

Origuchi<sup>1</sup> Shinobu<sup>2</sup>'s *Marebitoron* in a Global Perspective  
A Preliminary Study

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The concept of *marebito*<sup>3</sup> is arguably the most striking contribution made by the late *kokugaku* ethnologist and theorist of literature Origuchi Shinobu (1872-1953) to the history of Japanese philosophy. Notwithstanding, his contribution has been largely ignored up to the present by historians, and the only conceivable explanation is that the term *marebito* itself is not a proper concept in the strict philosophical sense, but a kind of pseudo-concept, halfway between the abstract conception of a certain reality and the imaginary projection of a literary archetype. As a consequence, the concept has been appreciated by students of classical Japanese literary history, but ignored by philosophers in general, due on the one hand, to the above mentioned dependency on a certain imagery of Japanese antiquity and folklore, and on the other, to the perceived difficulty of applying it in a general sense to realities beyond the narrow confines of Japanese ethnicity.

I develop my argument in three phases. First, I discuss the notion of *marebito* according to original sources in the collected works of Origuchi. His work on *marebito* extends from its original inception in 1923 to the finishing touches he made in 1952 and covers the whole of his academic career. The first decade is crucial in the formation of his conception. The first essays especially reveal the primary insights Origuchi draws from his own sources. His analysis traces the development of the belief in *marebito* through Japanese history, but there is an original prototype in association with this belief. I focus my attention on the early construction of his analysis, as the setting in which the *marebito* may be seen as the “other,” as presented in Western philosophy. So I propose the interpretive notion of *marebito*-as-other. In the second phase, I analyze philosophies of the “other” synchronically on a global scale. When we focus on the moment the *marebitoron* was first conceived, we find that 1923 was a period of transition, a time when the need to renew cultural energies was equally felt in Europe as in Japan, and philosophies of the “other” were being shaped. This permits me to attempt a comparative analysis of these philosophies from the perspective of Origuchi’s analysis. The sources examined lead to a transcultural and transdisciplinary discussion. In the third phase, I set aside the history of the critical literature on the subject, to concentrate

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<sup>1</sup> It is usual to transliterate the name as Orikuchi. Nonetheless, in this essay I follow the spelling used by the author’s disciple, the theologian Ueda Kenji (1927-2003). The author wishes to express his gratitude to Albert Craig and wife, who suggested many corrections in grammar and style to this essay.

<sup>2</sup> Japanese names are given in the usual Japanese order, family name first.

<sup>3</sup> Literally “rare person.” A term found in ancient Japanese literary records for a spirit or god that may visit a village during a festival, the building of a house, or other special occasions. Since Origuchi, the term and the idea it represents has been appreciated not only by scholars of Japanese classical literature and Japanese antiquity and folklore, but also by theorists of Japanese culture and ethnicity at large. On the other hand, it has been largely ignored by international philosophers as too limited in conception and too tightly entangled in Japanese ethnicity. Origuchi Shinobu is an ethnologist and scholar of National Studies or *kokugaku*, who has written of its place in Japanese literary and cultural history. In this paper I discuss Origuchi’s analysis and also attempt to relate the concept of *marebito* to comparable notions in 20th. Century European history of philosophy.

on three recent contributions. Discussing these works from a present-day perspective, I would suggest that not only can the *marebito* be seen as the “other” (*marebito-as-other*) but that the “other” of European philosophy can profitably be interpreted as the *marebito* (*other-as-marebito*).

The term *marebito* first appears in Origuchi’s scholarly writings in Part 2 of his 1923 “Kokubungaku no hassei” (“The origin of national literature”). It is a pivotal addition by Origuchi to his own personal appreciation of the question of the origin of Japanese literature, his “theory on ancient Japan” (*kodairon*). This gives us a clue to understanding the concept, which has been discussed by scholars since the early argument by Yanagita Kunio. Though Origuchi originally conceived the *marebito* in terms of his research on ancient Japan, his central concern was the application of his notion to the historical present. He wrote:

The word *marebito* has in fact a deep meaning attached to it. The holy visitor who comes to the celebration of the building of the new house was seen as an avatar of a *kami* who came only rarely. Perhaps this visitor, after offering an incantation [*mantra*], was entertained at a banquet. Even today, in the countryside of Okinawa, there is the belief that a house is built in the daytime by human labour, but continued by *kami* during the night. On the day the ridge-poles of the roof are raised, *kami* descend into the house and ring bells and beat the pillars. The sound is said to be heard by the inhabitants who lie prostrate on the roof. Of course, it is produced by the *miko*. (Vol. 1, 79)

Two sources provide this interpretation of the *marebito*. On the one hand, Origuchi cites a few examples of “rare visitors” from the *Man’yōshū* and the *Nihongi*. The reference in the text to the celebration of the building of the new house (*murohōgi*) appears in vol. 11 of the *Man’yōshū*, in what is probably a folk ballad in the style of a *sedōka*, in which describes the visit of a holy stranger to the newly built sacred hall. The stranger is referred to as *kimi*, indicating his higher rank. In a second *sedōka*, the visitor is offered the body of a sacred dancer, a custom originally referred to in the *Nihongi* (reign of emperor Ingyō).<sup>4</sup> On the other hand, though Origuchi submits that even in pre-Meiji Japan the presence of *marebito*-associated local festivities was drastically reduced, in peripheral areas like Okinawa (Ryukyu), or inland Japan, festivals were still being carried out in a recognizable manner. Among the variety of *marebito*-figures found in Japanese folklore, those in coastal areas are popularly believed to come from beyond the sea, from the Pure Land of Amida. In many cases the role of *marebito* is performed at festivals by men who wear masks and clothes that identify them as *kami*. The main role of the *marebito* (literary or performative) is to recite magical words of blessing for the inhabitants of a dwelling, or the protection of new crops, usually at the *setsubun* festivity. The nature of the *marebito* differs; he may be a *kami* visiting from faraway, the spirit of an ancestor coming from the netherland, or a shaman-type performer who incarnates a *marebito* at a festival. In this way Origuchi posits a *kami*-prototype stating that the references found in classical literature and the festivals actually held in

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<sup>4</sup> See W. G. Aston, *Nihongi*, Tuttle 1972, I, 318: “At that time it was the custom at a banquet for the dancer, when the dance was ended, to turn to the person who occupied the highest place, and say, ‘I offer thee a woman’.” Origuchi does not quote it, but in the *Nihongi* there is another very explicit reference to a “dedication celebration for a new house” (*nimurohōgi*) in the second year of the reign of Emperor Seinei, which included a “house-blessing formula” (*murohōgi*). See PHILIPPI 1990, 13-14, 80.

peripheral areas of Japan are connected: the latter being remnants of the former, the former being earlier archetypes of the latter.

In connection with the *Man'yōshū* quotations referred to above and the “Hitachi no kuni fūdoki,” Origuchi finds a secondary source for *marebito* in the “Ōtono hokai” festival (*Englishiki* “Kunaishō”). Here the priests Imbe and Nakatomi “visit” the Yin and Yang Gates of the Palace and enact a “marebito” ritual which originates in the folk customs represented in the *Man'yōshū* and *Fūdoki*. To quote:

The original meaning of the *marebito* refers to a *kami*. It is a *kami* who comes at appointed times. It is a *kami* believed by villagers to come from the sky and from beyond the seas to certain villages, where it brings about bounteous things, wealth, and good fortune. This *kami* was not the product of a religious imagination. The villagers of antiquity had actually heard the “noisy” visit of the *marebito* pushing against the doors of houses.<sup>5</sup>

For Origuchi then *marebito* is a primitive notion about a *kami*-type spirit, but of a peculiar character that belongs neither to the *amatsukami* nor to the *kunitsukami* groups found in the old texts. According to Origuchi’s explanations, the original or early *marebito* was neither a *kami* (god) of the sky (the Takamagahara) nor one of the land, but was, instead, a being from an “outer world,” a place beyond the sea called *tokoyo no kuni*. This kind of religious belief predated the appearance of the centralised Shinto system of the Takamagahara pantheon, and situates the *marebito*-type *kami* in the position of ancestors of the great *kami* of the Yamato court pantheon. Here Origuchi is clearly looking for nothing less than the *arkhé*, the religious foundation of Japanese culture. The popular association of the *marebito* with the ancestor spirits of families is also derivative and not original. Finally, a striking point in the text analyzed here is that, as spiritual entities *marebito* are heard and not seen.

In “Jokeishi no hassei” (‘The origin of narrative poems’, 1925), Origuchi cites a narrative poem from the *Nihongi*, reign of emperor Kenzō, that includes a “blessing formula for a (new) building” (*muroyogoto*).<sup>6</sup> Commenting a second similar instance, Origuchi explains as follows:

The way of attending the new building by the one who performs as *kami*, holds the rank of *kami*, and so believes himself to be one, was gradually forgotten, and in the Yamato area during the Asuka period, a person who was regarded as of a higher rank than the household in question was hosted as a *marebito*, and as such watched the dance of the *maibito*, naturally listened to the chant recitation, and was expected to take the maiden dancer as a wife for one night stay at the house. This is seen in the *Nihongi*, reign of emperor Ingyō. (OSz, Vol. 1, 431)

The formulas in “praise of the *marebito*” that are found in among other sources the *Manyōshū* quotations, also seemed to be a part of the old tradition, which later became obsolete and developed into the common *uchiage* or *naorai*. The point here, according to Origuchi, is that the inhabitants of old Japan were mentally open to the “exterior” (*gaikai*), the “non-human” (*jinji igai*), and were *not prone* to the deviations of subjectivity (*jun-kyakkan taido*). These people of the ancient age (*kodaijin*) are not the Japanese of the classical era however, and though they share the psychological

<sup>5</sup> OSz, vol. 2, 35. Translation from HAROOTUNIAN 1988, 429, modified to better fit the original.

