

The Multiplicity of Identity

~ “Persona” by Yoko Tawada and the Hybridity of Cultures ~

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Abstract

In this essay, the multiple aspect of cultural identity is evaluated. In today's globalized society, identity is one of the themes which people face difficulty with. The identity has become much more complicated since people have more mobility and started to share and experience diverse cultures. Each person holds more than one cultural or ethnic background, which contradicts with conventional understanding of mono identity. Especially, Japan has been believed as a homogeneous society where people have strong beliefs of identical ethnical backgrounds among each other. However, like Yoko Tawada, there are some Japanese who realize the possibility of diverse and heterogeneous characteristics within Japanese society. With regard to the identity theory stated by Erving Goffman, I will be analyzing how identity is determined in the novel "Persona" by Yoko Tawada. I believe that this analysis of identity within the novel provides us with an understanding of people who hold multicultural backgrounds and also the response of society towards such people. It will help us to realize the possibility of multiple aspects of our own identities and lead us to accept and transform into a much more diverse society.

1. Introduction

Identity is one of the themes I've been thinking about throughout my lifetime. My background as being Japanese, but grown up in Germany made me question "who I actually am." With two different characteristics within myself, I first had two separate identities which I believed to be Japanese and German. However, those two identities did not really fit into neither the Japanese society or German society because each of them had some kind of "lack" which could be caused due to appearance, language, behavior, or way of thinking. Then I encountered foreign students, other than Japanese who had multicultural backgrounds. From my sight, they seemed to have a united identity of different cultures and experiences. I realized that I do not have to consider my Japanese and German identities separately, but rather they are part of my identity which creates a single "I". Although I recognize such hybridity of identity, still it is difficult to be accepted by other social members, especially by the mainstream. Yoko Tawada, in her novel, tries to argue such multicultural aspects of identity with the struggle of characters processing their distinctive personalities. "Persona" and the experience of Michiko in Hamburg reflect my experience in Germany that I was seen differently due to my Asian appearance and considered as returnee who lacked Japanese common knowledge in Japanese society.

The theme of the essay is the multiplicity of cultural identity from the perspective of the hybridity of cultures. To evaluate the theme, I will use the novel "Persona" by Yoko Tawada and analyze from the angle of "how the cultural identity is defined/determined/distinguished in the novel." To answer this research question, I will break down my thesis into three pieces. First, I will state the former research on identity theory and explain how and what kind of identity is constructed. Secondly, I will discuss different categorizations of people used in the novel. Lastly, I will analyze the construction and deconstruction of characters' identities in comparison with identity theory and categorization. By answering those three topics, I will be able to answer what Persona is and how Persona plays a role in one's identity.

2. Summary of Novel, *Persona*

The short story “*Perusona*” (or “*Persona*”) was written in Japanese by Yoko Tawada in 1992. The story revolves around one Japanese woman named Michiko, who lives in Hamburg, Germany with her younger brother Kazuo. The story begins with one incident between a Korean male nurse and a German female patient at the mental hospital. With this incident, Michiko started to feel the strength of her “East-Asian” face which is described as an “emotionless” face. Michiko is aroused by some unknown force to travel to the East, but she could not find anything. Despite Michiko’s fear of losing her face, other Japanese characters such as Kazuo, Japanese wives, and Ayumi, a Japanese girl face no struggle with their faces and ethnicity although they are part of the minority group in German society. Michiko’s anxiety further expands with exclusion in the Japanese community because of her uncovered face and poor Japanese language. The story ends with Michiko floating around the town trying to find a Chinese restaurant with Noh-Mask on her face.

3. Yoko Tawada

3.1 Biography

Yoko Tawada is a Japanese female writer who writes both in German and Japanese. She was born in Tokyo in 1960. Her father was a translator and bookseller. Her first visit to Germany was in 1979 when she made the trip by the Trans-Siberian Railway. She studied Russian literature at Waseda University. She first moved to Germany in 1982 after graduating from Waseda University and worked in the book distribution company in Hamburg. She started studying contemporary German literature at Hamburg University and graduated in 1990. She continued her studies at the University of Zurich and received PhD in German literature in 2000. She has been living in Berlin since 2006 (“National Book Foundation”, 2018).

