

A Study of Preconceived Opinions and Preferences in Japan-Focused Articles in the *Chronicle of Higher Education* and *Times Higher Education*

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(Abstract)

This report examines the prevalence of preconceived opinions and preferences in coverage on Japan in the *Chronicle of Higher Education* and *Times Higher Education*, the two premier magazine-style media sources for information about higher education around the world. Through both a content analysis and a discourse analysis of coverage over a five-year period from April 16, 2009 to April 15, 2014, it is concluded that, while Japan is not severely under-reported in either publication, both magazines do exhibit preferred topics—often concerning internationalization—and preferred discourses that indicate significant problems with sensationalism and ethnocentrism in the articles.

(論文要旨)

本研究は、高等教育の情報を扱っている世界で主要な週刊誌 *Chronicle of Higher Education* と *Times Higher Education* に掲載された日本関係の記事を分析し、先入観・偏見の入った意見又はテーマの偏りの存在を考察する。2009年4月16日から2014年4月15日の5年の間に掲載された記事を内容分析と談話分析という二つの研究方法を用いながら、両週刊誌には日本関係の情報が少なくないにも関わらず、両誌の日本に関する好みのテーマが見られ、扇

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情のかつ自民族中心的な記事が多いということが本研究で明らかになった。

Key Words: Discourse analysis, content analysis, higher education, magazine

キーワード：談話分析，内容分析，高等教育，週刊誌

Introduction

The media in the United States and the United Kingdom create narratives for the reader to follow. In most cases, these narratives are ideological. According to Fairclough (1995, 14), these ideologies promulgated by the media “are propositions that generally figure as implicit assumptions in texts, which contribute to producing or reproducing unequal relations of power, relations of domination.” These ideologies are in essence preconceived opinions and preferences—that the writer and editor, consciously or not, insert into the text, and that the reader often unconsciously accepts as truth.

This report examines through both content analysis and discourse analysis the *Chronicle of Higher Education* and *Times Higher Education*, the two most popular and prestigious higher education magazines in the world, for preconceived opinions and preferences in their representations of Japan.

Literature Review

Although studies of media representations of Japan in the specialist higher-education weeklies apparently do not exist, there are several academic texts that, in one way or another, tackle some of the same issues that are addressed in this paper. This review will look at two important strands: 1) research into media representation of Japan in the Western press, often utilizing discourse analysis, and 2) research into the “othering” of Eastern cultures by the West, also often with discourse analysis as a significant methodological feature.

Research into Media Representations of Japan in the Western Press:

Some texts analyzing media representations of Japan in the Western press do exist. One particularly relevant text (Littlewood, 1996) traces the historical image of Japan as portrayed in the West. Littlewood (1996, 3) suggests that “the language of paradox has dominated descriptions of Japan,” be it the contrast between ancient traditions and modern technology, or the tension between aestheticism and brutal militarism. Stereotypes are also common, such as the image of Japanese women as geisha-like?submissive, childish, innocent, and yet somehow infused with sensuality. Littlewood (1996, xii) observes, in Western portrayals of Japan, the following:

“the time-honoured images turn out to be true. But in doing so, they obscure all the other things that are true—which is why they are dangerous. They teach us what to look for, and that is what we find; everything else becomes a background blur. We are left with a reality selected for us by our stereotypes.”

Littlewood (1996, 169) also mentions that the Western Japanologists have been no more insightful and helpful than others, leaving their readers with the concept that “the Japanese and their country are peculiarly impenetrable.”

Another book relevant to the topic of this paper is *Cultural Difference, Media Memories* (1997), edited by Phil Hammond. Several articles from various authors in this book examine British media representations of Japan. In the introductory chapter, Hammond (1997, xiii) suggests that “a truism about British media reporting of Japan is that there is not much of it.” However, the reportage that does occur often stresses “Japan’s moral inferiority and cultural difference” (Hammond, 1997, xv).

In the same book, Ben-Ami (1997, 5) asserts that “the notion of culture, as used

by many writers, conceals what is at root a racial conception of Japan.” For Ben-Ami (1997), many Western media representations of Japan have four characteristic shortfalls: 1) lack of historical specificity, 2) culture as a starting point, 3) emphasis on irrationality, and 4) double standards. His key argument is that “too much attention is often given to identifying the distinctive characteristics of Japanese culture, which are often of a superficial nature, rather than explaining why such differences exist” (Ben-Ami, 1997, 20).