<sup>6</sup> See *Nihongi* (I), 380-381. The corresponding passage in the *Kojiki* includes a different poem, with no character of *muro-yogoto* (see *Kojiki*, 370-371).

characteristics of people of the Nara period, such as the *masurao* type represented by Kamo no Mabuchi, they are even older and are in fact their predecessors. And the only access we have to their actual appearance is through the oldest extant fragmentary pieces of classical literature of the type found in the previously mentioned *Manyōshū* (vol. 11) and the narrative poems in the *Nihongi*.

Origuchi develops extensively for the first time his *marebitoron* in part 3 of the series of essays under the collective title “Kokubungaku no hassei” (Part 3, 1926, 3-62). Under the heading of “*Marebito* no igi” (‘The meaning of *marebito*’), he explains the meaning of the term in relation to other words or notions like “*kyaku*” (visitor) or “*tokoyo*,” and generally situates the figure of *marebito* in the context of Japanese religious festivals (*matsuri*) in which it shows its potential for significance.

Interpreting *kyaku* as *marebito* is something which dates from the beginning of our country’s literature. In the etymological interpretation, up to the present day, *marebito* was used to mean “someone who comes rarely,” including the sense of a welcome guest (*chinkyaku*); *marahito*/*marōdo* are thought to be phonetical variations. From the formal point of view, this is certainly correct. However, the content — its lexical use by the ancients, cannot be discerned unless the implication of its etymology is expanded. (OSz, vol. 1, 3)

Certainly, from the viewpoint of the shintoist perception of the material manifestation of an invisible spiritual power (*reii*), the word *mare* designates one of the unequivocal signs of the numinous —the “rare.” From the many examples found in Shinto literature and shrine worship, we may conclude that any natural object, human or non-human, which shows a trace of distinction possesses the attributes of the *kami*-nature. Origuchi finds in the *marebito* or “rare visitor,” the unmistakable manifestation of a *kami* presence. This is why the “rare visitor” becomes a “unique” presence and is received as a welcome guest by the household and the community. Origuchi finds evidence for this use of *marebito* in the *Kokinshū* expression “*toshi ni mare naru hito*,”<sup>7</sup> which compares the visit of a lover to the cherry tree, which blossoms only once a year. Here the presence of the visitor is not just rare but “unique,” and hence highly “esteemed,” according to Origuchi’s reading of the poem. In the same sense, other examples of using the variants “*maro*” or “*mari*” are found in the *Nihongi*.<sup>8</sup> In all, the keywords for *marebito* are “honor,” “rare,” and “novel.” Origuchi moreover argues that “*hito*” in old times referred not only to humans but also to “*kami*.” In conclusion, he states that according to its archaic occurrence, “*marebito*” refers to a *kami* who comes from the *tokoyo*.<sup>9</sup>

In this way the *marebito* is received as an “honored” guest and occupies a special place at ancient banquet ceremonies held at shrines. At homes, as the archaic meaning of the term “*aruji*” (*shujin*) indicates, the term originally referred to the custom of “entertaining someone as one’s guest” and was a respectful expression for the guest and not the host. He was treated in special ways that were taboo to other people. According to Origuchi, the people incarnating the *marebito* belonged to three classes: people with the appearance of *kami* (*shinjin*), performers, and beggars. They might perform, for instance, like Heian practitioners of yin-yang, uttering powerful words of blessing for

<sup>7</sup> *Kokinshū* nr. 62: *adanari to na ni koso tatere, sakurabana, toshi ni marenaru hito mo machikeri*: “these cherry blossoms, whom men call evanescent, flighty patiently (sic), they’ve awaited one who comes, but rarely in each year” (trans. L. R. Rodd/M. C. Henkenius 1996).

<sup>8</sup> As quoted in OSz vol. 1, 4.

<sup>9</sup> See OSz vol. 1, 5.

the household and stamping the ground to counter resistance to their magical word-binding on the part of the spirits of the soil. The special appointed time for their appearance was the New Year's prelude to spring, though during the Nara period, they were expected to return in the autumn to take part in the new harvest offering (*niiname*), on which occasion the *marebito* were required to bless the new buildings (*niimurohokai*); this served as the original model for the auspicious purification ritual (*kichijibarae*) performed for the coming year. They also acted as heralds of the new season. In Okinawa the belief in the visit of mountain spirits during the rites of spring is of the *marebito* type. As interpreted by Origuchi, this also served as the basis for the *bon* festival, when the ancestor spirits came from somewhere beyond the sea, namely the *tokoyo*, a sacred place where all types of visitors possess spiritual power (*reiryoku*). The belief that the *marebito* came from the mountains or the heavens is derivative. But the belief in the *marebito* as a spiritual force (*tama*) belongs to the domain of the sacred source of energy, whose power may be beneficial, but whose maliciousness (*jaki*) must be averted in connection with the practice of *harae* in the liminal time of seasonal change.<sup>10</sup> For the "visitor" (*otozurebito*) could turn into a "blessing spirit" (*kotohogu kami*), or just as well into a "cursing spirit" (*soshiru kami*). In all cases the *marebito* belief was associated with the pre-modern custom of hospitality.<sup>11</sup>

In the sequel to "Kokubungaku no hassei," the fourth delivery of the series, written in the same year (1926), the notion of *marebito* is again linked to that of the *tokoyo* and the magic of words. Origuchi states:

The incantatory formulas performed by the *marebito* coming from the *tokoyo* evolved gradually, and an incantation from heaven, which is a celestial *norito*, came to be performed. (OSz vol. 1, 135).

The point in this brief passage is in the contrast between the "incantatory formulas" and the "norito," and between the *tokoyo* and heaven. As is known, orthodox Shinto theology discards the old magic formulas in favor of the kind of ritual prayers called *norito*. From the thirties on, the governmental Shinto establishment started restricting the magical practices performed at mountain villages in northern Japan. Several years earlier Origuchi had already shown a lucid understanding of the coming conflict, and proposed the preeminence, from the point of view of an archeology of knowledge, of the magical power of the world of the *marebito*, over the diluted, and in any case, derivative nature of the politically sanctioned ritual practices of the *norito*. This caused an inversion in the understanding of both *norito* and the Takamagahara, and placed the numinous strength derived from the *tokoyo* in a deeper and more fundamental position.

The year 1927 shows a change of tone in Origuchi's theories on *marebito*. In two related essays, his sources for evidence are not so much literature as folklore, with a notable reference to his master Yanagita Kunio. In the first essay, "Okina no hassei" (The Origin of the *Okina*, 1927), Origuchi traces the roots of *dengaku* to the primordial presence of the *marebito* in the specific ritual context of the festivals for the change of season. The *marebito* takes the shape of an old man or woman, and the *kami*, who visit the community only on these festivals, are seen by Origuchi as representations of *marebito*.

The *marebitogami* who visit rarely or frequently, originally appeared only at the point of seasonal transitions during the year. (OSz, Vol. 2, 374)

<sup>10</sup> For the notion of "liminality" and its role in the formation of the community, see DAVIS 1975.

<sup>11</sup> The above paragraph is based on OSz vol. 1, 7-62.

In Origuchi's understanding, the *marebito* is not defined so much as a prototype or character with recognisable features, as from the special place it occupies in the symbolic topology from where it originates, which is to say, the special place of intersection between two worlds, and the special time when this intersection is possible. The one aspect that is clear about the figure the *marebito* reveals is its heteromorphism, its "difference", which is concomitant with a special type of spiritual power (*mono*). For this reason, the *marebito* cannot be ascribed to any particular religious body, it is external to any organised religious system, be it Shintoist, Buddhist, or Shinto-Buddhist syncretism, and precedes all of them.<sup>12</sup>

In the same vein, in "Muramura no matsuri: Matsuri no hassei" ('Village festivals: The origin of festivals', Part II, 1927), Origuchi notes:

The *marebito* who come to the spring festival can be understood as *kami*, but they can also be understood as invisible spiritual entities (*rei*). (OSz, Vol. 2, 458)

Later they are seen as ancestor spirits, demons, or mountain creatures, which appear in diverse guises, but their original shape is that of the numinous *marebito*. In this way Origuchi finds evidence for his *marebitoron* not only in the classics of literature, but also in religious folklore, as befits his apprenticeship with Yanagita.

An occasional reference to *marebito* in "Uta no hanashi" (Talking about poetry, 1929) brings to a close the first seven years in Origuchi's writings on the subject. Here he refers to the nativists Kamo no Mabuchi and Ueda Akinari to argue an important point concerning the perception of *marebito* as it appears in poetry.

*Marebito* refers to a guest of ours, but in the older sense is rather an unusual person who visits rarely. The wild goose is seen as a bird of passage, a rare visitor. But this is not in an allegorical sense, since the goose directly incarnates a *marebito*, thus eliminating any impression of vagueness. (OSz, Vol. 11, 112)

This quote shows again the heteromorphic nature of the notion of *marebito*, which is not prone to any sort of anthropomorphic interpretation. Its numinous essence can also be manifested in a proto-human or a zoomorphic form rather than central *kami* in the imperial (Takamagahara) pantheon or a Buddha-like *hotoke* or demon. This is because of the main topological reference for the *marebito*: the goose comes from the *tokoyo*, which makes it a *marebito*. The *kami* abiding in the Takamagahara region or the *kami* of the land (Japan) cannot be *marebito*, nor can the bodhisattvas arriving from Buddhist paradises, the demons or ghosts emanating from the infernal regions, or the souls of ancestors visiting from the land of the dead. These are taken to be *marebito* by villagers, but this is in a derivative sense, and does not provide us with an understanding of the original archetype.

