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Narratives, the Body and the 1964 Tokyo Olympics

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Introduction

In this paper I investigate media representations of the 1964 Tokyo Olympic Games by tracing the stories of three Olympic athletes that were prominent in the mass media at the time. In revisiting them, my aim is to explore the relationship between the spectacles of sporting performances and the narratives that are generated around them. I focus in particular on the ways in which these narratives interact with the production of broader social discourses.

The body in action generally evokes story-telling in viewers. The initial story, the body-text authored by the actor, is a private and unique inscription on his or her body. This body-text is, however, often overlayed by other narratives to generate different meanings. The relationships between such narratives are unsettling, giving evidence to each other while approaching different ends. The spectacles of the performing body exhibited at sporting events always spawn various narratives, through which we can observe aspects of the social and cultural norms of the time. A single performance can be brought to viewers as multiple stories that disseminate fast and far through the electronic media, and some of which have a disempowering effect on the performer. Three stories from the 1964 Tokyo Olympic Games that I introduce in this essay exemplify such instances. All three exhibit traces of the modern discourse of the body – the human body to be disciplined and managed and to be "clean-and-proper", as part of Japan's on-going modernisation project since the Meiji period (1868–1912) – which was revitalised by the mass media during the Tokyo Olympic Games.[1] By re-telling these stories, I wish to critique the ways in which this particular discourse undermined the agency of the performer and assisted the dominant paradigm of postwar Japan – namely, the ethics of hard work (the body as a means) and the belief in moving forward. This essay, therefore, does not have an ambition to present alternative accounts of history, but wishes to further enrich the growing body of critiques of sports, media and 1960s Japan.

The decade after 1960 occupies a special place in my memory, which has, in hindsight, been driven by and to a certain degree shaped my research in literary studies to date. In the

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lead up to 10 October 1964, primary-school children, myself included, were told to learn from Baron de Coubertin, the father of the modern Olympic Games, that the most important thing in life was not to come first, but to take part; and not to have conquered, but to have fought well. Once the Games started, however, the mood of the classroom quickly shifted, and talk was all about medals, heroes and our national strength. In the preceding years preparations for the *Tōkyo orinpikku* had already set in motion rapid changes in the social landscape not only in the metropolitan areas but throughout Japan: the disappearance of rice paddies, the appearance of new roads, new buildings, and in our homes new electronic appliances one after another. It was felt by many that our lives were improving and that achieving a better life was within our reach. The spectacles of the performing body seen during the Games manifested and paraded the ethics of hard work that matched the emotions of the viewers, who felt ready to work harder to rise higher.

The date, 10 October 1964, was thus marked in the minds of many ordinary Japanese as the beginning of Japan's "rise". And this "rise" was imagined communally through the images of athletic bodies, which we watched through the mediation of TV cameras, and through the stories that were brought to us by the media en masse. The narratives of individual athletes were told in such a way that they would draw forth in the viewers a sense of national unity and pride in an autonomous nation. These narratives that accompanied spectacles of athletes' bodies emphasised that they were the embodiment of will-power, self-discipline and self-control. In short these (model) individuals were highlighted as *self*-motivated and *auto*-powered. What is behind the story-telling as such is the inadvertent approval of the systemic operation of power on the private body. By encouraging citizens' self-governance of their own bodies, state power can operate more efficiently and thoroughly without manifesting itself as an oppressive authority.[2] One could say that those who led the government after the war without a fundamental shift in their thinking were thus able to realise their nationalist goals without evoking the word "Emperor". Indeed, as state power went underground or became inconspicuous in the postwar period, it became harder to imagine sources of oppression. Yet, as I attempt to argue in this paper, the private body was not altogether less subjugated than it had been under the militarist regime, and its passivity was intensified as people internalised the project of modernity as their own.

Being fascinated by their newly acquired TV screens, the people tasted the pleasure of being *spectators* whose own bodies were rendered inert and passive. The early 1960s saw the beginning of Japan's consumer society, in which people believed what they saw on the screen to reflect their reality or achievable utopian dreams. Hosting the Olympic Games was the culmination of Japan's postwar economic recovery and at the same time symbolised the recovery of a once-dispersed spirituality, national unity and pride.[3] By watching the smaller figures of Japanese athletes competing well against the much larger physiques of Europeans, Americans and Russians, Japanese audiences could re-imagine Japan as a unified nation-state.[4] The momentum of this, which was imagined as the birth of a renewed nation, was produced through a particular discourse of the body which, as I mentioned, harks back to Japan's modernisation project from the Meiji period.[5] Japan in the 1960s entertained the same ideals that it had before the war, and the effect of the war on the discourse of the body was interruption rather than a shift of paradigm, which I underscore through my stories below. [6]

The electronic board in the main stadium displayed three words in Latin – "*faster, higher and stronger*" – through which one could trace a belief in European Enlightenment

Humanism, representing the limitless potential of mankind. In the Japanese context these words are the very motto for economic recovery, signifying the dominant mode of production for factory workers – "produce *faster, more and better*." As a late-developing capitalist state Japan prioritised the interests of large corporations, and as a result, corporations provided citizens with the time and facilities needed for sporting activities. The benefit for corporations was three-fold: the sense of unity among employees; character-building to become company warriors; and advertising. It was also considered to be effective in keeping at bay the union movement and strikes.[7] The Tokyo Olympic Games took place in this climate and produced much needed folk heroes, and through the images of their bodies the discourse of winning was disseminated to all walks of life, continuing a discourse from 1930s' prewar Japan rather than merely reacting to defeat in the war.