In another chapter of the book, Hammond and Stirner (1997) analyze the themes and narratives that appear in British press reports on Japan. The authors find that the British press tends to focus on bizarre but true stories that detail the eccentricity and exoticism of the Japanese. Hammond and Stirner (1997, 90) also discover that “an undercurrent of hostility often runs beneath the stories of strangeness and difference.” There is, furthermore, an unstated sense of moral superiority in the “contrast between enlightened Britain and benighted Japan” (Hammond & Stirner, 1997, 92).

Research into the “Othering” of Eastern Cultures by the West:

The theme of othering runs through the aforementioned works. However, there is probably no work that has done more to forward this concept than *Orientalism* (Said, 2003). In this book, Said discusses the othering practice that is present in Western colonial discourses on the East. The people in the East become generalized, stereotypical masses through images in the Western press. Said (2003, 98) describes the process of othering as constructing “the Orient as being always the same, unchanging, uniform, and radically peculiar object.” Much of his scorn is reserved for the so-called Orientalist who “renders [the Orient’s] mysteries plain for and to the West,” and who is always removed from the society examined (Said, 2003, 21). As Said (1993, 45-46) mentions, the othering process is

problematic:

“When one uses categories like Oriental and Western as both the starting and the end points of analysis, research, public policy, ...the result is usually to polarize the distinction—the Oriental becomes more Oriental, the Westerner more Western—and limit the human encounter between different cultures, traditions, and societies.”

The othering tendency must be considered whenever a foreign press reports on a particular country.

In general, all of the texts mentioned above in the two sections of this literature review have some bearing on the research in our report. None of these texts, however, specifically examine representations of Japan as found in the specialist higher-education weeklies. Our report thus attempts to fill the gaps in this knowledge.

Methodology

This study utilizes a comparative analysis of Japan-related articles in both the *Chronicle of Higher Education* and *Times Higher Education* from the time period of April 16, 2009 to April 15, 2014, a span of five years, in order to reach an understanding of the representation of Japan in the Western press. These two weeklies have been selected for their role as the most authoritative and widely-read magazines on higher education in their respective countries of publication—the United States for the *Chronicle* and the United Kingdom for *Times Higher Ed*. A review of the literature suggests that these two magazines have never before been compared in a study of representations of Japan.

The five-year time span has been selected in order to obtain a broader, mid-term perspective that does not overestimate the effects of a single writer or editor, or a

single newsworthy event, but rather shows some continuity in the amount and type of Japan-related articles that appear in these two magazines.

In the first stage of this study, we employ content analysis, a method that to Rayner, Wall, and Kruger (2001, 70) entails “collecting, collating and analyzing large amounts of information about the content of media products.” Both the *Chronicle* and *Times Higher Ed* have a comprehensive database with a computer search function that yields a list of all articles that use the key word “Japan.” This search engine thus enables a quantitative content analysis of the amount of Japan-related articles over the five-year period for each magazine, as well as the potential for comparison with the amount of articles written about other countries.

In the second stage of this study, the focus is on qualitative rather than quantitative methods, through the use of discourse analysis. According to Newby (2010, 495), discourse analysis is “a cluster of approaches held together by a belief in the significance of communication as a source of insight.”

This study most often employs a form of discourse analysis known as critical discourse analysis, a method that has been popularized by scholars such as Foucault, Habermas, Bourdieu, and Fairclough. In particular, Fairclough (1995, 18) offers a flexible, broad-based approach to analysis of the media, one that regards “a discourse as a social construction of reality.” In analyzing the media, Fairclough (1995, 5) asks three basic questions: how the world is represented, what identities are given to the actors, and what relationships are set up.

In conducting the discourse analysis for our study, not all of the articles in the content analysis are tagged. Only the ones that are clearly Japan-focused, not just Japan-related, are subject to a detailed analysis. Thus, it has been decided that only articles of 100 or more words, with a credited author, and with content at least 25 percent dedicated to Japan are to be selected.

