

# Expatriation, Audience, and the Practice of Poetry

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This paper examines issues of expatriation and audience as they pertain to the careers of three American poets, Robert Frost, Gary Snyder and Arthur Binard. It includes a brief description of the expatriate in general and some possible reasons for expatriation. It also looks at issues of audience relating to the writer away from his or her native land. The main part of the paper is a brief biographical sketch of each poet, highlighting aspects which reflect on the topics of expatriation and audience, followed with a close look at some aspect of the poet's work. In the case of Frost, the issue of specific locations in poems is examined. With Snyder, the issue of authority and expertise is explored within the context of two poems. And in looking at Binard, the focus is on issues of language choice and style within the chosen language.

Most writing is addressed to what could be loosely called one's peers, readers who are contemporaneous fellow members of one's culture and language group. And most writing is in some way targeted to some smaller part of that larger group. A student writer may have an audience of only one, the teacher, but even they have a peer relationship in that they are both members of the same class, albeit with very different roles and status. And though his poems and plays hold a central place in world literature four hundred years after his death, Shakespeare did not write for the ages. He wrote for fellow London dwellers with a taste for theater in the 1590s and early 1600s. To use a more contemporary example, American writer and longtime Tokyo resident Donald Richie, a regular contributor to The Japan Times, other periodicals, and author of numerous books, probably has a fairly clear idea of his reader; a native English speaker or someone with high level ESL skills who has an interest in Japanese culture and possibly cinema. But can other writers realistically be as sure of their audience ?

This is a question which would have to be answered on a case-by-case basis. But two

broader questions are both more easily addressed and potentially useful. The first is, what exactly is an expatriate? The second and larger is, what are the effects of expatriation on a poet's work?

What is an expatriate? Basically, an expatriate is one who lives away from his or her homeland, for whatever reason. The person is not a visitor or tourist, but someone settled, who has made some sort of home in a new land. As for the reasons of expatriation, a person could be expelled, or forced to escape religious, ethnic, or political persecution. A person could be sent or taken as a result of familial or occupational obligations. Or someone can choose to live in a different country, either out of dissatisfaction with or antipathy towards the homeland, or because of perceived opportunities in the new country. These opportunities might be financial, cultural, educational, spiritual, or personal and private. A person might want to challenge him- or herself in a new environment, or escape the past or family. Expatriation can be for love, either of the new place or someone in it. Or both. Or almost any combination of the above reasons.

Another factor to consider is duration. How long does the person remain away from the homeland? Is he or she a sojourner, a person who leaves home with a specific return date, or at least a general notion of going back someday? Or is this an immigrant, someone who leaves with the intention to make a new and permanent home?

And what is the effect of expatriation on a poet's work, in terms of subject, career and audience? For whom is the poem written? The local expatriate community? The local and larger native audience? Readers in the poet's homeland? Some of these questions are the concern of this paper.

To many, Robert Frost (1884-1963) remains the quintessential New Englander. He is certainly best known for the poems set in that region. But Robert Frost was an expatriate. Most critics recognize the time he spent in England (1912-1915) as a turning point in his career as a poet in terms of public acceptance, maturation of his theories, and in sheer productivity. Certainly his sojourn there was significant. But it can be argued that this was a second expatriation, that an earlier and more profound relocation came about as a result of circumstances rather than choice when he was eleven years old.

Frost was born and spent the first eleven years of his life, not in the northeast, but in San Francisco, California. Not only was this a continent away from New England, but it was a completely different culture, one which was both urban and frontier. His mother was a Scottish immigrant. His father was the rebellious son of a Massachusetts family. William (Will) Precott Frost Jr. was a teacher turned journalist with political aspirations who named his son Robert Lee after Robert E. Lee, the defeated Confederate general of the American Civil War and a potent symbol of rebellion.