For the purpose of this paper – to revisit 1960s Japan and analyse the dominant discourse of the body – I propose a device through which a critical standpoint should emerge. It is to draw on the articles written by Mishima Yukio (1925–70),[8] who is more pertinent to this topic than most other writers from that era. Mishima was more prolific as a novelist in the 1950s, but it was in the 1960s that he became exceptionally versatile in his work and came to perform the role of cultural guru. His ubiquitous presence in the mass media was such that whenever one turns a stone to research any aspect of that era, one is likely to come across Mishima's name. Although he later gained notoriety for his suicide and came to be regarded as an eccentric, he wrote conservatively, always attuned to the needs of the general public, which earned him a large readership. He frequently published essays for women's magazines and newspapers in addition to his regular contributions to literary magazines; Mishima Yukio was "media-savvy" even by today's standards.[9]

During the Tokyo Olympic Games Mishima took on the role of sports reporter, gaining an official pass to access the various sporting venues. On the one hand, he shared the heightened emotions of the spectators and the TV viewers, and hence his writing reflected the general atmosphere of the time, which serves this discussion effectively. On the other hand, the issue of the human body was his personal and literary interest, which he tackled throughout his life. This places him in a unique and privileged position in this discussion. In 1955, at the age of 30, Mishima began body-building, and by the time of the Tokyo Olympics he had accomplished a masculinist makeover of his body and started to pursue martial arts. The discourse of the body in question which highlights one's willpower to manage and train one's body is known to be immanent in all kinds of martial arts. Mishima internalised this discourse and put it into practice, which became evident in his essays and dialogues published between 1965 and 1969 in *Eirei no koe* [Voice of the spirits], *Taiwa: Nihonjin ron* [A dialogue: On Japanese], *Hagakure nyūmon* [Hagakure for beginners], *Taiyō to tetsu* [*Sun and steel*] and *Bunka bōei ron* [On the defence of our culture]. It should be noted that the full list of his writings exhibits a shift after his involvement in the Olympic Games, and that these books were written in the subsequent years. The ways in which the discourse of the body that Mishima embodied may have precipitated the writer towards his death, however, are beyond the scope of this paper.[10]

The three stories that I tell below arethose of: the women's volleyball team, which won the gold medal; the leader of the male gymnastics team, who performed in spite of injury; and the marathon bronze medallist, who later killed himself, leaving letters of apology behind. I call these stories: 'Managing the woman's body', 'Overcoming pain' and 'Resistance of the body'. As a coda to these three stories, I consider contemporary writer Murakami Haruki (b.1949) in the final section 'Notes on the discourse of *konjō* [will-power]'. Murakami's report on the Sydney Olympic Games (2000) reveals a stark contrast to Mishima's Tokyo Olympics reports, which offers us a small opening to contemplate a possible shift between 1960s and present-day Japan.

Managing the Woman's Body

Mishima Yukio, not yet viewed as an ultranationalist in 1964, wrote enthusiastic newspaper articles as a sports reporter, putting into words the shared emotions of the people at large. One of the highlights Mishima featured was the final match of the women's volleyball competition – the USSR vs Japan – which resulted in a gold medal to Japan. The whole nation was glued to the TV screen and together shed tears of joy at the end of the game. The title of Mishima's article reads '*Kanojo mo naita*, *watashi mo naita: joshi barē*' [Her tears, and my tears, too: the women's volleyball]:[11]

> The volleyball court is like a shiny man-made lawn, spread on the shiny surface of the floor. It shows clearly the reflections of white shoes, red shorts and judges' yellow flags. That is why the members of the Japanese team often take a little towel out of their green shorts and wipe their sweat off the floor in a womanly manner, looking as if they were polishing the floor... Kasai [the team leader and the setter] is a wonderful party host who can tell at a glance which of her guests are finishing their dish and directs her waiters to serve the table immaculately. The Soviet Union team utterly exhausted themselves by receiving such an elaborate banquet.

The Japanese athletes performed their signature innovation, a rolling receive, which often made the floor wet with their sweat. Wiping the floor straight away to avoid slipping on it was the quick solution to the problem in a game in which time mattered. These athletes had been named the "Witches from the East" in Europe two years earlier for their superlative skills in the sport. Volleyball is not about femininity; it is about skill. In Japanese media reports, however, their womanliness – that is, their "Japanese" womanliness – came to the fore, as in Mishima's article above. In other words, the narratives of their sports performances were predetermined to be narratives of virtuous women's self-sacrificial deeds for the nation. [12] Here is my attempt to tell a different story about these athletes.

One of the growing industries in postwar Japan was textile production. In the novel *Kinu to meisatsu* (1964) (*Silk and Insight*) published in the same month as the Olympics, Mishima had written about the conditions of textile workers.[13] This novel depicts the nascent stage of Japanese-style corporate management, in which the capitalist plays the role of a father and manages his workers and production through the use of the family metaphor. The novel anticipates the proliferation of the style of management that later acquired universal renown as the (alleged) key to Japan's so-called "economic miracle". As a part of Japan's modernisation project, which began in the Meiji period, corporations were keen to develop a personnel management system that emphasised harmony by re-imagining the factory as a family-like moral community consisting of a caring employer (as the father) and faithful employees (as his children). This style of management tapped into the minds of ordinary Japanese who were already accustomed to a private life under social constraints; that is, constrained for the greater cause of achieving the unity of the whole. As early as 1913, an American model of modern management was adopted by textile companies such as Kanebō and Nichibō, along with Mitsubishi Electric and Nihon Electric.[14] In the postwar years the same management system, one that was supported by the story of a corporation as a big family, was reintroduced, in order to improve production levels and quality control.

