Soon after the *Choya Shinbun* series, other writers too, began to manifest their interest in poor issues. Kobayashi (*né* Suzuki) Umeshiro (1862-1940) wrote in depth on Osaka slums in 1888. He wrote just after a prolonged public debate had taken place over whether or not certain Osaka slums should be relocated because of their allegedly criminal and diseased nature, thus there was a certain topicality in his interest. Suzuki was educated at Fukuzawa Yukichi’s Keio Gijuku academy in Tokyo, and had then become the Osaka reporter for Fukuzawa’s *Jiji Shinpo* newspaper. While this is insufficient to suggest anything more than his level of education, his lifelong engagement with social reform and improvement, including during his five terms as a member of parliament, suggest that improving the situation of society’s less fortunate was one of his abiding concerns. Another prominent author to deal with poor and slum issues was

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14. 大串夏身, 『近代被差別部落史研究』(東京: 明石書店, 1980), pp. 46-47; 荒井貢次郎, 『近世賤民社会の基礎構造』(東京: 明石書店, 1987), p. 27.

15. 「府下貧民の真況」, 『朝野新聞』, 24.03.1886 – 08.04.1886, ひろたまさき編『日本近代思想大系 第22巻 差別の諸相』(東京: 岩波書店, 1990), pp. 320-331.

Sakurada Bungo (1863-1922). Trained as a teacher and in law, Sakurada was employed as a reporter by the *Nihon* newspaper, and in that capacity wrote a series of articles on Tokyo and Osaka slums that the newspaper published in 1890. Again, little is known of Sakurada's private life and the origins of his interest in the poor. But the fact that he wrote for the *Nihon Shinbun*, which was closely tied to a nationalist grouping known as the Seikyosha, is significant.

A number of intellectuals associated with the nationalist Seikyosha and Minyusha groups took up the idea that it was necessary to assure some degree of harmony between the different social classes of the Japanese nation. People linked to the *Nihon Shinbun*, founded in 1889 by the prominent journalist Kuga Katsunan, largely overlapped with the people involved in the Seikyosha movement, and many of them evinced considerable interest in poor people. Kuga founded the *Nihon Shinbun* that Sakurada wrote for in 1889, and himself in September of 1890 published an article entitled 'The problem of the poor people'. 'Who is not moved', he asked, 'by the state of the poor people?' Calling upon readers to imagine their plight, he reminded them that 'whenever society is in crisis, the pitiable poor people are the most acutely affected'. They might be uneducated and poor, 'but who made them so', he asked, at once calling into question the effects of economic modernization, and arguing for greater solidarity with fellow citizens. Kuga went on to point to the complicity of politicians and nobles in the misery of poor people, and called upon the former to succour the poor.<sup>16</sup>

Other writers associated with this newspaper and the Seikyosha movement included Sugiura Shigetake, who would later argue that people paid insufficient attention to the lower social strata that 'are in fact the base of society'<sup>17</sup>, and Nagasawa Betten, who earlier in 1890 had called for 'a literature that would sympathize with the poor and express its sentiments'.<sup>18</sup> Such appeals for readers to interest themselves in the plight of the poor people were accompanied by detailed investigations into poor life, with in-depth reporting by Sakurada Bungo being published in the *Nihon Shinbun* the following year.<sup>19</sup>

16. 陸羯南, 「貧民問題」, 『日本』, 10.09.1890, 松本三之介編, 『明治文学全集 第37巻 政教社文学集』(東京: 筑摩, 1980), pp. 183-184.

17. 杉浦重剛, 「須らく力を下層に用ふべし」, 『東京朝日新聞』 12.12.1896, 松本, 『明治文学全集 37巻』, pp. 131-133.

18. 山田博光, 「明治における貧民ルポルタージュの系譜」, 日本文学研究資料刊行会編, 『明治の文学』(東京: 有精堂, 1981), p. 268. Yamada is referring to a series of 1890 articles (長沢別天, 「貧民と文学」, 『江湖新聞』 29.04.1890 – 02.05.1890) listed in a brief biography: 佐藤吉丸編, 『明治ナショナリズムの研究—政教社の成立とその周辺』(東京: 芙蓉書房, 1998), pp. 284-287.

19. 桜田文吾, 「貧天地餓寒窟探検記」, 『日本』, 05.01.1891, 西田長寿編, 『明治前期労働者事情—

This interest in the lower social strata can be said to reflect the fact that Seikyosha members ‘proclaimed the importance of constructing a solid national foundation’. Towards that aim, they examined the actual state of national life, and stimulated debate over ‘social problems’.<sup>20</sup> The Seikyosha group promoted a popular nationalism that emphasized the importance of developing the ‘lower class society’ that was ‘poor in wisdom and capital’<sup>21</sup>, no doubt from the perspectives of ultimately assisting national economic development and increasing national power. From this perspective, the poor were a national resource with the potential to be developed; one main issue, presumably, was how to work upon the poor so that they would mobilize their subjective energies towards their own development in a way consonant with the national interest.

Members of the Minyusha, centred on Tokutomi Soho’s *Kokumin no Tomo* (founded by Soho in 1890), expressed much the same aims and ideas concerning the poor. Soho was a nationalist for whom the improvement of the country entailed consideration of the situation of the most unfortunate inhabitants of the country.<sup>22</sup> His aim was for this journal ‘to promote social reform and propagate liberalism and commonerism’, and thereby to contribute to the progress of Japan and its evolution into a ‘civilized country’. ‘I especially hated the worship of foreign material civilization’, Soho wrote, and that led him to critique the ‘aristocratic culturalism’ of worshippers of the West, and look at the actual state of Japanese people.<sup>23</sup> Soho’s avowed creed was ‘commonerism’, a term that suggests an attitude in favour of progress in the shape of popular prosperity, freedom, and happiness.<sup>24</sup> His proposals indicate that the establishment of national sentiment among the poorer parts of the populace required improvement in their material living conditions.

