

【 論 文 】

The *Trainspotting* Phenomenon in Japan: The History of the Reception of the Novelistic and Cinematic Texts

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Introduction

It could be said that the *Trainspotting* fad in Japan centering on the film was, as in Britain, a sizable socio-cultural phenomenon involving not only media industries such as films, publishing and advertising but also other industries like music and fashion. Nevertheless, Irvine Welsh's novel *Trainspotting* (1993) and its adaptations (particularly the film [1995]), although they are significant and attractive objects of consideration as cultural products or social texts, have rarely been studied seriously in Japan. The purpose of this treatise is, from the perspective of literary and cultural studies, to shed light on how the novelistic and cinematic texts have been received in Japan during the *Trainspotting* boom and thereafter. The materials used for reference in this investigation will be mainly the magazines, academic journals, books, a pamphlet, VHS and DVD videos and the like published in Japan.¹

In gathering the materials above, the following Japanese representative databases, indexes and bibliographies in the fields concerned were principally consulted: *Oya Soichi Bunko Zasshi Kiji Sakuin* (as regards magazines), *Kokuritsu Kokkai Toshokan Zasshi Kiji Sakuin* (as regards magazines and scholarly journals), *Eibei Bungaku Kenkyu Bunken Yoran* (as regards academic books and papers on English and American literature), *NDL-OPAC* (as regards the collection in the National Diet Library of Japan), *NACSIS Webcat* (as regards the collection in university and college libraries), *Nihon Shoseki Somokuroku* (as regards the books available in a specified year) and *Amazon.co.jp Home Page* (as regards the books, CDs, VHS videos, DVDs etc. available at present).² Each of these was searched with the key terms “Trainspotting” and “Irvine Welsh” (both in Japanese and English), but those materials which clearly had little connection with the novel and its adaptations in the search results were excluded from the objects of consideration.

As a rule, in the body of this study, the related materials will be examined in the chronologi-

¹ Newspapers are not included as source material since there are too many newspaper articles related to the topic. For example, if you try searching the *Asahi Shimbun Kiji Online Database* (the database for the *Asahi Shimbun*, one of the representative national newspapers in Japan, including two weekly magazines published by the company) with the key word “Trainspotting” (in Japanese), the search results in a list of 107 articles. Research has produced no record of papers on the subject of Welsh or *Trainspotting* read at the annual conferences of the English Literary Society of Japan (the largest society concerning English literature in Japan) and the Tohoku English Literary Society (the largest in the Tohoku district) between 1993 and 2004.

² For further details, see the “Databases, Indexes and Bibliographies Consulted” section at the end of this research paper.

cal order of their dates of publication. *Oya Soichi Bunko Zasshi Kiji Sakuin*, from which many of the materials were taken, arranges its monthly magazines according to the indication of the month and year on each issue and places them before the non-monthly magazines published in the same month and year. The present paper will follow this practice. As for academic journals, I traced their publication dates up to the month. When the indication of the month and year on an issue of a monthly magazine is the same as the publication date of a journal, the journal will be addressed first.³

I

In the brief article entitled “The *Trainspotting* Sensation Strikes Japan” in the weekly general-interest magazine *Aera* published on 9 December 1996, Sayuri Sakaguchi writes about the Japanese social phenomenon around the *Trainspotting* film as follows:

A body dripping with water all over, eyes staring straight at us. Masculine biceps. You may remember the poster from the film of *Trainspotting* adapted from the novel as it was pasted up all over the smart shops from early on and appeared on the covers of some magazines. The *Trainspotting* sensation which arose in Britain this year and swept over Europe and America has struck Japan with its soundtrack and visuals first.⁴

In the earliest period of the history of the reception of the novel and its adaptations in Japan, it was through the film poster, the magazine covers and the soundtrack music, not in the form

³ In the case of monthly magazines in Japan, the indication of a month on the cover of an issue and the actual publication month are not necessarily identical in the strict sense. For instance, few magazines publish an August issue in the previous month (e.g., on 15 July) though many magazines publish this issue on 1 August and the others on other days such as the 15th or 20th of the same month. On the other hand, it is usual that the dates of publication and sale of magazines are not identical and that the sale date precedes the publication date in Japan.

On this subject, the following passages would be helpful: “At present there is an agreement within the Japan Magazine Publishers Association that the difference between the date of publication and that of actual sale shall be ‘within 15 days’ in weekly magazines, ‘within a month’ in biweekly magazines and ‘within 40 days’ in monthly magazines. As a rule, if within these limits, the ‘October issue’ of a monthly magazine can be sold after 21 August, going back 40 days from 1 October. Likewise, a weekly magazine sold on 1 September can be termed the ‘8 September issue’ or the ‘15 September issue.’ [...] If they are placed at the same bookstore, the readers will psychologically suppose that the ‘23 September issue’ carries hotter news than the ‘21 September issue’ and the same is true of the ‘October issue’ as compared with the ‘September issue.’ [...] Other than this, the relations between the dates of publication and sale ‘have been determined based on such various factors as transport capacities of distributors and wholesalers, manufacturing processes and sales strategies of magazines, and the materials-gathering systems of editorial departments’” (Kasahara 104-05).

In this treatise the quotations provided are my own translations from Japanese unless otherwise stated.

⁴ This was the only article taken from the *Asahi Shimbun Kiji Online Database*, which was not used extensively in the research for this treatise. For the “Chronology of *Trainspotting*-Related Publications and Releases in Japan” listing the materials which were included in this research for consideration, see Appendix A after the body of the present paper.

of the translated novel or the subtitled film itself, that many of the Japanese general public encountered *Trainspotting*. The Japanese edition of the soundtrack CD *Trainspotting* had been issued on 22 May, more than a half year before the release of the film in Japan. Thus, the concept of “Trainspotting” as a smart British-born vogue had been advertised and hyped by the media, music and fashion industries, well in advance of the film release.

When discussing the reception of the literary text of *Trainspotting* in Japan, it would be reasonable to start with the Japanese translation of the novel. This was published on 10 November 1996, more than three years after the publication of the original novel. The monochrome pictures from the film poster well-known in Britain are on the dust jacket of the translation, and the band of paper placed over the jacket carries the blurb which reads “700,000 copies sold in Britain! / The overwhelming best-seller / A writer of genius breaking through the door to the 21st century / Irvine Welsh makes a brilliant debut!” The publisher makes the novel’s bestseller status in Britain its hallmark and defines it as the maiden work of a genius taking the lead in current fiction. And the band over the jacket also shows an obvious promotional tie-in between the book and the film, saying “The film *Trainspotting*—winter ’96–’97 / Released at Shibuya Cinema Rise and others nationwide (distributed by Asmik-Parco).”⁵

The translator’s afterword dated October 1996 at the end of the book (335–37) provides information about the circumstances of the translating process. The translator Makiko Ikeda received the original work through Aoyama Publishing Co., Ltd., which was to become the publisher of the translation, on the day before the preview of the film in Japan. Upset by the linguistic difficulty of the novel, Ikeda attended the preview the next day and was impressed with the “warped worldview” and “black humor” of the “intense film,” savoring “truly pleasant exhilaration” at the end (335). At the same time, she could not understand the spoken version of what she refers to as “Scottish,” was not confident of sharing the “atmosphere filling the screen, the main characters’ senses and what should be called the feeling of the times” and was afraid of translating the novel (335–36). A confusion of the novel with the film is already discernible here. Next, Ikeda spent about three weeks repeatedly reading through the original novel, attending many more previews and watching a video of the film. Finally she came to feel that “the characters have risen up with flesh and soul in my mind and begun to walk the streets in Edinburgh all speaking Scottish.” She completed the translation approximately two months after that (336). Due to these circumstances, she saw the film version before reading through the novel and translated the latter under the overwhelming influence of the former. It could be said that she did not merely experience the novel and the film almost simultaneously but also half-consciously and half-intentionally utilized her confusion and identification of the novel with the film in order to facilitate her translation work.