She wrote her first novel at the age of 12. Her career as a writer began with the publication of “*Nur da wo du bist da ist nichts*”, or “*Anata no iru tokoro dake nani mo nai*” in 1987. This is the collection of the poem published in German and Japanese bilingual edition. She has published her works in different text types including stories,

novels, poems, plays, essays. She has won various literary prizes in Japan, Germany and the US, including the Akutagawa Prize, the Tanizaki Prize, the Kleist Prize, the Goethe Medal and a National Book Award (“New Directions Publishing”, 2011).

3.2 Main Theme of Tawada’s literature

3.2.1 Exophony

Tawada writes in both German and Japanese. Many of her works revolve around travel and the space between cultures, or what she calls “Zwischenraum.” With such themes, she tries to explore the nature of language, the constitution of subjectivity, and the markers of identity (Slaymaker, 2007). She describes her literature as “exophony” literature rather than migrant literature. Migrant literature is literature when the author writes in a local language which they moved to. It contains the dichotomy of “us”, “local” and “other”, “foreign”. Exophony literature represents the state of being outside of the mother tongue. For Tawada, writing in German does not only mean writing in a “foreign” language but also gives her a new possibility of Japanese and German by experiencing the difference and connection between those languages. Arens (as cited in Slaymaker, 2007) further explains that Tawada’s works radicalize the instance of intercultural dialogue, rare between the East and the West and they provide the questions on conventional concept of literature and break ordinary use of language which confront the reader with critical perspective on language and culture.

3.2.2 The relationship between words (language) and reality

What is the significance of being outside of the mother tongue and exploring of new perspective on language? Tawada argues that language constructs how we perceive the world. We could not travel without our own body and mother tongue (or Japanese in Tawada’s case). Although we sometimes forget a specific word or expression in our mother tongue, how we feel about the world is based on our mother tongue. For example, in Japanese the expression “熱い水” (hot water) is not acceptable because the word “水” contains the meaning of cold as well. Instead, there is a specific word “お湯” in Japanese to describe hot water (Levy, 2003). In this way we have learned the system of the world and social standards through the mother tongue and more importantly the taboos (Tawada, 2003). Writing/thinking outside of the mother tongue removes the

limitation of the imagination and new ideas created by the mother tongue. Therefore, it is important, for Tawada, to write in both German and Japanese to expand the possibility of ideas, and further literature and languages.

3.2.3 Floating between cultural boundaries (Zwischenraum)

To explore the new possibilities of languages, she emphasizes the experience in *Zwischenraum*. She explains, “I am not interested in mastering many languages. Rather, I think the gap between two languages is important. I want to be a writer who seeks and falls into the “poetic” valley between language A and language B.” (Tawada, 2003). By writing in German, she distances herself from the Japanese and creates a space between Japanese and German. Her experience of losing Japanese once as she started to write in Germany and regaining Japanese through the translation of German made her realize this in-between space of languages (Kanda & Takahashi, 2012). Furthermore, she intends to stay in-between space of Japanese and German without going deep (or being fluent/mastering) into the two languages, so that she can maintain a distanced view to explore the unknown potential of languages. By doing so, she can continuously be informed, remove, and reform the hybridity of language. As Homi Bhabha (as cited in Slaymaker, 2007) evaluates, such in-between spaces provide the terrain for new signs of identity.

3.2.4 Multiplicity of Identity

However, what is exactly the new identity that Tawada tries to portray? She believes in the unity of a language – Japanese and German – and identity. She suggests that if there is an “actual self” (ほんとの自分), then that is the self that speaks/thinks/dreams in multiple languages (Slaymaker, 2007). She describes with an example of the web that the acquisition of a new language is like the complexion of web code by incorporating new traits. Through her stories and characters, she tries to insist on the misguidance of the assumption that a person holds only a single language in identity. Her characters are made regardless of national identity, origin, or language.

