Re:Search

Censorship's Distortion of Narrative and Marital Relationships in Japanese War Period Fiction

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this paper is to challenge the notion that most Japanese writers only wrote nationalist fiction during the Pacific War with America. I analyzed two short stories published shortly after the start of the Pacific War, "December 8th" by Dazai Osamu and "A Wife's Letters," by Uno Chiyo[i], with Gérard Genette's theory of narratology and voice as a frame. I establish that censorship perverts the traditional relationship between narrator and narratee, intradiegetic or extradiegetic, within the story and without the story. In each story, a housewife takes the role of author, one of her diary and the other of letters to her husband. Both of these cases should be examples of natural thoughts, uncensored, particularly a diary. However, both stories have censors, within and without the story. The presence of the censor changes how the story is told, and even the diegetic relationships within the story. The necessity of being over patriotic to appease censors causes a lack of connection between the husband and wife of "December 8th," in how they express their emotions. And in "A Wife's Letters," the war and censorship cause physical and emotional separation between husband and wife. In conclusion, these authors appease censors with nationalist prose, yet subvert censorship through author characters, thus revealing not only their true feelings about the war, but also on the effects of censorship on relationships and writing.

KEYWORDS

censorship, Dazai, Japanese literature, narrator and narratee, sentiment, separation, Uno, writing

What is the relationship between author and reader? It is not a simple distinction between the person who wrote the book and the person who reads the book, at least in the case of fiction. In between, there is at least one narrator, if not more, and there may possibly be at least one narratee in the way, as well as an implied reader. These narrators and narratees are intermediaries between the author and the reader through which the story is filtered. In his book *Narrative Discourse*, Gérard Genette writes about narrative voice and the relationship between both intradiegetic and extradiegetic narrators and narratees, with intradiegetic being a narrator and narratee within the story, and extradiegetic being those outside of the written story. In the simplest terms, a traditionally narrated story has relatively few levels of narration because the physical reader is the implied reader. However, an epistolary novel, for example, would have both readers and writers, and thus more narrative distance between the reader and the text. Likewise, diary fiction would have no intended audience, as it is written for one's self, and thus there would arguably be no narrative layers between the reader and the text. However, there is still the possibility for another layer between the reader—a censor. In this paper, I will question the role of the censor, and war censorship in particular, in two stories published in Japan during the Pacific War with America at three levels: censorship of the author, of the narrator (extradiegetic), and within the story (intradiegetic). Censorship distorts the traditional relationship between narrator and narratee in diary fiction and epistolary fiction, and furthermore, this distortion affects the intradiegetic, personal character relationships as well as the extradiegetic narrative relationships

Both of the stories "December 8th" and "A Wife's Letters," discuss the war but ultimately focus on the relationship between a woman and her husband, revealing the effects of censorship even in private forms such as letters and diaries. "December 8th," by Osamu Dazai, and "A Wife's Letters," by Chiyo Uno, both published in Japan in 1942. Both of these stories are written from a housewife's point of view, and both in a private form of writing: The wife of Dazai's story in a diary, and the wife of Uno's story in letters.[ii] "December 8th," by Dazai Osamu is the story of a housewife's reaction to Pacific War with America, which started with the bombing of Pearl Harbor on December 8, 1941. The

narrative is written as a diary, and the housewife writer wants to leave a record of the kind of day she had when the war started. "A Wife's Letters," by Uno Chiyo is a collection of letters by a wife to her husband on the front.

Thus, in "December 8th," there is no implied reader because it is a diary. In "A Wife's Letters," the intended reader is her dear husband on the front. It is valuable to read these works together because they both make the war very personal. "December 8th" translates the national experience of starting the war with America into the daily life of a housewife, and the letters of "A Wife's Letters" brings the battlefront home. Furthermore, in both of these stories there are not only extradiegetic censors, those outside the universe of the story, but censors within the story as well. Through focusing on the human relationships and the role of writing, both stories reflect what happens when a censor comes between the writer and the reader, and also how the censor affects the relationship between husband and wife.