Analysis begins with the headlines for the articles, as part and parcel of the text

itself. Moreover, the particular beliefs of the writers are investigated, and sources quoted in the articles are also subject to investigation. Themes are examined, as well as the implicit themes and hidden narratives. Furthermore, some attention is given to what might be considered the missing narrative, the untold story.

Results

The research results are presented below, beginning with the findings of the content analysis, and then followed by the findings of the discourse analysis.

Content Analysis of the Number of Articles about Select Countries:

Quantitative content analysis of the *Chronicle of Higher Education* and *Times Higher Education* reveals some valuable information.

As evident from the charts above, Japan-related articles are, in relative terms, frequently published in both weeklies. Furthermore, the content analysis suggests relative stability in the number of Japan-related articles published in a one-year period.

In comparison with the reportage on other countries, Japan-related articles are

Chronicle of Higher Education: Number of Articles for Selected Countries

	Database to 4/15/2011	4/16/2011 to 4/15/2013	4/16/2013 to 4/15/2014	Overall Data to 4/15/2014
Japan	1861	152	66	2077
China	2900	389	159	3448
South Korea	760	107	45	912
France	2271	202	89	2562

*Database at <http://www.chronicle.com>

Times Higher Education: Number of Articles for Selected Countries

	Database to 4/15/2011	4/16/2011 to 4/15/2013	4/16/2013 to 4/15/2014	Overall Data to 4/15/2014
Japan	2262	142	60	2464
China	3257	387	191	3835
South Korea	416	64	34	514
France	4485	263	110	4858

*Database at <http://www.timeshighereducation.co.uk>

not conspicuously over-represented or under-represented. The charts above show that the *Chronicle* publishes more China-related and France-related articles than Japan-related ones. The population of China, its geopolitical significance, and its economic dynamism all likely contribute to the extra reportage on China. On the other hand, the amount of France-related articles does seem to at least partly be the effect of a consistent and historical Western bias in the *Chronicle*. France, after all, does have a weaker economy (on most measures) and smaller population than Japan.

The *Times Higher Education* data likewise shows that Japan is still on the higher education radar. In *Times Higher Ed*, China continues to receive more coverage than Japan, and France is the recipient of even more reportage than China. However, France does have significant geographical and historical ties with the UK, so the results here are not particularly surprising.

Content Analysis of Japan-Focused Articles Used in the Discourse Analysis:

However, as mentioned in the methodology section of this paper, not all of the Japan-related articles will be used in the discourse analysis. Of the articles in the content analysis above, only ones that are at least 100 words long, have a credited author, and contain at least 25 percent Japan material have been selected for dis-

course analysis. A further, more detailed content analysis of the selected articles in this smaller sub-sample of Japan-focused articles is also revealing, and helps to support the conclusions reached in the discourse analysis.

The *Chronicle of Higher Education* provides 39 qualifying articles overall for the sub-sample. Only three of these can be identified as being relatively straightforward and neutral reports with no proof of bias.

The 39 articles, if categorized by theme, might be divided as follows: Internationalization, 16 articles; Disaster, 16 articles; War/History, 3 articles; Cultural Japan, 1 article; Women/Gender, 1 article; Economy, 1 article; Lifelong Learning, 1 article (database at <http://www.chronicle.com>). Internationalization is obviously one of the main themes covered in these articles. The *Chronicle*, with its newspaper-like style, also reports extensively on the March 11, 2011 earthquake, tsunami, and resulting nuclear accident that struck the northern part of Japan. It is also notable that the *Chronicle*, in this five-year span, has published few articles on either gender inequities or “quirky” cultural aspects of Japan.

In some years, the *Chronicle* publishes many Japan-focused articles, whereas in other years it neglects to do so. In the year 2009 (from 4/16/2009), two Japan-focused articles were published. In 2010, there were 11 articles, and in 2011 there were 18 articles. In the year 2012, only five were published, and in 2013 only two. In 2014 (through 4/15/2014), only one Japan-focused article was printed (database at <http://www.chronicle.com>). The peak year is 2011, the year of the great disaster, but a significant amount of space was also allotted to Japan-focused articles in 2010.