But with whatever prejudices Ikeda may have done her job, the finished translation, to do it justice, rose above the standard. On the whole, this translation seems to have reproduced the spirit and mood of the original fairly well though it is not free of some obvious mistranslations. The book mostly uses standard colloquial Japanese interspersed with slangy expressions rather than utilizing a dialect. This is probably because explicit class dialects as existing in Britain do not exist in Japan and because, although there are many regional dialects in Japan, there is

⁵ I referred to the 12th impression published on 19 September 1997.

no historically and socio-culturally equivalent dialect for the variant of Scottish dialect used in the original novel. If the novel had been translated in a particular dialect of Japanese, the result would have been a considerably different work from the original in nuance because it would have reflected the socio-cultural connotations and associations carried by the Japanese dialect chosen. In this respect, it seems that it was not inappropriate that Ikeda chiefly used standard Japanese, which sounds relatively neutral to the Japanese ear. The publisher's notes state that the British Council cooperated in the translation. This is information which deserves attention. Though Welsh's works do not appear to be favored by the British establishment, the novel may have been regarded then as one of the profitable exports supporting contemporary British cultural industries, which partly explains the backing which it received from the institution in question.

The reading public in Japan, however, did not have the opportunity to reach a deeper understanding of the translated novel as a literary work and to do justice to it, for twenty days after its publication the film version, which was to be more strongly and extensively influential, was released and inevitably the public became involved in the discursive space around the film. The popularity of the film probably contributed commercially to the novel (especially the translation) by increasing the sales, whereas it may have been rather harmful to the literary text, critically and academically, by having reduced the novel to mere source material for the film.⁶

II

It was during late November of 1996, in terms of the date of publication, that articles related to the film appeared in four non-monthly magazines. One article was published on the 25th of November, two others on the 27th, and the last on the 28th. In all of these articles obviously written before the film's release in Japan, the writers, who seem to have seen the film abroad or at Japanese previews, cover it in the space of between a half page and three pages, inviting the readers to the theater.

Of the four articles, the film review entitled "The Group Portrait of a Hilarious and Harrowing Youth" in the weekly general-interest magazine *Newsweek Japan* is the longest.⁷ The author John Leland writes at the top of the article that "*Trainspotting*, which created a big sensation in Britain, stars desperate but cheerful drugged-out young people" (78) and focuses on the film's treatment of the subject of heroin. He says "Among many 'drug movies,' this work is the most vulgar. There is no spiritual quest at all. They get high on instinct and even if they are down, they are faithful to animal instinct" (80) and comments that the film "does not preach against heroin. It audaciously depicted the pleasure of heroin as well as the agony caused by it" (79). He is also sensitive to the potential social influence of the film. He writes that "According to Boyle, the director, *Trainspotting* protests against drugs. There is, however, no doubt that it is steeped in the mystery of heroin" and concludes that "Unfortunately, *Trainspotting* is unfit

⁶ For the list of "Japanese Translations of Irvine Welsh's Works" other than *Trainspotting*, see Appendix B after the body of this paper.

⁷ This review, written in Japanese, is probably a translation from English. The quotations from it are my own translations from Japanese.

for the campaign to eradicate drugs. But it admirably portrays the young people dancing a wild waltz with heroin” (80). The characteristic of this review lies in the fact that it mostly concentrates on the heroin issue and that it is fairly conscious of the possible harmful influence to society by the film. This may have something to do with the writer’s socio-cultural background (such as nationality). He mentions the original novel by Welsh but does not compare the film with the novel.

The film pamphlet produced for the theaters (published on 30 November 1996) can be thought to have been fairly influential, critically speaking, during the earliest period of the film’s reception in Japan. Film pamphlets are easily available to the general audience and are supposedly consulted by many film reviewers, critics and reporters for newspapers and magazines when they write their film coverage. The film’s release in Japan was on 30 November, more than 9 months after its release in Britain on 23 February (Morace 80). The pamphlet, whose front, back and inside covers contain the familiar photographs from the film poster, consists of a variety of written information as well as abundant still pictures from film scenes. But, as is often the case with this kind of literature in Japan, its translations from the originals are sometimes careless and it does not specify the details of the used sources in most cases. Next, I will take up some important articles in it.

The anonymous leadoff article titled “Choose Your Future: The Best Youth Movie of the ’90s, ‘Hilarious and Harrowing’” reports on the film’s overseas impact and effect so far and positions it as follows:

[Danny Boyle’s] second film is this *Trainspotting*, the original of which is the cult novel published by Irvine Welsh in ’93 (a 700,000 copy bestseller after the film release in Britain). Since it was released in Britain in February ’96, it remained the No. 1 box-office success for quite a while and “trainspotter” became a vogue word as a result of its great hit status. It was highly praised as a masterpiece of the British New Cinema representative of the ’90s; “its exquisite storytelling and the style which fomented the atmosphere of the day” was characterized as “[Quentin] Tarantino’s *Pulp Fiction* plus [Stanley] Kubrick’s *A Clockwork Orange*” or “a *Quadrophenia* for the ’90s portraying a ‘hilarious and harrowing’ youth with cool humor and stylish visuals.” Its screenplay was given the ’96 British Academy Award and it was the most talked-about work officially shown at the 49th Cannes International Film Festival although it was not entered for the competition. At last, the Britpop movie which subsequently caused social phenomena all over the world, including America, lands on Japan.⁸

Next, the article enters into the form and content of the film itself and makes the following comment on it:

This work coolly describes the “hilarious and harrowing” youth of the 90’s. The story develops along the axis of Renton’s voice-overs, just as the original dryly piles up episode after episode. It contains some surreal and pop art-influenced shots full of trippy feelings

⁸ The pamphlet has no pagination.

such as Renton being swallowed down the toilet and the hallucinations due to withdrawal. The skillful direction throws the remarkable personality of each of the characters into relief, avoiding too much empathy without pros or cons. The music accelerates the feelings of hurtling and vibrancy. The ending on which they ultimately converge gives the audience a sense of exhilarating exaltation. It breaks through the image of youth cinema so far despite its motif of universal youth with friendship, betrayal and the choice of life.

The film is set in the late '80s although it was actually made in 1995. The article completely ignores its temporal setting and interprets it as an up-to-the-minute portrayal of young people.⁹

In the pamphlet essay “A Fine Blow by Britain: The Newness of *Trainspotting*,” the film critic Sawako Omori says about the substance of the film that “*Trainspotting* depicts an image of exitless youth. Young people stray at the lower levels of society without a proper job. This has been dealt with well in the British film repertoire.” But regarding its novelty, she states that “in *Trainspotting* the camera goes deeper into the human consciousness. With the help of its visuals (similar to British graphic magazines) and its music (a fascinating soundtrack by a lineup of old and new musicians), the perceptions of the junkie protagonist are represented vividly. That is new.” In addition, she predicts that “the dry and sometimes energetic and offbeat humor of the director Danny Boyle is likely to change the ‘restrained’ image of the British cinema.”

In another pamphlet essay “Ewan McGregor’s Defiant Face Defined the Film,” the critic Makoto Takimoto describes the film as “the purest upbeat heroin picaresque and a smart escape movie.” “Get away, get away, from our ordinary life. This motif is valid for any country,” he comments. But he calls the readers’ attention to the Scottishness of the film. “If you see *Trainspotting* as a British film, you will misunderstand its nuance. Its spirit is Scottish to the backbone. As opposed to the Anglo-Saxons in England, the ruled Scottish are Celtic and their masochistic pride and humor are always painful [. . .]. The intensity of this masochism is also the source of the power of the film.”

There are also contributions by art and music critics in the pamphlet. An anonymous article entitled “Irvine Welsh” consists of Welsh’s biography including a brief introduction of his works and the Japanese translation of his undocumented talk about his literary views and club culture. This one-page article, in spite of its brevity and anonymity, appears to have been rather influential. For the incorrect information contained in it, such as the assertion that *Trainspotting* “was awarded the Booker Prize,” and some passages from Welsh’s talk came to be recycled later on in the same or somewhat different forms by some other writers.

Finally, in the article “Read after Seeing or See after Reading,” it is noteworthy that Makiko Ikeda, who translated the novel, writes on the difference of the novel from its film version as follows: “If I were asked what the difference was between the film and its original, I would answer that there was no difference. The essence squeezed out of the original, put in the vessel of pictures and spiced up with music, is *Trainspotting* the film.” Whatever her real

⁹ For the temporal setting of the novel, see Hodge 122 and Morace 47. For that of the film, refer to the interview with Boyle in the “Making” section in the “Tokuten Eizo [Extra Visuals] Menu” on the Japanese edition of the DVD video.

intention may have been, this statement would mislead the reader. It would be true to say that the filmmakers tried to “convey at least some of the spirit and content of the book” (Hodge x), but the novel as a form of print media and the medium of film are, after all, different media, and the filming of the novel, however hard makers may try to be faithful to the original, entails an inevitable interpretation and transformation. Not only that, but the makers of *Trainspotting* made some serious and deliberate changes from the novel. For example, they selected only some voices from many voices in the novel, gave the film a linear structure made up of “a beginning, a middle, and an end,” focused on drugs and invented Mark Renton’s narrative. Also they sanitized the source material to attract a larger audience.¹⁰ Though it is foolish to blame the film only for being different from the original novel, it would be dangerous to confuse and identify the two rashly. Ikeda’s remark above might have had some adverse effect on the reception history of the novel (both the translation and the original) in Japan.