In sum, from the point of view of our interest in the notion of *marebito* as the ground for a possible philosophical conception of certain originality, the description offered so far provides us with several clues. First, more than anything else, *marebito* is a "meaningful word", that is, an ancient word, the analysis of which enables us to enter a hidden region of meaning not present in ordinary language. Second, the meaningful reality to which it points is transcendental; it points to a separate realm not accessible in ordinary daily living. But the connection of this realm to our present world is essential

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<sup>12</sup> For the allusion to the *marebito* as the "original buddha", under the historical figures of Buddhist masters of esoteric arts, see OSz vol.2, 403.

to the very survival of this world. Essence is separated from being. Third, our knowledge of this reality is a legacy from the past. This implies a second-degree, historical separation from the source, that is, a separation of place and time. Fourth, as a consequence, the utopian character of the notion is reinforced. This is shown by popular imagery associated with utopian lands, like the Pure Land of Amida or the Tokoyo. Fifth, in a symbolic topology of inversion, periphery is meaningful here, and not centrality. Or to put it in another way, meaning comes from the exterior, not the interior. In this sense, we have the complementary opposition between the domestic realm and its externality. The main feature of this exterior is its non-domestic wildness, its heteromorphism. Liminality plays an important role in this topology. Sixth, the oldest *marebito* appears as a performer, who chants and dances. The way to meaning is mediated through social interplay, social exchange between the human and the non-human, within a dramatic space. Seventh, the *marebito*-spirit is primordial. Eighth, it is invisible, yet perceptible. It is a distinct presence. Ninth, the ritual originally associated with the *marebito* is related to architecture, the blessing of a building serving as a metonymy for the protection of their inhabitants. This places *marebito* in the group of “guardian spirits” of the family and the community. Tenth, subjectivity in a sense that identifies the modern is excluded. Instead, we find a kind of objectivity understood as absolute transparency, exteriority, rituality, non-duality between the individual and the community (the household), and conceived as a way to overcome the modern but beyond any sort of historicism, since the model is archetypal, almost pre-historical, or in any case, non-historic. Eleventh, the context for the apparition of the *marebito* is celebratory.

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The year of Origuchi’s first attempt to formulate a *marebitoron* (1923), was also the year when notions regarding the essence of Japanese people, or Japanese culture were published. Yanagita Kunio (1875-1962), Origuchi’s senior in folklore studies, offered an early version of his notion of *jōmin* as an alternative to the former, through the publication of his *Kyōdoshiron* (‘Theory on the ethnography of the countryside,’ 1923). The term presents a striking contrast to *marebito*, in that Yanagita’s *jō*- (“usual”) is the exact opposite to *mare*- (“unusual”). Quest for nativism may be explained by his personal failure as a member of the Mandate Administration Committee of the League of Nations which met at Geneva between 1921 and 1923. By the time he returned to Japan, the seed for Yanagita’s ideas on nativism had already been planted.<sup>13</sup> The result was the gradual formation of a new image of the Japanese through the notion of *jōmin*. In this Yanagita fled from his former attachment to the fantastic, or the preternatural, in folk tales, an approach perhaps more akin to Origuchi’s work. The Great Kanto Earthquake that same year no doubt added a sense of urgency and realism. However, Yanagita’s aspiration to a conception of Japan as a national community would not be self-evident at a time when social disrapture between company entrepreneurs and urban labourers lingered from the Taisho era.<sup>14</sup> Proof of this was the mass killing of Koreans and leftist activists in the aftermath of the earthquake.<sup>15</sup> In all, 1923 displayed a marked

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<sup>13</sup> See INOUE 2007, 72.

<sup>14</sup> See A. Gordon’s reference to the diary of one such laborer in relation to the “communal feeling” in VLASTOS 1998.

<sup>15</sup> It is not irrelevant that the same year saw the publication of Kita Ikki’s *An Outline Plan for the Reorganization of Japan* (*Nihon kaizō hōan taikō*, which was soon banned). The publication in the of G. Lukacs’ *History and Class Consciousness* (1923) would also be noted in Japan. See chronology in FUJITA 1997.

contrast between the new urban living as the model for a modern Japan, centering on cosmopolitan Tokyo, and the nostalgic reaction for a premodern sense of a kind of identity that was already lost.<sup>16</sup>

In 1926 we find an unexpected turn in Origuchi's ideas on the etymology of *marebito*: the opposition between "tsune" and "mara", which he draws from an old song,<sup>17</sup> in which "tsune" is interpreted as "permanent residence" or "continuity" ("Kokugaku no hassei"). If we look at his comments from the point of view of Yanagita's theory of *jōmin*, the contrast between the two notions is striking. Certainly the "ordinary folk" represent that part of Japanese society which has not changed, and for which change is a threat; it has been the permanent element throughout historical change. The continuity of tradition is the safeguard of a national essence, and it is this and nothing else that *jōmin* means in the last analysis. Against this, *mare/mara* is merely the occasional and discontinuous. In the text here referred, Origuchi does not draw from Yanagita's work, but if he did, the result would not be a mutual contradiction but the revelation of complementary opposites.

For Yanagita, the search for a prototype in Japanese culture of a similar foundational nature as Origuchi's "Japanese of antiquity" (*kodaijin*), leads him to turn his original interest in the remote dwellers of the mountain villages (*yamabito*) to the "ordinary people."<sup>18</sup> Moreover, during the thirties, Yanagita defines the *jōmin* as "rice farmers."<sup>19</sup> In fact, we can easily discern the symbolic complementarity between the figures of the *marebito* and the *jōmin* in that, in a ritual context, the former typically visits the latter from the outside boundary of the space occupied by the farming village, the latter playing on these occasions the role of host, and the established time for these periodical visits being related to the vital moments in the planting and cropping of rice. Yanagita's *jōmin*, however, is not what is represented by present day Japanese farmers. Modernity has affected even rural areas, and as a consequence unwritten traditions have been forgotten. For this model Yanagita turned to Edo period rice-farming villages, where about seventy percent of the population belonged to this category.<sup>20</sup> We should note that by the time Yanagita developed his theory, Origuchi had spent more than a decade developing his own *marebitoron*; this notwithstanding, Yanagita ignored the possible relation between his ideas on *jōmin* and Origuchi's *marebito*. Yanagita himself eventually dismissed Origuchi's notion as too conceptual, without a clear historical reference, and too artificial. Just as Yanagita failed to show any interest for the other categories of the Japanese not included in the main category of *jōmin*, such as the non-*jōmin*, the *hi-nin*, the *eta*, or the socially discriminated dealers in the business of blood and death, as well as upper class families with hereditary names,<sup>21</sup> we must also count the *marebito* as *i-jin* ('rare people'), even though Origuchi explains that this is not a human but a *kami*. The relevant issue here is that from Origuchi's heterogeneous logic, the very possibility of formulating a theory of *jōmin* calls for the complementary role of the *marebito*. Yanagita, in his turn, is centered on the quest for a homogeneous notion of Japaneseness,<sup>22</sup> and the role played in relation to this by the cult of ancestors does not provide at all a scheme with the tension we find in Origuchi's argument. Moreover, if

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<sup>16</sup> A detailed description of this new modern lifestyle thriving in the Tokyo of 1923 is found in HAROOTUNIAN 2000.

<sup>17</sup> See OSz Vol. 1, 4.

<sup>18</sup> See FIGAL 1999, 140.

<sup>19</sup> OHNUKI-TIERNEY 1999.

<sup>20</sup> See MIYATA 1996.

<sup>21</sup> See the criticism on this point from Japanese ethnology, as summed up by MIYATA 1996, 64-71.

<sup>22</sup> For a criticism of the homogeneous character of *jōmin* from the point of view of gender studies in sociology, see HAROOTUNIAN 2000.



*marebito* is indeed a contrived intellectual artifact, at least the word belongs to the Japanese lexicon, whereas Yanagita's *jōmin* is simply a word he made up. In his ideas on *jōmin*, we can perceive Yanagita's excessive "normalising" drive, which results in another no less archetypical notion than Origuchi's *marebito*. For the latter Yanagita could not identify the term clearly with any given social class in his own day, that being because he was perhaps looking for a "normative" Japanese rather than a common peasant, that is, Japaneseness itself as a norm.

Yanagita did not perceive the lexical opposition between "ordinary people" and "rare visitor" as mutually reinforcing but rather as mutually exclusive. And in this perception the difference in each *kokugaku* scholar's project reveals its main contrast. For while Origuchi was trying to ground national existence in the exchange with the "other", Yanagita was trying to exclude otherness, and because of this he postulated the souls of ancestors, which were conceived by the *jōmin* as *kami*, as the religious foundation of the nation, which means a legitimation of the *jōmin* proposition from the point of view of ethnic self-identity.<sup>23</sup>

Thus far, from the point of view of a semiotics of cultural meaning, we have identified Origuchi's *marebitoron* as other-centred, in opposition to "sameness" or self-centredness in Yanagita's *jōmin*. By coincidence, the year that Origuchi's *marebitoron* was conceived, was itself crucial in the field of the new hermeneutics of culture, or theories of otherness in Europe. These theories influenced disciplines as varied as the philosophy of values or the philosophy of dialogue, philosophy of religion and theology, philosophy of culture, philosophy of science and epistemology, history of philosophy, the sociology of knowledge, philosophical and cultural anthropology, psychoanalysis and psychological phenomenology, existential phenomenology and hermeneutics itself. Among the works now considered classics in the groundbreaking philosophy of the "other", M. Buber's *Ich und Du* (1923) occupies a special place.