By 1954 large textile and electronics companies in the Tokyo, Osaka and Nagoya districts were systematically recruiting their factory workers from regional Japan, where family farming was not profitable enough to cope with inflation. Rural agricultural communities, recently decimated by the war, were now made increasingly unsustainable by the open market economy, the introduction of machinery, and the frenzy of land development led by the government. Although this trend started as soon as industrialisation began in Japan, its extent in the 1950s and 1960s far surpassed previous eras. The twenty years of running the *shūdan shūshoku* [the mass recruitment transport scheme] trains involved more than 550,000 young people aged either fifteen or eighteen, reaching its peak in 1964. In this year alone 100,000 of them boarded these trains.[15] The *shūdan shūshoku* was organised by a collaboration between local governments, industries, schools and the National Rail, which offered discount group tickets and additional train services. From 1965 onwards more students proceeded to complete their high-school education and consequently became harder to recruit. The scheme eventually ended, with the last train arriving at Tokyo's Ueno Station in 1975. During this period the junior high-school graduate recruits were dubbed the "Golden Eggs", a name that reflects the role that these young people, who were actually 15 year-old child workers, played in the rapid economic growth of postwar Japan.

In March every year a large number of these young girls, freshly graduated from both junior high and high school, were sent in groups to textile firm dormitories where they could choose to continue their education through evening school along with their full-time work.[16] They could also pursue their interest in various sports by joining company teams. Japanese textile companies were always keen to promote their company names through sporting events, which is still the case today. They could recruit young female athletes from their own pool of workers living in the dormitories and give them training over a period of years to make successful athletes. These women were separated from their families, going home only once or twice a year, for the New Year celebration in winter and the *Bon* festival in summer. They were often financially contributing to their family at home. The 1964 women's volleyball gold medal team consisted of such women.[17] Behind the team's success, there were hundreds of similar women who shared the same dream but did not make it to the national team.

The official documentary film of the Tokyo Olympics was directed by Ichikawa Kon.[18] After briefly showing the girls' emotionally charged faces at the winning moment, the camera's gaze comes to rest on the man on the bench, their coach Daimatsu Hirofumi, whose name later circulated throughout Japan as the real hero behind this success. Four years later Daimatsu became a parliamentarian, with the support of the conservative Liberal Democratic Party. A popular narrative that repeatedly appeared in the media was that Coach Daimatsu would never allow the girls to take a day off from their training, even when they were experiencing period pain. He himself writes:

> I can tell when the players have their periods. Their sweat during practice is different from the others': they sweat greasy sweat. Yet, as they keep practising a year or two even with their periods, they will have bodies that can endure the same practice even

> with cramps. They cease to have downtime. In short, whenever they face games, their period no longer hampers their performance.[19]

Daimatsu emphasised his knowledge of the female body and the importance of overcoming it, statements that the popular media faithfully replicated in print.[20] This Spartan coach, whom these girls adored, was narrativised in the media as a trustworthy and insightful man. He was, in a sense, the ideal father that, as a nation, Japan needed, particularly after the head of state lost his political power and spiritual charisma. The famous words of "*oni no Daimatsu*" [Daimatsu, the Demon] as he was affectionately called, are "*damatte, ore ni tsuitekoi*" [Just trust and follow me without question] and "*naseba naru*" [Where there is a will, there is a way], phrases that one can easily relate to the words of the emperor – as in the wartime propaganda – and hence the dominant discourses of the 1930s that effectively mobilised the nation for military expansion. The spectacle of the performance of the women's volleyball team that captured the nation's heart was thus quickly replaced by the words of the Father who managed and controlled the women's bodies. This reveals that the male-dominated sports journalism of the time was sensitive to the clash between an imagined femininity and the masculine properties of sporting performance. It was more appropriate to present these physically and mentally strong women as enduring and dutiful daughters than as heroes, despite their heroic achievement. The women themselves did not articulate their cause at the time (and perhaps do not even now), choosing to speak the same language as their coach. [21]

Following the Olympics, there was a period of volleyball frenzy among schoolgirls throughout Japan. In 1966, I found myself one of just over 100 girls putting their names down for the volleyball club at my junior high school; more than half of the 13 year-old girls were willing to go through mock-Daimatsu training every day after school.[22] In following years came series of *manga*, TV dramas and animations that are called "*supokon-kei*" [or *supōtsu-konjō-kei*] which can be translated as the "willpower-in-sports-genre". Among these, some popular titles shown as TV series are *Sain wa V* (The sign is V, 1968), *Atakku nanbā wan* (Attack no. 1, 1969), *Kyojin no hoshi* (Star of the Giants, 1968), *Ashita no Jō* (Tomorrow's Jo, 1970)and *Ēsu o nerae* (Aim at the ace, 1973).[23] These stories, which featured attractive young athletes, continued to send young viewers monological messages about the importance of endurance, patience, self-sacrifice, faithfulness and teamwork. The essence of the sentiments narrated in such stories, I would add, was not a far cry from that of the prewar militarist discourse.