So, born in San Francisco, Frost's earliest memories were of the city. As a boy he was even a member of a street gang. His father died at age 34 in 1885 of tuberculosis aggravated by overwork and alcohol abuse. His mother, with no family or other resources of her own (her husband's estate was \$8.00), was forced to fall back on the estranged family of her dead husband on the opposite end of the continent. One could question the use of the word "immigrant" in describing the relocated child, but I would argue that the sudden change in the boy's life amounted to an immigration. Both Canada and Mexico are closer to San Francisco than Lawrence, Massachusetts. Yet that's where the young fatherless family was forced to impose on perhaps unfriendly near-strangers deeply rooted in the small town and rural culture of New England. Frost himself felt the strain of the situation. He was later to say, "At first I disliked the Yankees. They were cold. They seemed narrow to me. I could not get used to them" (Parini 22).

So Frost was an outsider, an urban westerner, forced as a child to relocate to New England. His powers of observation came not from simply reflecting, and reflecting on, his own culture, but studying this new culture in which he found himself, learning it as a means of survival. He had to observe it in a way someone born into it wouldn't have to, with little help from his mother, a true foreigner with struggles of her own, or his father's family, who appear at least initially not eager to take on this foreign child. Frost's independence, another feature of his work, was not only a product of his family (both his mother and father were independent to a fault), culture (an ideal of both New England and the Far West), but of need. There were few on whom he could completely rely.

Poet and novelist Robert Penn Warren observed, "It's as though he were dropped into

the countryside north of Boston from outer space, and remained perpetually stunned by what he saw. I don't think you can overemphasize that aspect of Frost. A native takes, or may take, a place for granted; if you have to earn your citizenship, your locality, it requires special focus" (Parini 3).

So the rural and small town settings of much of his early and mid-career work, the work on which his reputation most depends, is not from the point of view of a native. It is the product of someone who is at his core an observing outsider, someone who has had to learn the terrain somewhat later in life and on his own. It is easy to see how this early experience contributes to the sense of alienation which imbues so much of his work.

Frost's second expatriation, his sojourn to England (1912-1915), was a change of choice and one of purpose. By then in his late thirties and an accomplished though little-published poet, he hoped to establish his reputation there. American publishers saw him, he thought, as a poetry-writing rustic "with mud on (his) shoes," a two-time college dropout with no strong connections to the literary world (Parini 83). London was the center of English language literary life at that time. It was also the center of tremendous artistic, social, and political change. The Modernist movement was just emerging and London was one of its birthplaces. This was an environment completely different from that of Boston or New York, to say nothing of the farm in Derry, New Hampshire he and his family had left behind. The doors in London proved to be open to him, an exotic, a foreigner with something fresh to offer. He was able to publish two books which were reviewed favorably in both England and America and complete a third manuscript. And while there he wrote some of the poems for which he continues to be appreciated, including "After Apple-Picking," "The Road Not Taken," and "Mending Wall." Indeed, experiences in the British Isles proved to be catalysts for these very American poems. For example, the idea of a poem about a dividing path had been on Frost's mind for some time, but it was his British friend Edward Thomas's indecision and remorse over choices they made while walking in the Gloucester woods which finally triggered "The Road Not Taken" (Parini 153). Stone walls seen in Scotland brought back Vermont memories, which led to "Mending Wall" (Parini 138).

So what of particular places in Frost's poems, both in and away from New England ?

Surprisingly, there are very few references to specific sites in his work. For example, the city of San Francisco is never mentioned as a setting, although several poems are set on the Pacific coast. The Cliff House, a San Francisco landmark, is mentioned directly in “A Record Stride” (Frost 294) and is perhaps indirectly referenced in the better-known “Once By The Pacific” (Frost 250). The only poem in which place-names figure prominently is the playful “New Hampshire,” the title poem to his 1923 collection. Here San Francisco is mentioned (though not in any connection with the poet), along with New York City, many towns in New Hampshire, and the states of Florida and Vermont, where, we learn in the last line, the poet was currently residing. And while Frost made no secret of the time he spent in England and how important it had been to him, only one poem, “The Thatch” (Frost 252) can claim a faintly recognizable English setting, as by that time thatched roofs no longer existed in America. An English setting might be inferred from the situation of the wounded soldier in “Not To Keep” (Frost 230) but there is no direct textual evidence that would support such a claim. So while there is a sense of regionality in much of his memorable work, little of it is tied to specific locations.