But before analyzing Buber's work, we should first establish the contextual limits of our discussion: 1923 was a moment in Europe when the question of identity, personal, national or transnational, was perceived very sharply, especially in the aftermath of the political, cultural and intellectual turmoil that followed World War I. The twenties were a period for reconstruction in every sense of the word and in all arenas; the need for a new start was direly felt. And the great danger, the great threat was none other than exclusionism and solipsism in the guise of various nationalistic agendas. At the same time Europeans were questioning what it meant to be European. In Japan, Origuchi was asking the question of what does it mean to be Japanese. For the former, it was the problem of citizenship, for the latter, the problem of ethnicity.<sup>24</sup> Europe is posed as a problem directly, or is always felt in the background in Buber and the other authors whom we propose to analyse here. For Origuchi Japan is the problem, the stimulus in this case being the disillusion with modernization that was acutely felt by many intellectuals of the epoch, and the deep sense of cultural crisis, the threat of a loss of identity. The context is perceived in both cases as a crisis of the model of modernization, and new prospects are expected. Hospitality will eventually be discovered in the roots of the formation of Europe as a cultural project with a given identity, in much the way

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<sup>23</sup> A possible way of looking at both concepts within a single framework would have been to apply the *ke* = "common"/*hare* = reinvigoration theory, in which *jōmin* would function as *ke* and *marebito* as *hare*. The framework has been posited by Yanagita. In *The Monkey as Mirror*, Ohnuki-Tierney discusses the opposition "profane" (*ke*) vs. "sacred" (*hare*) as basic in the formation of Japanese identity since the Edo period, through the formation of "self" = *ke* vs. "other" = *hare*, being the *marebito* a representative of the latter. See OHNUKI-TIERNEY, 129.

<sup>24</sup> See with respect to the relevance of the problem of "European citizenship" a recent updating in *Pliegos de Yuste* no. 9-10, 2009. Digital edition in English at [www.pliegosdeyuste.eu](http://www.pliegosdeyuste.eu).

hospitality becomes the basic semiotics of exchange between the community and the *marebito*. There is finally the problem of the dichotomy national-immigrant. Just as nations are formed by national members who aspire to ethnical purity, Europe as a transnational entity is formed to an extent by immigrants, people who have been displaced geographically, ethnically, and intellectually. What would be the role of the *marebito* was it to be seen as an immigrant from the *tokoyo*? Of course, the *marebito* is a visitor, and in this sense it does not become integrated with the community. But if we consider the periodicity of his visits, his relationship with the community acquires a permanence and the right to be considered a “foreign” part of the community itself, like an extension of itself to its own exterior. We propose to analyse the dichotomy of national-immigrant in its proper context as a tension inside the community which belongs to its own identity as community, in the culturally different conditions of Europe and Japan during this historically critical period.

Buber’s *I and Thou*<sup>25</sup> (*Ich und Du*, 1923), is generally considered the foundational grammar for the so-called “philosophy of dialogue.” From the point of view of the context we have just outlined, the character of the text as an answer to the danger of stagnating solipsism in the European intellectual world becomes apparent. If Origuchi resorts to the language of Yamato as restated through the tool of hermeneutics and etymology, Buber resorts to language in its primary character as the linguistic foundation of existence. The crisis of material culture as the consequence of a problematic process in modernity leads both authors to language as the basis of consciousness and identity. Buber finds that the exit from solipsism is already given in the dialogic structure of our linguistic consciousness, since the notion of the “I” never stands on its own but is always found and given meaning in its relational interplay with the “you” and the “it” (transformed into a “he” or “she”). Solipsism can never be a point of departure, as in the rational edifice inherited from Descartes; it can be nothing but a disrapture from its original place, the perversion of displacement. The discovery of the “I” through its interplay with the “you” is not arbitrary. The identity of the “you” is always veiled. The “you” becomes completely different from the “I”, that is, the nature of the “you” is to be an “other”. In “you”, the “I” makes the discovery of “the other,” absolute otherness. This implies that the “you” unveils itself as transcendence, for the “you” can never be produced or controlled by the “I”, unless it is first changed into an “it”. In the dialogic relationship between the “I” and “you” some other traits come to the surface, like an anticipation, or surprise. For the “you” is autonomous from the “I”, and the “I” cannot anticipate or submit the “you’s” operation to any scheme of its own. The only way open for development in the dialogical relationship is the “acceptance of otherness.”<sup>26</sup> The “I’s” (subject) existential structure is rooted in its “openness to otherness.” This otherness reveals itself as non-recognisable in the previous I-experience; it is a “strange otherness” on which the recognition of otherness as “different-ness” is based. The “you” as other is then a non-I, the negation of the “I”. But in its negation, it becomes to be essentially bound to the most primary act of cognition. From this existential acknowledgement springs a sense of “respect for otherness.”<sup>27</sup> It is

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<sup>25</sup> One may object to the English translation of “du” as “you” rather than “Thou” (as we find in Cl. Martin, in Dreyfus, H. L./Wrathall, M. A., eds. 2009, *A Companion to Phenomenology and Existentialism*, Wiley-Blackwell, p.200). From the author’s point of view, the problem is that the English title anticipates what we will find after an analysis of the work. But the hierarchical relation between the “I” and “Thou” helps us to connect it with the “culture of hospitality” to which it properly belongs.

<sup>26</sup> An expression incorporated later by Buber, in 1965. See CISSNA/ANDERSON 2002.

<sup>27</sup> For this expression see W. B. Pearce “Achieving Dialogue with ‘the Other’ in the Postmodern World”, in Gaunt, P. (ed. 1993) *Beyond Agendas: New Directions in Communication Research*, Greenwood, 59-74. Also for the expressions “openness to otherness”, “strange otherness”, and “differentness” see Cissna,

here that the “you” is revealed as a “Thou”, and the mutual relation acquires a new meaning, as it is expressed from the beginning in the usual English translation of Buber’s classic. For the “Thou” becomes a meta-subjective space pointing to the transcendent ground of the world to which the “I” belongs. In every “you”, there is a “Thou”. This discovery leads us to “celebrate otherness.”<sup>28</sup>

In Buber’s dialogical view, “I” does not only encounter other “I’s”, but “I” also encounters the world as “other”. In this way, the world that sustains the intersubjective realm is itself constructed through otherness. The world is then the place where “I” recognize myself, but it is also a world of strangeness, for it is not a construction of my fancy. In recognizing the world this way, “I” operate a process which may be called “making the other strange.”<sup>29</sup> The “other”, including other “I’s” and the whole world that sustains them, is itself grounded on the “Other”.<sup>30</sup> This explains how we have recognized every other “you” as “Thou”, which takes the relational haphazardness of our present to the dimension where we meet the “eternal Thou”. This line of reflection in Buber’s more theological vein was later developed by G. Marcel, who contributed the notion of “‘receptivity’ to the ‘Other’, in the sense that one might actively receive a guest.”<sup>31</sup> This notion of “receptivity” in the sense of “receiving” the other as “guest” will certainly strike the reader for its similarity with the basic relational attitude we find in the context of “receiving” the *marebito* as “guest”. We are exploring whether we can understand the *marebito* figure through the notion of otherness; that is, whether we can appropriate the presence of the *marebito* through its difference from us, as an “other”. Origuchi senses the character of that presence in the way the “I” = “community” relates with the *marebito*. Proper relational context, that of the ritual mode of relation, gives us a definite pattern, whereby the “I” = community, represented in the person of the head of the household, the head of the village, or the head-priest at the sanctuary, “receives” the *marebito* as a stranger, honors it as a “guest”, and treats him/her as “Thou”. From this basic relational pattern, Origuchi concludes that the *marebito* can be none other than a *kami*, just as Buber finds the sacred dimension supporting the relational bond.

In the field of psychoanalysis, the relational bond with “the other” is internalised, and as a result it is melded in the “I’s” inner mental processes; the reference to the objective world is subsumed into the subjective space. In Freud’s *The Ego and the Id* (*Das Ich und das Es*, 1923) the “I” changes into an “ego”, a subjective construct of consciousness<sup>32</sup> which finds its opposite in the unconscious field of the *id*. In this way the full circle stands within the walls of the “I’s” mind. Certainly the *ego* experiences “strangeness” towards the *id*, which springs from a source which is not under its control, as well as towards the external world, which becomes an outer source of demands. This feeling of strangeness is not resolved in the encounter with the “you”. The only “you” is perceived rather as a “he/she” that is incorporated into the conscious structure of the *ego*, through internalization and objectification of the figures of “father” and “mother” in the

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K. N./Anderson, R. (2002) *Moments of Meeting: Buber, Rogers, and the Potential for Public Dialogue*, SUNY Press.

<sup>28</sup> Sampson 1993, quoted in CISSNA/ANDERSON 2002, 93.

<sup>29</sup> Following Gurevitch, Z. D. (1988) “The Other Side of Dialogue: On Making the Other Strange and the Experience of Otherness” in *American Journal of Sociology* no. 93, 1179-1199.

<sup>30</sup> Buber states that “Every real relation in the world is exclusive, the Other breaks in on it and avenges its exclusion” (BUBER 1923/2004, 76).

<sup>31</sup> Quoted in Cooper, Mick (2003) *Existential Therapies: Using Evidence for Policy and Practice*, SAGE, 28.

<sup>32</sup> In this sense Freud preferred the term “Ich” to “ego”, since the former is connected to consciousness and self-reflection. “Ego” can be translated in German as *der Einzige* (the single one), as in Max Stirner’s *The Ego and his Own* (1844).