Matsubara Iwagoro (1866-1935), one of the most famous journalists to write about poor issues, was associated with the Minyusha. Matsubara’s birth parents died early, and he was raised by adoptive parents. Leaving home at 15, he made

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都市下層社会』(東京:生活社,1949).

20. 和田守,『『底辺』からの告発』,田中浩・和田守編,『思想の梅へ 第10巻 近代文明批判 「国家」の批判から「社会」の批判へ』(東京:社会評論社,1990),p.286.

21. 佐藤,『明治ナショナリズム』,pp.80-81.

22. 柳田泉,『明治文学と民友社』,柳田泉編,『明治文学全集 第36巻 民友社文学集』(東京:筑摩,1970),p.440.

23. 徳富猪一郎,『蘇峰自伝』(東京:中央公論社,1935),p.231.

24. See, Kenneth B. Pyle, *The new generation in Meiji Japan. Problems of cultural identity 1885-1895* (Stanford CA.: Stanford University Press, 1969), p. 44; John D. Pierson, *Tokutomi Soho 1863-1957. A journalist for modern Japan* (Princeton, NJ.: Princeton University Press, 1980), pp. 30-34, 128.



his living in Osaka by pulling rickshaws and engaging in other labouring jobs. Moving to Tokyo, he continued on as a labourer, studying at Fukuzawa Yukichi's Keio Gijuku Academy at night, and joined Soho's newspaper, the *Kokumin Shinbun*, in 1892.<sup>25</sup> It was for this newspaper that he composed his celebrated reports on poor urban life, entitled 'Tokyo – darkest life' in serial form, later published in book form as *In darkest Tokyo*. 'These writings are a record of this writer's experiences of darkest hidden life [...]. Entering into this darkness and mixing with poor children, I lived like that for over 500 days, changing occupation thirty times, with countless abodes and encounters, gathering memories of my life in the realm of the poor'.<sup>26</sup> Matsubara wrote about a life that he had lived, and his work has been described as characteristic of the Minyusha movement's 'commoner-oriented socialist critique of reality'.<sup>27</sup>

An almost contemporary and friend of Matsubara's, Yokoyama Gennosuke (1871-1915) was another celebrated chronicler of poor life who wrote initially about his own experiences. Gennosuke's biological father was a fishing boat-owner in Uozu in rural Toyama prefecture, and thus a man of some wealth. But his mother was a household servant, and she was paid off upon becoming pregnant. Like Matsubara, Gennosuke was adopted, in his case by a family of plasterers who gave him the family name Yokoyama. Like Matsubara, but unusually for a Meiji-era intellectual, he was of humble upbringing. Notwithstanding his labouring background, however, Yokoyama finished primary school. Working thereafter in a soy sauce factory, he earned the favour of one of Uozu's richest men, Sawada Rokurobei, who apparently asked Yokoyama's adoptive father to send Gennosuke to the new Toyama Prefecture Middle School that opened in 1885. Subsequently moving to Tokyo, Yokoyama attended the same law school as Sakurada Bungo. Law school reportedly became an expensive affair that bankrupted his adoptive parents, who eventually sold all their land and moved into rented lodgings to support him. Repeated failure at the bar exam combined with his parents' destitution to lead Yokoyama to become an impoverished tramp who lodged in a Zen temple. During that time, he developed literary interests, and by the good offices of a friend, Yokoyama managed in 1894 to acquire a job with the *Mainichi Shinbun* and the patronage of its editor, Shimada Saburo. It is perhaps unsurprising that he too, wrote of what he knew

25. 山田博光, 「松原岩五郎」, 平林一・山田博光編, 『民友社文学の研究』(東京:三一書房, 1995), pp. 256-258.

26. 松原岩五郎, 「東京 最暗黒の生活」, 『国民新聞』, 09.08.1893, 田中・和田編, 『思想の海へ』, p. 72.

27. 池田浩, 「書評: 松原岩五郎『最暗黒の東京』」, 『寄せ場』, 第2号, 05.1989, pp. 247-249.

and cared about: poor working life.<sup>28</sup>

The *Mainichi* was not only the oldest and most political of the established newspapers, it was also known for being independent and for having a social conscience. Shimada was to a large extent responsible for that reputation, for as James Huffman has noted, Shimada raised the issue of ‘urban poverty in an ongoing, systematic way’.<sup>29</sup> Shimada was influenced by Christian and socialist ideas; one biographer characterized him as a humanitarian.<sup>30</sup> At any rate, in his preface to Yokoyama’s celebrated book on poor matters, *Japan’s lower class society*, Shimada wrote of the need for the literate classes to give consideration not just to enriching the country, but also to the redistribution of those riches. And he also pointed out the particularity of Yokoyama’s approach (shared, of course, with Matsubara). ‘To study this [poor life], he entered into the ghettos, mingled with poor people, ate, slept and worked with them. Thus his writings are not just fact; his sentences also contain a natural sympathy for labourers and poor people.’<sup>31</sup>

Ethnographies of urban poverty such those produced by Yokoyama and Matsubara had varied effects. For some, the discovery of the world of the poor called for immediate action, to draw them closer to the mainstream. “Scholars, entrepreneurs, ministers, police chiefs [...]. See how many people, how many of our comrades, our fellow nationals, are leading monstrous lives almost like animals”, appealed the socialist intellectual Kotoku Shusui.<sup>32</sup> In a similar vein, the literary critic Taoka Reiun expressed the opinion that literary figures should interest themselves in the poor. His interest in social inequality seems to have been acquired from reading the works of Victor Hugo, whose writings drew the attention of people sympathetic to the Seikyosha and Minyusha groups.

