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Confused Reality: The War Masks in Japanese Author, Hikaru Okuizumi's *The Stones Cry Out* and Argentine Author, Jorge Luis Borges' "The Garden of Forking Paths"

Rachel McCoppin

University of Minnesota Crookston

Carl Jung connects the idea that the mask is the persona one presents to the world; "the persona acts...to conceal the true nature of the individual. It is a social role or mask which acts as a mediator between the inner world and the social world, and which constitutes the compromise between the individual and society" (Hudson 54). The concept of the mask as persona is common in literature, and global modernity is no exception. Oftentimes characters are so enveloped within false or unreliable personas that they fool and confuse the reader. The masks they wear serves as a front to society and the characters they interact with, but sometimes characters are so effectively masked that they become unclear of their own realities, and become unreliable narrators.

The masks one wears as a compromise with the self and perceived societal expectations can become dangerous; in some situations of extreme trauma, one's subconscious need for a false persona can become elevated. As Hudson contends, people who encounter horrific events, like war, often resort to identification with a false persona as a defense mechanism:

Prior to an acute episode it is not unusual...to have a period of increased persona identification, corresponding with the increased activity of the primitive defense mechanisms of splitting, denial, and projective identification. The greater the distance between the good and bad internalized objects due to splitting and denial, the more exaggerated the persona. (57)

Yet, when one's defense mechanisms can no longer hold "an acute psychotic episode occurs," and the persona is revealed as such replaced, at least temporarily, by the true identity (Hudson 58). This aspect of shedding the persona to reveal the true self is found in both Hikaru Okuizumi's *The Stones Cry Out* and Jorge Luis Borges' "The Garden of Forking Paths." Both works include characters who are masked in order to hide guilt or trauma experienced by war, and both undergo psychotic episodes where the mask is taken off and the protagonist's true identity briefly appears. In both works, the true identity that is finally revealed corresponds with modern subjectivity past societal expectations and conventions. Both authors' works contend that a new modern subjectivity is needed in order for their respective cultures to move forward into the modern era, but the key is for the individual to subjectively decide to both embrace

essential new elements moving into the culture, but also to firmly preserve important traditional values.

World War I and II served as a common and important theme within the modern era; many authors world-wide wrote about the cost of war. Because of these wars, post-war society and literature were changed in countless ways on a global scale. Modern European and American authors felt that traditional literary and philosophic structures could no longer portray what the world had been through, so the movement of Modernism sought to “make it new.” The style and format of many modern works underwent a profound change. Many European and American modern authors also believed that they had the ability to give meaning back to this new world of nothingness, and they did this by oftentimes turning to the modern philosophical movement of Existentialism. Existentialism holds that “truth” can only come to the individual subjectively; one must subjectively search for “truth” past traditional structures, like government, religion, and society. Friedrich Nietzsche and Jean-Paul Sartre both embraced the importance of the subjective individual, but out of this embrace of the individual, comes the importance of the individual’s accountability and responsibility towards others. In the literature of this era, where the theme of war is an aspect of most of its works, this existential theme of personal accountability for one’s actions becomes increasingly important.

Modernism literature that is not European or American oftentimes holds many of the same tenets as European and American Modernism, but there are important differences and additions that should be noted. First it should be necessary not to label modern literature that is not European or American in origin as peripheral or secondary. The modern works that are from areas outside of Europe and America are often distinct from their western counterparts, but these differences should be embraced as integral to readers’ understanding of Modernism; as Edward Said stated “Modernism needs to be reevaluated as a transnational movement that is inextricably linked to its history of colonialism, imperialism, war, and the outcomes of travel, commerce, media, immigration, and imagination” (Qtd in Tiampo 4). Therefore, this paper adopts Nicola Miller’s concept of “multiple modernities” where “other experiences of modernization resulted in other conceptions of modernity” (3). This idea of “multiple modernities” is an important one because it offers a broader view of what is generally conceived of as Modernism, and it allows readers to experience the great scope of the modern movement worldwide. This paper analyzes Okuizumi’s *The Stones Cry Out* and Borges’ “The Garden of Forking Paths” for their essential contribution to Modernism. Through their depiction of masked characters, they reveal the importance of blending modern subjectivity with their traditional cultures.

Both Japan and Argentina encountered a great influx of western culture in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the beginning of the modern era. This new and vast introduction of western culture influenced the artistic works of both cultures, but both cultures maintain traditional local aspects within their works as well, creating an

important and compelling version of what is understood to be Modernism. Both Japanese and Argentine Modernism make use of western tenets, such as new styles and literary formats and the existential importance of the individual and the need for accountability, yet both cultures do so in a distinct way connected to their local tradition. Both cultures include elements of the costs of war, violence, and destruction that defined the era, and both cultures also predominantly add an element of natural mysticism or Magic Realism to their modern works, again attributed to their local tradition.