There are some remarkable similarities in biographical detail between Robert Frost and Gary Snyder (born 1930). Both were born in San Francisco. Both families left that city because of financial hardship. Both men were raised by their mothers, Snyder’s parents separating during his adolescence. Both grew up in the country and lived much of their lives in rural settings. Both spent time in foreign countries, time which would shape their writing careers. Yet in many ways it is hard to imagine two writers more different from one another. Frost was a formalist who saw himself writing in the broad tradition of English literature. Snyder is basically a free verse poet who has also worked extensively in Japanese and Chinese forms. And where Frost came to be identified with the New Englanders among whom he spent most his life, Snyder has been proactive in creating his own personal cultural identity, embraced various traditions of North American tribal peoples, the literature and religions of China and Japan, and the various counterculture movements of the 1950s, 60s, 70s, and continuing on into the present.

After his family left San Francisco and between the ages of two and twelve Snyder lived in rural Washington State, where his family ran a dairy and made wooden shakes (shingles) for roofs. During this time two things happened which would prove to be

important later. When he was seven years old he was injured in an accident. His recuperation took four months and in that time he became a voracious reader, a habit which has continued throughout his life. He also became aware of and interested in the Native American Coast Salish people who lived nearby. These interests would continue and influence his decision to study both literature and anthropology when he entered Reed College in Portland, Oregon in 1947. Although his family moved to the more urban Portland area, Snyder maintained a keen interest in the outdoors, especially mountain climbing. At college he met Philip Whalen and Lew Welsh, two other men who would figure prominently in the Beat movement and the San Francisco Renaissance to come. During summer vacations he worked variously as a seaman, in the timber industry, and as a camp councillor. He spent a year after graduation as a fire lookout in a national park before beginning graduate studies in anthropology at Indiana University. However, he left school after one term, determined to become a poet. He moved to the San Francisco Bay area where he enrolled at the University of California at Berkeley to study Asian literature and languages. By this time he had already become interested in Buddhism, especially Zen, along with haiku. He was active in the emerging literary scene, becoming acquainted with poet and critic Kenneth Rexroth, poet Allan Ginsberg, and poet and novelist Jack Kerouac, who based the lead character of his novel The Dharma Bums on Snyder. In the summer of 1955 he left his studies to work on a trail crew in Yosemite National Park. That autumn he returned to the city, where he took part in the now-famous *Six Gallery* poetry reading. The poem he read, "A Berry Feast," is an ecstatic three part piece which melds Native American myth with grim images of man's mechanical conquest of nature and encroaching urbanization, but which ends with the sense that somehow the wild world would survive man's onslaught. At that same reading, Allan Ginsberg gave the first public reading of "Howl," the controversial poem which would have an influence on American and world poetry for the rest of the century and beyond.

Rather than remain and be a part of this exploding literary scene, Snyder left San Francisco and America. He lived in Japan most of the years from 1956 through 1969 where he studied and practiced Zen at Shokoku-ji and Daitoku-ji temples in Kyoto. He also visited other parts of the Pacific Rim and toured India for several months with Ginsberg and others. Returning to the US in 1969, he ultimately settled in the foothill region of the Sierra Nevada Mountains of Northern California.

Aside from his poetry, Snyder has published books of essays and interviews on many subjects, including spirituality, myth, ecology and literature. He lectures widely, is involved with community organizing, and teaches. He joined the faculty of the University of California at Davis in 1985 where he is now professor emeritus. He served on the California Arts Council, is a member of the American Academy of Arts and Letters, was nominated for the National Book Award, and won the Pulitzer Prize for the book of poems and essays Turtle Island.

There is a wide variety of diction in Snyder's poems, ranging from high seriousness to conversational to clipped lists, almost a pidgin. There is also a wide variety of subjects, from the mystical and sacred to the profane and the everyday. It appears, at least on the surface, that for Snyder there are no taboo subjects. But there is a curious lack of exploration of close relationships. Family members and friends, often identified by name, appear in many poems. Though they are described vividly there is little psychological examination or subtlety in the ways in which these people are presented. Be that as it may, he has created a large body of influential work, much of which is a pleasure to read.

Here are two poems from the 1983 collection Axe Handles, one of his more popular books.