In these cases, a desire to create a ‘national literature’ reflecting the state of the people, suggests Nishida, led to the development of interest in poor, slum, and social issues.<sup>33</sup> In Taoka’s words, ‘The so-called civilization and enlightenment of

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28. 立花雄一, 『評伝横山源之助—底辺社会・文学・労働運動』(東京: 創樹社, 1979), pp. 13-30, 38-41.

29. James L. Huffman, *Creating a public. People and press in Meiji Japan* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1997), pp. 241, 244.

30. 高橋昌郎, 『島田三郎—日本政界における人道主義者の生涯』(横浜: 基督教史学会, 1954), pp. 165-166.

31. 島田三郎, 「序」, 横山源之助, 『日本の下層社会』(東京: 岩波書店, 1949 [1899]), pp. 7-8.

32. 幸徳秋水, 「東京の木賃宿」, 『平民新聞』, 10.01.1904, 中山泰昌編, 『新聞集成明示編年史 第12巻 日露戦争期』(東京: 財政経済学会, 1936), p. 166.

33. 西田勝, 「日清戦後の『戦後文学』」, 小田切秀雄編, 『講座日本近代文学史II近代文学の成長と確立・明治下』(東京: 大月書店, 1956), pp. 9-11.

the nineteenth century entailed much civilization for the rich, but while it entailed the demolition of the noble and lowly classes, the divisions of wealth and poverty were thereby made even greater [...]. Poets and writers must sing of their desperate fates and evoke their pitiful lives [...], feel for the unfortunate, sigh, and in their place appeal to the heavens'.<sup>34</sup> Literature was at once to find suitable material to represent among the poor people, and to represent poor interests in doing so. Clearly, such literature was to be explicitly national: the poor people were to be represented as nationals who needed succour. In short, what was being asserted was an explicitly national project to integrate poor people, who were presented as an unhappily detached segment of the nation, into the nation proper.

In this sense, these writings were concerned with treating the aftermath of the dismantling of the Tokugawa status system, for this dismantling resulted not just in people's liberation from the strictures of status, but also in the destruction of people's former status-based communities, and in economic dislocation. In this context, the above writers perceived a need to constitute a new kind of social solidarity, centred on the nation, through literary representations of shared national belonging.<sup>35</sup>

In these late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century writings, intellectuals, politicians and journalists tried to direct public attention at the poor, motivated by a desire to promote national solidarity and minimize social disharmony, and by the notion that the education and development of the poor was necessary for the progress of the country, as well as to prevent crime, disease and disorder. In such circumstances, more and more writers conducted detailed investigations into the situations of the poor and unfortunate. As it turned out, their quest for information was attended by the rise of a style of reporting that, far from expressing natural sympathies for and affinities with poor people, tended to represent such people and their residential zones as dangerously deviant. Detailed study of the situation of urban poor people revealed myriad new issues that necessitated further inquiry, as well as intervention. Data collection and intervention then called for further inquiry to verify the effects of such intervention, demonstrating the kind of productive looping effect described by Ian Hacking, in which the detection of a problem and growing awareness of it arouse

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34. 田岡嶺雲, 「下流の細民と文士」, 『青年文』 09.1896, 黒古一夫編, 『思想の海へ 第12巻 思想の最前線で文学は予兆する』 (東京: 社会評論社, 1990), pp. 81-83.

35. Although referring to a slightly different context, see Gerard Delanty, *Community* (Oxford: Routledge, 2003), pp. 28-29.

responses that modify the situation, in turn calling forth more efforts to grasp the changed state of affairs.<sup>36</sup>

#### 4. An alien issue

The dynamics of late-nineteenth and twentieth-century Japanese inquiry into poor people's living conditions followed certain patterns seen elsewhere, including urbanizing Western Europe, Australia, and North America. In mid-nineteenth-century England, 'sanitary science' examined how environments, populations, migrations, and diseases were inter-related, finding that low-lying crowded areas were dens of disease, that courts and alleys and windowless places required housing reforms, better water, and so on. Middle-class commentators, concerned by 'their own lack of control over and within such areas', accentuated public sanitation concerns by portraying poor areas as dark unknown places, 'dens of evil fever', 'plague spots', 'vice hollows', and 'revolutionary slums' that lay 'beyond the public gaze, outside the ambit of official surveillance.'<sup>37</sup> Representations of slums as hidden and dangerous worlds awaiting discovery by intrepid explorers and intervention by public health and law and order authorities became in late-nineteenth century slum writing in the United Kingdom, Australia, and the United States 'a universal form'<sup>38</sup>, 'a virtual literary convention of that genre of writing.'<sup>39</sup> In short, the sort of gaze that was directed at colonial denizens was also turned towards the poor areas and people of large industrial cities by 'social explorers', who narrated 'the story of one person's journey into an alien culture, within one's society'.<sup>40</sup> In the Japanese context too, journalists, literary figures, and members of the government portrayed poor urban areas and their residents

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36. Ian Hacking, *The social construction of what?* (Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, 1999), p. 105.

37. Felix Driver, 'Moral geographies: social science and the urban environment in mid-nineteenth century England', *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, vol. 13, 1988, pp. 277-282.

38. Alan Mayne, *The imagined slum. Newspaper representation in three cities, 1870-1914* (London and New York: Leicester University Press, 1993), pp. 150, 160-161.

39. Deborah Epstein Nord, 'The social explorer as anthropologist: Victorian travelers among the urban poor', in William Sharpe and Leonard Wallock (eds.), *Visions of the modern city. Essays in history, art, and literature* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987), pp.122-134. See also David Ward, *Poverty, ethnicity and the American city, 1840-1925. Changing conceptions of the slum and the ghetto* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), p. 13.