Overcoming Pain

Ono Takashi, the highly accomplished gymnast and team leader of the entire Japanese Olympic team, had already won gold medals for the horizontal bar at both the Melbourne Olympics (1956) and the Rome Olympics (1960), along with other medals over three Olympics, by the time he was asked to lead the Tokyo Olympic team at the age of 32. There was a phrase that caught on in the media: "*oni ni kanabō, ono ni tetsubō*" which rhymed as "the iron bar for *Oni* [the ogre],[24] and the horizontal bar for Ono". The Japanese Men's Gymnastic Team was aiming at the team gold medal, and Ono's performance on the bar was a crucial element in achieving this. Trying to overcome he handicap anticipated his relatively advanced age would be, Ono overtrained and damaged his right shoulder in the lead up to his horizontal bar performance. The team doctor injected anaesthetic into his shoulder to reduce the pain, which inadvertently made him lose sensation in his whole arm. Ono then exercised vigorously to regain the sensation but with limited success, which resulted in further excruciating pain. He resorted to electric acupuncture and performed his horizontal bar routine despite the pain. While the nation watched Ono's performance, eagerly awaiting news of the team gold medal, reporters and commentators repeatedly reminded the audience of the fact that Ono was performing *despite the pain* for the sake of the team, and the nation. The spectacle of the beautiful performance of Ono's body was overtaken by a narrative about his pain and his willpower. Mishima, viewing this performance from the close distance of the journalists' seating area, wrote:

> The horizontal bar had been cruelly attacking his shoulder for some time. His shoulder then became the enemy of the perfection that he [Ono] was aiming to achieve. It was assaulting him from within, as if it had been a spy who sold his soul to the enemy camp.[25]

Mishima uses military metaphors such as "spy" and "enemy", while he also defines gymnastics as a meeting point of beauty and power, and the kind of sport that is closest to art.

> Of all sports gymnastics approaches art; the more it emphasises the value of the form, the closer it gets to art... If our body is a door with rusty hinges ... the body of gymnasts is like a revolving door. It endlessly vacillates from extreme flexibility to extreme tension and from emptiness to sudden fullness, transporting its power at will. And the performance which requires the highest levels of balance and strength is presented quietly in the most graceful form. At that very moment we are seeing not the human body, but the unworldly form created by human spirits. [26]

Mishima thus saw gymnastics as the site at which man's will-power overcame the body, and in his imagination this was done for the sake of art. But there is another story that contrasts with Mishima's storytelling.

The team leader for the women's gymnastic team was Ono Kiyoko, the wife of Ono Takashi. When given the chance, she could not turn down the opportunity to lead the Olympic team, even though she had given birth to their second child just one year before the Olympics.[27] As her husband approached the horizontal bar to perform with his partially numbed arm, she whispered into his ear, "Please do not die; we have children".[28] If his shoulder should give way, he could have had a fatal fall during his performance. What she meant to tell him was, "Please do not die for the country, but live for me and our children. Be father and husband before being a national hero", words that immediately resonate with "*Kimi shinitamou koto nakare*", Yosano Akiko's widely-loved early poem (1904) in which she tells her brother not to die in the war, and because of which she was accused of disloyalty to the Emperor and the country.[29] Even in the 1960s Ono Kiyoko did not wish to risk any criticism of this kind, and she did not tell her story until much later, in the year 2000. In the same interview she recalled a time when she was asked by her home prefecture to represent the district in *kokutai* [the National Sports Festival] just three months after her first baby was born. She says, "The men who make decisions do not know a woman's body".[30] Ono Kiyoko later had a successful political career with the right-wing faction of the Liberal Democratic Party, and her role included the area of women's health. Incidentally, Ono Kiyoko was one of the female TV demonstrators on *rajio taisō* [radio exercises], the formalised body movements that were practised in unison by schools and communities as the standard exercise regime. This was more than the pursuit of good health; it was also a symbolic act of good citizenship. This was at the time when every TV program was broadcast live; Ono had to get up before 5 am to make the 6 o'clock shows on the NHK, the national broadcaster. The TV viewers did not know while watching her mechanical movements and her impassive face that she was juggling motherhood, university teaching and competitive gymnastics. She was expected to move as precisely as a machine, and the narration that overlayed her performance was an equally mechanical man's voice that gave instructions, "one, two, three and four, now swing your arms widely. . ."

Resistance of the Body

Tsuburaya Kōkichi, bronze medallist in the marathon at the Tokyo Olympics, was found dead in his room in the barracks of the Self-Defence Forces on 9 January 1968. Tsuburaya had slashed his wrists to end his life, leaving behind two letters: a will addressed to his family, and an apology to the Forces. The first was an unusual suicide note that echoed an incantation-like rhythm – a sound reminiscent of pre-modern Japan – and therefore attracted the attention of the writers of modern literature. After giving thanks for each individual dish that he had been served at his parents' home during the New Year holiday, Tsuburaya briefly stated that he could not run any more and wished he were with his parents:

> Dear Father, dear Mother, the *mikka-tororo* soup was so delicious, as were the dried persimmons and *mochi* rice cakes,
> Dear Brother Toshio, dear sister,[31] the *sushi* was so delicious,
> Dear Brother Katsumi, dear sister, the wine and the apples were so delicious,
> Dear Brother Iwao, dear sister, the *shiso* herb rice and the *nanban zuke* pickles were so delicious,
> Dear Brother Kikuzō, dear sister, the grape juice and the Yōmeishu wine were so delicious, and thank you for always helping me with my washing,
> Dear Brother Kōzō, dear sister, thank you for giving me a lift home and back, the *mongō* cuttlefish was so delicious,
> Dear Brother Masao, dear sister, I am so sorry for making you worried,
> Dear Sachio, Hideo, Mikio, Toshiko, Hideko, Ryōsuke, Takahisa, Miyoko, Yukie, Mitsue, Akira, Yoshiyuki, Keiko, Kōei, Yō, Kī, and Masatsugu,[32] please grow up to be good people.
> Father, Mother, your Kōkichi is exhausted and cannot run any more.
> Please forgive him.
> He is sorry for always making you worried, causing you trouble and disturbing your restful minds.
> Your Kōkichi wanted to live at your side.[33]

In "Chōkyori rannā no isho" (1979) (The Will of a Long-Distance Runner), Sawaki Kōtaro describes this text as being written "as if to reawaken native souls which had been sleeping in the villages deep in mountainous areas" unaffected by the modernisation of the land.[34] Kawabata Yasunari, the Nobel Prize laureate, quoted this text in full in his essay soon after Tsuburaya's death, finding its style of writing both beautiful and humbling for a professional writer (Kawabata, 1978, pp. 292-95). Kara Jūrō, the dramatist of the 1960s alternative theatre movement, wrote the play *Koshimaki Osen: Furisode Kaji no maki* (1969) (Osen in her Undergarments: A chapter on the 1657 Edo fire), in which he used this text to wrap around the body to ward off evil.