Soy Sauce

*For Bruce Boyd and Holly Tornheim*

Standing on a stepladder  
up under a hot ceiling  
tacking on wire net for plaster,  
a day's work helping Bruce and Holly on their house,  
I catch a sour salt smell and come back  
down the ladder.

"Deer lick it nights" she says,  
and shows me the frame of the window she's planing,  
clear redwood, but dark, with a smell.

“Scored a broken-up, two-thousand-gallon redwood  
soy sauce tank from a company went out of business  
down near San Jose.”

Out in the yard the staves are stacked:  
I lean over, sniff them, ah! it’s like Shinshu miso,  
the darker, saltier miso paste of the Nagano  
uplands, central main island, Japan—  
it’s like Shinshu pickles!

I see in mind my friend Shimizu Yasushi and me  
one October years ago, trudging through days of snow  
crossing the Japan Alps and descending  
the last night, to a farmhouse,  
taking a late hot bath in the dark—and eating  
a bowl of chill miso radish pickles,  
nothing ever so good!

Back here, hot summer sunshine dusty yard,  
hammer in hand.

But I know how it tastes  
to lick those window frames  
in the dark,  
the deer. (Snyder 2, 30)

The speaker here is a raconteur, telling a seemingly impromptu tale, his memory triggered by the unexpected soy sauce smell of the salvaged lumber. There are two settings in the poem, the rural California building site and the Japan of his memory. And by free association and a kind of psychological triangulation, at the end there is a glimpse of a third scene, a mystical setting in which the speaker so closely identifies with the deer casually mentioned earlier in the poem that for a moment his consciousness is fused with that of the animal.



To an ear tuned to American English, there is tremendous characterization in the quoted speech. Even though the speaker is identified as female, “Deer lick it nights,” with its suggestion of dropped articles and prepositions, is slangy and “macho.” The other longer quote confirms this impression and gives further information about the speaker.

“Scored a broken-up, two-thousand-gallon redwood  
soy sauce tank from a company went out of business  
down near San Jose.”

The sentence starts with an omission: Who is the subject? “I”? “We”? “Bruce”? And the first word we are given is a slang term with strong connotations. *To score*, meaning “to acquire,” was a term common in the drug culture of the late sixties. It has the sense of an illicit transaction and suggests luck, wiliness or a combination of the two. Snyder might have had her use the more slangy “busted-up” for “broken-up,” but that would have probably moved the portrait too close to caricature. As it is, the passage loses a bit of its verisimilitude with the long string of adjectives. It is difficult to read this sentence aloud in a single breath. But the dropped “*that*” (or “*which*”) between “... a company” and “went out of business” helps maintain the voice. The phrase “down near San Jose” is an idiomatic rural expression meaning “a considerable distance to the south,” reinforcing the setting of this scene in the poem. It also places the poem in its primary setting, probably Northern California, though Oregon is a possibility. (In the context of the collection from which the poem comes, the California setting is clear.)

In the third and fourth stanzas, there is a sudden shift from the American setting as the salt smell of the lumber triggers a memory of Japan, in particular, *miso*. And not just any *miso*, but a specific *miso* from a particular region.

Out in the yard the staves are stacked:  
I lean over, sniff them, ah! it’s like Shinshu miso,  
the darker, saltier miso paste of the Nagano  
uplands, central main island, Japan—  
it’s like Shinshu pickles!

Here is Snyder the expert, a stance he frequently takes. If it weren't for the attractive character he presents, this move could easily lose the reader's sympathy. The speaker could easily come off as a supercilious braggart, but he doesn't. There's enough information for the non-initiate reader to learn generally what *miso* is without an interrupting trip to the dictionary. Further, Snyder avoids a superior stance by not making his knowledge the point of the poem. The point at this juncture of the poem is his fond memory rather than his superior knowledge:

I see in mind my friend Shimizu Yasushi and me  
one October years ago, trudging through days of snow  
crossing the Japan Alps and descending  
the last night, to a farmhouse,  
taking a late hot bath in the dark—and eating  
a bowl of chill miso radish pickles,  
nothing ever so good!