40. John Docker, *Postmodernism and popular culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp. 225-228.

as semi-foreign zones and alien peoples possessed of exotic customs, featuring themselves in the starring roles as intrepid discoverers and explorers.

Many late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century writers about the urban poor fixated on how they and their residential areas were distinct from the rest of the city. Of course, different spaces were associated with different groups; each district had its own historical particularities, whether as former cheap housing districts for labourers, samurai compounds for privileged members of the military strata, merchant row houses, or outcaste enclosures. But in prior writings, these were not presented as disconnected from each other, as alien to the others. They were integrated into a wider whole, in the Tokugawa order, with their own interconnected functions. However, in the Meiji years, certain differences were stressed, thereby occluding similarities and other differences; the differences that the poor were discovered to present featured among those that were emphasized.

For example, in Kyoto, there was an urban former outcaste area known as Yanagihara, which during the Meiji period came to be enveloped by Kyoto city wards. The area's wealthier long-standing residents tended to move out to higher class residential zones especially into the twentieth century, while in their place, impoverished urbanites moved to this convenient location close by Kyoto station. Based on its history as an outcaste area, and on its reputation as an area inhabited primarily by poor people, commentators ascribed the area a reputation for difference, as a place where residents did not 'breathe the air of enlightenment', as a place that gave observers 'the impression of being a different kind of world'.<sup>41</sup> Some insisted that the divide between Yanagihara and Kyoto was such that the former constituted an 'autonomous district'<sup>42</sup>, or even an 'alien realm'.<sup>43</sup> This perceived isolation can in part be attributed to certain contemporary developments. The abolition of the outcaste status groups and the termination of their former occupational duties and privileges in the early Meiji years saw their work in public order-keeping functions such as policing and cleaning taken away, thus reducing the degree of the local residents' integration into the wider city, and worsening their economic situation. History and post-Meiji socio-economic changes thus can be said to have combined to allow the presentation of this district as somehow 'alien', even though it lay within the city

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41. 「懇親会」, 『京都日報』 19.06.1889, 原田伴彦ほか監修, 『近代部落史資料集成 第3巻』 (東京: 三一書房, 1987), p. 194.

42. 「柳原荘の未来」, 『日出新聞』 28.10.1888, 『京都の部落史6.1』, p. 62.

43. 「貧民部落に大清潔法の施行」, 『日出新聞』 11.07.1893, 原田ほか監修, 『近代部落史資料集成 4巻』 (東京: 三一書房, 1987), p. 162.

area geographically (it was not however zoned as urban until into the twentieth century<sup>44</sup>). But it was by no means the case that such isolation was only cited in the case of former outcaste areas. Other poor districts were written about as ‘islands’, for example, with one Tokyo district reported in the *Hochi Shinbun* to have ‘customs and ways completely different from the rest of the city, naturally constituting an isolated island separated from the mainland’.<sup>45</sup>

Admittedly, such isolation and cultural difference were not always presented as negative features. On occasion, there were positive portrayals of the poor districts that were allegedly estranged from the rest of the city, in which writers suggested that these areas were where the kinds of pre-industrial communities that were disappearing elsewhere managed to persist.<sup>46</sup> For example, Matsubara Iwagoro saw Tokyo slums as alien places where, ‘if you pass between the row houses and take a step in’, you could find yourself faced by ‘countless odd races’ going home after working in the big city.<sup>47</sup> Matsubara’s slums were isolated islands of dirty and smelly rotting matter floating in the oceanic metropolis. One Tokyo district was ‘Japan’s number one garbage dump [...] every kind of pollution and dirt is to be found within the boundaries of this area. Dirty water flows in all directions, and the sunlight reveals rot and decay’.<sup>48</sup> And yet Matsubara’s vision was not particularly negative. The penetration of the sunlight into this fetid darkness in fact signified how decay was symbolic of life. Such places, writes Maeda Ai in commenting on Matsubara’s work, were also fertile, vigorous, warm, and dark, they were places where life and death merged, where the failures of modernity and capitalist industrial society’s competitiveness came to life.<sup>49</sup> Matsubara viewed the slum as a kind of asylum, as a sanctuary for the downtrodden. This vision was reiterated by, for example, Chiku Masataro, who discovered in Tokyo’s Shitaya ward ‘a different country, a different society outside society.’ Showing little interest in concepts such as filth and poverty, Chiku fixed on the point that there was, in his view, no wealth and no crime within this area, and announced that ‘much more than regular society, this one district has formed an ideal society.’<sup>50</sup>

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44. See, McCormack, ‘Making modern urban order’.

45. 小林丈弘, 『『特殊部落』 認識における構造と主体』, 『現代思想』 27巻2号02.1999, pp. 102-3.

46. Delanty, *Community*, pp. 15, 18, 25.

47. 松原岩五郎, 『最暗黒の東京』 (東京: 民友社, 1893), pp. 15-16, 19. This reference to ‘odd races’ brings to mind the unknown strange types who feature in Hugo’s *Les misérables*. See, Chevalier, *Classes laborieuses*, p. 207.

48. 松原, 『最暗黒』, pp. 47-48.

49. 前田愛, 『獄舎のユートピア』, 『前田愛著作集 第5巻 都市空間のなかの文学』 (東京: 筑摩書房, 1989), pp. 128-130.