Due to the government censorship enforced upon writers during the Pacific War, the traditionally held view is that literature of the period is not worth reading. However, I believe that the writers still found a way to artfully subvert censorship and tell a good story. Censorship in Japan did not start in 1941; Japan had been fighting a war in China since 1931, and there was censorship before then. But censorship tightened in 1937, and furthered even more in 1941. There are three factors that affect a work being published: The first is the kind of censorship, whether it is positive or negative. Writers were forced to both avoid criticizing the war (negative) and to celebrate the war (positive). It was important to comply with both positive and negative censorship if a writer wanted to be published, as Donald Keene writes in his treatise on war period Japanese literature (69). The second factor is the editing of a text, meaning that a work could be edited in part, with certain words, sentences, or even scenes deleted or completely banned. The third factor is who is enforcing the censorship, whether it is the government or the writer. The government and government censors could edit the work as previously mentioned, they could have a writer arrested to prevent them from writing, punish them for what they wrote, or they could send a writer to the front to write praise of the war effort. As a result, writers would censor

themselves in preparation for censorship, being careful of every word they wrote. If they expressed anything that could be read as resistance literature, the work would, at the very least, be edited or banned, and the writer could be arrested. By anti-war sentiments, or resistance literature, I mean anything against the emperor, the military, or the war itself, because any thoughts against war would ultimately be interpreted as criticism of the emperor as well. However, writers could not simply stop writing, for "they were under compulsion to express their feelings publicly in writing" (67). Therefore, they "had no choice but to compose works that demonstrated their patriotism and encouraged fellow Japanese to fight even harder" (68). Thus, much of the literature written during the war is largely unread because it is judged as too nationalistic. This view of war literature, however, rests on the questionable assumption that writers silently complied with censorship without using their creative talents to subvert government expectations. Jonathan Abel writes more positively of war literature in his book *Redacted.* He writes that Japanese writers "wrote not only through censorship but also about censorship, archiving its violence for contemporary readers and for historical memory" (3). Thus there were more possibilities than simply conforming and writing war praise, including writing through genre fiction. A writer could appease censors and yet still express their true feelings about the war even through censorship.

Based on postwar statements, Dazai and Uno's opinions of the war seem to be ambivalent, rather than clearly black and white, which creates the possibility of reading between the lines. During the war, Dazai published patriotic fiction that Donald Keene claims is now not worth reading. However, after the war, Dazai said, "During the war I thought that if, under the circumstances, Japan won the war, it would no longer be the land of the gods but of the devil. But I declared my confidence in a Japanese victory. I was on Japan's side" (1050). Further, Keene writes of Dazai's "December 8th," "This story has been cited by some critics to prove that Dazai acquiesced before the trend of the times, but by others has been included in collections of 'resistance literature'" (1050). For example, the housewife narrator praises the war, yet criticizes her husband's patriotism. Neither did Uno Chiyo seem to be an avid supporter of the war. Rebecca Copeland writes, "Uno, however,

denies having any interest in propaganda or in the war [...] Uno was not interested in the political battles that raged outside her world of passion" (58). And so in her story, we find a woman who focuses more on missing her husband and her daily life than praising the war. It seems that for both writers, they cared for the nation, if not the war. Uno was dedicated to helping women during the war, and although it may have been against his will, Dazai did write much during the war that pleased censors and survived the period. There can be no remaining fiction that openly opposed the war, so any of those thoughts would have been written creatively in order to deceive the censors. Thus, in scrutinizing the vocabulary and character relationships of their stories, although their thoughts on the war may be unclear, they reveal the negative influence of censorship upon readers, writers, and relationships.

Within these stories, there are three levels of censorship that affect the narrative: censorship of the actual text, of the narrator and her story, and within the story. Although Gérard Genette does not discuss censorship, he dissects various aspects of voice; from the narrating instance, to the time of narration, to role of the narrator, and more.[iii] He discusses the levels of narrative, the most common being first and second degree narratives. The act of writing a story is the first level, and the action within the story is second level (228). So in these stories, the housewife of "December 8th" is writing her story in the first degree of narration, but the events of the day are in the second degree. Likewise, the writing of the letters in "A Wife's Letters" happens in the first degree, but the content of her letters occurs in the second degree. Although both women are extradiegetic narrators, Genette argues that they do not necessarily view themselves as author-narrators: "A novel in the form of a diary does not in principle aim at any public or any reader, and it is the same with an epistolary novel, whether it include a single letter writer or several [...] the fictive authors of these diaries or [letters] obviously did not look on themselves as 'authors'" (Genette 230). However, in addition to the physical text of these stories being subject to censorship, the extradiegetic narrators are sensitive to censors, as is inherent in the form of "A Wife's Letters," because mail sent to soldiers would have been intercepted and edited, and the narrator of "December 8th" is conscious of her husband as a critic, even though it is a private diary. Although these texts are in personal forms of writing, these

narrators are forced to be conscious of themselves as writers because of the censor. The writers cannot freely express their thoughts and must keep the censor in mind. The censor, whether it be an outside censor or the writer themselves, therefore becomes both a reader and a writer standing between the narrator and the narratee, manipulating the text that comes between. The writer must be careful of every word written and every thought expressed, and the text cannot be an unconscious text, as Genette argues is the norm for epistolary and diary fiction.