But even at that there is a risk of superciliousness, by the nature of the memories. To the majority of his readers these memories are pretty exotic. However, the speaker returns to workaday America, perhaps with a sigh:

Back here, hot summer sunshine dusty yard,  
hammer in hand

but only briefly, because the combination of fresh experience and memory lead him to insight and a brief mystical identification with the deer:

But I know how it tastes  
to lick those window frames  
in the dark,  
the deer.

I think this is a wonderful little poem. He creates his settings quickly and deftly with the appropriate use of detail and gives sufficient information to allow the sympathetic

reader, if not to make the leap the speaker makes, then to at least witness that leap close-hand.

But I'm a fan. And I also share enough common background knowledge (rural California, 60s and 70s subcultures, Asian religion and mysticism, and Japan) to enter and transverse the poem. I wonder what the minimum necessary background is for an unprepared reader to experience the poem fully.

In this poem Snyder's expatriate experience is explicit. The chance encounter with the salvaged wood from the soy sauce barrel triggers a specific memory of Japan for the speaker. The juxtaposition of his special, even esoteric knowledge of Japan and the lowly role of construction helper the speaker has taken on for that day create a rich moment.

But Snyder's claims of insight or special knowledge are not always supported by his texts. There are several failures in the following poem.

At the Ibaru Family Tomb  
Tagami village, Great Loo Choo:  
Grandfathers of my sons

Weeds in the stone courtyard  
stone door plastered shut,  
washed bones within  
racked in urns,

We drink and sing in the courtyard:  
songs of a beautiful reef,  
songs of a grove  
they walked through long ago,

Drinking with the ancestors  
singing with their sons.

*VI, '81, Okinawa* (Snyder 2, 36)

This poem claims for the speaker kinship with those with whom he is drinking. Perhaps he is justified by marriage, but he appears to claim more while doing little to support that larger claim. One suspects the fellowship the speaker feels is more the effect of the alcohol being consumed than any legitimate fraternal relationship or clan membership. There is also a curious failure to present the setting visually, although I was only dimly aware of this failure before visiting Okinawa myself. A reader unfamiliar with Okinawan burial customs would have a difficult time mentally constructing the small house-like family tombs with walled courtyards from the little information he gives in the poem. Even a Japanese reader, unless he or she had visited Okinawa, would find this poem puzzling, as burial sites are very different in the other regions of the country.

Snyder has a strong tendency to romanticize the cultures he finds attractive. The critic Earl Minor sees this tendency (not writing about Snyder but in general) as a flaw. He says this romanticizing of the other can be called either “exoticism” or “primitivism,” depending on the level of complexity of the idealized culture. To idealize a culture seemingly more simple than one’s own is to engage in primitivism. If the culture is “less primitive than unfamiliarly refined, then the idealizing is exoticism” (Minor, 29). He further distinguishes between the idealization of past cultures, using the terms “chronological primitivism” and “chronological exoticism,” and the idealization of contemporary cultures, which he calls “cultural primitivism” and “cultural exoticism.” Giving a defining example, he says, “Chronological primitivism seeks its ideal “state of nature” in a utopian past, cultural primitivism in a contemporaneous but distant civilization” (Minor, 29).

It should be noted that while “Soy Sauce” appears in No Nature, Snyder’s 1992 collection of new and selected poems, “At the Ibaru Family Tomb” did not make the cut.

Unlike the other poets discussed, Arthur Binard was not born in San Francisco. He was born in Southfield, Michigan, near Detroit, on July 2, 1967. When he was six his family moved to nearby Clarkston. His father was an industrial designer with artistic leanings who worked in the automotive industry. He was also an avid outdoorsman who passed on his passion, especially for fishing, to his son. Like both Frost and Snyder, Binard lost his father early. He was killed in the crash of a small plane when Binard was eleven. Unlike either Frost or Snyder, for whom this is not a subject for poems,

Binard has returned to this loss several times in published work. When he was about sixteen his mother remarried and the family moved to Toledo, Ohio. He attended public schools and upon graduation from high school enrolled at Colgate University in Hamilton, New York, a small liberal arts school about an hour's drive from Syracuse. He says he chose to go there to side-step the family tradition of attending the University of Michigan. During his university years several things happened which redirected his life in unexpected ways. The first was meeting and establishing a close mentor relationship with Robert Blackmore. Blackmore was an English professor at Colgate who retired the first year Binard was there. Prior to being a college teacher, he had been a military test pilot during World War II and an editor at Time-Life Books. In an interview conducted August 1, 2006, Binard said "I went to my classes during the day, then went over to Blackmore's at night for my real education."

