Conclusion

These three cases gave me a variety of insights into the nature of our soundscape activities and showed me the significance (and disadvantages) of the *100 Soundscapes* project.

For example, the last case highlighted the need for noise abatement, not only for our health and aural well being, but also to reveal to our ears what all too often is covered by noise: the indigenous soundscapes of our local environments.

One of these cases also showed that folktales record the traditional interaction or relationship between the local people and the sounds of their environment.

In another case, when the local people became aware of the extra aural dimensions of their environment, it empowered them to pursue further ecological activities. At the same time, it is also important that the project—on a purely personal level—enabled these applicants and the local people they represented, to extend their understanding and deepen their appreciation of their local environments. Their comments and illustrations in their application forms demonstrated this clearly.

At the Stockholm *Hey Listen!* conference (June '98), I first presented the *100 Soundscapes* project from Japan as an example of how an awareness of soundscape and acoustic ecology issues can be converted into action. At that time I tried to highlight one of the most important aspects of this project: the fact that the project *itself* was an action brought about by the awareness of soundscape and acoustic ecology concepts. However, at the same time, I could predict from previous work in this area, that future actions needed to take more of a grass roots approach, *designing from the bottom up or from inside*, which is very different from the conventional way of *designing from the top down or from outside*. (Torigoe 1998: 104). After the Stockholm conference, Gregg Wagstaff succinctly honed in on this aspect of the project as follows:

> The *100 Soundscapes* project successfully raised public awareness of, and responsibility towards, the environment by means of its soundscape. This was achieved not by promoting a 'Self-realisation' but rather the identification of sounds as having a greater value or worth within a community by that community. (Wagstaff 1999: 7)

The fact that the motor boat travel company stopped running their motor boats on the Shiira River so that the visitors could enjoy the sounds of the subtropical forest and the living creatures in that area, demonstrates what Wagstaff and myself said above. The local people, including the owner and workers of the company, became aware not only of the value of the river's sound environment but also of their responsibility towards these sounds. As a result their priorities and understanding of their daily activities within their environment changed.

The *Wave Boy* statue is another, but in a way more ambiguous, example of action taken as a result of the *100 Soundscapes* project. As mentioned earlier I had an uneasy feeling when I saw the statue on the beach of Enshu. I felt that it fixed an image of *Wave Boy* in people's minds. Whereas the marvelous aural tradition of the legend allows people to use their inner imagination and conjure up images in their own mind's eye of this *Wave Boy*, a visual aid like this statue highlights only one person's notion of what he might have looked like.

These examples indicate that there can be a wide variety of actions as a result of soundscape projects, some of which may be more beneficial in the context of acoustic ecology, and some may even contradict its ideals. However, this does not mean that we should be discouraged from carrying out actions as a result of the project, as long as we consider them carefully and continue to exchange our opinions in an open atmosphere. (In this context we should not forget the fact that the eco-tourism in Iriomote Island is based on economic and commercial considerations.)

As we have seen from *Wave Boy*, legends of folk tales referring to environmental sounds are an important part of the local soundscapes. That was the reason I asked people in Monbetsu if they knew of any legends or folk tales based on the drift ice. When they replied that they had not heard of any, I suggested to them that they might consider inventing a new story which would include the sound of drift ice. If I were from the area, I would love to create such a story myself. This could also be a future action of the *100 Soundscapes* project.

At the same time, we should not assume that there are no legends about drift ice in Japan. It could very well be that there are some among the Ainu people who used to be the main people living in the drift ice area. But unfortunately, the dominant Japanese indigenous people, who started to take control of Hokkaido about 1800, did not culturally interact with the Ainu people.

It is highly likely that other peoples living around the Arctic Circle have stories and legends about drift ice. Indeed, it would be another action to initiate exchange of such stories among the people who share the common experience and environment of drift ice.