The second letter was much shorter than Tsuburaya letter to his family; in it, he apologises to his superiors at the Forces' Sports School and wishes Japan success in the Mexico Olympics, which were to take place later in the same year. Kimihara Kenji, his Olympic co-runner, sent a telegraph to his funeral: "May your soul rest in heaven. I swear to raise the red Sun in Mexico to carry out your wishes" (Sawaki, 1979, p. 137), which he later achieved, winning a silver medal. Tsuburaya had joined the Forces after high school and found they suited his personality and upbringing.[35] The Self-Defence Forces were formally established in 1954 and took their original form in 1950, soon after the outbreak of the Korean War, when the United States anticipated a strategic use for Japanese armed forces in the near future. Owing to domestic controversy over their legal status, their ideological ambiguity, and the social antipathy towards their war-provoking image, the survival of the Forces largely depended on how well they performed in recruitment campaigns and overall public relations.[36] The slogan that they used in 1957 was "*ai sareru jieitai*" (The Well-liked Forces), and their primary imperative was to win public approval (Uchiumi, 1993). In that climate, good performance in sporting events was regarded as an immediate duty, or an achievement akin to winning a battle. On 1 April 1964, six months before the Olympics, the principal of the Forces' sports school made a welcoming speech to its new members that included the following:

> In the final battlefield of the Tokyo Olympics you must keep your faith in winning the war as a member of the forces and fight until the last moment, becoming finalists, raising the flag of the rising sun and living up to the expectations of the citizens and the entire membership of the forces. . .[37]

Of the 22 members who participated in the Tokyo Olympics, bronze medallist Tsuburaya and weight-lifting gold medallist Miyake Yoshinobu received the Forces' highest award. But unlike Miyake, whose sporting achievements at his university had earned him an invitation to join the Forces, Tsuburaya was a soldier before he was an athlete. Thereafter, he gave frequent public talks and appearances, often at the expense of his training schedule.[38]

Mishima Yukio gives his own version of a voiceover of Tsuburaya's suicide, narrativising it as an ideal warrior's death and a highly respectable action. He concedes that even though the Olympic Games are the only opportunity for the army to represent the country and demonstrate national strength, ordinary people cannot regard the Olympic Games as an eternal "justice" to die for (Mishima 1989, vol. 3, p. 452). But Tsuburaya's illusion, Mishima claims, comes from the glory that he once experienced at the Olympic Games, and his death should be justified for it:

> It was a suicide brought about by his sensitive, masculine and beautiful pride. . .. He could have lived for many years to come, filling a new role as an instructor for the next generation of athletes or such. . . But, even if he successfully killed his pride and lived on, that would be just his body which survived. . . It is in fact simple; there is only one solution to this. To let one's pride live on, one has to kill the body which is breaking down. . .. And in wrenching the body off his pride, it was necessary for him to give another reason – the responsibilities and the honour of an army officer's pride.[39]

In reading Tsuburaya's will, Mishima, who was also a discerning literary critic, did not hear what many other writers did – the powerful sound of the text that was devoid of the central "I."[40] He instead focused on the justification for the suicide act.

In 1964, contrary to the expectation that a medal would go to Kimihara, it was Tsuburaya who came into the stadium on the last day of the Olympic Games in second place, following a charismatic runner, the Ethiopian Imperial Guard Abebe Bikila. On finishing, Bikila conducted a light cooling down exercise, leaving the spectators in awe that he had any energy left in his thin body. Bikila had had his appendix removed only six weeks before the Games. He mentioned later that any of his colleagues in the Imperial Guard could win the marathon; this audacious comment was given credence when one of his colleagues did win a gold medal in Mexico in 1968. Tsuburaya, on the other hand, was overtaken by another runner during his last lap and received the bronze medal. The expectation for him to run for another Olympics and receive a higher medal was internalised from then on by both Tsuburaya and his supporters, especially those in the Forces. Three years later, after celebrating the New Year at his parents' home, he was as usual running back to his army base along the national route, with his brother driving alongside. To his brother's surprise, Tsuburaya stopped and got into the car after only ten minutes or so, saying he could not run any more. During the holiday, he had been hit with the news that his long-term girlfriend had married another man. Tsuburaya had made the decision to follow the Forces' order – not to get married until winning a medal at the Mexico Olympics – and yet, he had been hampered by a series of injuries that made even competing a diminishing prospect. He was 28 years of age. He had lived, as all athletes do, the conflict of his own body: the body that thrived in performing to its limit, and the body that resisted the will to achieve.

Mishima's article romanticising Tsuburaya's final action as the way of the *samurai* demonstrates the writer's own ideals – the twisted image of masculinity that is closely connected to a will to die. Successfully going through his own physical makeover, Mishima by then held a strong belief in Man's willpower; he was determined not to belong to what Nietzsche called "the priestly class" – men who are introverted, self-reflective and inactive by nature. Instead, he wished to embody the class of the "knightly" which was in his own historical context the *samurai* warrior class.[41] Mishima upheld the way of the samurai, drawing his own warrior codes from *The book of hagakure*.[42] He saw the body as the blank canvas that a man could paint in different colours freely and at will. Tsuburaya's action in terminating his body's functions was thus painted by Mishima as the story of a man who possessed the ultimate masculinity of the *samurai*, which was demonstrated by his will to die. Mishima's response to this incident did not represent the general public's view, but indicated a direction, which the pursuit of the ultimate management of the body that appeared in both Western modernity and the *samurai* codes could lead us to. Within three years from Tsuburaya's death Mishima rushed to his own, performing an antiquated *samurai* death.[43] Despite Mishima's voiceover, it appears that Tsuburaya's "body" in the end resisted his "will to achieve" and payed the price for it.