*super-ego*. Although the *ego* strives to keep the mind connected to the external world, and has no support in the relational field with a “you”, it easily lapses into failure and the field of psychopathology opens up.<sup>33</sup> The real problem with this *ego* is that, having no relational connection with “others”, it cannot overcome by itself the condition of solipsism, which reflects a general mentality in intellectual circles in 1923 and opposes the more hopeful view that we find in phenomenological or hermeneutical thought patterns. Certainly the *ego* connects the “I” to its exterior, but finds no counterpart in that exterior, and there is no communicative pattern to assist it;<sup>34</sup> monologue substitutes for dialogue. In the field of contemporary psychopathology, it is generally acknowledged that Freud’s notion of the *ego* is subjected to a drive/structure model that is in opposition to an alternative relational/structure model.<sup>35</sup> In the last analysis, the external world is not even an open structure from which hope is instilled in the “I’s” mind, but another source of threat to the *ego*.<sup>36</sup> In Origuchi’s view, the bipolarity of the external world as a source of blessings for the “I”=community, as well as a possible source for adversity is acknowledged in the dual character of the *marebito*, a figure that will later be developed according to the *kokugaku* theory of the spiritual entity called *tama*.<sup>37</sup> This explains, according to Origuchi, the emergence of many local traditions where ritual behaviour is required to guarantee the favor of the *tama/marebito*. In the original view, however, the *marebito* plays an outstanding role as a guardian spirit which comes from beyond the community’s perimeter, and in this way local communities, although isolated geographically, are able to connect to a hopeful source of meaning. The threat would rather be in losing contact with this external source of vital energy and therefore falling into stagnation.<sup>38</sup> As a conclusion, we can make a distinct contrast between Freud’s approach to the notion of the “other” as a threat to the *ego*, and Origuchi’s approach to a possible notion of the “other” as protector of the “I”=community.

In the same year, Max Scheler claimed in *The Nature of Sympathy (Wesen und Formen der Sympathie, 1923)* that he had found the solution to the problem of the *ego* and solipsism. For Scheler, sympathy and love are faculties in the human experience which serve as bridges between the self and others. Contrary to the radical polarization of self vs. other, or inner self vs. external world, Scheler shows the artificial and derivative character in the rise of the self as opposed to its exterior. The enclosure of the *ego* in itself is a basic error of self-perception and of morality. Both self and other emerge from a common stream of vital experience, indistinguishable and primary. Inner self and exterior world are identified in the original, primordial experience. It is here that the possibility of raising the perception of the existence of the “other” as a value to the self is grounded. And through this realization all forms of ego-centeredness and solipsism

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<sup>33</sup> As acknowledged by Freud, the *ego* is the only window of the “I” to the external world: “Whereas the *ego* is essentially the representative of the external world, of reality, the super-*ego* stands in contrast to it as the representative of the internal world, of the id. Conflicts between the *ego* and the ideal will, as we are now prepared to find, ultimately reflect the contrast between what is real and what is psychical, between the external world and the internal world” (in FREUD 1986, 459).

<sup>34</sup> To Freud the *ego* is that part of the id “modified by the direct influence of the external world” (in Ford, D. H./Urban, H. B., 1998, *Contemporary Models of Psychotherapy: A Comparative Analysis*, John Wiley & Sons, 199-200).

<sup>35</sup> Notions presented by Greenberg, J. R./Mitchell, S. A. (1983) *Object Relations in Psychoanalytic Theory*, Harvard University Press

<sup>36</sup> Freud depicts the *ego* as “a poor creature owing service to three masters and consequently menaced by three dangers: from the external world, from the libido of the id, and from the severity of the superego.”

<sup>37</sup> For the notion of *aramitama* in Origuchi, see OSz vol. 2, 359-362.

<sup>38</sup> This connects our argument to Origuchi’s view of the *ke/hare* theoretical construction. For the notion of *ke* = “common” see OSz vol. 6, 137; for the notion of *hare* OSz vol. 17, 459.

are overcome. Scheler's analysis will lead us later to the phenomenological approach of the Freiburg school of thought, in Husserl and Heidegger. But we must not fail first to notice that in Origuchi's analysis of the dualism of community-as-self and *marebito*-as-other, precisely what the latter contributes to the scheme is the permanent possibility of overcoming any form of self-centeredness, isolationist drive, or solipsistic self-deterioration as fancies of an immature and morally deficient social self.

Contrary to Buber's stance towards a philosophy of the "absolute other," with an emphasis on its radical difference to the self,<sup>39</sup> Scheler propounded a "relative other," in the sense that the difference is not radical but it is subsumed under the common ground of a primary identification. What then, of the *marebito*-as-other? We would dare to ascribe *marebito*'s difference to radicality rather than to proximity, for according to the original shape of Origuchi's *marebitoron*, there is no common ground to be shared between the community-as-self and the *marebito*. He/it is a total stranger, in appearance (*ikeijin*) as well as in substance (*kami*). Moreover, the *marebito*'s place of origin, the *tokoyo*, remarks radical exteriority in the *marebito*. We have argued that originally, the *marebito* was exclusively associated with the *tokoyo*, not to the heavens or the mountains, which later led to the image of the *marebito* as an ancestor spirit, or *kami* in the Shinto pantheon's style. In contrast, the *tokoyo* represents a place of "absolute" alterity. We are talking then about the meeting of two different planes at one point in space and time, and not of a common sphere which includes two poles that revolve around each other. This is why we find the "absolute" otherness in Buber more akin to Origuchi's position than the "relative" view proposed by Scheler. This difference will also reflect itself in the ethical problem. For according to Scheler, it is the primary identity of the opposites of self and other which makes possible an ethics of otherness and sees the other as value. But from the point of view of Buber and Origuchi, what precisely makes valuable the contact with the other, be it dialogical or ritual, is its radical irreducibility to the sphere of the self. This we may call the transcendent moment in the relational bound self-other. In all cases, however, an ethics of the other is necessarily raised.

The ethical moment is also present in E. Husserl, the most representative philosopher of the Freiburg school. Here, too, we discover that 1923 turns out to be a very significant year. The need to return to the foundational moment of Europe as an intellectual culture<sup>40</sup> is urgently felt in the first volume of his *First Philosophy (Erste Philosophie, 1923)*. The book was written as a response to the deep sense of crisis of values in World War I in German intellectual circles.<sup>41</sup> Just as Origuchi went back to archaic Japan, Husserl went back to ancient Europe to rewrite the history of ideas, and by relying on linguistic or conceptual analysis, sought to discover the clue for a fresh new start. Origuchi, an anti-modernist, believed the clue was hidden in the creases of time, and was only fragmentarily revealed in ancient texts, while the enlightened

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<sup>39</sup> We are conscious that the full development of such a theoretical position is not found in Buber's classic, but for that we have to wait until the emergence of Buber's disciple, E. Lévinas, who proposed a theory of the "absolute Other" in *Time and the Other (Le Temps et l'Autre, 1948)*, which falls beyond the scope of this essay.

<sup>40</sup> *philosophischen Kultur*. Today we have an increasing literature about the myth of the foundation of European philosophy by ancient Greece, a romantic invention, but to bring this issue to our discussion would be completely anachronistic. See the author's position in [www.pensamientoglobal.com](http://www.pensamientoglobal.com).

<sup>41</sup> Perhaps the epitome to this had been the release of Spengler's *The Decline of the West*, just completed in 1922. On the other hand, *Krisis* will constitute a keyword in the philosophy of Husserl since this period until his last writings, as is evidenced in the title of his famous work of 1936, *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology (Die Krisis der Europäischen Wissenschaften und die Transzendente Phänomenologie)*.

Husserl aspired to take a new, further step in the intellectual history of mankind. Moreover, Husserl relies entirely on consciousness,<sup>42</sup> although not on the naturalistic conscious perception of the “psychological ego.” Against a closed, solipsistic understanding of the ego, Husserl propounds a “transcendental ego,” wherein a basis exists which will take us to the genesis of meaning, and in this way he negated the identification of “transcendental” with “transcendent”, the new science of consciousness being called “transcendental phenomenology.” In the search for a pure ego, the process towards the constitution of universal meaning starts from “methodological solipsism” through self-analysis, in the Cartesian tradition. But the self immediately reveals its complete immersion and dependence on its environment, personal, cultural, and historical. The structure of the self is open, and this is called intentionality. As a result the self is only constituted in the realm of intersubjectivity.<sup>43</sup> This is the space where the self encounters others, and through this encounter the ethical autonomy of man is itself constituted, in that the universal community of intellects gives itself its own destiny. The constitution of the community of men includes a plurality of worlds, among them the worlds of strangers, *Fremdwelten*. But universal communication is guaranteed, thanks to the human capacity for intersubjective empathy. In this manner, a “common factual world” (*Erfahrungswelt*) reveals itself as the unified place of intersubjectivity.

At the same time that Husserl undertook the reformulation of the edifice of European philosophy, he had the chance to appeal to a wider readership, when he was invited to contribute *Five Essays on Renewal* (1922-23) to the Japanese journal *Kaizō*. The term “renewal” becomes a transcultural term, comprehensible because of a common crisis of values in Japan as much as in Europe. The desire for renewal was universally felt, but in different ways. Husserl has the chance to address both audiences (that is, Europe and Japan). Husserl sincerely believes that mankind as a whole can and must aspire to create a universal moral order that goes beyond cultural differences. Renewal means above all to situate mankind in ethical life, through rational interaction. The universal community is possible thanks to the dialogic, communicative nature of individuals, who are sensitive to their intersubjective context. But in fact, Husserl’s project is Eurocentric. Universal reason is at the opposite pole of Origuchi’s hermeneutic endeavour in that the Japanese language, the language of Yamato, is an irreducible source of meaning and cannot be translated into the language of universal reason. It is only through linguistic analysis that Origuchi made the discovery of the *marebito*-as-other. Therefore, the encounter with the *marebito*-as-other is not the result of transcendental analysis, but of a context of transcendence. The *marebito*-as-stranger does not belong to the universal community of intellects; its otherness is radical. Its character falls beyond the reach of phenomenological analysis.

In this sense, Heidegger’s stance as thinker of post-metaphysics is closer to our point. Compared to Husserl’s rationalism, Heidegger’s intent to overcome Husserl through ontological analysis is detectable since the same period, a period in which he separated himself from Husserl, his mentor, and which marked the beginning of the so-called Marburg phase. Curiously enough the lecture course written by Heidegger that year bears the name of *Ontology* (*Ontologie*, 1923), as a challenge to phenomenology. There are two points in which the intellectual world of Heidegger approaches that of Origuchi. First, Heidegger operates fully the linguistic turn in the field of phenomenology by introducing the hermeneutical method. In this, Heidegger goes beyond Husserl’s

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<sup>42</sup> In *First Philosophy*, Husserl propounds “a philosophy of beginnings that institutes itself in the most radical philosophical self-consciousness”. Quoted in D. Moran, in Crowell, St./Malpas, J., eds. 2007, *Transcendental Heidegger*, Stanford University Press, 135.