On the last day of my visit to Monbetsu, I traveled through the frozen sea on an ice-breaker. From the deck of the ship, I noticed the footprints of the Northern Fox. Watching these footprints as they faded away into the white surface of the sea, I thought of the so-called "Okhotsk People", who, the local people say, used to travel just as freely on the frozen sea.

For the Okhotsk people as well as for the Northern Fox, it is not a national anthem that is important, but the environmental sounds which form the soundscape of their daily lives. It is a matter of survival for them to listen to the subtle differences in the drift ice sounds.

If people were bound more by the local soundscapes rather than by national anthems, there would be wider and deeper understanding among the people of this new millennium.

References

Torigoe, Keiko. 1999. "A Strategy for Environmental Conservation." In Henrik Karlsson (ed.) From *Awareness to Action: Proceedings from "Stockholm, Hey Listen!" Conference on Acoustic Ecology*, The Royal Swedish Academy of Music, pp.103—109.

Wagstaff, Gregg. 1999. "What is Acoustic Ecology's 'Ecology'?" *The New Soundscape Newsletter*, 9:4—7.

Endnotes

1 This paper was presented at the WFAE conference in Melbourne in 2003. Several sentences and figures were added for this version.

2 Recently, in March 2006, I visited the Shiretoko Peninsula and I heard a type of murmuring sound in the drift ice in Okhotsuk, which indicated that the power of the drift ice in the Okhotsk Sea has decreased since the year 1999. The murmuring sound was caused by the air captured inside the ice. As the ice melted, the air was released out into the sea water and made the murmuring sounds. When the power of drift ice is strong, however, the drift ice squeaks and grinds.

Acoustic Ecology Considered as a Connotation: Semiotic, Post-Colonial and Educational Views of Soundscape

By Dr. Tadahiko Imada

Keywords: *Semiotics, Post-colonial, and Soundscape*

I. Phono-Centrism and Metaphysics

Jacque Derrida criticized the Cartesian metaphysical view of philosophy as being logo-centric. Derrida thinks that logos is merely a monologue criticized as phono-centrism. Phono-centrism suggests that when one speaks something, one's speech should express exactly the same contents which one intends to say, in other words, there is no difference between speech and writing. Derrida writes (1978, pp.279-278):

> The history of metaphysics, like the history of the West, is the history of these metaphors and metonymies. Its matrix—if you will pardon me for demonstrating so little and for being so elliptical in order to come more quickly to my principal theme—is the determination of being as presence in all senses of this word. It could be shown that all names related to fundamentals, to principles, or to the center have always designated the constant of a presence—*eidos, arche, telos, energeia, ousia*, (essence, existence, substance, subject) altetheia, transcendentality, consciousness, God, man, and so forth.

European philosophy always listens to its own voice. This monologue pursues a desire for unification, explained by the terms "A=A." This is a concept which seeks identity among differentiation. For example, the concept of "a human = a human" may express that a human being is always a human being even if one looks like a hoodlum, and this concept of "A=A" comes from a particular value named "cogito." Therefore, the concept of "A=A" secretly introduces the concept of humanity. Derrida (1980) also argues that all language, because of a surplus over any exact reference, leaves the reader and listener free to interpret due to a certain vagueness of the relationship between signifier and signified. European metaphysics strives for a solid foundation of language, that is to say, an original meaning which is spoken and can be precisely written. Therefore this writing (*ecriture*) actually says exactly the same thing as the original meaning of the speech. In Saussurian linguistics, attention is paid to speech events (*parole*). Derrida criticizes this as phono-centrism and removes the center of Saussurian linguistics from speech events to writing (*ecriture*). Derrida explains (1976, p.78):

> The privilege of the phone does not depend upon a choice that might have been avoided. It corresponds to the moment of the system (let us say, of the "life" of "history or of "being-as-self-relationship"). The system of "hearing / understanding-oneself-speak" through the phonic substance—which presents itself as a non-exterior, non-empirical or non-contingent signifier—has necessarily dominated the history of the world during an entire epoch, and has even produced the idea of the world, the idea of world-origin, arising from the difference between the worldly and the non-worldly, the outside and the inside, ideality and non-ideality, universal and non-universal, transcendental and empirical, etc.