The second major event occurred at the end of his second year at Colgate, when he decided to follow an Italian friend back to Milan. Once over there, he quickly became frustrated with his inability to communicate and enrolled in Italian lessons. He discovered an affinity for languages and developed a passion for studying them. He became fluent in Italian quickly and began keeping a journal in his new language. As a result of developing these writing skills in a second language he was later able to publish articles in Italian in Italy. After a year and a half and at the urging of his Colgate teachers, he returned to the US to finish his degree. His Italian skill was so advanced by that point he was able to "challenge" the Italian language courses offered, passing the examinations and getting credit without attending the classes. He became interested in the Tamil language, also offered at Colgate, mainly because of the challenge of its non-Roman alphabet. As a result he spent a term in southern India in an overseas study program learning his third language.

Interestingly, Binard's Italian skill led him to an interest, first in Chinese, then Japanese. A Colgate professor hired him to translate letters the American poet Ezra Pound had written in Italian to Benito Mussolini. This exposed Binard to Pound and his use of Chinese characters in The Cantos, along with Pound's thinking about the ideogrammatic writing system. On his own Binard began to look into Chinese, but found the challenge of Japanese, with its concurrent use of *kanji* (Chinese characters) and two different syllabic writing systems, more attractive. At the same time he was completing

his coursework and writing his honors thesis on English Renaissance poet Thomas Nashe, he audited the second semester of an introductory Japanese language course. Eager to immerse himself in his next language, Binard left both Colgate and the US upon completion of his classes and having his thesis accepted, not waiting for the graduation ceremony. He had his degree sent to his mother.

Binard arrived in Japan in 1990 with no job or contacts other than the telephone number of a man named Bob who ran a guest house for foreigners. Yet within two or three days of arriving in the Ikebukuro district of Tokyo, he had a place to stay (at Bob's), a job at the Ikebukuro branch of an English language school, and was enrolled as a student at a local Japanese language school. (He continues to reside in Ikebukuro, though not at Bob's.) He developed quickly as a Japanese-to-English translator, specializing in children's books, art book texts and poetry. An early homework assignment, the translation of a tale by Oguma Hideo, won praise and an offer to collaborate from the noted literary figure Kijima Hajime. That translation, The Grilled Fish, was published by Tohdo Publishers. He also began writing and publishing poems and essays in Japanese. His first collection of poems, Tsuriagetewa, was published by Shichosha in 2000 and won the prestigious Nakahara Chuya Prize that same year. The city of Yamaguchi, which awards the prize, published Binard's own English translation of the book as Catch and Release in 2002.

Binard continues to write poems in both English and Japanese, translate both Japanese to English and English to Japanese, and write essays and children's books. Sometimes he works alone, sometimes in collaboration with his wife Kisaka Ryo, also a noted poet, essayist and translator. He is working on a long-term project, a bilingual anthology of twentieth century Japanese poets and will have had two more books published by autumn of 2006, one a collection of essays first published in the Asahi Shinbun newspaper and the other an art book, the "Lucky Dragon" paintings of Ben Shahn, for which he wrote the Japanese text. The paintings were inspired by the ordeal suffered by a group of Japanese fishermen who were irradiated by the atomic blast at Bikini Atoll. Binard's text is based on his research into the incident and his interviews with survivors. A lively and still-youthful man, he lectures widely and is something of a media personality, appearing fairly frequently on television and regularly on radio. However, he is adamant in his resolve to avoid becoming a "TV Talent" and is careful about which

programs on which he will appear.

Although part of his work is translating Japanese texts to English, this is mostly for Japanese publishers and Japanese consumption. Some of his translations have appeared in prestigious literary magazines in the US, including Modern Poetry in Translation, Prairie Schooner, AGNI, and Mañoa. But his current activities keep him so busy that he often finds himself having to refuse to take on new assignments. Along with the book projects, he contributes regularly to over a dozen periodicals. He simply doesn't have the time to pursue an American career.