The *Chronicle* often employs a roster of foreign correspondents to cover higher education issues around the globe, and Japan-focused articles prove to be no exception. Of the 39 articles, 28 were written by David McNeill and two were penned by Ian Wilhelm, both writers with strong ties to the magazine. The remaining nine articles all had different authors. This heavy reliance on one foreign correspondent

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—David McNeill—has both strengths and weaknesses as journalistic policy.

One concern with having one main correspondent covering an entire country's higher education system, no matter how professional that person may be, is a lack of alternative voices. This is unfortunately the case with the *Chronicle*. The main correspondent's personal opinions are strongly reflected in his articles; this is evident in the quite limited list of privileged voices (quoted sources) that he utilizes. As the scholar Van Dijk (1991, 115) notes, "news gathering and quotations are often biased through the choice of sources and the uses of source texts."

McNeill quotes students attending Ochanomizu, Waseda, Tokyo, Ritsumeikan APU, and Sophia universities—all elite institutions. His faculty and administrative sources are culled from the same elite universities. Also, the most privileged voice belongs to Bruce Stronach, dean of Temple University Japan, which is the branch campus of an American institution. Stronach is quoted in nine of the 28 articles by McNeill. Other academics quoted in more than one article include Akiyoshi Yonezawa (Tohoku University professor), Paul Snowden (former dean, School of International Liberal Studies, Waseda University), Nori Morita (dean, School of International Liberal Studies, Waseda University), William Saito (venture capitalist and government adviser), and John Belcher (president and co-CEO, Study Abroad Foundation). These privileged voices are by no means neutral in their opinions. Moreover, McNeill and other writers depend on English-speaking, often non-Japanese, sources.

The *Times Higher Education*, on the other hand, provides 40 articles for detailed analysis. Perhaps 16 of these articles show few or no signs of preconceived opinions and preferences, cultural or otherwise. This figure is substantially higher than the three for the *Chronicle*, but this does not necessarily indicate that *Times Higher Ed* shows fewer signs of preconceived opinions and preferences. Thirteen of the 40 articles are book, movie, or art reviews, which are often quite carefully worded,

strain to avoid cultural bias, and are usually penned by highly trained professional Japan experts.

In contrast to these review articles, 16 of the articles are what could be called opinion pieces. Extreme examples of preconceived opinions and preferences — especially of a cultural type—can be found in these writings.

Divided by theme, the 40 articles can be classified in the following fashion: Internationalization, 16 articles; Cultural Japan, 13 articles; War/History, 4 articles; Women/Gender, 4 articles; Disaster, 2 articles; Economy, 1 article (database at <http://www.timeshighereducation.co.uk>). Similar to the content in the *Chronicle*, internationalization is a main theme. However, *Times Higher Ed* did not publish much about the March 11, 2011 disaster. Moreover, approximately one-third of the articles can be placed in the Cultural Japan category, suggesting a focus on Japan as an exotic, unusual country worthy of cultural explanations for better understanding. *Times Higher Ed* also publishes a significant amount of articles on gender inequities in Japan.

Reportage on Japan shows year-by-year fluctuations that seem to defy analysis. In the year 2009 (from 4/16/2009), only two Japan-focused articles were printed. In 2010, five articles were printed, and in 2011 a total of nine. This increased to 12 in 2012, and decreased slightly to 11 in 2013. In 2014 (through 4/15/2014), only one Japan-focused article was published (database at <http://www.timeshighereducation.co.uk>).

Without a designated foreign correspondent in Japan, *Times Higher Ed* does utilize a more diverse roster of writers than the *Chronicle*, but still relies on just a handful of authors. Susan Burton has penned nine of the 40 articles, and Andrew Adams has contributed five opinion pieces. Michael Fitzpatrick, a freelance writer with ties to the *Japan Times*, has four articles, and several *Times Higher Ed* fulltime reporters have written two or three articles on Japan over the five-year period.

Much like with the *Chronicle*, few of the writers are actually Japanese citizens.