Naess (1998), for example, proposed the concept of deep ecology, which has no objective/subjective distinctions, and all human beings can instinctively and spontaneously experience it. His concept is quite similar to Noam Chomsky's linguistic theory. Chomsky (1966) proposed the concept of deep structure, in which all human beings innately and universally have as one, the same internal organs. However, both "deep ecology" and "deep structure" have never yet been found. If anything, we might merely listen to Naess' monologue and should not expect to find any fundamental ecological truth. Needless to say, any cultural symbol or heritage is not genetically inherited, (e.g., Levi-Strauss, 1968). Thus, we cannot share the same acoustic environment where everybody universally feels comfortable. We may be able to find some commonalities in terms of acoustic environments and people's perceptions. However, we should also examine their socio-cultural settings very carefully. We need to learn what deconstruction, cultural history, narratology, and feminist theory have to offer even for acoustic ecology as well as soundscape studies (Said, 1991, xvi).

Umberto Eco says (1972, p.383):

> If the ultimate structure exists, it cannot be defined; no metalanguage can ever capture it—because if it can be discovered, it is no longer ultimate.

How can we understand or even compare soundscapes which have totally different histories and contexts? In non-Western cultures, there is presumably no concept of Western acoustic ecology or soundscape at all. Can we simply abstract a "sound structure" of which Western people may make sense from non-Western sound cultures? And can we accept such a structure as a universal one for acoustic ecology or soundscape, ignoring all the evidence of differences? We can possibly have some universal sense of acoustic ecology or soundscape from a European or North American perspective. However, if it does not apply to non-Western sophistication (if people in the non-Western culture do not need to seek the universal nature of acoustic ecology or soundscape at all), a universal structure of acoustic ecology itself would be a European and North American cultural product in a specific period.

People in Japan, for example, used the word "music" as soon as Western musical influence came to Japan in the early twentieth century (Tanaka, et al, 1986). In ancient times, "music" meant the foreign instrumental sounds which were mostly from Korea and China. Simultaneously, people in ancient Japan called their own

music "singing and dancing," "playing" and "sound of a thing." That is to say, the ancient Japanese people thought about various sounds not only as acoustic phenomena but also as cultural and religious events, existing in a more inclusive socio-cultural context. The traditional way of listening in Japan involves a sort of amalgam of environmental sound, instrumental sound and any other environmental facts. In short, cultures do not share the same methods of listening, that is to say, there are as many ways of listening as there are cultures and ears.

II. Roland Barthes' Semiotics

Saussurian linguistics (1966) focuses on abstracting a "universal system" (e.g., the concept of signifier and signified) which can apply to all languages around the world. Semiotics, however, extends Saussurian linguistic theory to decode socio-cultural systems as a system of meaning, that is to say, semiotics is an apparatus to analyze socio-cultural phenomena as the structure of meaning. Semiotics assumes that language is not merely a tool for communication but also for creating any other communicative apparatus such as music, advertisements, foods, objects, clothes and so on. Roland Barthes (1968) started off as a structuralist and coded everything into semiotic systems of signs and signifiers from fashion, to poetry, striptease, hamburgers and advertising in the manner of Jakobson and Lévi-Strauss. But for Barthes, the sign draws attention to its own arbitrariness which does not want to be natural and in the act of conveying meaning, communicates its own relative and artificial status as well as signifier. His reasoning is political. Signs which are "natural" are also authoritarian and ideological because ideologies seek to make social reality "natural" (e.g. saluting the flag, western democracy represents the true meaning of the word *freedom*). Barthes sees such things as contemporary mythologies. He thinks that all signs are ambiguous, capable of many different interpretations, but this does not mean they are all limitless. It does mean they are not fixed in meaning. Barthes (1973) also illustrated his view that all theory, all ideology, all determinate meaning, all social commitment have become terroristic and writing is the answer to all such "terrorism." He thinks about writing as enabling meaning to be dislocated and released from the straightjacket of a single identity. To understand why Barthes held this view, the context of modern France must be examined. Particularly important is the fact that he wrote *The Pleasure of the Text* five years after the 1968 students riots in Paris where France itself nearly collapsed into anarchy (Reader, 1987). Barthes (1982, p. 4) has written about Japan, as follows:

> Today there are doubtless a thousand things to learn about the Orient: an enormous labor of knowledge is and will be necessary (its delay can only be the result of an ideological occultation); but it is also necessary that, leaving aside vast regions of darkness (capitalist Japan, American acculturation, technological development), a slender thread of light searches out not other symbols but the very fissure of the symbolic.

Barthes visited Japan as a member of a French cultural mission in 1966. His *Empire of Signs*, written in 1970 is a sort of impressionistic criticism of Japan. What Barthes hoped to reveal are things which have been concealed by metaphysics—"another wisdom (the latter might appear thoroughly desirable)"—but he keeps his perspective as an outsider and tries to forget his own background as a French person. Barthes somehow had a need to escape from the metaphysics and logo-centrism in the West, but the Japanese do not need to escape. Japanese behave according to a cultural manner that Barthes likes. But unlike with him, it is always done involuntarily. Only when a certain external perspective is brought into an internal culture, can the culture be accepted as an exotic presence. However, since this exteriority is always produced somewhere out there, we can hardly expect a neutral standpoint at all.

Barthes believes that Japan, as an empire of signs, is opposed to the West as an empire of meanings. This opposition between signs and meanings is equivalent to the opposition between full and empty. According to Barthes, people in the West always have a desire to fill signs with meanings, that is to say, the Western world is fulfilled by the metaphysics of Christianity. However, Japanese people reject filling signs with meaning involuntarily. Signs in Japan always exist with a kind of "lack of meaning," as if they are empty signs. It means that many signs are not explained by both spoken and written words in Japan. People do not have any desire to fill signs with meanings. In this quote he clarifies the most important difference between the West and Japan, namely: there is no antinomy in the Japanese *Bunraku* (the Japanese puppet performance that was originally begun in the sixth century), in contrast to the fact that a basic antinomy plays a very important role in Western drama. In the West, this antinomy is called "dualism." Especially modern Western thinkers, such as Descartes (1988), tried to understand the world as divided into the spirit, body, mind and matter. Although we can find many common points between the Western and Japanese puppet performance in that they have a puppet, story, music, actor, audience and so on, the concept is completely different: *Bunraku* is not based on Western dualism. Barthes creates a contrast between Western theater and Japanese *Bunraku*, whereas the Japanese have never regarded the Bunraku like *Barthes* does, that is to say, they have never tried to "analyze" the *Bunraku*.

Ecriture (writing) is one of Barthes' best-known terms. It has an original meaning of "written language," "a literary expression," or "literary style." But he thinks *ecriture* is a tendency which is seen in a certain period of literature and is independent of each single work. In *Empire of Signs*, *ecriture* becomes a general term for a visual and spatial sign system. He says (1982, p. 4):

> Writing (*ecriture*) is after all, in its way, a *satori*: *satori* (the Zen occurrence) is a more or less powerful (though in no way formal) seism which causes knowledge, or the subject, to vacillate: it creates an emptiness of language. And it is also an emptiness of language which constitutes writing; it is from this emptiness that derive the features with Zen, in the exemption from all meaning, writes gardens, gestures, houses, flower arrangements, faces, violence.