While language choice is predetermined by the publisher and project in much of his work, he finds poems come to him in one language rather than another on a poem-by-poem basis. And though he finds it useful to move among his languages seeking solutions to specific problems ("Now in Italian they would use..."), the "home language" of a poem is clear to him from the start. As a result, translating his own poems for the English edition of Tsuriagetewa was a real challenge, much more difficult than he had anticipated. In fact, one poem, "Aomori," gave him such trouble that he abandoned the attempt altogether. Instead, he substituted another poem, "Aomori, May 1999," which has a similar title but was written originally in English.

Like Snyder, Binard has strong social, political, and environmental concerns, but they don't often make a strong appearance in his poems. Again, like Snyder and Frost in their earlier work, his subjects are personal. They tend towards American memories, his day-to-day experiences and scenes observed in Japan. Here is a good example of the later.

At the Kabuki Theater

Sojuro the Ninth is dancing the part  
of the heroine in *Not So Fast!*—his specialty.

During intermission  
on a plush sofa in the lobby  
I stare across at the concession stands

where fans crowd, reaching and bobbing,  
buying up souvenirs...

when, from out of that churning company  
a woman emerges, following the perfect hemisphere  
of her belly, in a loose chemise. She glows  
with composure, her feet glide, skim the carpeting  
until here, by the sofa, she stops.

With unhurried grace, she executes  
a turn, and in a calculated sequence  
of weight shifts, sits

down next to me, now settling in  
to a quietly choreographed exchange  
with the partner there inside her.

The dance was classic  
at the Kabuki Theater. (Binard, 63)

This is the work of a deft, light hand. Beneath its seeming simplicity, a number of contrasting, potentially conflicting elements are brought together. With materials which could have been either grotesque or sentimental, he creates a moment of appreciation. Further, he achieves an almost impossible effect—humor with no victim. It is a poem of small rewarding surprises, often achieved by line breaks:

...following the perfect hemisphere  
of her belly,

and:

... She glows  
with composure.



We are shown the woman's condition without being told she's pregnant. We also learn the woman is at the center of her condition without being a victim of it. After all, she is at the theater, not home "in confinement," and nothing in her movements suggests discomfort, only a degree of appropriate, practised caution. And the light, light irony at the end, the trope linking her movement across the room to the dance on the theater's stage, diminishes no one, but simply reflects the speaker's appreciation of the scene he has witnessed.

Binard doesn't always practice the conciseness of language displayed in "At the Kabuki Theater." For example, in the prose poem "Newcomers" he writes,

Across the street from the school is the prefectural Library. I head in, and over to the newspaper rack, start flipping through an English daily, then notice two fish staring at me from a poster on the far wall. Hey, I think, long time no see! I'd know those fins and faces anywhere, so many summer days spent catching and tossing them back into Michigan lakes—my boyhood companions, Black Bass and Bluegill. (Binard, 29ff)

This has a jaunty, nonchalant quality to it, especially the idiomatic, "Hey, I think, long time no see!" That tone survives even in the more literary, "written" rather than "spoken" diction of "so many summer days spent catching and tossing them back" which follows.

This language is an appropriate set-up for what comes next in the poem. The speaker learns that his "boyhood companions" are a scourge in Japan, that they are preying on and endangering local fish species. He sees this as a possible warning, and at the end states that he ought to be careful in his new waters, to "...not...make too much of a splash." The playful element of the language, while not disappearing, is considerably and appropriately muted here.

Binard uses this prosy, conversational register often but it does not always serve his material well. For example in "Readjustment" (Binard, 78ff), the long, prosaic introduction of the poem's setting and speaker's condition establishes an almost banal quality from which the poem never completely escapes. This blunts, first, the interesting details

of the speaker being in a TV studio and having make-up applied, and then his sudden shock and disorientation at his changed appearance. Seeing himself in the mirror and TV monitors, he is almost overwhelmed by his sudden resemblance to his father's corpse, which had been cosmetically repaired after his death in the airplane accident. By strength of material the poem succeeds, but one could want work which more fully utilizes the dramatic potential of the moment.