As a result, the entire story becomes a narrative situation in which the act of writing has a role to play within the story, and the nature of censorship is revealed within the story as the characters deal with intradiegetic censorship. The wife of "December 8th" begins her diary entry "I must write my diary with special care today" (Dazai 660). She is not a casual diary writer, for she is consciously constructing the text, nor is she writing for her own personal sake, so that she may remember what happened on that day, but for the historical record: "I've got to leave some sort of record of how a housewife in an impoverished household spent the day: December 8, 1941" (660). Although it is a diary, she writes with a purpose and an audience in mind, and so the diary is transformed from a private text into a public one. She understands that the day the war starts with America is important, and that her position has a housewife grants her a unique perspective on the war. She recognizes that she has a duty in preserving a record. And so she must censor her work for a future audience, because she must faithfully represent history. And in "A Wife's Letters," writing is the only means of communication between husband and wife. She sends him many letters, three in his first week gone. In her letters, she frequently cannot find the right words to say to him: "Really, how can I explain myself?" (Uno 780). She receives one postcard from him, but after that, she has no communication from him. She receives a package without a message, and it devastates her. She searches through newspapers, searching for any sign of him or where he might be. It is only through the act of writing that she can connect to her husband. However, the censor stands between her and her husband, and not only must she edit her own thoughts, but the ones that come from her husband are

limited. The censor then becomes a barrier between not only the extradiegetic narrator and the reader, but between the characters of the story as well.

In Dazai Osamu's "December 8th," the narrator is conscious of censorship not only due to the public nature of her task, but also because her husband is also censored. The writer of the diary means for her journal to be used as a historical record sometime in history, even if it is one hundred years from now: "In a hundred years when they're doing a grand celebration for the 2700th anniversary of the founding of our nation, maybe this diary of mine will be discovered in a corner of a storehouse somewhere, and they'll know that this is what a Japanese housewife was doing on this special day a hundred years ago, and it will serve as a little historical reference" (Dazai 660). As a result, she cannot write freely as a woman might in her diary, for she must represent the nation well. Consequently, she censors herself, for she does not want to be judged later for what she has written now. And so her audience is a censor for whom she must be careful of what she writes. However, she does mean to write faithfully, and so in regards to the future audience the work is not censored so much in content as in style. Her husband is the second censor, for he is also a writer. "My husband always criticizes my writing," she says," whether it's a letter or my diary or anything else" (660). So although this is a diary and thus should be a private form without an intended reader, she knows that he will probably read it, and she must be conscious of how he will read and criticize her work. He takes the position as editor not simply because he is a writer, but because he too is being censored and edited as a professional writer. Perhaps as a stand-in for Dazai himself, he must praise the war effort, or at least not speak against the war. As mentioned above, writers could not stop writing, and therefore had to write works that praised the nation and avoided critique. This comes out in the husband's speech, over patriotic and strange. There may be a difference between the level of privacy in the work of each writer, the husband and the wife, but censorship still affects both of their writing. They must consciously write in a way that would be approved of, whether by the government or the intended, or even unintended, reader.

It follows, then, that both the wife and her husband express patriotic thoughts, and yet, there is a difference between what they say and how they express it due to the nature of