Quite dissimilar to the articles in the *Chronicle*, few privileged voices other than the writers themselves appear in the *Times Higher Education* pieces. With over 70 percent of the articles being either 1) opinion pieces or 2) book, movie, or art reviews, less reliance on quoted sources is to be expected. However, many of the quoted sources actually are the same as in the *Chronicle*, such as Paul Snowden, Go Yoshida, and William Saito. This suggests that privileged voices do exist.

Nonetheless, the *Times Higher Education* articles can be differentiated from the *Chronicle* ones not only by their less frequent usage of privileged voices, but also by their greater emphasis on the nameless source, quite often portrayed as an amoral, odd, or incompetent Japanese person, whose anonymity precisely means that their voice unfortunately cannot be verified.

Discourse Analysis of the *Chronicle of Higher Education*:

A glance at even some of the headlines of Japan-related articles in the *Chronicle* suggests a tendency for hyperbole: “Enrollment Crisis Threatens Japan’s Private Colleges” (McNeill, 2009), “In Bleak Economy, Japanese Students Grow Frustrated With Endless Job Hunt” (McNeill, 2010a), “Japan’s Universities Struggle to Recover from Earthquake and Tsunami” (McNeill, 2011a), “Amid the Devastation, Japan’s Hardest-Hit Colleges Struggle to Move Forward” (McNeill, 2011b). In deconstructing these headlines, it becomes evident that, according to McNeill, not just a problem exists, but an actual crisis, and it does not just exist but threatens. Moreover, although the economy of Japan has not necessarily been robust, it is labeled as bleak, with job hunting not just lengthy but endless. Universities in Japan do not recover from the March 11, 2011 disaster but rather struggle to recover. Gender inequities can only be tackled by major repair. Hyperbole in the headlines makes for good reading, but does little to give the reader a fair, proper understand-

ing of Japanese higher education.

The main correspondent's personal opinion is also obvious in his writings on internationalization. His narrative for internationalization is as follows: Internationalization is good, Japan is slow in internationalizing, and thus further effort is needed. One Japanese project—the Global 30, a government program to internationalize Japanese universities—has been introduced as “off to a wobbly start” (McNeill, 2010b). According to the writer, “the stakes for this island nation are high,” and success of the program is portrayed as almost a necessity (McNeill, 2010b). He further states that “with Japan's population falling and dozens of private colleges facing bankruptcy, the government has little choice but to look beyond the country's borders” (McNeill, 2010b).

In another article, McNeill (2011c) claims that a school year that starts in April “puts the nation's universities out of sync with most of the planet.” In addition, he argues that the debate over switching to an autumn enrollment “has become more pressing as problems in Japan's higher-education sector grow” (McNeill, 2011c). He concludes that the country needs “another round of debate on why Japanese universities are struggling to internationalize—and what can be done to fix it” (McNeill, 2011c). In his narrative, Japanese higher education is broken—even getting worse by the moment—and only more internationalization can save it.

However, there is evidence of a more objective perspective in other articles, particularly those articles that were written by occasional contributors - which account for slightly more than 25 percent of the articles in the sample. The quoted sources in these articles include fewer foreigners, and significantly more government officials. The news is much more straightforward. Ian Wilhelm (2011), for example, writes a relatively positive post-disaster article entitled “Japanese Universities Let Potential Academic Partners Know They're ‘Open for Business,’” quoting several university officials. Andrea Fuller (2010) in “U.S. Administrators Get a Close Look

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at Japan's Education System," describes in relatively positive terms a trip sponsored by the Fulbright International Education Administration Program. Ursula Lindsey (2011), in "An Unlikely Partnership Leads to a Science and Technology University in the Middle East," gives more straightforward news, with quotes from Japanese and Egyptian officials.

On the whole, however, articles in the *Chronicle of Higher Education* provide a negative (and biased) representation of Japan, with a strong writer-induced narrative, and a fairly heavy dose of sensationalism, all bearing a decidedly journalistic style.

Discourse Analysis of *Times Higher Education*:

Does a discourse analysis of the Japan-focused articles in the *Times Higher Education* sample provide similar results? In general, although it is true that some similarities do exist, contrasts with the *Chronicle* articles are also present.