Notes on the Discourse of *Konjō*/Willpower

Murakami Haruki is one of the most well-read contemporary Japanese novelists outside Japan. He started his writing career when Mishima's ended. One of Murakami's earlier novels, *Hitsuji o meguru bōken* (1982) (A Wild Sheep Chase, 1989) begins with a university campus scene in which the young protagonist and his girlfriend are munching hotdogs and talking about having sex. In the background the muted TV screen is showing Mishima giving a final propaganda speech in his theatrical uniform and with a kamikaze-style headband around his head. Murakami thus gives his own version of a voiceover to Mishima's performance, which highlights the fact that Mishima's ultranationalism fell on deaf ears. Karatani Kōjin makes the observation that the target of Murakami's "chase" in this novel is Mishima, and the novel is an attempt to overcome Mishima and what he represents (Karatani, 1995, p. 122) – namely, a masculinity tightly connected to nationalism, or vice versa.

During the 2000 Sydney Olympic Games Murakami went to Sydney as an Olympics reporter. His reports were published as two volumes entitled *Sydney!* in 2001. An avid long-distance runner himself, Murakami focuses on the marathon. He demonstrates his knowledge of the sport and offers an insider's view of the technicalities of the race. The book begins with a novelistic piece featuring Arimori Yūko and a psychological transcript of her race at the 1996 Atlanta Olympics.

> — The idea of quitting never occurred to her. To complete whatever she started was her way of life. "*Konjō* ? No, it is not the matter of *konjō*. I run for my own self worth. I run, swallowing my own blood. — If I went home without a medal, no one would listen to me. People are only going to listen to those who come home with the goods. And I have a lot to say. For that alone I must get a medal, because people only understand when they are shown something tangible". But at the same time, she really could not care less about medals. "I have twice been thrown into this cruel giant mincing machine called the Olympics, and each time I completed the race, staking my own dignity. Each time was a valuable achievement of my own. I'd never let it be judged by whether or not I got a medal, never by that single flag of the Sun —." Emotions akin to anger were always there deep down in her mind.[44]

Murakami's novelistic treatment of this gold medallist, who did not even participate in the Sydney Games, demonstrates his critical stance on the Olympics, the supposed theme of his book. Through the Arimori story above, he is from the start setting a tone that is anti-nationalist and anti-glorification, pre-empting any expectation of that sort from his readers. Murakami spends time in describing the taste of his breakfast, a meat pie in the stadium, and just like in his novels, he drinks beer after beer. His detailed descriptions of food, transport and other mundane affairs have the effect of diffusing, dispersing and dislocating the "extra-ordinary" space of the Olympic Games. Murakami's reports are devoid of nationalistic sentiment, and he describes female marathon runners without a hint of gender specificity. The contrast Murakami provides with Mishima is intentionally stark. Mishima attempted to capture the extraordinariness of the occasion, peppering his writing with words of grandiosity, celebration and excitement. On the one hand, Mishima's articles conveyed the very emotions that the whole nation was immersed in at the time of the Olympics, and their focus was on the spiritual values such as perseverance and endurance – *konjō* – that the athletes supposedly demonstrated through their performances. Murakami, on the other hand, denounces this term through his description of the internal landscape of a marathon woman. Arimori's monologue represents today's Japan, which does not value self-sacrificial modes of performance in the same way it did in the 1960s. It nevertheless still talks about a pain that cannot be relieved in producing a bodily performance, and about the media who would not give her a chance to express herself without being decorated with a medal. She denounces the concept of *konjō*, but she has one internally. On this point the discourse of the body remains in the same orbit of the narrative of overcoming the resisting body.

Yōko Zetterlund, a professional volleyball player who grew up in Japan and made it to the US national team for the Atlanta Olympics, has a Japanese website for her fans, on which she writes comments on various issues surrounding sports. In one article she wonders why Japan has not performed as well in sporting events in recent years despite the richer environment available for athletes. Admitting that the term *konjō* is outdated, she implies that this is what is missing in the sporting culture of contemporary Japan. The Daimatsu-*esque* spiritual emphasis – a return of *konjō* – is projected onto her catch phrase: "Make Everything Possible: there is no mission that is impossible", the coach's motto of "*naseba naru*" in translation.[45] While sporting events are positive social and cultural practices from the perspectives of the participating individuals and local communities,[46] the discourse of *konjō* as such can mislead those who prefer stories with simple structures. Monological stories are easy to take in as one's own story, since they obviate the complex negotiations one otherwise has to tackle in life. The discourse of *konjō* was one of the grand narratives of postwar Japan that urged people to give up their own story-making and follow the simple and linear story of success. What it suppressed most in the process was the human body as a private locale that harbours happiness and pleasure.