the different kinds of censorship imposed upon each. The wife is writing a journal, and so although she is concerned for how her husband will critique the work—and how the future reader will perceive it—this is different from her husband, who is worried about his public persona as writer. As a result, her writing is more muted, while his is exaggerated, if not strange. Throughout the piece, the wife shows her support of the war, including casual statements that could come straight out of propaganda. She exclaims, "Oh, how I'd like to really talk to someone about the war—well, we really did it, it's finally got going, stuff like that" (Dazai 663). Her response to the "Imperial edict declaring war" is that she runs home crying to tell her husband. And when more news reports come in about attacks on American bases, she trembles because she "wanted to give thanks for everyone" (665). She is in support of the war effort, and enthusiastically so. She cheers on the soldiers fighting at war, praising "dear, beautiful Japanese soil," threatening American soldiers not to touch foot on "our sacred soil" (663). She calls Japanese soldiers "pure" and American soldiers "cruel" and "beastly." She appropriately uses terms according to propaganda. She evens says "If you dare even set foot on our sacred soil, your feet will rot off, for sure" (663). She uses strong language, but this was the common language used in propaganda, and therefore would be expected of her. Her husband's patriotism, however, is a bit too enthusiastic. Once the war is announced, they both rejoice, yet her husband again says something strange: "Where is the western Pacific? San Francisco, huh?" (Dazai 662). His question may not sound strange to an American reader, but for an ultra-nationalistic Japanese person, Japan is the land of the rising sun, and the easternmost country. To be placed West of America is disrespectful, and so the most patriotic Japanese would have placed Japan as East and not West in relation to America. So the wife takes the opportunity to critique not only his thoughts, but his character as well. She expresses her doubt of his intelligence because of his lack of geographical knowledge. However, his misunderstanding is rooted in his patriotism. He says, "They call Japan 'the land of the rising sun,' and it's also called 'the Orient.'...Don't you think that there's some way to have Japan east and America west?" (662). He clearly understands where things are, but he believes in the principle that Japan is the origin of all things, and thus places on the map should be labeled

accordingly. She declares that his "patriotism somehow goes to the extremes," and that she is disgusted by him, ashamed of him (662). She demonstrates that she, too, is patriotic, but here she makes it clear that there is a proper way and an improper way to express it. She is sensibly writing things down, "right and proper," but he is sentimental, too sentimental, and this is all due to the different kinds of censorship they both face.

The present censorship compels the husband to be over emotional, or sentimental, which he, in turn, attempts to force on his wife, but she wants to write properly, and so she does not comply with his extreme standards. Although both the husband and the wife are writers, the intent of their writings and the emotions they express are very different. She writes, "But then, I must try not to be too stiff about it [...] He says that all I do is make it serious, and it impresses people as being dull and slow. There's no 'sentiment' in it at all, and the sentences are not at all beautiful, he says" (Dazai 660). The word used for sentiment is not a native Japanese word, but the English word sentiment transliterated into Japanese. So his idea of emotional writing is not a native, Japanese idea, but borrowed from another language. She, too, has some kind of emotions: "Maybe it's because my emotions are too deep" (660). The word she uses for emotion is a native Japanese word, reflecting that her feelings are more natural. She writes, "It's not that my soul is so serious but that I'm just stiff and awkward and never have been able to be innocent and lighthearted and easy with people" (660). She is unable to truly express herself either in front of people or in writing because she has too many desires. However, her husband writes easily, as that is his profession. He is paid to write fiction—"sentimental" fiction. She does not have a high regard for her husband. She refers to his conversations as "stupid and silly" (660). She declares that his "patriotism somehow goes to the extremes," and that she is disgusted by him, ashamed of him (662). They both write with emotion, and they are both serious about what they do, but the strong presence of the censor in the life of her husband marks a difference in the use of emotions.

Therefore, the husband's patriotic sentiments are not even to be trusted because he is not writing naturally, but expressing thoughts forced upon him by censorship, and so his wife perceives him as a liar. She asks him, "Do you think Japan really will be OK?" and he

replies, “We’re all right—don’t you think that’s why they did it? We’re sure to win” (Dazai 663). She comments, “The things my husband says are always lies and utterly beside the point, but anyway, this time at least, I deeply wanted to believe absolutely his serious words” (663). The word used here for serious is not the same as what she used in the beginning, meaning “diligent or dedicated,” but rather “formal or stiff.” His lies are not personal, but constructed. She wants to believe his formal lies but she cannot. She doubts whether Japan will be okay, and her husband’s convictions that Japan will win the war do not console her. She outright declares that his confidence in Japan’s victory is unreliable. It turns out that her husband is useless. She declares that she could survive independently without him: “I might end up having to put Sonoko on my back and evacuate to the countryside. And that would mean that my husband would probably stay behind alone, taking care of the house. But he’s so incapable of doing anything that I feel quite depressed” (Dazai 665). He has been an irresponsible national citizen because he has not prepared for the war, and he has not even gone off to war because he is a “lazy” novelist, remaining at home. She even goes so far as to compare him to a neighborhood husband, who is “truly a hard worker, and the difference between [them] is like between day and night” (665). In this, Dazai may be ridiculing himself and other writers. He is a writer who does not fight in the war, who writes “formal” lies, and in stories expresses extreme patriotism for the sake of publication.