<sup>43</sup> Defined in *First Philosophy* as “subjectivity in community with others.”

rationalism, in that linguistic hermeneutics aspires to understanding the irrational as well as the rational through textual analysis. Also, in textual analysis, the notion of progress wanes. Origuchi similarly chooses hermeneutics, in the nativist tradition, and relies almost entirely on textual linguistic analysis. Second, contrary to progressiveness in Husserl, who tried to move forward, both Heidegger and Origuchi turned their intellectual gaze backwards and believed that meaning could not be construed but was already given. Moreover, Heidegger thought that meaning (or truth) was veiled, hidden, and remained in its purity only in the origin. Because of this, Heidegger wrote about the “forgiveness of Being” (= meaning, truth), ontology being the discipline about Being. Methodologically he returned to the origin of European philosophy and negated history. For him the presocratics, especially Parmenides, represented the pristine moment of the revelation of meaning. We have seen that Origuchi tried to establish a similar agenda. As anti-modern as Heidegger was postmodern, he did not rely on history either: for Origuchi meaning was to be recovered from the fragments pointing to the origin, just as Parmenides *Poem* was fragmentary. For both Origuchi and Heidegger, meaning was preserved in words, in ancient words, and the task was to extract meaning from etymology, the etymology that revealed the original meaning of otherness in the word *marebito*, the etymology that revealed the original meaning of both identity and difference in the Greek word *to on*. Meaning was in both cases a foundational semiotic act.

The 1923 text of *Ontology* consists of a basic outline of the topics that Heidegger developed more systematically in *Being and Time*. Here, too, we find the early shape of the basic tenets of several decisive problems that later raised Heidegger to critical acclaim. In relation to our query, we find a definite philosophy of others already present. The first point we will underline (Heidegger’s stress) is that meaning is mediated by others.<sup>44</sup> Quoting Aristotle, he writes that meaning is attached to “authentic being” in the world.<sup>45</sup> In hermeneutics the linguistic turn is fully operational. Meaning has to do with language in a communicative setting. In this context “the other” makes full appearance. In an early analysis of *Dasein*, “the other” shows the aspect of “other beings-which-are-there with him in the mode of life.”<sup>46</sup> In this way the analytics of *Dasein*, from the beginning, accounts for it in the necessary communal context of “being-with-each-other.”<sup>47</sup> The *Dasein* encounters others in the everyday experience of encountering the world.<sup>48</sup> The *Dasein* is never isolated. But, needless to say the *Dasein* does not always easily identify any experience with other *Dasein* in a common world. There is room for the strange. However, here Heidegger does not develop an argument concerning the other as a “stranger”. He limits his analysis to a phenomenological account of the experience of the “strange” itself from the point of view of the nature of the encounter of *Dasein* with his world. The characteristics of the “strange” are unpredictability and incalculability. They unveil this world as contingent.<sup>49</sup> In sum, in

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<sup>44</sup> Heidegger reviews the history of hermeneutics in the first chapter, in which he quotes the use of of the word in the *Sophist*: “Apherméneue, ‘shall report about’: making known what the others mean.” (6). Heidegger takes a further step in emphasizing that meaning is given in a linguistic community.

<sup>45</sup> The quote goes: “Addressing and discussing something with others (conversation about something) exists in order to safeguard the authentic being of living beings (as they live in their world and by means of it).” (7).

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 23.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 24. This shows, on the other hand, how unfair is the criticism of individualism in the notion of *Dasein* in Heidegger, as interpreted by Heidegger’s Japanese critics since T. Watsuji.

<sup>48</sup> “the others one has something to do with are also there in the everyday things being encountered” (75).

<sup>49</sup> “The strange is only (...) inexplicit familiarity insofar as it has been shaken up and awakened and is now being encountered in the character of unfamiliarity. (...) Through the disturbability of inexplicit

an ontology of encounter, the self-as-*Dasein* finds itself already in an intersubjective space of other selves. In this sense, Heidegger shows his lineage, that is, resulting from the phenomenological analysis we have found, his debt to the notion of intersubjectivity in Husserl. The difference is procedural. If Husserl takes the individual self as the unit of analysis, and from there tries to incorporate the reality of other selves, Heidegger starts from the community of selves from where he strives to arrive at “authentic” individual self. In both cases, the analysis of individual being is mediated by the intersubjective field. With Husserl, this field is universal and not limited by cultural differences, since it is sustained by communicative reason. With Heidegger, this field is eminently cultural, defined by language, and consequently, sustained by linguistic national identity. In *Ontology*, as is the case with Husserl, there is no reference to alterity beyond the problem of being-with-other. We should also call this analysis of the other “relative otherness,” in the sense that absolute alterity is excluded by principle, and that the focus of interest is centered on other selves, which is to say the element of otherness within the self in the domain of intersubjectivity. This leads to a field of analysis of the self-as-other, and conversely, the-other-as-self. The mediation of self and other is the key point here, and the encompassing instrument of analysis, that is, intersubjectivity, is what makes the ontological project possible.

Heidegger later confirmed his ideas in *Being and Time* (*Sein und Zeit*, 1927). Here again, he solved the problem already posed by Husserl about understanding others through the notion of “being-with” (*Mitsein*).<sup>50</sup> But there the seed for a different approach to the topic of otherness is also present, the direct encounter with Being. If Being has no content and cannot be translated into any particular mode of being-in-the-world, then it must be represented as empty. Here the problem of the negation of being leads us to “absolute otherness” as non-being. Non-being then becomes “the nothing,” or “nihilation”. Still, in *Being and Time*, Heidegger does not develop his positive philosophy of nihilism, for which we will have to wait until his intellectual turn known as *Kehre*. By 1923, Heidegger is still trying to cross the limits of the phenomenological approach to the topic of the “others”, and does not address as yet fully the problem of Being-as-Other.<sup>51</sup>

In Origuchi, we have seen that the source of being is in otherness, a statement that can be traced back to his *marebitoron* of 1923. So far, in our comparative analysis we have been able to discern two types of discourse regarding alterity. On the one hand, we have a kind of theoretical elaboration regarding the relation between the self and the “others”, who are recognised as other selves, in the unified realm called intersubjectivity, which is the material from which the community is made. We have called this type of approach “relative otherness,” but we might also call it “immanent otherness,” in the sense that

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familiarity, what is being encountered is there in its *unpredictability*, its *incalculability*. The there encountered has the peculiar rigidity of something oppressive, contingent” (77). Needless to say, it is precisely this contingent character that makes the world an open structure where *événement* can take place, as Heidegger’s French disciples have explained.

<sup>50</sup> Husserl had acknowledged that the phenomenological leap from experiencing one’s own self to experiencing the other’s self was a difficult problem for phenomenology. Heidegger starts his ontological analysis by negating the radicality of the distance between my experience and the other’s experience. He states: “...because Dasein’s Being is Being-with [*Mitsein*], its understanding of Being already implies the understanding of Others” (HEIDEGGER 1927/1962, 161).

<sup>51</sup> In parallel with Heidegger’s turn to “facticity”, K. Jaspers published both the 3rd. Edition of his *Allgemeine Psychopathologie* (1913/1923), and *Die Idee der Universität* (1923), in which he tried to take a step away from the threat of both rationalism and scientism. He would later reinstate the enlightened project of universal wisdom, but as of 1923, he presented no particular reflection on otherness, further than taking the patient as a singular individuality, and building an academic community based on mutual respect.



the whole display of self and other is confined to the sphere of the community-as-world. But there is another type of discourse on alterity which we have called “absolute otherness,” or “transcendent otherness.” Here the problem is not about the “others” but about the “Other”. And the place of exchange is not within the community, but in the liminal space where this world gets connected with other worlds. The first type leads to social discourse, the second is clearly religious. The first type emphasizes interiority, the second exteriority. The first, subjectivity and time-perception, the second objectivity and the importance of place. In the Judeo-Christian tradition about otherness we can discern a mixed type. For the “absolute Other” becomes a conversational partner, a “Thou”. In this sense it retains the dialogical structure of the first type, which is projected into the transcendent field of exteriority. We might say that exteriority and immanence coalesce into one single vision. In the second type, the perception of place and time, in any case, creates sacredness. We have seen that the visit of the *marebito*, which is occasional and unexpected in the beginning, tends to accommodate to festival time. The context of the religious festival moves our frame of mind beyond the requirements of dialogue and rationality. The exchange with otherness is then meta-linguistic, in the sense that ritual poetry, in which the *marebito* is directly addressed, is not of the dialogical type, and the ritual formulas uttered by the *marebito*-performer in festivals are magical and not communicative.<sup>52</sup> Now, magical language involves irrationality.

This is precisely what is remarked in another canonic work published in 1923. R. Otto’s *Das Heilige* (1923). Here we enter common ground. There are numerous references to characteristics of religious discourse that correspond to our analysis of the *marebitoron*. We must mention the notion of the “numinous” (das *Numinose*) or the mysterious, already borrowed in our previous analysis, and its several moments, starting from “Power” (*Übermächtig*), “Energy” (*Energisch*), and above all “the moment of mysterium (the “absolute Other”, *das “Ganz Andere”*). “Absolute otherness” awakens in us the primordial religious experience of entering a different dimension, the feeling of the “strange”, the “unusual”, the unfamiliar,<sup>53</sup> in a word, “emotion” (*stupor*). The feeling of “absolute otherness” is attached to impressive objects that pertain to the natural, animal, or human order, objects “unfathomable” and “beyond conception,” which stand in opposition to our common sense due to their dissimilarity (*dissimilitas*) and accessibility only through mystic experience. We might then add the “fascinating” moment, and so we arrive at the full list of characterizations of the numinous which are equivalent with Origuchi’s description of the figure of the *marebito*.<sup>54</sup> All the elements listed above are applicable to the *marebito*. Certainly, in *marebito* we discern the features of “uncommon power” (*reii*), “vital primary energy”, “otherness”, “strangeness”, “religious emotion”, “dissimilarity” (*ikei*) and “fascination”, and just as

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<sup>52</sup> We might express this in John L. Austin’s terminology, saying that language in the *marebito* exchange with the community is of the “performative utterance” type, while its meaning in its use as a common “locutionary act” is subordinated to its character as “illocutionary act”. See Austin (1962) *How to Do Things with Words*, The Clarendon Press.