In today’s globalized society, such identity which holds multiracial/ethnic/lingual identity becomes much more common compared to the past. However, we are

compelled to show identification with one nation, which still contains strong insistence on polarization. Tawada's writings notify the readers own the multiplicity of their identities. She dares to write in a "foreign" language to find a linguistic and cultural "mixed blood" space by crossing the boundaries of language. The experience of crossing the border within ourselves and immigrating to a nation and mother tongue allows us to gain a heterogenous society that is freed from fixed and homogenous "place" and "culture" (Yamade, 2010).

4. Identity Theory

Goffman (1963) explains that there are three types of identities, which are personal identity, social identity, and ego identity. Personal identity refers to the individual's unique identity which cannot be applied to other people. This is based on the idea that no one shares the same experience from the same events, social interactions, or the cultures or worlds surrounding them. Personal identity is a construction of biographic, social, cultural, and personal elements that make a person a relatively stable distinctive character. Social identity is constructed through the process of acceptance of one's identity as true or authentic by others. The person can meet certain criteria or social expectations of culture or group, which allows them to refer to themselves (or their identities) as this or that "type" of person. The ego identity, on the other hand, is the most intimate subjective identity among these three types of identities. Unlike personal identity, the ego identity is independent of collectivity, a particular value of reference group and other social members (Hitlin, 2003). Williams (2000) explains its central characteristic as a selection of personality amongst a variety of attributes, which the person feels coherent and consistent with what to be concerned as true of themselves regardless of time and location. Ego identity is continuous and coherent in one's self-image and social relations.

Goffman (1959,1961) explains a process for the construction of identity (especially social identity), which he names "identity negotiation." This is the process in which people make agreements to "who is who" in the relationship. This agreement establishes the expectation for other people's faithful attitudes towards the identity (or the role)

created in the process of determining who is who. In contrast to Goffman's process of "who is who", McCall (2003) points to the "who is not" process which she defines as the identification process through disidentifying with other social groups that differ from the person. McGuire (1987) gives an example with children at school. They are unlikely to mention their racial characteristic when they are asked to answer "who they are." However, when they are asked "who they are not", then they highly tend to mention other ethnic minority groups. Identity construction goes through those two identifying and disidentifying processes. "place" and "culture" (Yamada, 2010).

5. Analysis

5.1 Mask and Face

The main key of the novel is the face which is tied to the image of a specific ethnicity. Asians including Michiko and Seonryon, are seen as an emotionless race with no facial expression. Among Asians, especially Japanese people like Kazuo or Ms.Sada's family and friends, there is also prejudice against other Asians and their faces. Michiko is swayed by this image and prejudice which evaluate her Asian face and they even influence her identity. At the end of the story, Michiko walks the street with a Noh-mask, which is a prop of Japanese traditional play. And she feels that she is freed from a face and she can walk the street with confidence once again. She explains that her body shrunken and overwhelmed by her face was freed and it became much larger and the Noh-mask reveals the things that Michiko could not put into words as facial expressions.

Suzuki (2011) explains that the face and the expression attached to the face create the "culture" that distinguishes the inside (仲間) and outside (よそ者). People who live in the same dominion(領土) can read the cultural code through the facial expressions of each other. However, the outsider who has a different cultural code is unable to read the meaning, which reflects on the claim that Asians have an emotionless face from the perspective of Germans because Asians and Germans have different cultural codes. However, the face is not naturally born to define a specific ethnicity which is illustrated in Ayumi's comment on Michiko's face as a Vietnamese-like face

without make-up. To obtain a specific “ethnicity”, people need the “transformer” (変圧器) like wearing make-up to “become” Japanese in Michiko’s case. Suzuki describes that when people live inside the dominion, then the face and the person’s personality equals the same identity of a specific ethnicity. However, in Michiko’s case, her personality as a hybrid of Japanese and German does not equal her Asian (or Japanese) face, which requires her transformer (or make-up) to appeal to her Japanese-ness.