These positive depictions echo French and English counterparts in which working class areas were noted for their ‘milling vitality and vigour, a sense of continual movement and life’, as opposed to the sterility considered to characterise more bourgeois areas.<sup>51</sup> They also hinted at how such travel into poor areas could lead the travellers to a critical and reflexive consideration of what it meant to become ‘civilized’ and modern<sup>52</sup>, and of the way in which capitalist modernization ceaselessly creates obsolete ‘wasted people’, to use Bauman’s term, through continuous technical innovation and economic changes that have the effect of ‘degrading and devaluing the previously effective modes of “making a living”’.<sup>53</sup>

Overall, however, poor urban zones tended not to be viewed as repositories of community, vitality, and pre-industrial tranquillity or as asylums for the refugees of industrial modernization. It was rather more common to treat the poor and their residential districts as had done H.A. Frégier, the Chief of Police of the Prefecture of the Seine, in the Parisian case some decades earlier. As Frégier suggested in the title of his magnum opus, entitled *Of the dangerous classes of the population in the large cities, and ways to improve them*, a growing concern of modern urban administrative government was the management of the massive numbers of working poor in the cities, with a view to making them better citizens who would not pose any threat to social order and governance. For Frégier, the ‘poor and vicious classes are always, have always been, and will be always, the most productive seed of all kinds of evildoers that we specify by the term the “dangerous classes”’.<sup>54</sup> Writers depicted Osaka’s Nagamachi area, which was subsequently to evolve into the well-known working-class area of Kamagasaki, in much the same fashion. During the Tokugawa period, this district had been the southern entry point into Osaka, and a locus of cheap accommodation, as well as labour.<sup>55</sup> Despite its integration into Osaka’s labour and accommodation markets,

50. 知久政太郎, 「変装探訪 世態の様々」, 1914, 南博編, 『近代庶民生活誌 第2巻』(東京: 三一書房, 1984), pp. 394-397.

51. P.J. Keating, *The working classes in Victorian fiction* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1971), pp. 12-14.

52. About this possibility, inherent in travel, see, Nicholas Thomas, *Colonialism’s culture. Anthropology, travel and government* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1994), pp. 5-6, and also Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial eyes. Travel writing and transculturation* (London: Routledge, 1992), p. 43.

53. Zygmunt Bauman, *Wasted lives. Modernity and its outcasts* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2004), pp. 5-6.

54. H.A. Frégier, *Des classes dangereuses de la population dans les grandes villes et des moyens de les rendre meilleures* (Genève: Slatkine-Megaritis Reprints, 1977 [1840]), p. 7.

55. 小山仁司・芝村篤樹, 『大阪府の百年』(東京: 山川出版, 1991), p. 45. See also 佐賀朝, 「近代巨

however, Meiji-era Nagamachi was not merely rendered as ‘countryside in the city’, but as ‘in fact a completely separate realm’, so identified particularly by the residents’ lack of morals, savage looks, physical deformities, different skin colour, and so on.<sup>56</sup>

Indeed, portrayals of the Japanese urban poor not only repeated themes of poor criminality and disease that were so popular in industrializing cities around the world, but also drew upon the same sorts of racialized descriptions of poor people. One of the better known expressions of this discursive style is provided by the writing of Engels in the mid-nineteenth century about English slums as wildernesses whose labouring residents constitute a ‘physically degenerate race’, ‘a race wholly apart’, forming with the bourgeoisie ‘two radically dissimilar nations, as unlike as difference of race could make them.’<sup>57</sup> Such refrains were applied equally to the poor residents of the faubourgs of Paris, of whom Eugène Sue wrote in his popular 1842-1843 serial *Les mystères de Paris* that ‘We’ve all read [James Fenimore] Cooper’s descriptions of ferocious savages, we’ve shuddered for the colonists and the townspeople, fearful that so close to them lived and loitered these barbarians tribes cast out so far from society by their bloodthirsty habits.’ As he went on to claim, the problem was that such savages lived not just in far-off and exotic places like the American West, but ‘amongst us’, in the figures of poor urban dwellers.<sup>58</sup>

This writing style that presented the urban poor as aliens and their living areas as other worlds proved popular also in the Japanese context, inspired especially by the late-nineteenth-century suggestions of General William Booth, the founder of the Salvation Army. The Japanese literary critic Maeda Ai has noted that translations of works such as Henry Stanley’s *In darkest Africa* and Booth’s *In darkest England*, which were both hugely popular in England, greatly influenced the development of slum writing in Meiji Japan. Both of these works were published in the English language in 1890, and were translated into Japanese before the turn of the century.<sup>59</sup> Echoing earlier French writing on the urban poor, Booth made clear the relevance of Stanley’s record of his travels in

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大都市の社会構造—明治期大阪の都市内地域」, 佐藤・吉田編, 『新体系日本史6』 pp. 377-386.

56. 「大阪の別世界」, 『東雲新聞』 03.04.1888, 原田ほか監修, 『近代部落史資料集成第3巻』, pp. 240-241.

57. Anne McClintock, *Imperial leather. Race, gender and sexuality in the colonial context* (London and New York: Routledge, 1995), p. 43.

58. Chevalier, *Les classes dangereuses*, pp. 86, 663. See, also, Jean-Luc Racine, ‘Les vocabulaires de la stigmatisation urbaine’, Colloque: Les mots de la ville, Paris, 4-6 décembre 1997, accessed at <http://www.unesco.org/most/p2wp3d.htm#atelier%205>.