<sup>53</sup> See the following sentence: “Diese selber aber, nämlich das religiös Mysteriöse, das echte M̄rum, ist, um es vielleicht am treffendsten auszudrücken, das ‘Ganz andere’, das thāteron, das anyad, das alienum, das aliud valde, das Fremde und Befremdende, das aus dem Bereiche des Gewohnten Verstandenen un Vertrauten und darum ‘Heimlichen’ überhaupt Herausfallende und zu ihm in Gegensatz sich Setzende und darum das Gemüt mit starrem Staunen Erfüllende” (OTTO 1923/1963, 31).

<sup>54</sup> Of course, there are other moments in Otto’s description of the numinous which are bracketed here, not just to evade the problem of dissonance between both discourses, but because methodologically we are focusing on defining a possible theoretical ground common to both authors regarding the perception of otherness.

in Otto's analysis, the comprehensive word that encompasses all these features is "divine" (*das Heilige = kami*).<sup>55</sup>

In the section dedicated to the analysis of "total heterogeneity", Otto displays his appreciation of the concepts of emptiness and nihilism in the Indian Hindu and Buddhist traditions. This places his analysis in a special position, a step further than the authors we have previously reviewed. Already in 1923, Otto connects the problem of the perception of heterogeneity with the inapprehensibility of the object, leading him to the consideration of emptiness and nihilism in Eastern traditions. This connection clearly precedes the argument displayed later by Heidegger, and more conspicuously noted by interested critics than the precursory task performed by Otto.

The notion of heterogeneity applied to Origuchi's *marebitoron* presents two poles: heteromorphy and heterotopy. Heteromorphy refers to the way the presence of the *marebito* is acknowledged by the community, that is, as a strange visitor (*ikeijin*), and heterotopy refers to the way the community imagines the place of origin of the *marebito*, the *tokoyo* as exteriority. Thus far, in our comparative analysis we have been able to trace possible transcultural points of reference in relation to the otherness of the *marebito*, but the only reference to the contextual topology attached to this figure appears as transcendence, and depends on Judeo-Christian theology, or secondarily as the nothing, no-place attached to Buddhist philosophy. The *tokoyo* can be analyzed both as a place of transcendence, comparable to *Takamagahara*, and as a no-place, inasmuch as there is no imagery about its shape or topology, or even about its cosmological coordinates, that is, an u-topia. It is just another place. But in 1923 there already exists the possibility of looking at it from another theoretical framework, that is perhaps more adequate. In this year, following a visit by Einstein to Japan, the journal *Kaizō* edited an article covering the theory of relativity. The article had a strong influence on intellectual circles and provoked a broad spreading of the notion of a multi-dimensional world and the relativity of time-space. Poets and artists started contributing their private imagery to the topic of other worlds and their connection to ours, among them, the utopist poet and writer Miyazawa Kenji. Miyazawa's world view recalls some features we have discerned so far in our analysis of the *marebito*-as-other. Already, in his most expressive pieces of free verse, which appeared as *Spring and Asura* (*Haru to Shura*, vol. 1, 1923), Miyazawa gives way to his bizarre self-perception and world-perception. Looking for a full integration of all dimensions of existence, he calls into a single line of thought a wide variety of heterogeneous elements which assemble themselves following his unique principle of arrangement. By so doing, he positions himself at a liminal point where different lines of space and time cross freely and intermingle. This he calls the "fourth-dimensional extension".<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> We cannot overlook the fact that there is a striking coincidence between many features characteristic of Kokugaku's traditional emphasis on a theological hermeneutics of the irrational in *kami* discourse and Otto's phenomenology of the divine. Comparative studies in Kokugaku circles of the 20th century have been discouraged nonetheless. An exception is the line of research followed by Nakano Yūzō's comparative perspective in his study of Motoori Norinaga and the 19th century nativist Tachibana Moribe's notions of *kami*. See 「橘守部の神理解」『神道宗教』第184・185号、2002.

<sup>56</sup> He writes in the "Preface" to *Spring and Asura*: "All of these propositions/Are asserted within a fourth-dimensional extension/As mental images and the nature of time itself". (1923, English translation follows Kaneko in S. Glick, ed. 1987, *The Comparative Reception of Relativity*, Springer, 365-367). He also uses the expression "four dimensional structure" in the original manuscript, which he later discarded. For the discussion on whether Miyazawa is following an Einsteinian scheme or a Bergsonian appreciation of time as *durée*, see the argument which follows the quotation offered above in *ibid*.

The introduction of a fourth extension has the consequence of opening up the world of common experience to the experience of alterity, which will be the base whereon Miyazawa will build up his richly imaginary cosmology. Fantasy and imagination are not opposed to reality and objectivity, but all are part of a multi-dimensional and integrated perception. Then life becomes art.<sup>57</sup> In *The Spring and Asura*, Miyazawa places heterogeneity right in the centre. He presents himself as other than human, identifying with an Asura, a demonic entity in Buddhist cosmology who defends Buddhist law.<sup>58</sup> In sum, Miyazawa's poetic world also presents itself through the features of heterogeneity. The poet-as-Asura becomes a heterogeneous being from a heterogeneous place. The effect is transience, a poetic-shamanic experience, through which the unconscious mind operates in our world.<sup>59</sup> In Miyazawa's poetry, landscape is presented as a place of transformation, through the eye of heterogeneity. Doubtless, Miyazawa's world and Origuchi's intersect at one point, but they should not be confused. For one thing, whereas Origuchi rejects modernity and his linguistic commitment is very selective and reductive, Miyazawa incorporates the lexicon of modern science together with local expressions of tradition in a non-discriminative outlook, and by doing so situates himself beyond the dichotomy of ancient-modern, national-foreign. However, from the point of view of a philosophy of heterogeneity, in Miyazawa we find the most conspicuous example of an intellectual coetaneous to Origuchi, in which we also find the features of "heteromorphy" and "heterotopy", although in a unique sense of these words.<sup>60</sup> In relation to the "other", the main difference is perhaps that while in Origuchi the "other" appears as a foreign presence towards the I-community, in *Spring and Asura* the "other" is "I".

Finally, we must mention the publication in 1923 of two classic works in the field of cultural anthropology, namely, the English translation of L. Lévy-Bruhl's *La Mentalité primitive* (*Primitive Mentality*, 1922), and J. G. Frazer's abridged one-volume edition of *The Golden Bough* (1890/1923). For the purposes of our discussion we will focus on three ideas which L. Lévy-Bruhl presents in the former work. First, the importance the author gives to the unconscious way the primitive mind structures its world. Secondly, the belief in unseen powers found among primitive people. Third, the notion that the primitive worldview is not inferior to the civilised mind, but rather a totally different mode of thought. In Frazer's reedition (1923), which became very popular, we find several references to Japan in connection with the main topics treated in the essay, but nothing which connects his pioneering research with the question of otherness. He will

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<sup>57</sup> Consider Miyazawa's sentence: "Should we not make all of our fields and all of our life into one huge four-dimensional art?" (1926, in KATŌ 1979, 252). For comparative purposes, see K. Nishida's notion of "absolute free will" (*Art and Morality, Geijutsu to dōtoku*, 1923), in relation to Miyazawa's notion of freedom in artistic expression.

<sup>58</sup> The following poem is wellknown in this respect:

The bitterness and the lividness of rage  
Spits to the depths of April's atmospheric strata  
Goes to and back, teeth gnashing  
I ... am ... an ... Asura.

(KATŌ 1979, 252).

<sup>59</sup> This is what the poet G. Snyder calls the "savage" wisdom, which he saw in Miyazawa (*The Back Country*, 1967).

<sup>60</sup> It might be pointed out that there is a great difference between Miyazawa's Buddhist monistic outlook and Origuchi's traditionalistic Shinto outlook, but as a poet, Miyazawa's Buddhism does not function in opposition to the *kami* world, for it is comprehensive. Miyazawa expresses "emotion" in front of "The Dancers of Haratai Village", "strangely dressed beneath a crescent moon" (KATŌ 1979, 252). At the same time, in *Spring and Asura*, heterotopy points to the liminal space where the poet situates himself between worlds, and not to a utopic distant world like the *tokoyo*.

nonetheless mention a few examples of possible interest from a comparative viewpoint: the author's treatment of the subject of the external soul, in relation to the proto-shamanic belief in the absence and return of the soul, might offer us a modified version of diverse techniques for propitiation of the soul, and shows a certain structural parallelism to the topic of the visit by the stranger and the invigorating result. Another aspect of interest lies in his argument that magic precedes religion. In this context, it would not be amiss to recall the confrontation between Origuchi's stance in favor of shamanic practices in the Tohoku region, and the official religious-minded opposition to magic in powerful academic and political circles of the Shinto establishment. Of secondary interest in *The Golden Bough* is the treatment of the human incarnation of gods, and the fear of the stranger, which contrasts with the "fascination" towards the other we have found in Otto's work.<sup>61</sup> In sum, in the early twenties, cultural anthropology was inclined to study the problem of the primitive mind, "primitive culture", "primitive language", or even primitive psychology,<sup>62</sup> and held a privileged position, eminently suited to the study of ancient beliefs of the *marebito* type. But in fact, the problem of the other would not be posed until much later, and we only find a precursory statement of the primitive mind as totally other in Lévy-Bruhl, who on the other hand does not touch upon the figure of otherness within ancient culture, but only raises the methodological problem of how to constitute a discipline which can integrate heterogeneous cultures.