However, the Noh mask, which appeared to be the most Japanese-like face, does not work as a transformer-like make-up. Although the Noh-mask has a Japanese face, the mask is not taken into the “daily” lives, but only in the “play” which is not tied to the cultural code. So, people just watch Michiko with a Noh-mask as someone wearing a mask, but not as Japanese or any other ethnicity because her actual face is covered. Goffman (1959) claims that social interaction is linked to the theatre in which people play different roles in everyday life. People are conscious of others, like actors on the stage are conscious of the gaze of the audience and their certain expectations of the characters in the play. But once the actors are backstage, they can relax from the role or identity that they play on the stage and can be themselves. Michiko by wearing the Noh mask, could be freed from the role attached to her face. It implies Michiko’s separation from the image and prejudice of Asian faces tied to the specific cultural code. This separation from the specific image of the Asian face allows Michiko to gain the body with “powerful words” and confidence unlike wearing make-up. Tawada (2007) insists that the Noh mask is not the tool to cover up the “real face”, but it is like the neck of a cut-off dead person who tries to regain a lost body. Noh-mask leads Michiko to regain the lost body which is covered under the pressure of her Asian face (again tied to the image and prejudice).

5.2 Places defining identities

5.2.1 Floating Europe

In the story, Michiko wanders around the town from Japanese districts to “floating Europe” where many refugees from East Europe and Africa live. But in each place, she is exposed to the gaze of the group of people who Michiko does not belong to. She wanders the town with the excuse of finding the transformer for Ms.Sada which

no one but Michiko cares about. However, Michiko knew that she had somewhere she wanted to go where she did not know exactly.

Tawada (as cited in Numano, 2013) explains two different powers, centrifugal force and centripetal force. Centrifugal power is a force that attracts a person to the wider world outside when a person experiences persecution which causes them to dislike the original place (hometown). Centripetal force, on the other hand, is the power to be attached more and more to the lost mother tongue, or a hometown while living outside of the hometown. Michiko's journey through the town illustrates exactly these forces as Michiko started to confuse her Japanese identity, she became attracted to the area that she had been avoiding. This also links with one of the geographical identities stated by Chandler and Munda (2014), which is the sense of attachment to a specific city, region, or country. Michiko is attracted to the east area of the town, where she believes that she can find somewhere she really wants to go. However, after she visited floating Europe, she was in a hurry to come back to her house and become Japanese once again. Yet, she still feels like being outsider within the Japanese community. Throughout her journey in the town, she was unable to find the place where she felt attached. As Tawada claims, the exile (亡命者) like Michiko has a destiny to live in the space between such centrifugal force and centripetal force, which leads to a loss of attachment to specific places.

5.2.2 Mental hospital

In the novel, the portrayal of the mental hospital has been written several times. The novel starts with the story of a female patient, Renaté in a mental hospital who falsely accuses a Korean male nurse, Seonryon of misconducting sexual assault. At first, no one believed Renaté because she always spread a fake rumor or "lie" about people. However, in the hospital meeting, people were convinced that Asians do not have facial expressions so they might hide their cruelty under their face. The portrayal of the mental institution is followed by the episode of "Natural Selection" which is an educational film made during World War II. In this film, the "good" genes and "bad" genes are illustrated in contrast. The scene first shows the well-nurtured kids with blond hair, followed by the depiction of mental patients tied to the bed. The story continues with

Katrina asking Michiko whether the Japanese also killed the mental patients during the war.

