

cPANEL 11: Literature and Art after Fukushima, timeslot 5

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Post-Fukushima Literary Discourses on Food and Eating

There has been a strong fear of radiation-contaminated food after the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear disaster, and individual and societal attitudes towards food safety have increasingly been keen. However, there is a curious phenomenon that some literary works, such as those written by Taguchi Randy, show a certain resistance to a popular discourse of food safety and question modern perception of food and eating as well as the underlying relationships between humans and the environment. Analyzing post-Fukushima discourses of food safety and literary resistance to them, I intend to discuss how language affects public interest in, and perception of, food and eating.

Lisa Mundt, Goethe-University

Staging Dystopia? Theatrical and Artistic Responses to 'Fukushima'

Since the triple disaster hit Japan in March 2011, a number of playwrights and artists have felt the desire to find challenging and creative ways to respond to "Fukushima" and to the preceding subtle "disempowerment of the public" (Mishima Ken'ichi) in Japan. All these artists have expressed their desire to contribute to a change in Japanese society. I therefore consider it essential that discussing "Fukushima" in an artistic context also means rethinking the political potential of theatre and the performing arts today. This question will be discussed by taking a closer look at two works created in response to "Fukushima" in 2011: *Real Times*, a video which shows members of the performing art collective ChimPom setting up a flag on top of an overlook near the Fukushima Power Plant, and the *Referendum Project*, an interactive performance created by the leader of the renowned theatre troupe Port B, Takayama Akira.

Ina Hein, University of Vienna

Narratives of Trauma and Healing in the Aftermath of Japan's Triple Catastrophe: Yoshimoto Banana's *Sweet hereafter*

Yoshimoto Banana's newest novel *Sweet hereafter*, published in November 2011, refers to Russell Banks' 1991 text of the same title. The latter deals with the question how parents in a small American town cope with the loss of their children who had been killed in a bus accident. Yoshimoto's narrative takes up the traffic accident theme: Her female protagonist survives a car crash, heavily injured, while her partner dies. The story does not address the events of March 11 directly, but Yoshimoto links them together by dedicating the novel to all the people who have experienced the triple catastrophe. The paper aims to analyze how Yoshimoto redirects the device of *iyashi* (healing), which has been one of the main characteristics of her oeuvre so far, in order to connect her novel to the wider context of Japan's traumatic experiences of the catastrophe.