### 3

In the field of critical literature on *marebito*, E. Ohnuki-Tierney stands out for proposing a model for understanding *marebito* in the guise of a stranger as well as a foreigner, a viewpoint derived from the semiotics of the other, the other being a projection of the self to the outside, thus generating a given dynamics of re-appropriation.<sup>63</sup> In this sense, rather than seeing it as a feature of ancient Japanese beliefs, Ohnuki-Tierney sees *marebito* as an expression of a primordial psychological trait that underlies Japanese cultural history. Her interpretation opens up the possibility of understanding *marebito* as the other, and creates a space for discussing *marebito* in the context of the dialectic self-other. It is of particular interest in that it permits us to take a step further from Origuchi's *marebitoron*. By bringing forth the symbolic potentials contained in the figure of the *marebito*-as-other, Ohnuki-Tierney rescues its powerful appeal from the arcana of classical literature and remote mountain rituals, and uses it as an instrument to reassess the capacity of Japanese culture to relate as an island civilization to its exterior, which is to say the world. In an updated context of mutual exchange, that is, the necessity to appreciate the external power of reinvigorating the self, Ohnuki-Tierney has recently turned Origuchi's *marebitoron* into a major contribution to the semiotics of culture that is perfectly in line with Western reflective traditions of the type of philosophies of the other analyzed in this essay.

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<sup>61</sup> See on this respect chs. LXVI and LXVII of *The Golden Bough*.

<sup>62</sup> In the field of cultural psychology see examples in C. Bartlett, *Psychology and Primitive Culture* (1923); J. Piaget, *Le Langage et la pensée chez l'enfant* (1923); from the ethnographic field, Br Malinowski's "The Problem of Meaning in Primitive Languages" (1923); from the field of phenomenology, see vol. 1 of E. Cassirer *Philosophy of Symbolic Forms* (1923).

<sup>63</sup> Ohnuki-Tierney states: "I propose that from the perspective of reflexivity, the *marebito*, or stranger-outsider deities who come from outside a settlement or outside of Japan, constitute the semiotic *other* for the Japanese, which is symbolically equivalent to their transcendental self, that is, the *self* perceived at a higher level of abstraction than a reflective self" (OHNUKI-TIERNEY 1993/1994, 54).

Another modern scholar, Richard B. Pilgrim,<sup>64</sup> has pointed out the importance of the spatial reference of the *kekai*, or place where the *marebito* is received at New Year in the shrine or the home. The *marebito* is understood as “vague, formless energies or spirits (*tama*)” whose presence is somehow perceived (*kehai*) as visiting the human realm from “the other world” (*tokoyo no kuni*) or the mountains. As we have seen, in clear contrast to the shrine system of the post-Meiji Shinto establishment, in Origuchi’s symbolic topology the *home* has a privileged position. The polarity of the household receives its tension from the farthest possible place to it, the *tokoyo*. At the same time, the *marebito* belongs to a different nature from the Takamagahara pantheon, marking its peripheral position, but at the same time its vital function for the social fabric to be able to survive, which reveals a conspicuously pre-structuralist outlook. Its numinous nature detaches it from the anthropomorphic or zoomorphic type of the *kami* in the Shinto pantheon. For the *marebito* can take a number of different guises, and its presence is felt even in some festivals, but remains unseen, confirming what we have already seen in Origuchi. This puts conceptual limits to an indiscriminate expansion of the theoretical potentials in *marebito* as a symbolic notion. In the context of the exchange between the self and the other, not any kind of exchange will result in a spiritual benefit for the self. The importance of place should be kept in mind, as well as the proper rhetoric of exchange. Ritual place and rhetoric can be reinterpreted to apply to the present. The home will always have a “sacred” meaning as the supportive and living spatial reference of the self. This topology generates a rhetoric whereby the self must act as “host” and the visitor coming from the exterior, defined by the limits of the home, must act as “guest”. The guest brings vital new energy to the home, so that the living space does not deteriorate into a closed shell. The home as an open structure requires this kind of exchange. The stronger the tension between host and guest, that is the farther the distance from where the guest originates, the higher the spiritual capacity for renewal. In this way, the threshold, or the hearth, play a symbolically important role as liminal places for the encounter with “an other” who comes from another dimension.

The postmodern philosopher Nakazawa Shin’ichi (1950-) has published a monographic essay on the intellectual personality of Origuchi, (*Kodai kara kita miraijin Orikuchi Shinobu*, ‘O. Sh.: A Man of the Future Coming from the Past’ 2008). In an interview published earlier in France (2006), he acknowledged Origuchi to be an inspirational figure for his own philosophical endeavours. He also declared that although Origuchi has remained marginal because his thinking does not fit into any great system of thought, his way of thinking presented a unique and irreducible character. As a “philosopher of difference,” Origuchi is nothing less than vindicated by Nakazawa.<sup>65</sup>

In his book Nakazawa offers an original insight about the persistence of the symbolic role of the notion of *marebito* in the present, and stresses the mediation that the *marebito* performs between the other world and our world. For Nakazawa, *marebito* incarnates the exterior in our world, and brings with him spiritual heterogeneity. His idea of the *marebito* represents a formal and conceptual way of expressing the need to host the incursion of the infinitely distant. It is not just a literary metaphor, but a primary source for the possibility of “opening a passage to a heterogeneous world”. Concerning the *tokoyo*, Nakazawa points to Origuchi’s expression, “the home of the soul” (*tamashii no furusato*), as a nostalgia for a paradise lost and the desire to regain it. In this sense, the notion of *marebito* in Origuchi goes beyond academic query to

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<sup>64</sup> In “Intervals (*Ma*) in Space and Time: Foundations for a Religio-Aesthetic Paradigm in Japan”, in FU 1995, 55-80.

<sup>65</sup> See “Dialogue 3” in KASSILE 2006, 41.

become a vital matter. In a second sense, the *tokoyo* points to “the other world” (*ano yo*), whose passage to “this world” is made by the *marebito*. In this sense, the *marebito* are identified with the “spirits of the dead” (*seirei*), who appear in festivals held in many small islands of southern Japan, and who by wearing masks and covering themselves with vegetation, open a passage to the other world in people’s minds. The belief in *marebito* sustained in many different forms throughout the Japanese archipelago is evidence in favour of a kind of realism in Origuchi’s thinking that went beyond his poetical intuition. In sum, the notion of *marebito* is proof of Origuchi’s originality.<sup>66</sup>

We have seen that the notion of *marebito* can be taken in a variety of meanings, and that several interpretations are possible. From the conceptual viewpoint this might lead some critics to discard the term as not apt for a genuine philosophical discussion, but from the semiotic point of view, its partial ambiguity has the advantage of a symbolic richness that is absent in more abstract philosophical vocabulary. What I propose in this essay is to consider whether it is possible to translate this symbolic notion into a coherent philosophical discourse. Of course, this requires interpretation, that is, an application of the symbolic richness of the concept to a definite setting of argumentation. I have explored the possibility of interpreting *marebito* as a notion about “the other”, and I have checked all possible elements that can be found there regarding heterogeneity, like heteromorphy and heterotopy, and this in a global context. Discourses about the other are varied, and belong to different fields of knowledge. Our interpretation of *marebito*-as-other proves to be original within the context of the general conceptions of otherness. It is not possible to subsume it into any of the discourses on the other analyzed in this essay. In my opinion the *marebito* remains an outstanding contribution by Origuchi to a key problem in today’s philosophical debates. It cannot be reduced to a simple mechanism of projection of the self into its exterior: it is exteriority itself. It cannot be reduced to the interplay between self and other within the context of intersubjectivity. Nor is it reducible to the limits of theological discourse, for the *marebito*-as-*kami* does not fit well into any given pantheon. It has not been proved, I believe, that it can simply be identified with the cult of ancestors. It is a much more radical concept. Its utopian component, its radical heterogeneity, impels us to treat this notion in its own proper context, that is to say the liminality of space and the suggestion of a multidimensional conception of reality. Origuchi was not a philosopher: rather he passed on to posterity a half-poetic, half-intuitive notion associated with a suggestive word from antiquity. It is our task to draw out the potentiality of this notion and to transform it into a valid concept for today’s philosophical discourse. If my interpretation of the *marebito*-as-other is correct, then we may take a further step and with a simple grammar of transitivity, postulate the notion of the other-as-*marebito* and explore the consequences. For instance, might we not transpose “total otherness” into the realm of intersubjectivity? This is what Origuchi seems to suggest. *Marebito* seems to have such a potential. It requires an expectation, a protocol, a treatment, a celebration, all driven by the nostalgic desire for the “other”. It also involves an “ethics of hospitality” in a general framework of a theory of exchange.<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> See the chapter entitled 「「まれびと」の発見」 in NAKAZAWA 2008a, 30-52. NAKAZAWA 2008b, 166, situates the *marebito* type of *kami* within the broader framework of a theory of images, stressing the interface functionality of these *kami*, connecting the world of things seen with the realm of things unseen.

<sup>67</sup> It calls for consideration in the line of recent hermeneutical theories of “hospitality”, inspired by in Augustine, and following, s defined by Heidegger, Lévinas, Sartre, Ricoeur, and Derrida. See a general presentation in W. Ogletree (1985) *Hospitality to the Stranger: Dimensions of Moral Understanding*, Fortress Press.

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APPENDIX : MAREBITO IN THE ESSAYS OF ORIGUCHI. SOURCES IN OS-ZENSHŪ

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