For Barthes, writing is "not in order to read it (to read its symbolism) but to follow the trajectory of the hand which has written it: a true writing." (Barthes, 1982, p. 45) He has also written about the Japanese *Kabuki* (one of the great three theatrical arts in Japan, which originally began in Kyoto at the end of the sixteenth Century) actor, "The Oriental transvestite does not copy Woman but signifies her." (1982, p. 53) He thinks *ecriture* is formed by a gesture of ideology, and that is why the Oriental transvestite is a gesture of the ideology of woman and is not plagiarism. "The whole of Zen wages war against the prevarication of meaning. We know that Buddhism baffles the fatal course of any assertion (or of any negation) by recommending that one must never be caught up in the four following propositions: this is A—this is not A—this is both A and not A—this is neither A nor not-A . . . The Buddhist way is precisely that of the obstructed meaning: "the very arcanum of signification, that is, the paradigm, is rendered impossible." (Barthes, 1982, p. 73)

This "exemption from meaning" is exactly what the Japanese culture values based on "ruminating" and "*satori*." Barthes explains "*satori*," as follows:

> Westerners can translate only by certain vaguely Christian words (illumination, revelation, intuition), is no more than a panic suspension of language, the blank which erases in us the reign of the Codes, the breach of that internal recitation which constitutes our person. (Barthes, 1982, p.75)

There is a particular space for *Bunraku* and *Kabuki* and those Western concepts such as metaphor, implication and dualism are not involved at all. Karatani (1989, pp.268-269) has written, as follows:

> For example, the "Japan" of the Empire of Signs is a place of absence. Barthes's project was to reexamine Western thought in terms of an exteriority free of the sovereignty of the thinking subject which would be called "Japan." It is in this sense that Barthes's "spirit" exists: as a critique of the Western nineteenth century, seen as an autarchy devoid of exteriority. But the "Japan" discovered by Barthes—that is, the Japanese nineteenth century—is also a despotic system.

What Karatani implies here, that two different cultures can coexist, creating a sort of cultural mixture is however not quite possible. Although some commonalities can be found between two different cultures, many differences exist simultaneously. Karatani concludes (1989, pp.271-272):

> No matter what form the West's evaluation of Japan may take, Japan will remain for the West a place of exteriority rather than being what in fact it is: a discursive space filled with complacency and almost totally lacking in exteriority. Can there be a way out of this situation? The only word that comes to mind is "spirit," not, to be sure, interior or community spirit, but rather spirit as exteriority.

Karatani does not think that semiotics by Barthes can be considered as a tool to make a connection between two cultures (e.g., Japan and France). As Karatani says, the methodology to observe each cultural sophistication has to be "spirit", since exteriority goes beyond simple stylistic borrowings or adaptations from Western concepts as the West sees it. The predictable question arises here: can semiotic research make a link between the West and Japan in terms of social constructs of a space and location through time?

III. Sounds and Connotation

Barthes (1953) proposed the concept of denotation and connotations (first and second degree languages). The denotation refers to the actual things to which language applies. The connotation, however, brings in many more things and is the meaning-proper of an expression. An American motion picture *Finding Forrester*, directed by Gus Van Sant in 2000, interestingly illustrates the concept of connotation: Jamal Wallace (Robert Brown) is a 16 year old high school student who lives in the Bronx, New York. He has an aptness for basketball and is a genius in writing. He coincidentally meets Pulitzer-prize winning author and recluse William Forrester (Sean Connery). Jamal is helped along and shaped by Forrester. Some lines from the movie:

> Forrester: "Whatever happens, I'm off. What's the word that you and your friends would use for that?"
> Jamal: "Leaving?"
> Forrester: "Oh God . . ."
> Jamal: "Where are you off to?"
> Forrester: "Well, I have a homeland I haven't seen for too long."
> Jamal: "You mean, Ireland."
> Forrester: "Scotland, for God's sake!"
> Jamal: "I'm missing with you, man."

"I am off" and "I am leaving" are denotatively the same meaning. However, Forrester does not like the term "leaving" at all. Ireland and Scotland denotatively express the two different countries but have totally different connotations. Barthes thinks that the concept of denotation/connotation is a mythical system, which can apply to not only language but also any other social events. Barthes' concept should be applicable to the acoustic environment as well as to soundscape. We do not listen to sound itself as an acoustic entity. The sound merely creates metaphor and image, which we receive from time-to-time. If anything, we might not have any denotation after all.