The thoughts and responsibilities of the husband and the wife are so contrary that it causes a separation between them, both from each other and between their activities. A husband should be reliable and provide for the household, but that role is left to the housewife. His over-patriotism, his lies, and his laziness are all due to his profession as a writer. However, his career is impeded by the need to cater to the demands of censors. As a result, he is not a very good writer, and he is so patriotic he disturbs his wife. His behavior is strange, and she does not understand what he says or does. In the end, when she comes across him on the road in the night, he tells her, “Now I have faith, and so the night road is just like full daylight to me” (Dazai 667). But what does that even mean? It is unclear whether he means that he has faith in the nation, or something else. As a result of the

changes censorship has forced in his thinking, the reader is unable to tell his true thoughts, and whether he is genuinely ultra-nationalistic. His responsibility to represent the nation well in writing alters the relationship between husband and wife, inhibiting them from cooperating as they are supposed to.

The narrator of "December 8th" is conscious of herself as a writer not only because of the public nature of her text, but also because of her husband's position as a critic of her writing, and thus a private text is complicated by unexpected censorship. Similarly, the narrator of Uno Chiyo's "A Wife's Letters" is conscious of herself as a writer because letters sent to soldiers during the war would have been censored during the war. The difference between the texts is that "A Wife's Letters" is an epistolary novel, and so there is a very clear implied reader, as opposed to a diary that does not have a directly intended reader. The wife of this story is writing to her husband, yet she cannot deny the censor who stands between her and the receiver of her letters, and thus the censor becomes a secondary intended reader. Letters to and from soldiers would have been censored in the war, meaning that parts of the letter could have been edited, or letters intercepted and removed. As a result, the housewife must strictly write only positive things about the war; otherwise her husband might not receive her letters. Likewise, she may not even acknowledge the censor, as the narrator of "December 8th" acknowledges her husband and future readers. However, the story only consists of her letters, and only one response is mentioned. Otherwise, it seems that he sends her no mail. The reader and the wife are thus unaware of both where he is and what he is thinking. The wife never complains about censors, but only implores him to reply and send a signal. This touching story about a woman missing her husband thus stands as an example of the effects of the larger phenomenon of censorship upon the relationship between husband and wife.

The narrator of "A Wife's Letters" writes so emotionally and seemingly naturally that she disarms the censors, thus allowing for leniency to express her true feelings. She expresses that she is in support of her husband going to war, and that she is proud of having a soldier for a husband. She speaks of sending her husband "with magnificent resolve to a distant battlefield on behalf of our great nation" (Uno 779). In fact, she

describes the feeling of watching her husband join the other soldiers as "a rush of joy" (780). And in a later letter, she declares, "My husband, among all those many who have gone to war, was with the force that marched triumphantly on Singapore. The thought made me tremble with pride. How fortunate I am—tending your absence with pride—much more so than an ordinary woman" (791). She takes pride in having sent a husband to war, in particular that he was part of the advance on Singapore. And at the end of the story, in the last letter, she joins other people in celebrating the fall of Singapore. She demonstrates that she is a good housewife, taking care of the house while he is gone, and that she is a good neighbor and Japanese citizen by cheering other men as they go to war, such as her neighbor's son (789). By demonstrating her patriotic nature, she is free to express herself emotionally, for although she does write the expected nationalistic praise, there is an overwhelming sense of sorrow and loss. Every mention of her joy or excitement for the war is enclosed in passages of isolation. When she is with the crowds either sending off soldiers or celebrating a victory, she feels alone and disconnected. She only glorifies the war as far as is necessary in order to be accepted. The amount of time spent on writing about how she misses her husband exceeds the amount spent on praising the war. There is a rift between the woman and her husband that is caused not only by the war, but also by the censors that limit the written communication between the two. The husband is meant to be a narratee who stands between the narrator and reader, but his response is entirely absent, further disrupting the relationship between reader and writer.