III

The December issues of three monthly magazines in 1996 dealt with the film. Taking the practice about the dates of publication and sale in Japan into consideration, it is safe to assume that these articles were written before the film release in Japan. While two of the magazines gave about a page to each article and their treatments were similar to those in the non-monthly magazines published in November, the music and audio magazine *Switch* carried three *Trainspotting*-related articles. Let us see them in the paginal order.

In the anonymous article “The ‘Apples’ of the Chemical Generation,” the author analyzes the social background of the movie’s great success in Britain: “it seems that what *Trainspotting* has shown is the condition of the depressed psychology of British youth, who are said to have lost faith in the ‘rebellion’ itself following the punk movement. What was scooped out to the surface happened to be the ‘outdated’ drug of heroin, and it is impossible to discuss the film by only focusing on heroin.” This article does not attach the greatest importance to the heroin issue. Subsequently, after touching on the rise of rave culture in contemporary Britain, accompanied by the drug “ecstasy,” it says that “present-day youth culture in Britain is led by that ‘Chemical Generation’” and concludes that “the person who speaks for them must have been ‘Renton.’” Here the temporal setting of the film is made light of and its contemporaneity is emphasized.

The second two-page article “Irvine Welsh: The Poetry for the Chemical Generation” is one of the earliest Japanese articles to treat Welsh in any detail. While the writer Kengo Watanabe writes about *Trainspotting* that “this first novel really skillfully described an aspect of the present world which was apt to be overlooked,” he does not rate its literary quality and artistic value so highly, saying that “*Trainspotting* did not necessarily have a clearly explicable story. Rather, much realistic information based on Welsh’s experiences (especially about drugs, music, football and sex) blended in well with the work and its vulgar and coarse style without frills appealed particularly to young readers” (36). But after mentioning Welsh’s later works, Watanabe appraisingly comments that “The shocking and topical stories, witty and intellectual humor, modern and sensible characters juxtaposed with vulgar people, experiments in the page

¹⁰ For the difference between the novel and the film of *Trainspotting*, see Hodge x and Morace 81–83.

layout such as making words move up and down and arranging sentences in the shape of a letter. . . . It was evident even to the people in the posh and conservative world of letters that these, filled with venom, were not the work of a mere junkie” (36). Near the end Watanabe concludes that “He wants to render the fashionable stuff of youth culture flooding the streets and the adrenalized excitement into intuitive works rather than take the conventional literary approach of elevating stylistic beauty to the limit and spending many years polishing and improving writings. That attitude may be what is needed and understood just now in the late '90s” (37). Although this is valuable as a deft rough sketch of Welsh's literature at the very early stages of his introduction in Japan, the essay still displays a superficial understanding of Welsh's work (particularly *Trainspotting*).

In the third article “The ‘Bad Feeling’ Which Gained the Support of the British Youth,” Atsuko Kawaguchi points out “the parallel between the position of [Richard] Lester's [Beatles] films against the social realism of the preceding Free Cinema in the '60s and that of the Boyle team in '90s British cinema” and “the linkage between the image of the (anti)hero as a ‘disagreeable fellow,’ as assumed by the protagonist of *Alfie*, (more than that of the near-future delinquent boy [in *A Clockwork Orange*] by Kubrick) and the character [of Renton] in Boyle's film.” She also argues that “*Trainspotting* has brought a light of hope to the British screen world by tracing the lineages of pop culture and the films opposed to social realism.”

The common tendencies of the magazine articles in this period could be roughly summarized as these characteristics:

1. They mainly deal with the film version and either ignore the novel completely or only incidentally refer to it as the original of the film. (One article chiefly discusses the novel but inevitably mentions the film as well.)
2. They are favorable to *Trainspotting* (both of the film and the novel) as a whole apart from certain details.
3. They are indifferent to, or make light of, the British social class position of the characters in the film and the novel.
4. Japanese writers are relatively indifferent to, or generous towards, the possible bad influence on society of the drug descriptions in the film and the novel.
5. In dealing with the film, they mostly give the director and the cast credit for its success, taking almost no notice of its scriptwriter or producer, much less the original novelist.

Point 3 could be attributed to the lack of class consciousness in Japan, and point 4 could be ascribed to the fact that drugs have not yet become such a serious social problem in Japan.

Among the December issues of the weekly magazines, the two published on the 3rd and the 6th took up the film, and the semimonthly film and drama magazine *Kinema Junpo* dated the 15th gave extra space to special articles on it. These articles were also probably written before the film release. Both of the articles in the weekly magazines were brief reviews within one page each, but the two double-page feature articles (four pages in all) in *Kinema Junpo* seem to have been more influential.

In the first feature article “The brilliant crazy tragedy imbued with the British classic cinema” (though it is doubtful whether the film is a “tragedy”), Nagaharu Yodogawa traces the genealogies of the British cinema. After that, he says “‘youngeeness’ gave birth to this

extraordinary movie” and decides that “*Trainspotting* is a controversial work which the film world will perhaps talk about continually for many years” (63). In this review, he mistakes an episode in the novel for one in the film and betrays his misconception that a stage play with the same cast developed into this film. These misunderstandings accidentally bring out the problems of confusions and erroneous identifications between an original and its adaptations and between individual adaptations themselves, which tend to happen when a work of literature is variously adapted.

In the second feature article “‘The Significance of Surviving’ and Danny Boyle’s High ‘Aim’ in the Cinema,” Kenji Tanigawa writes that “The film depicts their [Renton and his mates’] fleeting everyday life dispassionately” and that “What is felt is not a loud assertion but the senses of throbbing and hurtling in the lives of those who enjoy this present moment with all their might in given circumstances and run hard to survive” (64). He pays attention to the detachment throughout the film on the part of the filmmakers. Taking up the film’s latter half in particular, he subsequently summarizes it as follows: “the second half of the movie unfolds along the tense relationships, somewhat different from the first half, between Renton struggling desperately for another life and his mates continuing to frustrate him [. . .] Renton decides to betray them for his future [. . .]” (64). Views would vary on Renton’s escape at the end. On that point Tanigawa writes that “the director Danny Boyle would perhaps want to say that ‘the means aside, surviving is important above all else’ rather than justify Renton’s act” while saying that “The means which Renton chose to take advantage of his good luck is morally never to be forgiven” (64). His interpretation here is ambivalent, suggesting that Renton’s behavior in question was necessary to survive although it was ethically wrong. As is clear from the last quotation but one, his identification of the director with the filmmakers is striking, and this review does not have a single mention of the original novel.

In 1997 the four January issues of the monthly magazines dealt with the film, and it can be surmised that these articles were written around the time of film release. The poetry magazine *Hato yo!* reports that the film “is on.” All of these four articles are light reviews within a half page each, similar to the brief reviews thus far.

The five tendencies given before still seem to apply generally to the magazine articles in this period.

IV

Of the non-monthly magazines published in January 1997, the semimonthly youth magazine *Sukora* issued on the 9th took up the subject of *Trainspotting*. This anonymous article titled “Is *Trainspotting* the greatest youth movement this year!?” reports that “On Saturday 30 November [the film release day], a very long line from the foot to the top of the Supeinzaka slope in Shibuya [in Tokyo]” was formed by people waiting to see the film at the movie theater and also says that “The novel translation put on the market by Aoyama Publishing Company before the film release was a hit, selling over 100,000 copies in a month.” In the materials gathered by me, this magazine article is the first to report on the situation of the film release in Japan.

Among the February issues of the monthly magazines, the retailing magazine *Across* dealt with *Trainspotting*. In the three-page article “*Trainspotting*: The First ‘Youth Movie’ for the Cool Generation in a Long Time,” Kimiko Takano sums up the state of affairs around the film

at the earliest stage after the film release.