Forty years after the Tokyo Olympics, we keep watching athletes run faster, jump higher and perform more intricate movements than their predecessors ever did. The spectacle of the Japanese athletes' bodies no longer engenders national unity to the same degree as it did in 1964. If what we read in the monologue written by Murakami reflects the reality of an elite woman athlete, she seems in control without being coerced by her male coach, or her country. It tells us that the discourse surrounding the body has shifted to one that is more individualistic. It also seems that the systemic intervention in the woman's body no longer operates in the same manner as it did before. Nevertheless, coercion can occur through the complex workings of an enlarged and empowered mass media that creates voiceover of various narratives, producing discourses that are in favour of certain interest groups. The spectacle of the body attracts viewers, and therefore the human body is still easy prey for media punters. Every four years, Olympic Games continue to remind us of national boundaries and our sense of belonging, which is often more divisive than inclusive. On 31 August 2006 the Governor of Tokyo, Ishihara Shintarō, announced his city's victory over Fukuoka to become Japan's candidate to host 2016 Olympic Games. Ishihara's ultranationalist and racist stance has not been critically discussed and condemned by the media to date.[47] His performance as the public face of the Olympic Games is likely to create a further divide between nations and may revive the sense of sporting games being wars by other means. The narratives accompanying the spectacles of the body will still require our constant attention.

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Notes

1. The body is marginalised in the modernist concept of the subject, in which the self is imagined to be a clean-and-proper unified entity. Julia Kristeva first used these terms to critique the oppression of the symbolic realm in Lacanian psychoanalysis in *Powers of Horror* (1982). Michel Foucault's critique of the modern nation-state demonstrates the same concept in *The Birth of the Clinic* (1994) and *Discipline and Punish* (1995). This approach to the body was consistent with the pre-existing *samurai* code of ethics that was popularised in support of the militarist cause in the mid-Meiji period. See Yoshikuni Igarashi, *Bodies of Memory: Narratives of war in postwar Japanese culture, 1945–70* (2000), which effectively demonstrates a Foucauldian reading of the body in postwar Japan. Japanese names are given surname first throughout this essay, unless they are authors of English publications such as Igarashi.
2. The state-citizens equation that I use here can be replaced by the corporation-workers relationship in the context of postwar Japan. The difficulty in locating power in this period is compounded by the tight collaboration between the state and large corporations.
3. The modern Olympic Games were initially held as the opening performance of the World Exposition, which functioned as a vehicle for imperialist projects (Yoshimi, 1992; 1999; 2002; and Tomotsune, 1995).
4. Prior to the Tokyo Olympics, television had already created a national hero – a professional wrestler called Rikidōzan (1924–63) – who, using the "native" technique of *karate-choppu*, always defeated American wrestlers at the end of the match. He was of Korean descent, and started his sporting career as a *sumō* wrestler in Japan.
5. For historical accounts of the ways in which sports were incorporated into rising militarism in prewar Japan, see Kimura (1978, pp. 117–78).
6. This view is underscored by recent research, such as work by Yoshimi Shun'ya (1992; 1999; 2002).
7. It has been pointed out that the development of sporting activities went in parallel with the country's industrialisation process; hence the absence of club-based civil sports was notable until recently (Todoroki, 1993, pp. 13-32)
8. Among the novels written by Mishima Yukio are *Kamen no kokuhaku* (1949) (Confessions of a mask), *Kinkakuji* (1956) (The temple of the golden pavilion) and the four volumes of *Hōjō no umi* (1965–71) (The sea of fertility).
9. Mishima appeared in six films as an actor. Twenty-one of his novels have been made into films, and *Shiosai*(1954) (The sound of waves) was remade five times over twenty years. His playfully written articles such as *Fudōtoku kyōiku kōza* (1958–59) (Unethical educational lectures, Mishima 1989, vol. 3, pp. 15–222) and *Han teijo daigaku* (1966) (Lessons not to become a faithful wife) were originally serialised in popular magazines.
10. See Otomo, '"The way of the samurai": *Ghost Dog*, Mishima, and modernity's *Other*' (2000) for further discussion on this point.
11. Mishima (1989, vol. 4, pp. 347–48). The original article was published in *Hōchi shinbun*, 24 October 1964. English translation of Japanese quotations is mine throughout.
12. Igarashi describes the ways in which the nation-wide expectation for the team to compete in the Tokyo Olympic Games altered their plan to retire after winning the world championship in 1962. See 'Nostalgia for Bodies in Pain' (Igarashi, 2000, pp. 155–63).
13. There are well-publicised non-fiction works such as Hosoi Wakizō's *Jokō aishi* (1925) and Yamamoto Shigemi's *Aa Nomugitōge* (1968) which documented the hard conditions of young textile workers in the Meiji-Taisho periods. Mishima's fiction focused more on the family rhetoric used by the company owner and the innocent youths involved in the early Showa period.
14. Frederick W. Taylor's *The Principles of Scientific Management* (1911) was translated into Japanese as early as 1912, and its methodology was modified and promoted through a governmental institution. The Industrial Efficiency Research Institute was set up in 1921 to promote the concept. See William Tsutsui's *Manufacturing Ideology* (1998).
15. I owe this information to 'Nanmin no sengoshi: shūdan shūshoku, dekasegi and rettō no fuchi' (Sunouchi, 2001, pp.195-218).
16. Although there were also a large number of boys who were recruited in this way, they were considered to be lifetime employees, while girls were there for a limited period and regularly replaced by a fresh intake.