Barry Truax writes (1984, pp. 47—48, p.147):

> Jacobson (1978) has described the linguistics relation of sound to meaning on the phonemic level in terms of Saussure's concept of the sign through which the signifier and the signified are linked (Saussure, 1966). . . . Although originating in the theory of signs, these terms and the model within which they function are useful for describing how sound communicates. . . . In situations where sound is the conveyer of information, it functions in a quasilinguistic sense as a "signifier" of that information. One identifies a particular sound as indicating the presence of an object or person, or as reflecting a specific state of the environment.

Truax thinks that the concept of soundscape describes the various systems of acoustic communication in relationship to each other. Saussure (1966, p.67) referred to the arbitrary nature of a sign and that the same concept of this arbitrariness may be applied, to some extent, in acoustic communications. Another example concerning denotation/connotation (in terms of acoustic communication) is the sound of bells at Nicoli Temple, a Russian Orthodox Church Temple, which has been heard by people in the town of Kanda in Tokyo. A variety of expressed values about Nicoli Temple were collected:

Question:

> "Explain in words your impressions of the sound of the bells."

Answers:

"I wish you every happiness."
"It was a signal of evening in my childhood."
"I don't like it, because it reminds me of when I was poor."
"I wish to marry as soon as possible."
"It is not noisy. I have very fond memories of it."
(Imada, 1991, pp.214—215)

These informants listened to exactly the same bell sounds. However, each of them gave us totally different answers. The definition of the concept of soundscape by the World Soundscape Project is (Truax, 1978, p.126):

> An environment of sound (sonic environment) with emphasis on the way it is perceived and understood by the individual, or by society. It thus depends on the relationship between the individual and any such environment. The term may refer to actual environments, or to abstract constructions such as musical compositions and tape montages, particularly when considered as an artificial environment.

Even in our present time, the definition of "music" is still pretty much coming from a nineteenth century Western aesthetic as articulated by Hanslick (1957), in which critics had developed a position where music could exist as an autonomous world. Many music teachers, not only in Japan but also in North America, assume that all music serves the same function for all human beings, and that music is a kind of "universal language" for all human races. Soundscape, however, is the idea of perceiving various sounds such as the sounds of nature, artificial sounds in cities and music, as total sonic scenery. We could, therefore, begin to see parallels between structuralist/poststructuralist theories proposed by both Barthes and Derrida as a concept of soundscape. There is evidence concerning the music/noise contradiction. A Japanese theatrical company premiered their performance outside Japan in Chicago, USA, in 1867 (Mihara, 1998). Their acrobatic performance was based on *kabuki* (one of the "great theatrical arts" with *noh* and *Bunraku*, which was originally begun in Kyoto at the end of sixteenth century). Aya Mihara (1998, pp.135—136) quotes from a review about their Chicago tour, as follows:

> Take, for instance, the peculiar tone which a dog emits when subjected to the irritation of a tin kettle tied to his tail, and under a rapid state of locomotion down a side street; join to this the heartbroken tone which a pig makes, under gate, when he cannot go forward, when it is forever too late to retrace his steps, and when it is misery to remain where he is; unite with this, the plaintive notes of a guinea hen in a state of mental agitation, and you have the peculiar music which my Japanese friend produces. To be sure, the dog, pig, guinea hen and Hollander together make more of a tune than he, which is not surprising, as one Japanese cannot be expected to rival the joint efforts of all these animals. (the *Chicago Tribune*, June 2, 1867)

Today, we can easily see that there is a lack of information of and understanding for Japanese culture and music at that time, as well as racial prejudice against Asian people. We know that today's music journalists in Chicago are quite unlike their cohorts one hundred years ago. Is this because they have more information about Japan and education regarding racism, where we can actually find the purely universal standpoint of music or sound in which all human beings can share equally and denotatively? Robert Walker writes (1990, pp. 187—188):

> It is commonly reported in many ethnological studies of the Australian aboriginal culture, for example, that the Australian aboriginal considers the role of the Dreamtime absolutely crucial to their survival. The Dreamtime is regarded as the truly creative time of their existence. It is the time when they make contact with the supernatural forces that shaped their universe. It is also regarded as the source and repository of songs and, indeed, all artistic activities...In such a belief system, creativity, as Western thought has defined it, cannot exist. There is no place for the individual as "creator" of his or her own music. This represents a significant and qualitative difference between an aboriginal musician and a Western composer such as Liszt.