Initially, she reports as follows:

[. . .] *Trainspotting* landed in Shibuya, Tokyo on Saturday 30 November. It attracted 1577 people, broke the record of the first day attendance so far at the Shibuya Cinema Rise, which was showing it, and has been a big hit since then, with people standing to watch it every day. The translation of the original novel sold more than 50,000 copies during the two weeks after it was put on sale. The temporary shop “Trainspotting Supported by Beams” [. . .], which deals in the original goods and the articles of popular British brands such as Mozart and Free which the actors wore in the film, is also greatly prosperous, selling out its goods and articles as soon as they come in.

From this article we can see how the translation, the original goods and other items related to the film were also a big hit. Moreover, she writes that “Before and after its release day, [the film] was reported on by the various media in Japan” (9).

She also does not forget to review the film itself:

[. . .] only the hero Renton apparently succeeds in escaping, but he finally chooses a commonplace life; that is, he gets carried away by the current of the world in the end. I think there is a taste in this cynical last scene which you could not find in the youth cinema until now, let alone in the American indie cinema such as the works of Jim Jarmusch and Tarantino. I don't know whether this is British or not, but anyway I felt that such a cool outlook on the world is found also in the Japanese young people of today. (8)

What is worthy of note here is that the review of the film is ultimately connected with “the Japanese young people of today” who make up most of its audience. She says that “it appears to have made a good impression on today's youth in that it also does not preach, not arguing for or against drugs” analyzing a reason for the popularity of the film (9). She shows a great interest in the audience of the film, inserting interview results with ten spectators in the last page.

It was in March of 1997, in the materials that I gathered, that an article with *Trainspotting* as its subject was first printed in the scholarly journals in Japan. This essay entitled “*Trainspotting*” appeared in *Daito Bunka Daigaku Eibei Bungaku Ronso (Daito Bunka Review)* and was written in English by George Wallace, presumably a teacher at a Japanese university. Wallace presents the novel favorably and plainly to the Japanese (especially university students).

Firstly, in the section titled “What is the book about?” (1-2), he gives “a brief synopsis of the book.” Secondly, in the section “The book's attractions” (3-9), he explains “why the book has proved so popular with a young audience in Britain.” Thirdly, in the section entitled “Criticisms that might be levelled at the book” (9-10), he anticipates criticisms against the novel and refutes them. Fourthly, in the section “Difficulties in reading” (10-11), he considers “the difficulties the book's use of the vernacular might present some readers.” In the conclusion (11-12) he comments on the work as a whole, saying “The book tells us much about the kind of life many young people face in modern urban society: life without hope for the future,

without love, and without security. While the book neither glorifies, nor condones the taking of drugs, it does explain why some people do drugs" (11). On the other hand, he is sympathetic to Renton's escape, writing that "Renton, the sole character to escape, realizes this; only by throwing off his lethargy, and making a clean break from his past, can he salvage anything from his life," although he is skeptical about its success, saying that "His choice of destination is however highly ironic: Amsterdam is famous for being a city with a very relaxed attitude to drugs. As Renton heads towards his new life, we are left wondering how strong his resolve to make a clean break with the past will remain" (12). The principal objective of the essay is to introduce the Japanese to the novel and invite them to read it. After saying that "The main difference between the Scottish dialect used in the book and standard English is the vowels a, e, i, o, and u" (10), he gives a list comparing "the Scottish dialect that appears in the book" with "their standard English equivalents" (10-11), which would come very much in handy for the Japanese reader at least.

But this essay, without almost any reference to related literature, cannot strictly be called an academic study. The essay supposed to have been touched off by the *Trainspotting* fad in Japan mentions the film but does not compare the novel with the film. Although it may have roused an interest in the novel in the author's circle and might have induced an English research paper in January of the next year, it does not seem to have had a marked effect on the academic world of English literature in Japan, for to the best of my knowledge it has never been quoted or referred to in other articles, and the novel has hardly been studied in Japanese academia since then.

Of the March issues of the monthly magazines, the literature and history magazine *Bungakukai* took up the novel. In this review of the translation, titled "On the Flight of the Youth Who Cannot Get Angry," Ryuji Morita, using the key terms of "the working class" and "Scottish," summarizes the novel: "before Welsh, who comes from the working class in Edinburgh, stands not only the barrier of class but also that of being Scottish. Welsh depicts the 'young people who have become unable even to get angry' being hampered by this double barrier, by making full use of vulgar words, black humor and rhetoric full of connotations" (236). After mentioning the reform of British society in the '80s, he discusses Renton and his fellows as victims of Thatcherism: "The unemployment rate in Scotland is remarkably higher than it is in England. This is one of the results of Thatcherism, which attached great importance to investments from abroad being premised on the victimization of the weak, but Renton does not direct his anger at Thatcher. What upholds him is a masochistic pride in being Scottish, which forms a painful nihilism in him" (237). Morita is not favorable towards the characters' nihilism and decadence and comments critically that "Renton, turning his back on the limited choices of life, seeks refuge in heroin from the shitty life which will end in his death. His mates also spend their days in drugs, alcohol, brawls and sex. [. . .] they do not have the backbone to rebel against the world. Rather, they even appear to be trying to play up to it passively." Therefore, he values Renton's escape saying that "[. . .] Renton's flight beyond the barrier brings slight hope to the horrible narrative colored by death, despair and violence." He does not ask whether Renton's betrayal of his mates is right or not.

This is one of the earliest articles in Japan that took the novel as their subject, though it does not deal with the original English novel, and reviews the translated novel in limited space without mentioning the film. It could be recognized as the contribution of this book review that

it pointed out the relationship of Thatcherism in 1980s Britain to the novel and that it called the reader's attention to the social class and Scottish identity of the characters.

Among the non-monthly magazines in March, the weekly general-interest magazine *Aera* published on the 17th covers the film. In this very short article entitled "A great success by 'Kimu Taku Effect,'" Yukiko Hayami reports that "The smash-hit British film *Trainspotting* is getting close to *Der Himmel über Berlin (Wings of Desire)*'s record for the second largest attendance (150,000) in a single theater in Japan. The original is a semiautobiographical debut work by ex-junkie Irvine Welsh." The center of the interest of the article is in trends related to, and reactions from, the audience, though it comments on the film very briefly as well.

Of the April issues of the monthly magazines, the general-interest magazine *Nikkei Entertainment!* dealt with the film. In the article "*Trainspotting*: Kimu Taku's Favorite. The Ultra-Decadent Movie Indulging in Drugs, Alcohol and Sex," Hiroshi Takada reports on the popularity of the film: "The Cinema Rise Shibuya, a movie theater showing *Trainspotting* in Tokyo, set a new record by making more than 100,000,000 yen as box-office profits in 51 days since its release (only three or four films a year earn over 100,000,000 yen). Even on weekdays there is a large audience and they say it is likely to be a long run until the end of the Golden Week." Takada also says on the state of the audience that "The majority of the audience are in their twenties. As it is a British film, many people were seen wearing styles of coats and pants like London fashions." On the subject of the soundtrack album and the original and translated versions of the novel, he writes that "The soundtrack CD has been selling well, too, and the number of sales has passed 100,000 copies although it is said that 'few pass 50,000.'" The original novel on which the film is based was written by Irvine Welsh and published in '93. It became a bestseller (700,000 copies) in Britain and sold 50,000 copies [of its translation] in the first two weeks in Japan." He concludes the article by saying that "It can be said that the music, novel and film— as one body—made a hit." This article places a little more weight on the popularity of the film, soundtrack album and novel and on the type of audience than on the film itself and, like the article immediately before, indicates a shift in the interests of the articles (or writers) in this period. It is noteworthy in summarizing the situation around the film as an early interim report a few months after the release in Japan.

Among the non-monthly magazines in April, two magazines published on the 1st and the 10th took up the translation of the novel. The anonymous book review "A 'Drug to Read' for People Utterly Despairing of Their Lives" in the weekly general-interest magazine *Shukan Playboy* reviews the translated novel, throwing in a quotation and summarizing episodes from it. The author, without touching on the film, sums the novel up: "its content is desperately dark. But it is fresh and young, and powerful. Youth in Scotland, unemployed and on the dole after finishing university [sic]. Drugs, alcohol, violence, theft and sex. Out-and-out indifference to society and to others. A story spun from the monologues of young people who associate in an arid emotional landscape." And the writer paradoxically invites the reader to this unusual novel by saying that "If you define literary works as things preaching something significant to life, such as hope or ideals, you had better not read this work." Also, in a review of the translation in the weekly general-interest magazine *Shukan Asahi Geimo*, Sayuri Ichijo reviews it very briefly without referring to the film. These two articles are similar in discussing the translated novel without a mention of the film. We can see that at this stage magazines at last showed interest in the novel itself behind the film (albeit the translated novel), not merely as source

material for the film.

