

## Struggle between the Body and Words: Reading Yoshimura Man'ichi's Works

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After the Great East Japan Earthquake, an increasing emphasis on patriotism and recovery from the disaster pressurized individuals to sympathize with the local community and excluded those who were disobedient to the pressure. Yoshimura Man'ichi's novel titled *Borādo byō* ボラード病 (Bollard Disease) sharply exposes this kind of peer pressure. The novel is written in the form of a memoir in which a woman recalls her elementary school days. Despite the unembellished narratives, readers will feel that her daily life as she describes it is strange. On the one hand, the community she lives in emphasizes the food safety of local products such as fish and vegetables and vociferously promotes *musubiai* (bonds) between community members. On the other hand, her classmates suddenly die one after the other, and men in business suits keep the inhabitants of the town under constant surveillance.

This story never mentions the Fukushima nuclear power plant accident and radioactive contamination. Nevertheless, we who live after the 3.11 earthquake cannot help relating the fictional town of Kaizuka to post-earthquake Japan, both of which turn their backs to an unpleasant reality and assume an easy optimism. As Itō Seikō asserts, “this story isn't an allegory, but a fact named fiction.” *Borādo byō* definitely expresses a critical perspective toward various contradictions and deceptions in Japan after the 3.11 earthquake.

In this paper, I will particularly focus on the novel's representations of physiological phenomena such as excretion, vomiting, and menstruation. Yoshimura has written many works illustrating the darker side of human nature by intentionally describing the unclean parts of the human body. *Borādo byō* does not shy away from this unflinching examination of the human condition, using descriptions of the narrator's somatic sensation to express her sense of discomfort in the society. Moreover, another novel by him, *Utsu-romantikku* 虚ろまんていく (Empty Romantic), published in 2015, even describes the struggle between the body and words. I am therefore led to interpret his distinctive expression as more than a gratuitous depiction—as an indicative of violent struggles against the social restrictions and suppression of human beings. I consider this paper the first step in investigating the possibility of resistance to post-3.11 Japanese society, even as I examine Yoshimura Man'ichi's representations of distasteful physical sensations and skepticism expressed through words in his novels.