59. 前田, 「獄舎のユートピア」, pp. 122-126.



the African Congo region to slum adventuring in the first pages of *In darkest England*, where he found parallels between ‘Darkest Africa’ and ‘Darkest England’. ‘May we not [...] discover within a stone’s throw of our own cathedrals and palaces similar horrors to those which Stanley has found existing in the great Equatorial forest [...Think...] how close the parallel is, and how strange it is that so much interest should be excited by a narrative of human squalor and human heroism in a distant continent, while greater squalor and heroism not less magnificent may be observed at our very doors.’<sup>60</sup>

In the Japanese instance, Booth’s suggestions that the strange and exotic could be found just as easily close to hand as far away were followed up by Matsubara Iwagoro in his *In darkest Tokyo*, as well as in Sakurada Bungo’s references to William Booth<sup>61</sup>, and more generally in the large amount of slum-investigation writing that journalists, literary figures, and members of the police forces produced. Matsubara’s report on ‘darkest Tokyo’<sup>62</sup>, originally published as a serial in the *Kokumin Shinbun*, is probably the most celebrated piece of slum literature. A writer who portrayed slum life with a view to criticizing society<sup>63</sup>, and with personal experience of such life, Matsubara nonetheless referred to himself as ‘a solo adventurer into slums’, positioning himself with readers rather than with his former neighbours. Among his fellow ‘urban adventurers’ of the time was the Christian Socialist writer Tokutomi Roka, who wrote of his late-nineteenth century evangelical forays ‘through nauseating smells and filth’, ‘alone into the slums and *eta* settlements’, to gather in the ‘souls of those whom society has rejected’.<sup>64</sup> The protestant preacher Kagawa Toyohiko would in similar fashion see his work in the slum of Shinkawa in Kobe<sup>65</sup> give rise to portrayals of him as a ‘Christian knight errant who [...] sallied forth to fight the battles of beaten and broken humanity’.<sup>66</sup> To cite just a few more examples, the *Kobe Shinbun* ran a series of investigative articles in 1906 on Kobe slums to considerable popular acclaim; the author likened the Shinkawa district to

60. William Booth, *In darkest England and the way out* (New York and London: Funk and Wagnalls, 1890), pp.11-12.

61. 成田龍一, 「帝都東京」, 『岩波講座日本通史 第16巻 近代1』(東京: 岩波書店, 1994), p. 201.

62. 松原岩五郎, 『最暗黒の東京』(東京: 岩波書店, 1988).

63. 池田, 「書評」, pp. 247-249.

64. 徳富蘆花, 『思出の記』1901, in 『現代日本文学全集 第5巻 徳富蘆花集』(東京: 筑摩書房, 1955), pp. 238-239; Tokutomi Kenjiro, *Footprints in the snow*, translated by Kenneth Strong (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1970), pp.207-209.

65. 賀川豊彦, 『死線を越えて』(東京: キリスト教新聞社, 1971 [1920]), pp. 133-224; Toyohiko Kagawa, *Before the dawn / Across the death-line*, translated by I. Fukumoto and T. Satchell (London: Chatto and Windus, 1924).

66. William Axling, *Kagawa* (London: Student Christian Movement Press, 1932), p. 49.

London's East End. The anonymous adventurer wrote of how he prepared himself for his incursion by dressing carefully in rags, carrying a knife, paper, and various other tools.<sup>67</sup> For this author, Shinkawa was 'a den of evil': perilous, enchanted, and with the reporter in danger of being killed if unveiled as a media spy. To enter and reveal its nature was 'an extreme adventure'.<sup>68</sup> Yamazaki Gensen also recounted his 1915 slum visits as a great adventure requiring lengthy preparations including growing his hair long and dishevelled, acquiring a tan, choosing faded dress, and devising a suitable tale of misfortune to explain his appearance in the slum.<sup>69</sup>

Obviously, depictions of slums and poor areas as alien worlds inhabited by savages had to deal with two major problems. Firstly, such areas were actually within the city bounds, and by no means presented a completely different aspect to surrounding areas. Secondly, the residents of such areas tended to work in what was presented as the city proper, and furthermore were not at all visually distinct from their urban co-residents. In response to this lack of clear-cut visual markers of difference, writers commonly used smell as a literary artifice to differentiate poor areas and people from other areas and more respectable populations.

Alain Corbin has argued that through the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, middle-class individuals in France became more attuned and sensitive to both public and private odours. As they did so, they began to claim that workers' sense of smell was less refined, and so allowed them to tolerate offensive odours. 'Unequal sensibilities', writes Corbin, 'were only one more sign of inequality among individuals'. That is, the fact that the masses were presented as living in smelly and putrid conditions was taken to signify that they were physiologically different to the civilized people. This alleged difference was then used to present the poor people as blights on the modernizing city that needed treatment and elimination.<sup>70</sup>

In context of Japan's industrializing cities, the olfactory marker of bad smell was especially commonly referred to in the case of former outcaste and new

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67. 木工冠者, 「貧民窟探検記」, 『神戸新聞』6-21.12.1906, 南編, 『近代庶民生活誌 2巻』, pp. 17-18.

68. 安保則夫, 『ミナト神戸—コレラ・ペスト・スラム—社会的差別形成史の研究』(京都: 学芸出版社, 1989), pp. 246-248.

69. 山崎源泉, 「貧民窟探検記」, 『救済研究』, 第3巻2~7号, 02.1915 - 08.1915, 南編, 『近代庶民生活誌 2巻』, pp. 134-135.