Many of the articles might be classified as opinion pieces, and the texts exhibit examples of othering. As previously mentioned, one tactic used in the *Times Higher Education* is quoting nameless Japanese persons, and attributing to them characteristics that fit stereotypes. For example, in "After the Quake: We Shall Carry On" (Burton, 2011), a fellow teacher mentions that the transport has stopped due to the disaster, and that many teachers and students thus need to stay overnight at the university. Burton writes that the teacher "sounds rather pleased to have the opportunity to keep working in her office." This serves to reinforce the stereotype of worker-bee Japanese. In the same article, this stereotype is advanced further when a university administrator calls on the telephone and says that she is now at the university because the dean gave everyone the day off due to the disaster. This suggests that all Japanese people love working, a notion that reads much like fiction.

In another article (Burton, 2013b), a reductivist stereotype of the Japanese education system is presented. It is claimed that the system “is built on rote learning and memorization of the masters’ works.” From this stereotype, it is asserted that plagiarism “is a Western concept that does not fit well within Asian culture,” and that “referencing one’s sources is not common practice in Japanese academia” (Burton, 2013b).

Students also receive their share of derision. For example, Burton (2013a) quickly infantilizes the Japanese female student with the following:

“During the holidays, our students can get extra credits by studying at our sister college in the US. I interview them before they go. They sidle, giggling, into my office and with little eye contact whisper that their goal is to understand others’ world view and talk with foreigners. When I ask them if they have any concerns about going abroad, they reply that foreign food is ‘high calorie.’ Then they bow and shuffle away to pack their Hello Kitty cases with packet miso soup.”

In this short introductory paragraph, the reader learns that Japanese female students sidle and shuffle, but never walk. They whisper and do not make eye contact. They also have a simplistic view of the world, and of course must have their Hello Kitty suitcases.

The educational system is similarly disparaged: “In Japan’s hierarchical society, education is a given thing to be accepted without question or much enthusiasm. But in the US, our Japanese students gain a different experience of academia” (Burton, 2013a). In these two short sentences, the writer manages to include a base stereotype of Japanese education, and to idealize the Western educational experience. In another article (Burton, 2013c), it is claimed that “Japan is a seniority-based

society and academia is an elite men's club, dominated by graduates of the highest-ranking universities." The writer proceeds to describe a nameless Japanese woman, trained abroad, who was passed over for a tenured position that eventually went to a man. We, the readers, must simply accept the narrative that there was discrimination in the hiring system, and that "no Japanese man wants to be outperformed by a woman, especially those who return to Japan not docile and subservient but 'bossy and opinionated'" (Burton, 2013c). As Hammond and Stirner (1997, 91) mention, however, "the topic of women's inequality in Japan seems to hold an endless fascination for British journalists."

More examples of othering can be seen in articles that bemoan the fact that foreign faculty members are expected to understand Japanese. In an article penned by Adams (2010a), the writer complains about the fact that his Japanese university sends him materials in Japanese. He does admit that no UK university would ever hire a foreign scholar without English ability, but he also insists that "international academia has a common language and it's English" (Adams, 2010a). For this writer, internationalization by definition means that everything should be in English.

In another article, the same author expands on the Internationalization as English model. He suggests that "the Japanese funding agencies, like Japanese universities, need sustained efforts in developing bilingual administration" (Adams, 2010b). This opinion suggests that internationalization should be based on terms established by the United States and United Kingdom.

Articles that mention internationalization frequently provide a narrative similar to the Chronicle, claiming that internationalization is good and Japan needs more. In one article (Fitzpatrick, 2010), it is claimed that "entrenched ideas," "general ambivalence," and "empty slogans" have hindered internationalization efforts, but that it is imperative to internationalize in order to "revive the country's moribund

education system”. While Fitzpatrick provides a generally more neutral and fair analysis than some of the ‘opinion pieces’, he not only is giving an opinion but also is engaging in overstatement, as when he calls the Japanese education system moribund.

Many of the *Times Higher Education* writers reside in Japan, and thus might be considered insiders with special knowledge. However, it has been shown that they sometimes take the extreme Orientalist approach to analysis, with severe cultural biases present, and at times reduce Japan to the essentialist polar opposite of the UK. Some writers also clearly have a narrative to tell and a story to sell. It is worth noting, however, that eight of the 40 articles were written by various in-house *Times Higher Education* reporters. It might be expected that these reporters would possess inadequate knowledge to provide a fair interpretation of Japan or Japanese higher education, but actually their articles show greater sophistication. Taken as a whole, these writers are careful to avoid cultural biases and blanket statements.