Tachibana (as cited in Slaymaker, 2007) claims that through this depiction of the mental hospital Tawada tries to demonstrate the complexity of the biases found in the ethnocentric minds of all groups which cannot be described by simple dichotomy like East versus West or being normal versus mentally ill. In the first portrayal of the mental hospital, Seonryon, or more generally Asian is the victim and Renaté (who is mentally ill and German) is the victimizer. However, in the second scene, such a mental patient was a victim of German and Japanese (or Asian) which shows the distinction between a “normal” person and a “mentally ill” person. By showing the replacement of the victim-victimizer relationship with different situations, Tawada insists on the different categorization of people - and the ethnocentric minds attached to each group - which suggests the complexity of the identification of a person.

But the reference to the mental hospital does not end here. It further continues and ends with the scene where Michiko flows around the town with Noh's mask on her face. People (German locals and a clerk in Chinatown) tried to avoid looking at her straight and she heard the voice whispering “the mental hospital...” towards her. Michiko is now an unidentifiable figure in a sense of ethnicity, which only allows people (again German locals and clerks in Chinatown) to categorize her as a mental patient with no specific ethnical identity attached to it. On the other hand, Michiko recognizes herself as liberated from being Asian by showing her face to the public and feels that she is even more confident in being who she is. Michiko could only become her real self by being mentally ill at the same time. Through this, Tawada suggests how people lose their real identities by being categorized into some ethnic identity through their faces and how it is difficult to escape such images tied to their faces.

5.3 The Characters and Their Identities

5.3.1 Michiko

Michiko is the protagonist of this novel. She is Japanese and moved to Germany with her younger brother, Kazuo. In the novel, she is portrayed as a character who

confuses her racial/ethnic identity while the other characters seem to have a stable identity. She is “miscategorized” by German locals and even by Japanese people. When she walked pass the refugee camp which is located in the districts she has been avoiding, she was asked whether she was from Vietnam. Another man asked whether she was Korean. She also heard voices saying she was Thai or she is Filipino. But no one mentioned her as Japanese and she claimed herself as Japanese. Her appearance is not recognizable as Japanese until she insists she is Japanese. However, her face bare of makeup hinders her from fitting into the “pure” Japanese community as well that she is regarded as Vietnamese-like by Ayumi, who is a teenage Japanese girl living in a Japanese district. Furthermore, her mother tongue makes her question herself. At Ms. Sada’s house, when she tried to tell the truth she felt that her Japanese became awkward despite being the language of the country where she was born and raised, and the language that gave birth to what she thought of as her identity. As Benjamin Baez (as cited in F.A. Ibrahim, 2016) explains, the adaptation to a new environment, which in Michiko’s case is German society, could cause a loss of one’s language, which leads to the loss of intimacy associated with the original cultures. Michiko’s inability to speak Japanese in the Japanese community indicates her loss of connection with her origin. This experience made Michiko question her “Japanese” identity.

Tachibana (as cited in Slaymaker, 2007) explains Michiko’s state by using the theory of two dimensions of self, “I” and “me” by George H. Mead. According to Mead (1934), the “me,” is a “habitual individual, while the “I,” is the principle of action and impulse that is associated with society. Both her “I” and “me” identities were identical for Michiko at first as she believed that she was purely Japanese (from her appearance too) and her mother tongue is Japanese (again the language that she was raised with and constructed her identity). However, the miscategorization of her appearance by others and the powerlessness of her Japanese language created the gap between “I” and “me.” The creation of a gap between “I” and “me” started after Michiko told Kazuo the story about Seonryon’s incident with Renaté, which she referred to as a cogwheel inside her body which began to turn. While Michiko refers to herself as East Asian (東アジア人), Kazuo denies the existence of such a word. Still, Michiko is miscategorized as Vietnamese, Korean, or Filipino, which are other East Asians.