V

Articles on *Trainspotting* did not appear for some time after the one cited just above, probably indicating that the *Trainspotting* boom centering on the film had passed its peak.

The July 1997 issue of the monthly young adult women's magazine *Elle Japon* carried the next *Trainspotting*-related article. This anonymous article titled "The Design Group Tomato Sliding Through Various Media" reports on the creative unit Tomato, who designed the film's title sequence (with a title logo, moving bands of light and a train sound effect) and the film poster. It does not focus on the film itself.

Of the August issues of the monthly magazines, *Nikkei Entertainment!* published an article on the film, entitled "*Trainspotting*: The Big Hit Began with a Moviegoer's Purchase of a Laser Disk." Yasuhiro Noda begins the article by writing that "*Trainspotting*, which has been showing since November last year, not only drew the largest audience in a single theater in the first half of this year but was also the biggest such megahit in [Japanese cinema] history apart from *Nuovo Cinema Paradiso* (*Cinema Paradiso*)" (148). However, the focus of this article is on how the staff of a film-distributing agency in Japan decided to distribute the film, not on the film itself. What is noteworthy as well is that it announces that the film "will be on at the Cinema Rise Shibuya until 18 July and shown at the Parco Space Part 3 and others after that" (148) and also that it reports that the soundtrack CD "was a big hit, which is unusual for a soundtrack, selling more than 200,000 copies inclusive of the imported edition. [. . .] Prior to the film release it started to sell well mainly at foreign-owned record shops and achieved the highest sales in history at Tower Records as a soundtrack album, passing *Pulp Fiction*" (149). From these two articles above, we can understand that at this time the writers' interest completely shifted from the film itself to the situation surrounding the film and its related commodities.

Turning our eyes away from magazines, the soundtrack CD *Trainspotting 2* was released on 18 September, suggesting the firm popularity of the film-related products.

On 3 October, more than ten months after the film release in Japan, the VHS videos of the film (subtitled, wide-screen subtitled and dubbed versions) were released. On the front side of the video case are that familiar poster photograph showing the five main characters, the catchphrase "Choose life" printed in large letters and, beside it, a definition of the film as the "best youth movie of the '90s, 'hilarious and harrowing'" in small letters.

Quoted in Japanese on the back of the video case is an abridged version of the well-known voice-over by Renton at the opening of the film (beginning with "Choose life" and ending with "But why would I want to do a thing like that?"), and subsequently the film is summarized:

Mark Renton and his mates are always high, or stealing to buy drugs: Begbie, addicted to alcohol and brawling; Diane, a neat and clean secondary-school girl during the day; Sick Boy, a womanizer and "007 maniac"; good-natured and timid Spud. Their friendship will ultimately collapse, and only Renton tries to find a chance to escape from there. What future will he ever choose? The fresh and powerful director Danny Boyle made Irvine Welsh's bestseller into a film. The best youth movie of the '90s, "hilarious and harrowing,"

which thrilled people all over the world. Top musicians gathered to create the soundtrack music, with Britpop performers as the core.

Here, in an identification of the film with the novel, this film is interpreted as a “hilarious and harrowing” youth film in which the protagonist Renton, who rejects choosing a decent and ordinary life and his future at the beginning, after leading a decadent life with his bad companions, flees from its quagmire and comes to choose the future which he once rejected. The “official” interpretation of the film as summarized and fixed here would reflect the dominant discourse about the film in Japan at this point and, on the other hand, was perhaps to influence, to some extent, the later interpretations by the general audience at least, by having been printed on the case as a “fact.”

After a quiet period in September, the weekly magazine *Shukan Asahi Geino* published on 23 October carried a brief review of the video of *Trainspotting*. In this article titled “*Trainspotting*: A Marvelous Masterpiece Which Is an Opposite to Hollywood Movies!” Takashi Matsuo comments on the film:

You could think of it as an entertainment utterly opposite to Hollywood movies. In its atmosphere there are some elements resembling the works by Quentin Tarantino, but it doesn't feel as constrained. It is more casual, more urbane, realistic and vivid in its description of things and also has an air of sophisticated and inexplicable mysteriousness about it.

He also predicts that “Just as *Easy Rider* remains, for people currently in their 40s and 50s, a work symbolizing their youth, so *Trainspotting* is likely to become the same for the people who are in their 20s now.”

After this article, hardly any other articles appear with the film as their theme, and it can be presumed that the *Trainspotting* boom came to an end around this time.

About a year after the film's release in Japan, the weekly young adult women's magazine *Hanako* published on 10 December ran the article entitled “Right now, what is most interesting is the British cinema.” Shoko Watanabe begins her article by writing that “Recently British films are so interesting that you cannot take your eyes off them. The first of them was *Trainspotting*, which was a record-breaking hit in mini-theaters in Japan [...]” and reports on the thriving film world in Britain since then. The major interest of the article, however, is no longer in the film *Trainspotting*.

VI

After the *Trainspotting* fever had finished, a study on the novel appeared in *Mejiro Daigaku Jimbun Gakubu Kiyō (Journal of Humanities, Mejiro University)* published in January 1998. In this English-language treatise titled “The Language of *Trainspotting*, ‘Ebonics’ and Dialects of English Today,” Ron Grove writes as follows in the introduction:

[...] the language of the book [*Trainspotting*] is one of its most fascinating features. As one would expect, it is sometimes closer to Scots than to English and replete with colorful,

if often foul, expressions. Some of the foulest of these are interesting linguistically, as they are the lexical basis for alternative expressions of grammatical structures basic to both Scots and English. [. . .] The book is sensitive to the social significance of dialect and contains several scenes revolving around attitudes toward speakers of related varieties of language, such as Standard British (i.e., upper-middle-class southern England) English or North American English, as well as non-native varieties. (32)

In the next section “The Language of *Trainspotting*,” Grove analyzes the linguistic features of the novel at some length, quoting ample examples (32-42). What is considered here includes mainly the following issues: Scots and the language of the working class in Scotland today; the stylistic difference between “the characters’ dialogue and their narrated thoughts” and “less personalized narrative portions” in the novel; the spellings of words, the vocabulary and the use of “*cunt*” as an “all-purpose term for someone else, either friendly or unfriendly” in the novel; the usually negative reactions of the main characters to “nonlocal accents”; the “clear sociopolitical implications” in accent in the novel, many of which have to do with the “history of English domination of Britain”; and the causal relation of the “personal problems, e.g. drug addiction” and the “National misfortune” of Scotland. Grove recapitulates the section by saying that “[. . .] *Trainspotting*, by using specifically Scottish varieties of English (or English-influenced varieties of Scots) and by expressing attitudes about local and other accents presents a strong case for the social and political importance of language variety within the English-speaking world” (42). In the next section, he discusses the “Debate about ‘Ebonics’ in the Oakland Public Schools” in America (42-45) and finally states in the conclusion that “For many, their specific variety of English is central to personal and group identity. Greater awareness of this feature of the language would help all users of English, whether as a first or as an additional language, to understand each other better. [. . .] Greater respect for non-standard varieties would remove social barriers, possibly including inhibitions about proficiency in standard varieties” (45).

This study can be appreciated as one which academically treats the language, particularly the “social and political importance of language variety” in the novel, based on many references, although it is not only about the novel. It also has a few mentions of the film version of *Trainspotting*. This would be one of the most accomplished of the small number of articles on the novel published in Japan up to the present. But from analysis of the situation afterwards, it does not seem to have been influential nor inspired other papers on the novel to be written in Japan.

Among the non-monthly magazines, the article entitled “A Dream of Making a Fortune at One Swoop, Supporting the Cinema” in the weekly magazine *Aera* published on 19 January made reference to the film. Here Sumimaro Yagyū reports on how investments of the money from the National Lottery Fund in Britain into filmmaking are useful in reviving the cinema and says that “They began to work in 1995. *Trainspotting*, portraying comically heroin-addicted young people, also won popularity in Japan the year before last.” Notwithstanding the mention of the film, the principal object of its interest is the present film world in Britain, as was the case with Shoko Watanabe’s article.