17. The Olympic team was based on Nichibō Kaizuka (Nihon Bōseki Kōgyō, later called Yunichika), which is now owned by Tōre (Tōkyō Reiyon). The members were Kasai Masae, Miyamoto Emiko, Yada Kinuko, Handa Yuriko, Matsumura Yoshiko, Isobe Sada, Matsumura Masami, Shinozaki Yōko, Sasaki Setsuko, Fujimoto Yūko, Kondō Masako and Shibuki Ayano.
18. *Tōkyo orinpikku*, 1965, Tōkyo orinpikku eiga kyōkai.
19. The extract from Daimatsu's *Nasebanaru* (1964) (When there is a will, there is a way) is translated and cited by Igarashi in *Bodies of Memory*, 2000, p. 157.
20. Igarashi makes a fascinating connection between Daimatsu's wartime experience as a POW and his philosophy of winning and managing women's bodies (2000, pp. 155–63).
21. Looking back, team leader Kasai recently mentioned that girls owed everything to Coach Daimatsu, who loved them and taught them so much through the hardest training. (http://www.joc.or.jp/stories/tokyo/20041021_tokyo.html)
22. Extra-curricular sporting activity is called *bukatsudō* in Japanese. Peter Cave points out the changing culture of school sports in '*Bukatsudō*: The educational role of Japanese school clubs' (2004).
23. Saitō Tamaki (2003, pp. 153-59 and appendix). Saitō points out that the *supokon* genre survives through the 1980s but as a parody of the earlier works, found for example in *Toppu o nerae* (1988) which is an obvious parody of *Ēsu o nerae*.
24. The *oni*, a powerful creature of Japanese folk mythology, is always represented bearing an iron bar.
25. Mishima (1989, vol. 4, p. 346), originally published in *Mainichi shinbun*, 21 October 1964.
26. Ibid (pp.345–346).
27. The couple convey in an interview just before the Games that they are longing to have a normal family life with their children. (See 'Chanoma no kin medaru' in *Bungei shunjū ni miru supōtsu showa shi* vol. 2, pp. 330–35).
28. 'Ase to namida to egao no yonjū-ni nen' (Forty-two years of sweat, tears and smiles), *Shūkan Asahi*, 7 July 2000.
29. The poem was written as a letter to her younger brother, who was a conscript in the Russo-Japanese War (1904–05) in which 60,000 young soldiers died in less than two years.
30. Op. cit., 'Ase to namida to egao no yonjū-ni nen'.
31. All nameless "sisters" are his sisters-in-law.
32. These are the names of his nephews and nieces.
33. The original Japanese text can be found on the web, or in print (Kawabata, 1978, pp. 292–93; Sawaki, 1979, p. 100). My translation fails to convey the starkly detached tone which runs through this poem (as I would prefer to call it); even in the last sentence the poet refers to himself in the third person.
34. Sawaki (1979, p. 101). For the biography of Tsuburaya, see also Hashimato Katsuhiko (1999).
35. Ibid. Sawaki describes Tsuburaya's good relationship with his father, who was a man of principles and a patriarch who both loved his children and raised them in a highly disciplined manner.
36. Their public relations strategies must have been effective, since my childhood memory of the Self Defence Forces in my hometown is a warm and happy one: the big fair of their camp Open Day; my excitement at climbing on top of a tank; the reassuring presence of strong but friendly men in uniform.
37. Uchiumi (1993, p. 272), the extract from *Taiiku gakkō shi* (Jieitai taiiku gakkō, 1964, p. 93).
38. The media in general talked of public expectations as the cause of Tsuburaya's suicide. Uchiumi and others, however, emphasise that the nature of the Self-Defence Forces was the key factor (Uchiumi, 1993; Nagaoka, 1977; Aoyama, 1980; Kawamoto, 1979).
39. Mishima (1989, vol. 3, p. 452).
40. Modern Japanese literature strove to construct the solid presence of the speaking "I", a project that Mishima was part of. At the time of Tsuburaya's suicide, however, Mishima was departing from that project, as demonstrated in *Hōjō no umi* (The sea of fertility).
41. The quoted terms are Nietzschean terms. See *On the Genealogy of Morals* (Nietzsche, 1989, First essay, sections 6 and 7). For Mishima's understanding of Nietzsche see Seikai Ken (1992) and Roy Starrs (1994).
42. Mishima (1989, vol.1, pp. 688–734). The English translation is found in *The samurai ethic and modern Japan: Yukio Mishima and Hagakure* (1992). *The book of hagakure* was written in the eighteenth century by Yamamoto Tsunetomo and read only by his associates in a region away from the central Edo government. It was revived and taken seriously during Japan's modernisation in the Meiji period as representing a value system peculiar to Japan.
43. Henry Scott-stokes (1975) gives a detailed description of Mishima's suicide. For a more literary interpretation of Mishima, see John Nathan (1974), and the film by Paul Schrader (1985). It goes

without saying that in Japanese there books are constantly being written on Mishima and his works, one of the most recent being Dōmoto Masaki's memoir (2005), which openly discusses Mishima's sexuality and its relevance to his final action.

44. Murakami (2004, pp. 24–25).
45. The original article on *konjō* that included her criticism of Japanese athletes has been removed from the current website http://www.yoko2.com, which may also reveal the view of the general public. There are, however, various articles found on this website that convey similar sentiments, and her motto remains the same. Incidentally, Zetterlund was coached by her mother, who was herself once trained by Coach Daimatsu, over seven years.
46. There are numerous positive stories of communal involvement in sports in contemporary Japan. See for example, Light and Yasaki's account of how the J. League has constructed local identity (2000).
47. One example of Ishihara's racially derogatory remarks is cited by John Brinsley and Keiichi Yamamura (9 February 2007):

> [Roppongi] is now virtually a foreign neighborhood. Africans – I don't mean African-Americans – who don't speak English are there doing who knows what — This is leading to new forms of crime such as car theft," he [Ishihara] said. "We should be letting in people who are intelligent". (http://www.bloomberg.com/apps/news?pid = newsarchive&sid = avIXVI1vqIKo)

See also the controversial article written by Ishihara (*Sankei shinbun*, 8 May 2001). Morisu Hiroshi and Kan Sanjun point out the Japanese media's apparent inability to critique Ishihara's racism in *Nasionarizumu no kokufuku* (2002, pp. 22–23).

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