We have to make sure that the "affective power" of music, for example, belongs to Western culture. There are no terms for Western affective power in the Australian Aboriginal aural culture. As Walker mentions, there is no place for the individual as "creator" of his or her own music outside Western musical culture. The following hypothesis presumably comes into being:

1) We cannot universally understand acoustic ecology because acoustic ecology is arbitrarily created based on a specific epoch and culture. In other words, to understand the concept of acoustic ecology (method) or soundscape (practice) one must understand the cultural forms that produced it.
2) We can conceivably learn the concept of acoustic ecology or soundscape in terms of contextual relationships.

IV. Final Thoughts

Japanese music education has believed in the European aesthetic values since the end of the nineteenth century to the present time. That is to say, the imposition of European musical epistemology on Japan has persisted for over one hundred years. The concept of soundscape presumably tries to eradicate Western music's autonomy, in other words, people's own personal standards can possibly re-examine all the traditions which Western music has preserved.

Derrida sees a fundamental alienation between speech events (*parole*) and writing (*ecriture*). If one says "the sky is blue", this *parole* may be expressing a specifically impressive blue, felt by a particular person. Writing (*ecriture*), however, produces "the death of a subject," because this writing does not represent (=presence) any specific feeling of any particular person at all and merely becomes a general linguistic sign. If one can possibly own the terms "the sky is blue" to express a specific feeling, nobody can use the terms any longer. If language is the system of differences as Saussure says, language cannot be present for anyone any more. Hence, language no longer represents any specific feeling for any particular person at all. The term "play" is therefore introduced by Derrida to indicate this absence of any transcendental meanings in *ecriture* or text. Derrida thinks that as soon as one uses some words, language automatically gets involved in the system of differences and is separated from any original meanings. The combination between "original meaning," "speech events (*parole*)" and "writing (*ecriture*)," which phono-centrism takes for granted, and the presence of the truth ensured by phono-centrism, cannot be established any longer. Thus, several possible arguments against Derrida exist. There are no absolute grounds for use of words such as truth, certainty, reality and so on. However, are we able to say that these words lack any meaning? At the same time, if there are no certainties or truth, how do we know that there is no truth simply because words cannot tell us the truth? We should carefully examine what Derrida actually suggests. What are those terms—such as deconstruction, *différance* (difference), and play—proposed by Derrida, actually for? The European people have always grasped reality through words. However, no matter how we try to explain this world through words, it keeps changing continuously into new realities. Don't we call this sort of unpredictable nature which exists in the world "reality."? Derrida therefore states that European metaphysics cannot tell us any truth because of the huge gap between reality and human recognition, and this "world" is only "play" after all.

Much Western thought has already been introduced into Japan. This metamorphic process induces a black hole, which could presumably be explained by the term "play," to use Derrida's word—that is to say, bringing Western ideas or products into Japan without having European metaphysical ties. In stark words, many Japanese people have started to feel very strongly about their Japanese roots and how they made us think differently even though we were brought up with Western artifacts in Japan. There can be no such thing as a neutral standpoint to a Japanese. Perhaps our postmodern world has sown post-colonial contacts after all. Post-colonial theory (e.g., Loomba, 2001) has revealed how notions of the universal are ethnocentric, since their formulations are created by the image (connotation) of the dominant culture (i.e., Euro-American culture).

The imposition of European epistemology on non-Western nations has continued for over one hundred years. Soundscape is useful as a concept, for example, in Japanese education, in that it can illuminate for us how to simply listen to sounds critically and socio-culturally. Simultaneously, we should re-examine this idea utilizing a post-colonial theory in order to go beyond the simple adaptation of Suzerains' (colonizers') concept, as the West views sound and culture.