Of the academic journals, *Tsudajuku Daigaku Kiyo* (*Journal of Tsuda College*) published in March carried a study on Welsh. In the paper entitled “Senritsu no Jigazo [Self-Portrait in

Labyrinth]: Irvine Welsh, *Maraboustork* [sic] *Nightmares*,” Atsuko Hayakawa, who also translated the Welsh novel mentioned in the title, mainly discusses *Marabou Stork Nightmares* but touches on *Trainspotting* as well (56). But as regards the *Trainspotting* novel, only its title is mentioned, and all of the related commentary (a paragraph of 14 lines) is about the film version. It is quite strange that she should discuss only the cinematic text of *Trainspotting* considering that she is discussing Welsh’s literature, but even this could be looked on as a proof of the overwhelming influence of the film.¹¹

On 25 October, a pocket edition of the translation of the novel was published. The making of a book into a pocket edition means that the book sold above a certain standard and was recognized by Japanese society. The jacket of this book is still under the influence of the film, using the pictures of Renton and the other four main characters from the poster. The paper band over the jacket characterizes the book as “A masterpiece of British *pop literature* representative of the ’90s, which was ardently supported by the Chemical Generation” (my italics) but also says, “Made in England,” beside there, betraying a lack of understanding. The back jacket, summing up the novel, writes “Lethargic and selfish young people in Edinburgh spending their time in drugs, alcohol, violence and sex. Meaningless daily life without a job or a hope for the future. Under these hopeless circumstances, Renton, with a full-blown heroin addiction, was aiming to survive for a bright future—.” Here the novel is simplified and interpreted as a narrative in which Renton aims to survive for a bright future under hopeless circumstances, which reminds us of the “summary” of the film on the back of the VHS video case.

But the “commentary” at the back of the book is a little better informed. In this essay titled “A Future Classic Youth Novel” (493–98), Masayuki Kawakatsu classifies and places the novel as follows:

Trainspotting is a story in which a young man who “chose not to choose life” comes to choose his future. So it can be described as a sort of a Bildungsroman depicting the formation and development of the protagonist’s character. As Renton is prepared to do dubious things (in a bad sense) for drugs, however, it is also the newest type of a picaresque novel about a working-class hero (as defined by John Lennon) and his experiences of various happenings. (494)

Next, he develops a genealogical study of the novel:

Jack Kerouac’s *On the Road*, William Burroughs’ *Naked Lunch*, Richard Brautigan’s *Trout Fishing in America*, Kurt Vonnegut, Jr.’s *The Sirens of Titan*, Charles Bukowski’s *Women*. . . . There is a genealogy of what is called “novels which slept with the times” having a great effect not only on the literary and publishing worlds and novel-loving circles but also on the young people’s lifestyle and ideas of the day. Irvine Welsh’s *Trainspotting* is a novel that slept with the ’90s. And fairly well. (494)

¹¹ For the list of “Research Papers on Irvine Welsh in Japan” which are not cited in the main text, see Appendix C after the body of this paper.

Moreover, he says of drugs that “the young people in *Trainspotting* do drugs in order not to perceive realities and systematically [and repeatedly] kick them so as to [sustain the physical ability to] keep up that state. This is a crucial point of the newness of *Trainspotting*” (496). Discussing “literary experiments,” he points out that “In *Trainspotting*, the sections from Sick Boy’s, Spud’s and Begbie’s points of view are mixed while the main point of view is Renton’s, and Renton’s reflections on drugs, the *Junk Dilemmas* sections, are inserted at appropriate points” (497). Lastly, he writes on the appeal and value of the novel that “[. . .] I think the reason why *Trainspotting* drew so many readers [. . .] is because it freshly portrays the ‘quivers of hearts’ towards the problems every human being faces, such as sex, love, friendship, parents, anxiety about the future, death. . . . For this reason, it will continue to be read by future readers even if the life and manners depicted in it become, in time, out-of-date” (497-98). On the other hand, he enters into the film version and briefly compares it with the novel.

In a restricted space, after placing the novel in the literary history schematically, he tactfully analyses the work itself and the situations around it and comments on them with occasional insights. This was one of the most noteworthy of the essays on the novel written in Japan, particularly in Japanese, at the time (and remains so even now). Despite this, it is merely a “commentary” on a translated version of the novel, placed as an appendix at the back of the book. It lacks strict documentation, a unifying theme for the whole essay, and textual analyses endorsing the writer’s arguments, as well as not discussing the original novel. More academic and full-fledged researches would be needed.

VII

Meanwhile, as regards the film-related merchandise, on 16 February 1999 *Trainspotting* was published by Screenplay Publishing Co., Ltd. as No. 87 in the “Screenplay Series,” which consist of “complete transcriptions in English and Japanese of the lines and stage directions (scene descriptions) of the films” (2). These “can be utilized both to enjoy films as bilingual readings and to learn English conversations” and include explanations of English words and phrases, plus several accounts of the films (2). This company also released the rerecorded audiocassette version of the *Trainspotting* screenplay. In this way, the disquieting and, in a sense, blasphemous novel published in Britain in 1993 has gradually been defanged and sanitized while being transformed from novel to stage play and to film, and finally has come to be canonized as teaching material for English and English conversation in Japan at this point.

On 3 April, the Japanese version of the DVD video of the film was released. The quotation from Renton’s voice-over and the “summary” of the work on the back of the DVD case were almost the same as those on the back of the VHS video case cited above.

Among the monthly magazines, the October issue of the general-interest magazine *Chuo Koron* dealt with the film *Trainspotting*. In the critical essay “Thatcherism and the British Cinema,” the critic Masaaki Oba devotes one section (256-57) to the film.

Taking up Renton’s voice-over at the opening, he argues that “In this monologue an irony against Thatcherism is already incorporated. These messages of ‘Choose something’ represent the democracy of assets ownership promoted by the Thatcher administration” (256). Next, touching on the policies which Thatcher’s Conservative Government pursued while in power for

11 years from 1979, he writes that as a consequence of these policies the disparity in wealth between the north and the south in Britain, which had existed in connection with the class system, came to become even wider. He goes on to state that “In other words, Renton, the protagonist of the film, is not in the position to choose anything, however determinedly Thatcher may appeal to them to invest in the future” and points out an irony in the voice-over above (257). Additionally, he is sympathetic to Begbie and Tommy saying that “[...] Begbie, though he is alcoholic and is always brawling, does not do drugs. That is, he adheres to the old way of living of the working men. And Tony [sic], who likewise does not take drugs preferring Scottish landscapes, can be said to maintain a Scottish identity through [his love of] nature” (257). But Oba is harsh and negative towards the central figure, saying that “In contrast to them, Renton becomes completely rootless while indulging in drugs, betrays his mates and absconds with the large sum of money they got by selling drugs” (257). Lastly, he concludes the section:

In the transformed Britain, communities in which people are bound to each other by the consciousness of being working-class or Scottish are broken up; only the question of whether people have money or not determines who they are. Contrary to his monologue at the beginning, Renton becomes a selfish brat and chooses his future. This ending can also be seen as suggesting a great turning point of British society in that he crosses a [moral] border which cannot be recrossed. (257)

In this critique, Oba discusses the film by placing it in the wider history of British cinema and society rather than treating it merely as an isolated work of art. This critical essay, although it is brief, is an important contribution to the critical history of the film in Japan, and it may be gathered that the criticism of the film had gradually matured and was in a stage of reappraisal at this point.

A book published on 25 August 2000, entitled *Eikoku Eiga de Yoake made (Up Until Dawn with British Films)*, is a “guide to the British cinema” which discusses 180 films. The influence of the *Trainspotting* film was strongly evident, with the inverted original poster of the film placed on the upper front jacket and the first chapter being titled “Choose the British Cinema!” Its author Atsuhiko Irie deals with the film at the beginning (16-18) of the first section “Choose the British Cinema!: The 10 Best British Films of the '90s” in Chapter I.

Initially, he comments on the film as a whole that “This is not a film chanting a slogan of ‘No Drugs!’ Of course it is not an irresponsible song in praise of licentious youth, either. It is difficult to classify it, but if forced to do so I’d say that it is a superlative work of entertainment” (17). Subsequently, he writes as follows:

They [Renton and his mates] don’t, and don’t want to, choose life, and so they shut out the outside world with drugs.

