

STANCE-TAKING IN DAZAI OSAMUGYAKKO AND AKUTAGAWA RONEN; RECONSTRUCTING THE “REAL” INTENTION BEHIND THE ELDERY CHARACTERS’ UTTERANCES

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ABSTRACT

The narrative of the senile elderly tends to be interpreted through the stigmatized lens of the senile, which is often unassociated with the real intentions of the elderly. This is similar to the stigmatized views that people have of the autistic, in which an autistic person’s intentions are often misinterpreted because of the other participant’s subjectivity (Oches, 2008).

In this paper, the polysemic nature of the inter subjectivity in the narratives of the elderly characters in two Japanese novels

(“Gyakko” by Dazai and “Ronen” by Akutagawa) is examined from three perspectives: 1) the intersubjectivity and arraignment in stance-taking (Du Bois, 2007); 2) the concept of framing and reframing (Tannen, 2006); and 3) the poetic truth of sincerity (Abrams, 1953).

Consequently, the identities and experience of the elderly from their golden age are recast in the stereotypes toward the elderly characters when the other characters evaluate the utterances of the elderly. Even though the elderly character has limited utterances, every time the author adds a further context, there are further subjectivities added to the narration. These second framings create a visual shift as each new character has a new position and a different subjective recollection, which makes the readers doubt the quality of the information (Grice, 1975) from the elderly person’s utterances. The tense management also affects the credibility of the elderly person’s recollections. These subjectivities are enabled by the author’s control of the narrative rather than by what the characters say.

KEYWORDS: *Alignment Inter subjectivity poetic truth of sincerity Prosodic polysemism subjectivity the maxim of quality.*

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