Tachibana (as cited in Slaymaker, 2007) refers to this “I” as the identity tied to family and the social order and rules, and “me” as the identity tied to the energies that connect and orient the body to the mother (womb). While Michiko could maintain her “I” identity as Japanese by wearing make-up and speaking Japanese, her “me” identity started to have distance from Japanese identity which is indicated in her face bare of make-up (her natural born “East-Asian” face, which is deemed as Vietnamese or other East-Asians) and her Japanese when telling the truth is not recognizable as Japanese. In other words, “I” can be referred to as social identity and “me” as ego identity. Michiko needs to wear make-up and speak Japanese to be accepted as Japanese, which demonstrates the social identity stated in Goffman’s theory. “Me” identity appears with Michiko’s face bare of make-up, which is consistent since she was born, and telling the truth in Japanese shows her ego identity.

Her identity as Japanese which is curved through the family and (Japanese) society started to contradict with being East Asian - which is her habitual identity in Mead’s words and which connects with the body to the mother (womb) in Tachibana’s words - simultaneously. This contradiction caused Michiko to confuse her identity and eventually deconstruct her consistency between social and ego identity which she believed to be identical at first.

5.3.2 Kazuo

Kazuo is Michiko’s younger brother who lives with Michiko in Hamburg. Michiko shares stories and experiences with him to get a consensus from him. Hikita (2015) argues that Michiko and Kazuo’s relationship creates the consciousness of “us” which maintains the identity of each other. In other words, Michiko and Kazuo create their cultural territory which makes each other insiders. They do not have to create a specific self to present the readable identity like Michiko needs to wear make-up to present her Japanese identity because their relationship occurs within the inner cultural territory. Kazuo’s word that he started to call Michiko instead of older sister as he calls her so when speaking German represents that for him, Michiko as being herself is already accepted as one identity. Therefore, whenever Michiko feels that her identity is

threatened, Michiko calls, “Kazuo, Kazuo” and shares the stories and experiences to recover her identity. Her saying, “I need to recover my body condition by seeing Kazuo” represents that Kazuo is a reliable person who can maintain her identity.

Yet in contrast to Michiko, Kazuo still strongly holds his identity as Japanese and he denies his identity as being East-Asian. Although Michiko insists that Kazuo has a more Korean-like face than Seonryon who is a Korean nurse, he claims he is Japanese, but not East Asian. Kazuo can maintain his Japanese identity by distancing (or even taking a hostile view of) German and other East Asians. This contradicts Michiko's belief that she is also East Asian and makes question about her identity. Michiko believes that Kazuo holds the most similar identity as she explains that she does not need any explanation to make him understand her. However, Kazuo’s denial of being East Asian creates the distance between him and Michiko, and Kazuo explains that Michiko sometimes becomes a stranger. This conflict threatens the cultural territory that Michiko and Kazuo have created and starts to make Michiko an outsider even at home.

5.3.3 Wives

In contrast to Michiko, Japanese wives are depicted as characters who draw the line between their own Japanese culture and German local culture. Ms.Sada and Ms.Yamamoto can keep their “Japanese” face with facial expression by living inside their cultural territory in Germany. They both live in the “Japanese” district where many Japanese families live. They tried to keep their way of living as of their lives in Japan. As Michiko visited Ms.Sada, Michiko described that she was wearing slippers, eating rice cookies (お煎餅), and sipping Japanese tea before she knew it. Ms.Sada’s routine of inviting guests in Japanese style is naturally adopted at her house which is kept away from outside (German culture). Suzuki (2011) argues that they are transplanting their territory into Germany and avoid going out of their territory. The Japanese district in Hamburg is like Dejima Island, an isolated island separated from German society. Although Michiko was this part of Japanese culture, she felt that she was becoming an idiot explorer drinking tea in a house of the natives, which shows her distance from Japanese culture. This is because Michiko is now living outside of the Japanese cultural territory (or Dejima) and has a hybrid of local German and Japanese lives. Her distance

from Japanese cultural territory restricts her from being part of the rhythm that Ms.Sada and Ms.Yamamoto have.