The monologue of “Choose life” delivered by the protagonist Renton (played by Ewan McGregor) at the opening is at once a proposition imposed on the characters and a theme given to the audience. [...] But the specified picture of “chosen life” is sad and painful. It is sad because it overlaps ourselves, who live more or less buried in everyday life. It is painful because we are compelled to realize that the empty status quo [in which we exist]

has never resulted from our own choice (of life). (18)

Irie sees both positive and negative implications in the “proposition” of “Choose life.” He goes on to state that “The more you enjoy the work on a simple level, the harder you are struck by such sadness and painfulness. What is marvelous about this film is that it is constructed that way.”

Apart from the value of this particular film review, the book is probably one of the earliest examples of writings which rate the film among the best 10 British films of the '90s (and at the top of the list) and try to institutionalize this status for the film in the context of a book of film criticism.

A book titled *Eikoku Henkutsu Tenrankai (Hot Brit Groovers Exhibition)*, No. 15 in the “Talking Heads Series” on literature and arts, published on 31 December took up Welsh as a subject along with J. G. Ballard, Damien Hirst, Peter Greenaway, Will Self, Alex Garland and Jeff Noon in a chapter entitled “Brit Groovers 7.” In the introductory section “Irvine Welsh,” Kyo Satsuki, summarizing the substance of the novel *Trainspotting*, writes that “Welsh describes drugs, clubs, music and the life of working-class young people. And for the youth portrayed there, the greatest problem is not so much one of turning their anger on society as their own pleasure and how to cope with the pain inside themselves.” She comments about its style that “[. . .] Welsh adopted a Scottish accent consciously. Language isn’t a mere arrangement of sounds. Rhythms themselves have colors and ideas and are filled with emotions. Welsh’s choice was excellent. All of this was present in the language he chose.” But it is doubtful whether Satsuki develops this argument on the basis of reading the original novel in English. Moreover, she says that “this unique work [the novel *Trainspotting*] scored a great hit. The film, the film poster and the like represented the *Trainspotting* world very well and synergized the novel,” which suggests that what may be called an identification or mutual permeation of the novel and the film (plus other related materials such as the poster) is still persistent.

In the year 2002, the semimonthly fashion magazine *Figaro Japon* published on 5 February took up Welsh and his works. The anonymous article “Let’s read young writers’ books” introduces Welsh very briefly, using a column of 25 lines, and goes so far as to say that “though his works became best-sellers one after the other, respectable literary critics don’t appreciate or respect Welsh either in Britain or Japan” (156). Needless to say, this remark is not necessarily true but is to be noted as the one showing most straightforwardly how Welsh is viewed in general in Japan.

VIII

The April 2004 issue of the monthly English language and literature magazine *Eigo-Seinen (The Rising Generation)* carried some feature articles on films by scholars of English and American literature. One of them was the first article in a long time on the subject of *Trainspotting*. In this essay entitled “*Trainspotting* Scotland,” Noriyuki Hattori discusses both the film and the novel, comparing the two with each other.

As respects the novel, he points out its “filthiness,” “violence,” “revenge,” “death,” “sentimentalism,” “nostalgia” and so on and comments that in the latter half of the novel ““sentimen-

talism' and 'nostalgia' surpass 'filthiness' and 'violence'" (25). Focusing on its "revenge" in particular, he says that "This fierce work by Welsh, who was born a working-class son in Leith in Edinburgh and went through many hardships, is, as it were, a violence of 'revenge.'" Hattori suggests one possible interpretation of the novel: "[. . .] Renton, a flop of an intellectual who, although he is Scottish, disdains his home country and tries to escape from it, [. . .] deserves retaliation from Begbie, who leads an authentic Scottish working-class life" (25). Concerning the relation of the novel to Scotland, after pointing out that "In the depths of Welsh's nostalgia, sorrow and anger is found 'the Scottish question' more than questions of 'class,'" he comments that "the Renton in the novel has a disdain for Scotland and a desire to get away from it, both of which are more intense [than those of the Renton in the film]" and that in this respect "the novel is more escape-oriented and negative" (26).

On the other hand, paying attention especially to the notions of "hurtle," "escape," and "flight" in the film, he argues:

The film *Trainspotting* hurtles. It is, however, also a flight. [. . .] [It is] The escape of an underdog deprecating his own Scottishness. But in the film the flight as an escape is inverted into the flight as a flying. In the final scene where Renton steals his mates' money and runs away, a number called "Born Slippy" by Underworld, which became a big hit, is played as background music, and the catharsis of music and image converts Renton's treacherous escape into cool flight. (26)

With regard to the connection between the film and Scotland, he says that "the film presented Scotland as fashionable, based on the fact that 'cool' Ewan comes from Scotland and by making full use of varied media effectively" (26). He is fairly conscious of the differences between the novel and the film without confusing them.

Moreover, discussing the difference between the treatment of "Scotland" in the novel and that in the film, he mentions the "rehabilitation of Scotland" and infers that "The lapse of three years from the original novel to its cinematization and the changes in the state of affairs over Scotland are related to this outcome" (26). Lastly, locating both the film and the novel in the social situation of Britain in the 1990s, he concludes:

The year 1996, when *Trainspotting* was released, was the very time that the movement for the rehabilitation of Scotland was flourishing nationally. It is no exaggeration to say that *Trainspotting's* great success gave great momentum to the [political] devolution of Scotland. The novel and the film of *Trainspotting* were at once a junction of various media and a huge junction of politics, culture and commerce. (26)

It could be said that this essay is superior to, and more mature than, many of the *Trainspotting* essays which have appeared in Japan so far, in the sense that it compared the novel with the film, based on accurate knowledge and calm understanding of both of them, and also connected them to contemporary British politics, culture and commerce. But it lacks evidence supporting many of the author's arguments and views (such as references to, and quotations from, primary and secondary sources), which is possibly because of its limited space for discussion. For this reason, it may not be called an academic paper in terms of rigor

although its content is enlightening. It is expected that this essay will become one of the stepping-stones to more full-fledged and higher-grade studies of the novel *Trainspotting* and its adaptations in Japan, rather than remain one of the highest Japanese achievements in the researches on them.

Conclusion

The *Trainspotting* boom in Japan was a fairly large socio-cultural phenomenon involving industries such as music and fashion as well as specific media industries such as film, publishing and advertising. Under these complicated circumstances, Japanese society performed varied signifying practices regarding both the novelistic and filmic texts of *Trainspotting* as originated in Britain, attaching particular meanings to them. In consequence, it became impossible to discuss the novel in earnest without entering into the film version, just as reference to the novel is inevitable for a deeper understanding and appreciation of the film as an adaptation of the novel. This is because the influence of the film version, which is more popular, more understandable and has a stronger direct impact, rebounded onto the novel, and the film came, in a sense, to be projected onto the novel. In a way, the writing process of the Japanese translation of the novel speaks eloquently about these circumstances. Because, whether we like it or not, we are incorporated in the discursive space of the socio-cultural phenomenon centering round the film version, to disregard this phenomenon would be an academic dishonesty even when we are specifically studying the novel *Trainspotting*.

It is considered that the *Trainspotting* phenomenon in Japan became serious more than a month before the film release on 30 November 1996, although the release of the Japanese soundtrack CD on 22 May could be placed in the prehistory of the phenomenon. The peak numbers of magazine articles on *Trainspotting* came in the issues of the weekly magazines published in late November and in the December and January issues of the monthly magazines. But it can be inferred that the sale dates were one or two weeks before the publication dates in weekly magazines and the sale dates were over one month before the publication dates in monthly magazines. The magazine articles which appeared in this period mostly deal with the film version, ignoring, or only making passing references to, the novel, and even in the extremely rare event of an article discussing mainly the novel, mentions of the film are inevitable. We cannot help but observe that these articles generally remain superficial in understandings of the film and the novel although they are favorable to either of them as a whole and invite the readers to them. In addition, this period was also a period of disordered information, in which misconceptions about the film, the novel and Welsh, plus confusions and identifications between the original novel and its adaptations, occurred in no small numbers and were subsequently recycled.

Once a semimonthly magazine published in early January 1997 had reported on the state of affairs on the release day of the film and the sales of the translation of the novel, the main interest of the magazine articles began to shift from the film itself to the situation around the film including its audience and related goods. It was with an essay in a university journal published in March, after the peak of the reports in journalism, that responses to the novel *Trainspotting* started to appear in the academic world. It is suggestive that the author was a native speaker of English, and this introductory essay in English does not seem to have had a

noticeable influence on the academic world of English literature in Japan. In Japanese society, the Japanese-speaking and English-speaking worlds may form relatively closed circles to each other, even within the academia of English literature. Furthermore, we can see that, during this period, magazines also turned their attention to the translated novel behind the film version, judging by a rather substantial review of the translation of the novel printed in the March issue of a monthly magazine and brief reviews in two weekly magazines published in early April.