The focus of the story however, is not on the war, but on the letters, and so just as in "December 8th," she establishes her joy for the nation, including her support of her husband, through her writing. She writes, "When it finally dawned on me that I would not be able to see you one last time, I was so overwhelmed [...] what had come over me? And here I had only minutes earlier been feeling such elation for this husband of mine whom I was sending off"(Uno 779). She does not understand her own feelings; she does not even know how to explain her feelings. She cannot even think straight; her mind is numb.[iv] At the end of her last letter she writes, "You my darling, you my husband, your heart as our bond, please behold the emotions of a woman such as myself" (797). The emphasis of these letters is not

to praise the war, or to discuss the war, but only to express herself. It seems that she feels joy when she sends off her husband, but she is not sure if that is the way one should feel when she sends off her husband, and even that feeling is okay. When she returns home, her "carefree joy began to fade into a vague apprehension" (781). She writes as a way to try to understand her feelings. She repeatedly tells her husband that she does not understand her feelings, or that she does not know how to express her feelings. And although she calls them silly and womanish and even says, "Really, who can blame women like us for our petty feelings?" (791). She dialogues her feelings in respect to her position as both a woman and letter writer, especially because this kind of emotion would be expected of her by the censors and helps to enforce her concern for the nation.

However, her love for her husband as a soldier is not as important as her love for him as her husband, which is most strongly connected to the act of writing. Her love for her husband is the most important emotion connected with the act of writing. When she discusses the war, it is only in the context of her husband, his uniform, looking for references of him, and where he is on the warfront. Otherwise, it is mentioned when she is seeing off other soldiers, or at the end when she is celebrating the fall of Singapore. While the wife of "December 8th" is disgusted with her husband, the wife of "A Wife's Letters" is in love with her husband. She does not write to her husband simply to tell him what happened in her day. The first three letters recount parting from him. It is not that it is a long story that requires multiple letters, because she writes the whole story in the first letter. Rather, her memory lingers on the day she parted from her husband for the first three letters. And in the fourth letter, she writes that ten days have passed since he left (Uno 787). That means she writes three letters in about one week, focusing on their separation. She does write about other things, but she cannot let it go. She is heart-broken and distraught after he has left. After he leaves, she tries tracking his journey: "At first I followed your progress diligently, charting your different destinations on a map. But how could I continue this vigilance indefinitely?" She loses track, but when she receives his postcard from Taiwan, she feels "impatient and forlorn" (787). She immediately has a desire to see him. She reads newspapers looking for pictures of her husband, but even if she cannot find a picture of him,

she imagines him in the scenes she does find (790). She has a need to be read and responded to. She ends the story, "From your distant land, please see me as I am" (797). It is only through writing that he may see her, but she does not know if he sees her. But she receives no response from him, and so there is a lack of connection. Thus, her act of writing to her husband in order to enforce their connection goes unrewarded.

Now far apart, writing is the only thing that can act as a bridge between him, however, censorship prevents such a union from taking place. After losing track of his progress in the newspaper, another form of writing, she is "impatient and forlorn" (Uno 787). The word translated as "forlorn" is *tayorinai*, which literally means "without anyone to rely on; unreliable," but could also mean "without a message" (alc.co.jp). In other words, not having any communication with him is what causes her state of restlessness. So when she finally receives a postcard from him, she is ecstatic. "It made me want more," she says (787). She has a message, *tayori*, written by his own hand, which she reiterates. "Gazing at the postcard," she feels like she is "in a dream" (787). She imagines him, where he is, and what she is doing. Seeing his writing and his message lead to visualizations of him, and she can feel that they are connected. So when she receives a package of his clothes, and there is no message, she does not accept it. She searches for a message, *tayori*, but there is none, and she cannot understand why. These things are as they are when he left her, coming to her as they were when he sent them, but there is no message. Because there is no message she cannot visualize him, she cannot connect with him. She buries her face in his clothes, yet even his clothes do not smell like him, despite the fact that they should. His soldier's uniform bears no resemblance to the man who wore them. She cannot even depend on the sense of smell to connect her to her husband. So instead, she accepts the clothes as a substitute for her absent husband.