Like Ms.Sada and Ms.Yamamoto, Ms.Steif also tries to bring her German cultural territory into Japanese society. Ms.Steif is a female German character who will move to Japan with her husband. She is now learning Japanese to give specific instructions to her Japanese maid when she moves to Japan, but her Japanese language ability and different cultural competency hinder her from communicating successfully with Japanese. Although Ms.Steif can say some phrases in Japanese, she is not able to transfer the meaning behind those words because she does not share the same culture with a Japanese family. This is illustrated when Ms.Steif suddenly said to Ms.Sada and Ms.Yamamoto, “Don’t feed my dog a fish with eyes and bones” in Japanese at Ms. Sada’s house. Ms.Sada and Ms.Yamamoto stared at Ms.Steif with surprise and their faces were strained. Michiko immediately explains that it is the phrase that Ms.Steif learned last week and because Ms.Steif learns the instruction phrase, the sentence sounds awkward. With Michiko’s explanation, Ms.Sada and Ms.Yamamoto were able to understand the situation. When Ms.Steif performs her Japanese in front of Ms.Sada and Ms.Yamamoto, Michiko realizes that Ms.Steif’s facial expression is lost while she speaks Japanese. Michiko explains that Ms.Steif needs so much focus on pronouncing each Japanese word correctly that she forgets all else. Suzuki (2011) explains within the cultural territory the language and face work together naturally. Ms.Steif is an outsider in the Japanese community (or at Ms.Sada’s house where Japanese cultural territory is imported), which makes her lose her facial expression when she speaks her “foreign” language. Therefore, once people go out of their cultural territories, they lose their face. However, like those three characters, as long as they are living inside their cultural territory in a foreign country, they can maintain their faces.

5.4 Exophony

Michiko reflects the central theme of Tawada’s literature. Michiko living in Hamburg and adopting herself into German society by speaking German and buying stuff from local stores, compromises herself between her original Japanese and local German culture, which creates distance from the Japanese community and cultures. For

Michiko, both Japanese and German cultures are part of her life, and she no longer distinguishes those two cultures as her original culture and foreign culture, meaning her state of becoming exophony. Michiko's movements between Japanese and German cultural contexts reflect Michiko's state of being in-between and her identity as a hybrid of Japanese and German culture, which she can adapt herself to both cultural contexts. She can understand and pass meaning over to the other cultural side by giving more detailed explanations. Japanese wives and Ms. Steif understand Michiko's hybrid identity which makes them ask Michiko to pass things to their cultural territory without crossing the cultural boundaries by themselves. Although they recognize Michiko's identity, they do not accept the hybridity of Michiko's identity as part of their cultures, which leaves Michiko in between Japanese and German cultural territories. As being exophony, Michiko starts to question her identity as Japanese and tries to seek the other parts of her identity, which is identity of East-Asian. However, her other possible identity (East-Asian identity) is easily denied by other Japanese people.

These terms such as Japanese, East-Asian, or Vietnamese refugees, are not just words to describe specific ethnicity, but they are attached to ideas, which are influenced culturally, historically, and nationally. Michiko by being outside of Japanese cultural territory, started to recognize specific emotions and hatred attached to those words, which people try to distinguish themselves from other races. This makes Michiko unable to place herself within those categorizations and float between those terms. However, unlike Tawada's theme on recognition of the multiplicity of identity, Michiko could not realize and absorb her multiplicity of identity at the end. She lost her social identity in both German and Japanese communities which led her to float around the town with a Noh mask, which freed her from the ideologies attached to her face. The loss of social identity implies that Michiko is no longer part of society, but rather an outsider which causes her to be seen as mentally ill. Not only Michiko is seen as mentally ill, but also she feels that she is watching a movie that other people in the society are playing, in which she is not involved. The social expectation of one's identity as a mono/single identity is strong, and Michiko was unable to maintain her multicultural identity. Yet by hiding her face, which is the representation of specific

ethnicity and factors to determine one's racial/ethnic identity by other people, Michiko could finally become self (what she really is), which made her regain confidence.