Early in the twentieth century Japan experienced a massive industrial transformation, directly tied to its decision to serve Allied forces in WWI; in two decades Japan's industry underwent explosive change, leading to Japan feeling overwhelmed by Modernism (Harootunian xi). Like European and American Modernism, Japanese Modernism strove to foster in an era of new beginnings, directly moving away from the restrictions of the past, but many Japanese critics felt uncomfortable with this shift; they "targeted the shallowness of Japan's new civilization, its commitment to the machine, money, and materiality, and Japan's addiction to a derivative culture...that clearly belonged to another's historical experience...Japanese critics could recognize that their adopted culture was an imitation, a reification of a reification, a mask covering a mask" (Harootunian x). This sense of wanting to maintain and also develop a new culture unique to Japan, not a copy of another culture, is an important element within Japanese Modernism.

After World War I and II, Japanese culture witnessed a focalization of the Western, and existential, sense of the importance of the individual and subjectivity; one result of Modernism in Japan was "the emergence of the individual with a strong sense of self-awareness" (Morton 14). Before the start of this modern age, much of Japanese culture focused on the vitality of collective objectivity. This shift towards the importance of the individual clashed severely with the traditional values of the people as a whole and their duty to their emperor. This new focus of identity reveals the uniqueness of Japanese modernity.

In European and American Modernism this idea of the importance of the subjective individual already dominated western literature, but in Japan's modern era a clash of values can be witnessed between the importance of individuality and the collective. The new modern Japanese person subjectively retained "decision-making competence as the arbiter of competing demands. Ethically, he never relies solely on external controls and rules, but rather is equipped with internalized constraints—a conscience...He responds...to universal, transcendental values and hence has the capacity to resist social and political pressure" (Koschmann 264). It is this new tenet of subjective self-actualization that led to works such as Okuizumi's *The Stones Cry Out*. It is this modern individuality in Japan that led to a questioning of the cost of war and violence; "What disturbed [modern Japanese] writers about the prewar period was...the fact that the people submitted, easily and in good faith, to the excess of leadership" (Gluck 25).

Okuizumi's *The Stones Cry Out* traces its protagonist, Manase, from a traumatic experience at the close of World War II, to the rest of his civilian life. Manase wears a mask of unreliability throughout the whole work that is related to his trauma of his war experience. He is so masked that he cannot remember the war in a decisive way; memories and flashbacks only haunt him through unreliable and confusing nightmares. The book slowly reveals that Manase is a masked character; one that is hiding, unintentionally, a very sinister past. His true self, and his true past, force him to dispel the mask he wears at the close of the novel, thus embracing the new modern Japanese tenet of choice that must come with the new subjectivity of the era. Because Manase did not embrace subjective modern choice in his war experiences, he became masked to live in accordance to his conception of traditional Japanese culture, but once he is able to unmask himself, he becomes a modern subjective individual who is also firmly rooted within Japanese tradition.

The book opens with Manase in Leyte at the end of the war; he is wandering around lost after his comrades have been killed in battle. He encounters a group of fellow Japanese soldiers in a cave who also have been wandering around at the close of the war searching for direction or salvation. They are depicted as all being very near death; they are starving and injured, many of which are unable to move. Manase is drawn to them because they are with an important character to the plot, the captain; he holds control over these lost men and will also hold power over Manase most of his life. The captain is depicted as being mentally unstable; when Manase and the other lost soldiers encounter him, his entire regiment has been killed, and now he believes that this group of wandering soldiers are his men alive again. He wields a sword that he uses to put men out of their misery by slitting their throats when they are very near death. One by one, the captain ceremoniously kills the wounded men. Manase is compelled by the confusion of the captain serving for him as either a monster or an agent of mercy. Manase's confusion over what role the captain actually plays is central to Manase's persona he wears after this war experience. His draw to the captain also corresponds to the new concept in Japanese modernity of individual subjectivity. Throughout the novel the captain serves as Manase's inner dilemma between subjective free will and blind devotion to a leader.

Manase's relationship to the lance corporal he meets in this cave also represents the core message of the novel. If the captain is Manase's struggle to follow a traditional Japanese devotion to authority for the collective betterment, the lance corporal represents a new modern subjective Japan, but this representation is unique to Modernism. For Manase the lance corporal promises a new modern subjective choice and identity away from the traditional collective, but he also represents a maintenance of lasting Japanese values that remain and define Japanese Modernism as different from its European and American counterpart.