Stylistically, Binard shares some traits with the Imagist poets of the early twentieth century, as does Snyder. This group continues to have a wide influence. Earl Minor points out they helped establish "...a modern tradition of clear, definite imagistic poetry." However, Minor continues, "Their poetic abilities aside, these poets... seemed to have concentrated so intently upon achieving clearly defined poems, especially poems made up of visual images or 'pictures,' that they failed to write their poems in moving language" (Minor, 181-2). This is a risk Binard sometimes takes, sometimes to the detriment of the poems.

But issues of Binard's English usage may be moot. After all, few if any recall the Polish writings of Jozef Teodor Konrad Korzeniowski. But when he wrote in English as Joseph Conrad he created work for which he is remembered as a giant.

In conclusion, there appears to be little in the way of common effects of expatriation on the three poets examined. As stated earlier, there is almost no direct evidence in the poems themselves that Robert Frost wasn't born in the New England region or that he ever spent any appreciable time any place else. There are a few oblique references to California and the Pacific coast and only one poem for which there could be a strong argument made for an English setting. This in spite of the facts of his California birth, a wrenching childhood relocation, and a two-year period spent in England during which his publishing career was launched, many of his most important poems written, and his ideas about his art matured. It was during this period, too, that his audience, his readership, was established, first in England, then the United States. In contrast, Gary Snyder's time in Japan provided both source material for his frequently autobiographical poems and grounded him in spiritual and cultural traditions which shape and flavor his work. He frequently uses his expatriate experiences to support a stance of "Old Japan Hand," an expert on the "exotic" East. And while he has some following in Japan, his

main audience is North American. And in yet further contrast, Arthur Binard's Japan is home, rarely exotic, and sometimes commonplace. But his American background, memories and language are never far away. And where the other two poets looked to their homeland for an audience, Binard's readership in both English and Japanese is overwhelmingly in his new home and Japanese.

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## 『外国人としての異国での生活、読者、そして専門的詩作活動』

ジョン・グリブル

この論文は、祖国を離れて、いわゆる異国でその詩作活動をしているRobert Frost(ロバート・フロースト、1974年-1963年)、Gary Snyder (ゲーリー・スナイダー、1930年生まれ)、そしてArthur Binard (アーサー・ビーナード、1967年生まれ) という3人のアメリカ人の詩人の専門性に関して述べたものである。

最初に、祖国を離れるということはどういうことかという一般的な意味あいと、何故人は、祖国を離れて、異国で生活をするのかという、その考えられるいくつかの理由について考察する。更に、祖国から離れて著述・詩作をしている者に繋がっている読者について考える。

論文の主要となるところは、3人の詩人それぞれの簡単な伝記的スケッチ、祖国を離れての詩作と読者に関するいくつかのテーマに反映している顕著な要素について述べた後、夫々の詩人の専門性や業績のいくつかの要素を探ってゆく。

フローストの場合においては、彼の詩の特有の地域の問題、特に、彼が非常に一体感をもっているニュー・イングランドから離れて、異国にいることについて考察する。

詩人は、彼のほとんどの生涯をマサチューセッツ、ニュー・ハンプシャー、そしてヴァーモントの各州で過ごした地域優先主義者であると見られているが、驚くべきことに場所を特に位置つけている詩は、非常に少ない。

非常に長い間日本に居住していたスナイダーについては、(彼は、現在は、カリフォルニア州に居を構えているが)、祖国を離れて異国にいるという経験を基にした知識と専門的技術の問題を2篇の詩の中から検証する。詩人は、知識で創作することに多くの場合成功しているが、時にはそれがつまずきになっている。

多言語を操る作詩者であるビーナードの場合は、その焦点となるのは、選ばれた言語の範囲内で、言語選択とそのスタイルの問題である。彼はミシガン州の出身で、日本には1990年から居住している。ビーナードは、スナイダーのように、材料に関して適切な言語を合わせることと作詩のアイディアで大体的場合は成功しているが、しかし時として表現と主題の間に、不調和が見られている。

論文の最後に3人の詩人の詩作における異なった外国での生活が持っている影響と彼らの読者についての概観を述べる。