The blank period in the May and June issues of the magazines suggests that the overheated phase of the *Trainspotting* fever ended during this period. On 3 October, the VHS video of the film was released; the dominant interpretation of this film in Japan was summarized and printed on the video case in an attempt to fix such an interpretation “officially.” As articles on the subject of the film seldom appeared in magazines following an article in a weekly magazine published on 23 October, it can be surmised that the *Trainspotting* boom ended around this point in time.

In a university journal published in January 1998 after the boom had passed, a treatise on the novel *Trainspotting* appeared, written by a native speaker of English. This study academically analyzes the “language” in the novel in some detail, but it does not seem to have inspired other scholarly papers on the novel, let alone criticisms on it, in Japan. On 25 October, the translation of the novel was published as a pocket edition, which indicated a certain social recognition. While the jacket and the covering paper band of the pocket edition, under the influence of the film, simplify and define the character, value and meaning of the novel and try to fix them, the “commentary” at the back of the book teaches the readers how to read the translated novel. What the author does in this “commentary” is not only an analysis of, and comment on, the work itself and its surrounding situations but also a classification of the novel and its positioning within literary history. In that respect, this essay can be said to be a step up from many of the essays on the novel which have appeared in Japan so far.

In a section of a critique printed in the October 1999 issue of a monthly magazine, the author discusses the film *Trainspotting*, placing it in the wider history of British society and cinema. This critical essay shows a reappraisal of the film in a wider scope than before, which makes us feel that the criticisms on the film are gradually maturing. A book designed to be a “guide to the British cinema,” published on 25 August 2000 shortly after the 1990s, rates *Trainspotting* among the best ten British films of the 1990s and attempts to institutionalize it. After a long interval, the April 2004 issue of a monthly English language and literature magazine recently carried an article with *Trainspotting* as its theme. This essay, although it is difficult to label it as an academic treatise in terms of strictness, can be thought to surpass most of the essays on *Trainspotting* in Japan until then in that it accurately compares the novel with the film and relates both of them to contemporary British politics, culture and commerce.

As we have seen so far, not so many serious and substantial studies have been made on either the novel or the film version of *Trainspotting* in Japan despite some period of superheated reporting from the mass media (particularly journalism). As concerns the novel, the nature of Welsh’s literature and its linguistic difficulty for the Japanese may be cited as reasons for this, but they are not the only reasons. It seems that, since the academic world of English literature in Japan (especially the Japanese) generally reacted negatively to the *Trainspotting* boom as centered on the film, the novel has also rarely been brought up for discussion, being hit by the backwash. What little interest Japanese academia has in Welsh has already shifted, with very

few exceptions, to his later works. This state of affairs will have to be rectified, for the novel *Trainspotting* and its adaptations are considered to be cultural products and/or social texts well worthy of fully-fledged research from a standpoint of literary and cultural studies. The present treatise is an attempt to redress this situation.

Appendix A:
Chronology of *Trainspotting*-Related Publications and Releases in Japan
(listing those included in this research as the objects of consideration)

- 1996
May
22 Albarn et al. (soundtrack album)
Nov.
10 Ikeda (translation of the novel)
25 M. Watanabe (magazine article)
27 Leland (magazine article)
Moriyama (magazine article)
28 “This Winter” (magazine article)
30 Film Release
Toyoshima et al. (film pamphlet)
Dec.
“Apples,” K. Watanabe and Kawaguchi (magazine articles)
Sato (magazine article)
“*Trainspotting*, the Youth Drug Movie” (magazine article)
3 “*Trainspotting* Is Epoch-Making!” (magazine article)
6 Yodogawa, “*Trainspotting*” (magazine article)
9 Sakaguchi (magazine article)
15 Yodogawa, “Brilliant Crazy Tragedy” and Tanigawa (magazine articles)
1997
Jan.
Sukemasa (magazine article)
“What Is the Youthfulness” (magazine article)
Yanashita (magazine article)
Yazaki (magazine article)
9 “Is *Trainspotting* the Greatest Youth Movement” (magazine article)
Feb.
Takano (magazine article)
Mar.
Wallace (journal article)
Morita (magazine article)
17 Hayami (magazine article)
Apr.
Takada (magazine article)

- 1 “Drug to Read” (magazine article)
10 Ichijo (magazine article)
July “Design Group Tomato” (magazine article)
Aug. Noda (magazine article)
Sept. 18 Underworld et al. (soundtrack album)
Oct. 3 *Trainspotting* (VHS videocassette)
23 Matsuo (magazine article)
Dec. 10 S. Watanabe (magazine article)
1998
Jan. Grove (journal article)
19 Yagyū (magazine article)
Mar. Hayakawa (journal article)
Oct. 25 Ikeda (pocket edition of the novel translation) and Kawakatsu (commentary in the pocket edition)
1999
Feb. 16 Ikeshita and Pollard (screenplay)
Lutz and Pollard (audiocassette of the screenplay)
Apr. 3 *Trainspotting* (DVD)
Oct. Oba (magazine article)
2000
Aug. 25 Irie (book)
Dec. 31 Satsuki (book article)
2002
Feb. 5 “Let’s Read Young Writers’ Books” (magazine article)
2004
Apr. Hattori (magazine article)

Appendix B:
Japanese Translations of Irvine Welsh's Works (excl. *Trainspotting*)

- Welsh, Irvine. *Acid House*. Trans. Makiko Ikeda. Tokyo: Aoyama, 1998. Trans. of *The Acid House* (excluding "A Smart Cunt: A Novella"). London: Cape, 1994.
- . *Ecstasy*. Trans. Makiko Ikeda. Tokyo: Aoyama, 1997. Trans. of *Ecstasy*. London: Cape, 1996.
- . *Filth*. Trans. Sachie Watanabe. Tokyo: Artist House, 1999. Trans. of *Filth*. London: Cape, 1998.
- . "Katorikku no Tsumi (Sukinakuseni) [Catholic Guilt (You Know You Love It)]." Trans. Takafumi Kondo. *Chikubi no Iesusama [Nipple Jesus]*. Trans. Yoshiko Kamei et al. Tokyo: Sony Magazines, 2002. 273-301. Trans. of *Speaking with the Angel* Ed. Nick Hornby. London: Penguin, 2000.
- . *Marabou Stork*. Trans. Atsuko Hayakawa. Tokyo: 3A, 1997. Trans. of *Marabou Stork Nightmares*. London: Cape, 1995.
- . *Smart Cunt*. Trans. Kenji Kazama. Tokyo: Aoyama, 2001. Trans. of "A Smart Cunt: A Novella" and "The Rosewell Incident." London: Cape, 1994 and Edinburgh: Canongate, 1996.
- . *Trainspotting Porno*. Trans. Makiko Ikeda. Tokyo: Artist House, 2003. Trans. of *Porno*. London: Cape, 2002.

Appendix C:
Research Papers on Irvine Welsh in Japan (excl. those cited in the main text)

- Yokota, Yukiko. "Irvine Welsh, *Filth*: Naze Sanadamushi ga Erabaretaka [Why Were Tapeworms Chosen?]." *Hakubutsushi no Bunkagaku [The Cultural Study of a Natural History]*. Ed. Keiichiro Uetsuki. Tokyo: Taka-Yumi, 2003. 281-94.
- . "Shuppatsuten ni Tatsu Sakka, Irvine Welsh: *Marabou Stork* o Chushin ni [Irvine Welsh, the Writer Standing at a Starting Point: Focusing on *Marabou Stork Nightmares*]." *Eibei Bungaku no Genfukei [The Ur-Landscape of English and American Literature]*. Ed. Shinsei Gengo Bunka Kenkyukai. Tokyo: Otowa-Tsurumi, 1999. 187-207.

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- NDL-OPAC*. Kokuritsu Kokkai Toshokan. 12 May 2004 <<http://opac.ndl.go.jp/>>.
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- , comp. *Nihon Shoseki Somokuroku 1994*. Tokyo: Nihon Shoseki Shuppan Kyokai, 1994.
- , comp. *Nihon Shoseki Somokuroku 1995*. Tokyo: Nihon Shoseki Shuppan Kyokai, 1995.
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