70. Alain Corbin, *The foul and the fragrant. Odor and the French social imagination* (Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, 1986), pp. 140-143.

commoner areas. Possibly referring to the odours attendant on leather-making processes, Sakurada Bungo declared that ‘upon approaching the row houses of the [former] outcaste settlement of Nishihama [Osaka], a strange stench undetected elsewhere approaches on the wind’.<sup>71</sup> Yokoyama Gennosuke, well-known for his sympathy towards the poor working classes, fixed upon the smell of a former outcaste district in Tokyo’s Asakusa ward, which, he claimed, was ‘indescribable’, causing migraines and attacking the nose such that stays longer than a half-hour were impossible.<sup>72</sup> The odour of the Yanagihara area in Kyoto caused journalists to feel queasy. It was so malodorous an area that ‘when one passes through it, the stench stays in one’s nose for three days’.<sup>73</sup>

This is not to say that smell was found only to be a particularity of former outcaste districts. It was also discovered in working-class urban districts. Suzuki (formerly Kobayashi) Umeshiro, a journalist stationed in Osaka for Fukuzawa Yukichi’s *Jiji Shinpo* newspaper, wrote of his visit to Osaka’s Nagamachi in 1888: ‘When one enters Nagamachi, and especially the back street [...], an almost unbearable and unspeakable stench overpowers one’s sense of smell.’<sup>74</sup> Sakurada Bungo also visited the Nagamachi area in the course of his “slum adventures”, and in his case too, merely walking through the area overpowered his senses, the stench remaining in his nostrils until long afterwards, reducing his energy and killing his appetite.<sup>75</sup>

This concern with bad smells is novel, since people had not been greatly concerned with smells during the Tokugawa period, when travellers from Europe commented that because human waste materials were stockpiled for later use as fertilizer, bad smells were ever-present.<sup>76</sup> It was only during the early Meiji years that officials, intellectuals, and gradually the population more generally acquired a concern with ‘bad’ smells as part of their drive for civilization and hygiene. This stress on the smell of certain districts provided, apart from the disciplinary effect of teaching people what smells were unacceptable, a way to ‘sustain the illusion of slums as an alien world’,<sup>77</sup> as well, of course, as to mark out in an intangible way

71. 桜田, 「貧天地」, p. 166.

72. 横山源之助, 「新平民社会の状態」, 『太陽』, 10.1899, in 原田ほか監修, 『近代部落史資料集成4巻』, pp. 85-88.

73. 「浴場は悪疫予防の一端なり」, 『中外電報』, 28.05.1886, 井上清ほか編, 『京都の部落史6巻史料近代1』(京都: 京都部落史研究所, 1984), pp. 285-286.

74. 鈴木梅四郎, 「大阪名護町貧民窟視察記」, 1888, 西田編, 『明治前期労働者事情』 246-247.

75. 桜田, 「貧天地」, p. 163.

76. 小野芳朗, 『<清潔>の近代—「衛生唱歌」から「抗菌グッズ」へ』(東京: 講談社, 1997), pp. 40-46.

77. Mayne, *The imagined slum*, p.175.

who was respectable: those who did not smell.

Overall, representations of poor places portrayed them as being less than suitable for proper human habitation. They were unhygienic, criminal, isolated, immoral, primitive, and smelled bad. Rather than express any great solidarity with the poor, such depictions brought into question the very humanity of those who resided in these locations. If certain places were inhuman, then the people who resided there could but be abnormal. And conversely, since the people who resided there were abnormal, the places could not help but be deviant...

These writings, it goes without saying, are the domestic counterparts of colonial ethnographic narratives about how intrepid writers infiltrated unknown and exotic places, got close to the strange local peoples, and gleaned new information about their ways of life. Labourers, like colonials and potential colonials, were identified as other, distant and different, through the same kinds of representational modes. Like colonials, the urban poor were to be found at the end of journeys into 'contact zones', to use Pratt's term<sup>78</sup>, in dark and foreign lands. Writers promised to provide accurate and factual unveilings of these alien places and people, their surveying, mapping, and naming constituted, of course, 'the imposition of Western [scientific] structures of knowledge' on former blank zones.<sup>79</sup>

Such narratives as these were evidently intended to be edifying for the educated reader; they were also sources of knowledge for the governing classes to reference and use in implementing policies. And official intervention in poor areas, let it be stressed, was rendered unavoidable by the tenor of the kinds of writings briefly sketched out above, given that they portrayed poor areas and their residents as particularly problematic in terms of hygiene, crime, morality, and idleness. This 'need' for official intervention was, in fact, accentuated by a curious form of inversion, in which these poor districts and peoples who were targeted by implacable law and order and hygiene campaigns, which is to say targeted for colonization by respectable civilized values and practices, were portrayed not as under attack by the mainstream, but on the contrary as attacking respectable society.<sup>80</sup> In other words, the primitive residents of the wild

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78. Pratt, *Imperial eyes*, pp. 4, 7.

79. Tim Barringer, 'Images of otherness and the visual production of difference: race and labour in illustrated texts, 1850-1865', in Shearer West (ed.), *The Victorians and race* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1996), pp. 36-37.

80. Incidentally, the urban poor had been most explicitly equated with barbarian invaders in the work of Antoine Eugène Buret, *De la misère des classes laborieuses en Angleterre et en France* (Paris: Paulin, 1840), who mused that 'maybe they're [the urban poor] thinking about an

zones discovered in and around the city were represented as menacing settled urban order.

Most infamously in the Japanese case, Kagawa Toyohiko announced that the habitations of 'low class urban society' were spreading, around a core of former outcaste areas, and invading the surrounding areas. This was held to be particularly evident in Tokyo, but was to be seen in western cities also.<sup>81</sup> This notion was earlier expressed in the 1890 assertion by the hygiene maven Nagayo Sensai that 'It is a fixed principle that the normal spread of cholera first involves eruption in pauper communities, where it multiplies, and gradually spreads to the mainstream.'<sup>82</sup> Writers of fiction too, availed themselves of these representations. Shimizu Shikin's 'Migrant Academy' was partly set in the town of Yanagihara, where she had lectured on lifestyle reform.<sup>83</sup> In this short story published in 1899, the Yanagihara area of Kyoto was described as having small houses lining the road, sandals drying on roofs, scabby and dirty barefoot children in the street. When the heroine enters the area, she is 'assaulted by some kind of stench'. Despite feeling uneasy, her rickshaw continues on, past dead animals and rubbish-filled drains. Even the houses that seem clean have raw hides drying on the roofs, and the rickshaw puller confirms her suspicions that it is a former outcaste village.<sup>84</sup> Of the heroine Okiyo's entry into Yanagihara in this story, Edward Fowler has noted, 'it is the intruder who fancies herself to be under attack, even as she penetrates open space'. What this aggression towards her is suggested to do is 'validate her subjecthood and affirm the undifferentiated homogeneity of majority society'.<sup>85</sup> Such writing, in short, inverts the very violent attacks made on poor districts by mainstream society with its overwhelming power, and in so doing, this inversion further strengthens the rationale for official intervention to bring about massive change in the poor areas.