As a result of the censorship that stands between letter writer and reader, not only are the wife and her husband separated, but there is also a rupture in identity in both of them. The emphasis of the story is her separation from her husband. She repeatedly mentions their parting, contrasting that with times when they are together. She emphasizes how the crowds separate her from her husband, and she only barely sees him before he

disappears: "Somehow, I was pushed to the back of the swelling crowd [...] I could just manage to glimpse your face as the car pulled away" (Uno 784). But then he is gone, and she is overwhelmed. She repeatedly mentions his figure disappearing from sight. The motif of vision becomes important throughout the rest of the work as a representation of her connection to the husband. She desires to be together with him, which is why she is constantly imagining him on the front and looking for photos of him, of his figure. Even if she cannot find picture of him, she imagines that he is there in other pictures or films of soldiers. However, she does not find one photograph. This physical separation causes an emotional separation tied to their changing identities. He tells her, "You must not think of me as your husband. Rather, you must think of me as a soldier, just a man with no particular name" (786). As a result of the war, her husband is no longer her husband, but a soldier. She says that she feels an "inexpressible loss" watching him go, but she is not sure why she feels that way. Then she realizes, "it must be because, because you were no longer just the man I love, the man who belongs to one woman—to me. No. You were now that man—a man traveling to a distant land for the sake of his country, charged with a mission" (780). He is not identified in terms of his relationship with her, but only to his country. It is a form of permanent separation. As a result, she, too, experiences some identity confusion. After he has left, she feeds the birds at Kannon temple, and prays to Kannon. She writes, "When, I wondered, had I become a normal woman—the kind of woman who on her way home stops by the temple to pray to Kannon-sama and then feed the pigeons?" (Uno 783). Neither she nor her husband are who they were, they are no longer defined by their relationship to each other. She is a woman, and he is a soldier. The war and censorship have ultimately changed both their relationship and their identities, which affects their letter exchanges.

The fault with the war is that it separates her from her husband, and it is through writing that she can express her pain at being separated. At the end of the story, the husband and wife are not reunited, as they should be in a good romance. They are disconnected, and they may never be reunited. He is still at war, and she is stuck at home. At the very end, even amidst the celebration of the fall of Singapore, she admonishes her

husband, "You my darling, you my husband, you heart as our bond, please behold the emotions of a woman such as myself [...] From your distant land, please see me as I am" (Uno 797). Will they ever be reunited? It is left open-ended. Still, in the end, it is clear that rather than being actively anti-war or political, the wife, and therefore Uno, is simply unconcerned about the war. She loves her husband, and celebrates him as a soldier in the battle. Regardless of whether he is dead or alive, she expresses her love for him. And yet he is silent. She receives no message from him. Why? It is unclear, because we are limited by what she knows. Could his letters have been censored? We cannot know. We only read her letters, and as a result, we too are separated from the reader's response. We can only feel the emptiness of a lack of messages.

What these two stories share is that the war creates a separation between husband and wife, augmented by the presence of censorship in their lives. By writing in personal forms, letters and diaries, the war is made very personal, and the reader is brought right into the narrator's daily struggle. In "December 8th," there is no implied reader because it is a diary. In "A Wife's Letters," the intended reader is her dear husband on the front. In both cases, the reader is exposed to very private information and thoughts. And yet, in both cases, these thoughts have to be censored. As demonstrated, the wife of "December 8th" is filtering her thoughts because she is considering the possibility of her diary being used as a public record. As such, she must represent her station properly, without any sort of anti-patriotic thought. In "A Wife's Letters," her letters would have been censored, and so she must censor her true feelings as well. In both cases, the war causes a separation. In "December 8th," the anxiety of the husband concerning censorship causes him to say strange things that his wife can neither depend upon nor believe. Her husband is thus made unreliable, and she is forced to be an independent woman, rather than a wife supporting her husband. In "A Wife's Letters," the physical separation from her husband causes a change in identity in both of them. She no longer knows herself, and she is ashamed to even express herself because she is expected to be fully supporting her husband. The censor stands in as an unnatural intradiegetic narratee. The censor is not supposed to be there, interrupting the flow of natural thought, either in a diary, or in a

letter. And yet the censor asserts his presence and further augments the divide between the reader and writer, woman and husband, but between any two human beings aiming to communicate in a society that aims to control thought.

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[i] I use the Japanese name order, family name and then personal name.
[ii] Neither protagonist has a personal name used in the story, so I will simply refer to them as the wife of "December 8th" or the wife of "A Wife's Letters."

[iii] Genette does talk about censorship, but only in that paralepsis is a form of censorship as the narrator leaves out information, but he is specifically talking about techniques of representing time, and not governmental censorship.

[iv] Both "overwhelmed" in the quoted passage and "numb" are translated from the phrase ぼうとする.