References

Barthes, R. (1968). *Elements of Semiology.* New York: Hill & Wang.

Barthes, R. (1982). *Empire of Signs*. New York: Hill & Wang.

Barthes, R. (1972). *Mythologies*. New York: Hill & Wang.

Barthes, R. (1973). *The Pleasure of the Text*. New York: Hill & Wang.

Chomsky, N. (1966). *Cartesian Linguistics*. New York: Harper & Row.

Derrida, J. (1981). *Position*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Derrida, J. (1976). *Of Grammatologie*. Baltimore: John Hopkins University.

Derrida, J. (1978). *Writing and Differences*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Descartes, R. (1988). *Selected Philosophical Writings*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Eco. U. (1972). *La structure absente*. Paris: Mercure de France.

Hanslick, E. (1957). *The Beautiful in Music*. New York: Bobbs Merrill.

Imada, T. (1991). "Soundscape As Performance." In *Anthology of the Seventh Nagoya Cultural Encouragement Prize*. pp.207-219. Nagoya: Nagoya City Cultural Foundation.

Jakobson, R. (1978). *Six Lectures on Sound and Meaning*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Karatani, K. (1989). "One Spirit, Two Nineteenth Centuries." In *Postmodernism and Japan*. pp. 259—272. Durham: Duke University Press.

Levi-Strauss, C. (1968). *The Savage Mind*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Loomba, A. (2001). *Colonialism/Postcolonialism*. New York: Routledge.

Mihara, A. (1998). "Was It Torture or Tune?: First Japanese Music in the Western Theatre." In *Popular Music: Intercultural Interpretations*. Pp.134—142. Kanazawa: Kanazawa University.

Naess, A. (1998). *The Sound Crisis a Genuine Part of the Ecological Crisis.* Paper Presented for *"Stockholm Hey Listen!"* at the Royal Swedish Academy of Music, Stockholm, Sweden.

Reader, A.K. (1987). *Intellectuals and the Left in France Since* 1968. London: The Macmillan Press.

Said, E.W. (1991). *Musical Elaborations*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Sant, G.V. (Dir). (2000). *Finding Forrester*. (Film Reference).

Saussure, F. (1966). *Course in General Linguistics*. London: Peter Owen.

Tanaka, N. et al. (1986). *Nami no Kifuho* (Wave Notation). Tokyo: Jiji Press.

Truax, B.D. (1984). *Acoustic Communication*. Norwood: Ablex.

Truax, B.D. (ed). (1978). *Handbook For Acoustic Ecology*. Vancouver: A.R.C.

Walker, R. (1990). *Musical Beliefs: Psychoacoustic, Mythical, and Educational Perspectives*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Tadahiko Imada is an associate professor in the Faculty of Education and Vice-Director of the International Music Centre at Hirosaki University in Japan. He holds an MA from Simon Fraser University where he studied as a recipient of a Government of Canada Award; and his Ph.D. is from the University of British Columbia in Vancouver. His publications appeared in many academic journals in the U.S., Canada, Australia, Sweden, Korea, Hong Kong, India and Japan. He is the co-author of *A Little Sound Education* (together with R. Murray Schafer, 1996). Prior to joining the faculty at Hirosaki University, he was a research fellow at Roehampton Institute London. He was Visiting Professor at the University of Tennessee at Martin in 2002.

Quote:

"If an ancient master plays the kin,
his music has the power to move
the earth and a fierce god,
and all kinds of instruments
have a variety of effects
according to kin sounds.
However, when poor players
play the kin, its sounds sometimes
move the moon and the stars,
make snow and frost out of season,
and disturb the clouds and thunder.
Thus, the kin is the greatest instrument.
So why should we choose
any other instrument except the kin
as a standard for tuning all sounds "

— "The Tale of Genji" by Lady Murasaki