Japanese Modernism meshes together quintessential modern tenets with Japan's traditional system of values. This is what makes Japanese Modernism unique to Japan;

Japanese critics felt that "America itself was a country that possessed no traditional culture, as such, and thus had no access to a solid residue of durable values" (Harootunian 59). Japanese modernists strove to attain a new cultural philosophy that was similar to western Modernism, but they also understood the importance of maintaining their important history as well as a core set of traditional values that would not be "made new" as European and American modernists declared as essential.

When Manase meets the lance corporal, he has only days to live, as maggots swarm his eye sockets; he only lies within the cave and talks to Manase about geology. Though their encounter was brief, the lance corporal and his discussion of geology leave an impression upon Manase that will serve as his salvation throughout the novel, as well as a modern anti-war message for the reader. The lance corporal's discussion of geology is philosophical in nature and ties to the perseverance of traditional Japanese values within its modern movement.

Inherent in Japanese literature back to the classic era is the respect for the simplicity of everyday life and nature. Many of Japan's most famous literary works focus on the importance of nature and its healing properties for the lost or pained individual. Many Japanese modernists were "drawn to the provincial past because it seems to them to offer an antidote to the present...the most predictable perhaps is their interest in *sesoshi*, or *seikatsushi*, the history of everyday life—customs, mores, the details, not of events, but of existence" (Gluck 34-5). Manase's interest in geology is a focal point of the novel; the many scenes where he is at peace within nature searching for rocks ties this book to Japan's traditional past of valuing the healing aspect of natural simplicity. The role of nature, as initiated by the lance corporal, will be the one thing that heals Manase by forcing him to face his true self and his former actions, though it is his obsession for nature that also destroys the persona he wears in his civilian life by forcing him to face his true identity.

After the war, Manase's persona is of a passive man who is obsessed with collecting rocks; he is no way the subjective modern man he will be when he unveils his mask at the close of the novel. He finds it difficult to adjust to an average civilian life; "The persona, which is perhaps long-standing in its present exaggerated form, may dominate the patient's entire mode of behavior; it has become more than a role, it is the person's characteristic pattern of behavior" (Hudson 59). Manase takes over his family business, but soon no longer participates in it. He marries out of obligation, but rarely spends time with his wife; they eventually have two sons, Hiroaki and Takakki, and Manase also rarely spends time with them. Manase does not participate in his life; he only is interested in his obsession. Modernist Watsuji Tetsuro spoke of the Japanese value of natural simplicity "everydayness marked the site of real human existence, where the experience of living relationally supplied both the condition for comprehending the meaning of life and for privileging authentic understanding of those who experienced the 'practical and active contact' in the everyday...this conception of the everyday was rooted in the house, which was produced by a unique historical...environment...and provided the place within which

to put into practice an ethical life” (Harootunian 292). Manase’s break with his identity results from being traumatized in the war; he is unable to tie together modern Japan’s importance of a new subjectivity with this embrace of traditional values that Tetsuro speaks of, and so for the majority of the novel, he remains fragmented.

The majority of this book appears very mysterious and confusing as it is only related through Manse’s limited and unreliable memory. The reader does not truly learn exactly what happened to Manase during his war experience. Manase is only able to glimpse the war experiences through nightmares and feverish fits, so the readers are unsure what actually happened to Manase, and what he may be guilty of. But there are many clues within the narrative.

At the end of his war experience, Manase blacks out and awakens in the hands of American captors with no memory of what happened to him and does not know what happened to the rest of his comrades in the cave, including the captain and the lance corporal. All that he remembers is washing off a red substance from his hands in a nearby stream, that looked to him like blood. This is an obvious clue that Manase may have killed someone within the cave. He is also holding a piece of green chert that the lance corporal gave him, which will later serve as a clue to some of the events within the novel. Whether Manase remembers every word the lance corporal spoke and later becomes obsessed with his hobby of geology out of guilt for causing the lance corporal and perhaps the other soldiers within the cave harm remains unclear for the entire book. What is clear is that Manase has experienced some kind of trauma within the cave; this is the reasoning behind him having no memory of how he got out of the cave, and what happened to the other Japanese soldiers within the cave. It is also clear that there is some sense of wartime guilt felt by Manase for not adhering to his true self, or the tenet of modern subjective choice, and this is the reason why he develops a persona to cope with his post-war life as a civilian.