In one article, the in-house reporter Jack Grove supplies a more nuanced take on Japan’s internationalization efforts than many other writers in the sample. For example, he provides reasons why internationalization might not be in Japan’s interest, although his general tone still favors internationalization as a goal. He also parses his language, as when he adds the word “supposed” to “the supposed malaise in Japanese universities” (Grove, 2012b). Paul Jump, another *Times Higher Ed* in-house reporter, does a similarly solid job (Jump, 2010), using graphs and figures to support the article, and generously quoting actual Japanese sources. He generally examines structural rather than cultural reasons for a decline in Japanese research output.

In addition, some articles by in-house Times Higher Ed writers provide a more positive interpretation of Japanese higher education. In one article, Reisz (2013) writes about five historical figures from 150 years ago who, after receiving some

British education, returned to Japan and modernized its system. Two other generally positive articles (Jump, 2012; Gibney, 2013) report on UK-Japan academic collaboration, and one (Grove, 2012a) explains the efforts of De Montfort University to attract Japanese international students. Perhaps, since UK universities are involved in these tie-ups, the *Times Higher Ed* writers prefer to portray Japan in a much more positive light for these articles. In general, though, the overall quality of the articles written by the in-house staff suggests that non-Japan specialists, albeit ones with significant expertise on higher education issues, can be relatively fair and culturally sensitive. Orientalists and sensationalizing foreign correspondents, at least in these samples here, do not supply such high quality.

Moreover, the book, movie, and art reviews in the *Times Higher Ed* sample also exhibit relatively few signs of bias or sensationalism. As might be expected, reviewers in the sample have almost always been selected from a professional class of academics, and reviews themselves have a particular format that encourages balanced, fair reportage. The reviewers reject the “Japan as peculiar other” hypothesis, sometimes even explicitly, as when Healy (2012) states that the book he reviews “is not a book about the Other, but about ourselves—Western or Japanese.” As another example, Suter (2012) writes that the author of the book being reviewed dispels several myths and stereotypes that persist about Japan. While it would be possible to find a few cases of possible bias or sensationalism in the reviews, overall these thirteen articles are quite even-handed in their portrayal of Japan.

On the whole, the articles in *Times Higher Education* display fewer but more extreme cases of bias than the articles in the *Chronicle* sample. The *Times Higher Ed* articles tend to provide dubious and negative cultural representations, with a less journalistic style and a greater othering of Japan.

Conclusion

Media studies specialists tend to conclude that “news does not consist of lists of facts or events” (Bignell, 1997, 81). Rather, news is a story or narrative. In fact, it is claimed that “news discourse is an ideological representation of the world because it selects what will be reported and sets the terms of what is significant” (Bignell, 1997, 82).

In this report, it has been shown that coverage of Japan in the *Chronicle of Higher Education and Times Higher Education* articles is also ideological, and often rife with bias. Sometimes this is the bias of journalism, which requires a certain amount of sensationalism to sell its products and a significant amount of simplification to convey “reality” to the reader in, say, 1000 words or less. Oftentimes, however, the bias is even more objectionable, cultural in nature, portraying Japan in unflattering stereotypes that emphasize the otherness of the country.

Is there any way to reduce, or perhaps even eliminate, this bias in reporting? Said (2003, 24) rhetorically queries whether it is possible to “study other cultures and peoples from a libertarian, or a nonrepressive and nonmanipulative, perspective.” This leads to the supposition that bias may be inevitable within the process of producing news, and that it appears even more difficult to erase when discussing foreign cultures.

However, it should be possible with greater awareness to reduce the amount of bias. Journalism is, after all, a profession that prides itself on objectivity and neutrality, a profession that is taught “to strive to eliminate all personal and cultural bias” (De Botton, 2014, 81). Writers and editors must be more careful when producing their representations of reality, especially when foreigners and foreign countries are involved.

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