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invasion, like the barbarians to whom we have compared them', quoted in Chevalier, *Classes laborieuses*, pp. 594-595.

81. 賀川豊彦, 『貧民心理の研究』 1915, 賀川豊彦全集刊行会編, 『賀川豊彦全集 第8巻』 (東京: キリスト新聞社, 1962), p. 45.

82. 小林丈広, 『近代日本と公衆衛生—都市社会史の試み』 (東京: 雄山閣, 2001), p. 30.

83. 小林丈弘, 「部落の窮乏と自主的改善運動」, 井上ほか編, 『京都の部落史第2巻』 (京都: 京都部落史研究所, 1991), pp. 72-73.

84. 清水紫琴, 「移民学園」, 古在由重編, 『紫琴全集』 (東京: 草土文化, 1983), p. 221.

85. Edward Fowler, 'The buraku in modern Japanese literature: texts and contexts', *Journal of Japanese Studies*, vol.26, no.1, 2000, p.9.

## 5. In conclusion: the civilized man's burden

Writings about the threat posed by poor areas and people to society in general suggest, perhaps, how 'modern civilization' was felt to be a very fragile thing, so fragile that its existence could be threatened by a few poor districts and their alien residents in huge and densely populated cities. But this is not the most important point to take from the above discussion. What I wish to stress is that analogous to racism, these discourses isolated certain alleged particularities of poor urban districts and their residents. That is, they were concerned with fractioning the general population, with hiving off a segment of the urban population from the rest. From this perspective, it seems obvious that the effects of these writings were at odds with the professed aims of the nationalist writers considered earlier, who by contrast had written about how there was a need to represent the interests of the poor people and integrate them more fully into the national population.

To expand on this point, these poor places were represented as alien and dangerous. Their residents were depicted as primitive, racially different, and morally depraved. These places and peoples, in short, escaped state control. Primitive peoples lived in wild zones in urban centres. Such alien territories inhabited by dangerous and savage natives, once discovered at the heart of the modern city, had to be made known, subdued, and civilized; in other words they called for colonization and assimilation.<sup>86</sup> The actual conduct of colonial governance, it goes without saying, requires investigation by the impartial civilized observer, in order to produce more detailed knowledge about the kinds of residents defined as problematic, to mark out their particular features and make those people known and thus open to governance. Based on such information could be formulated policies to appropriately reform those populations and places.<sup>87</sup> To recapitulate, the civilized observer was to come, to know, to classify and to diagnose, thereby to establish the need for intervention and management, and to propose ways in which such reform programs might be effectively implemented.<sup>88</sup>

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86. Amy Kaplan has pointed out this aspect of slum reporting in the context of the nineteenth century US: *The social construction of American realism* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1988), pp.44-45. For a similar comment on the Japanese context: 安保則夫, 『ミナト神戸』, pp. 246, 262-265. On the English case: Driver, 'Moral geographies', pp. 281-282, and Keating, *The working classes*, pp. 32-34.

87. Barbara Cruikshank, *The will to empower. Democratic citizens and other subjects* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999), pp. 76-77.

88. Thomas, *Colonialism's culture*, pp. 4, 41, 66. Incidentally, in eighteenth and nineteenth-

The ensuing statistical and quantitative studies of the poor, which I do not have the space to deal with in this paper, were premised on the idea that the poor were decisively different from the rest of the population, and that state intervention in their lives was necessary. Mary Poovey has suggested that the kind of positioning of individuals and groups in relation to a larger society as seen in the narratives that differentiated poor and alien zones and people from the rest of the urban scene 'allowed social analysts to treat one segment of the population as a special problem at the same time that they could gesture toward the mutual interests that (theoretically) united all parts of the social whole'. Baldly stated, such representations allowed for state intervention into the problematized areas and populations, on the grounds that it was in the interests of society as a whole to do so. At the same time, of course, those interventions made it clear also to the rest of the population what qualities and characteristics were required of them. Difference, in the form of perceived impediments to national social harmony and progress, was first discovered, and then treated; the welfare and advance of the society as a whole was linked to solving the poverty and related problems ascribed to a few.<sup>89</sup>

To conclude, then, the kinds of writings about poor districts and their residents discussed in this paper can be said to have been at least in part a response to imaginings about the existence of a single national community. Those imaginings led to a problematization of poverty in especially the urban context, and engendered an investigative effort that tended to discover domestic zones of alien difference that called out compellingly for colonization and assimilation efforts by the metropolis. This discovery of difference, however, in turn aroused a colonial drive expressive of an expansionist will to assimilation and unity...

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century England and France, the urban poor and other 'wasted people' were frequently dispatched to the colonies. See, Bauman, *Wasted lives*, pp. 36-38. Such strategies were also adopted in the Japanese case. See my 'Other paths to Japaneseness – Buraku emigration in the Meiji era', *East Asian Studies*, June 2002, vol. 31.

89. Quoted in Cruikshank, *The will to empower*, p. 4. See also Thomas, *Colonialism's culture*, pp. 71-72.