5.5 Persona

Carl Jung (as cited in Boeree, 2006) states Persona is a public representation of self. It comes from a Latin word for mask and represents the mask that people put on in front of the outside world. There is also a collective unconscious, which relates to our inheritance and instinct as a species. Although Persona is one type of archetype within the collective unconscious, it is the most distant archetype. However, Jung explains that this Persona and collective unconscious overlap greatly with each other and that more people become identical to Persona, meaning a person unconsciously becomes more collective rather than distinctive. The danger for this is that since the Persona becomes identical with the collective unconscious, people start to be excessively concerned about "what people think" and lose the distinction between themselves and the outside world.

In the novel, Michiko starts to incessantly care about maintaining her face (or her Persona/mask) by pretending to be "more" Japanese within society. At the same time, there was an unknown force that attracted Michiko to the East, which stems from her East-Asian blood (or her mother's womb). Here Michiko's Persona and her collective unconscious as a species contradict since the Japanese society denies the categorization of East Asians. Yet Michiko does not recognize the cause of conflicts since her Persona becomes identical to the collective unconscious. By wearing the Noh mask, Michiko can free herself from her Persona by hiding her face, which is a social representation of herself. However, this decision to walk on the street with a mask was seen as mentally ill. Jung sees the mentally ill as people who are haunted by ghosts, which contain all the dead from the past. Tawada (2007) also explains the Noh mask as the neck of off dead person who tries to regain a lost body. And those mentally ill could only be healed by understanding the ghost and becoming comfortable with the dead. This insists that Michiko could only regain her normality through understanding and accepting her collective unconscious which stems from East-Asian blood.

Lastly, Jung claims that the goal of our lives is the realization of the self. The self equally represents all aspects of our personality (without opposition), so people are both or neither individual and collective, both and neither female or male or both and neither good nor bad, and so on. This means that by realizing the self, people could finally accept their multiplicity of identity. Jung explains that it also means that there is no cease to act since there is no opposition. Although Michiko seems to lose her normality, Michiko in the end, has no need to act. Michiko insists on watching other people act their Persona through the eye hole of the mask, but Michiko is not part of this movie. This indicates that she is no longer acting her Persona, yet unable to express her real self without wearing the Noh mask.

6. Conclusion

This essay has discussed how we recognize, determine, and distinguish our own identities and other people's identities. Throughout the analysis of the novel *Persona* by Yoko Tawada, different factors and categorizations that influence each character's construction and deconstruction of identities are evaluated. As the title "Persona" suggests, identity is not only constructed by individual characteristics and uniqueness, but the members of society play great roles to influence and recognize one's identity. Since the ideology of mono/single identity has been the norm in a society like Japan, people like Michiko who hold different cultural backgrounds face difficulty in accepting and being accepted one's multiple aspects of their identities. Tawada recognizes not only the existence of a multiplicity of identities but also the struggle accompanying such an identity. However, the struggle does not simply occur once people move outside of their countries as we saw with Japanese wives and Kazuo's case. They can maintain their Japanese cultural territory by transplanting Japanese culture into German society. By doing so, they can maintain Japanese mono/single identities which other members of this society accept these single identities simultaneously.

Tawada illustrated such identity negotiation between characters by emphasizing "Face (or Mask)." Whether the characters are able or unable to maintain their facial expression depends on the success or failure of playing the expected role within the society. Michiko could not perform her expected Japanese identity which leads her face

to be seen as other East Asians like Vietnamese or Filipino. “Persona” which is the mask we put on in front of others is important to present the identity expected by others. However, Persona sometimes pressures a person to become someone different from who the person really is. Tawada, as she explains with her main themes, believes her “actual self” to speak, think, and dream in multiple languages. Although the Persona plays a great role in society, she throws the question of whether this Persona really represents who we are and one of the consequences caused by the Persona that is the loss of one’s possibility of having multiple identities.

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