Later in the novel, Manase’s son Hiroaki is murdered in a cave near his family home. This is another significant clue within the narrative. Hiroaki was alienated by his father, until he became interested in Manase’s obsession of geology. Manase and Hiroaki become quite close, until his son is found murdered by many stab wounds in a cave his father and he visited often searching for rocks. Manase is not arrested by authorities because he was allegedly gone on a business trip, but his wife states that she knows he murdered their son. This scene within the book is also very telling. Manase feels that his wife is mentally unstable, so he makes a plan to tie her up and commit her to an insane asylum, but in the midst of tying her up, his unstable persona snaps and his true self from the war momentarily breaks through. Manase finds himself strangling his wife and is surprised by this, which again reveals that Manase has not come to terms with his true self. His wife moves out, and his youngest son is raised by a relative.

Later in the novel, his younger son, Takakki, is grown and also has taken part in a destructive lifestyle, as he has murdered a number of people in a revolutionary gang

where he serves as the leader. In another revealing scene, Takakki confronts his father stating that he knows that his father recognizes the look of murder on someone because he knows that his father murdered Hiroaki. Takakki states that he indeed there at the time his brother was murdered and heard his father's voice calling to Hiroaki from inside the cave.

Once Takakki leaves, only to be killed later by authorities, Manase has his most complete nightmare, which reveals to him and the reader a plausible explanation of what happened to him during the war. Directly following this nightmare, Manase is a changed character; he has recognized that he has only been wearing a mask for his entire post-war life. He leaves the book on geology he has been writing for the majority of his life to his destroyed family with the new realization that it is only a book that anyone could write with no new information discovered. Jung "commented on how the dissolution of the persona may leave the patient disoriented as he becomes increasingly aware of unconscious material" (Cited in Hudson 59), and this is exactly the state Manase finds himself in. Manase's repressed war experiences are finally being demasked in the last scene of the book.

Manase goes to the cave where his son was murdered and finally takes off his mask to confront his real self by facing his war experience and how it resulted in the death of Hiroaki directly and Takakki indirectly. Within the cave, Manase again experiences a kind of flashback, but in accordance to Japanese Modernism it is written as if it is actually happening to him in the present. Manase sees a faint light at the back of the cave and discovers that the captain is there, urging him to kill the lance corporal, who also again lies there. Manase is entranced by the captain; he takes the sword ready to kill the lance corporal, as Manase witnessed him doing, enthralled, to many other soldiers within the cave. Here the narrative is finally exposed; presumably Manase's guilt throughout the book comes from killing the lance corporal as ordered by the captain, again from him not choosing what he subjectively felt to be the right thing to do. This would explain why Manase has needed to be masked throughout his civilian life. But in the alternative reality presented in real narrative time, as in quite common in Japanese literature, the lance corporal begs for one more day, one more chance to see the sun rise. And in this alternate version of reality Manase is finally healed and demasked. He subjectively chooses, this time, to save the lance corporal and honor his wish to live a bit longer. Manase picks him up and carries him out of the cave into the sunlight. There he is given the piece of green chert he held when captured by Americans at the start of the novel, only this time, the rock turns into a crystal, and the lance corporal tell Manase that his two sons gave him the crystal. Manase is healed and unmasked in this version of reality because he finally chose to embrace, not the order of the captain, as may correspond to pre-modern acceptance of imperial Japan, but to his own subjective self.

This alternative reality within the narrative is portrayed as really happening to Manase because in Japanese Modernism magic realism is an accepted part of an older cultural belief. "History" according to modern Japanese author and critic Kobayashi

wrote, “flees from thought that constantly strives to discover new interpretations and ‘comes to be reflected only [in those immutable] forms that are difficult to move the more one looks at them” (Qtd in Harootunian 82). Manase’s obsession with geology served as his reminder of what he did and who he was. As stated it aided in destroying his post-war life, but it also healed him, as again throughout Japanese classic literature, nature has the ability to do. Nature served as the truth of what happened in the war, but also the agent of healing within the novel. The tying together of fantasy within a harsh war novel is unique to Japanese Modernism. All that matters to the narrative message is that Manase did face the truth of himself, not the fantastical facts surrounding this revelation. The purpose of this book is inherently modern in that it declares the destructive cost of war to everyone involved, generations after the event.

Japanese Modernism repeatedly discussed the lesson of the cost of war, having experienced its massive destruction first hand. Harootunian states that because Japan belongs in the category of ‘late developer’ its focus on strict militarism can be explained in order to preserve and protect an autonomous Japan; this sense dominated modern Japan, but post World War II, after the atomic destruction of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and the defeat of Japan to Allied forces, the literature shifts to a new understanding of the true cost of war.

After the demilitarization of Japan post World War II, “the Japanese people were exhausted from constant air bombardment, wartime food shortages, and the seemingly never ending flow of casualties that affected every family, yet they were quite willing to, in the words of their Emperor, ‘endure the unendurable” (Beauchamp vii). In Showa Japan, the “dark valley” refers to the militarism before Japan’s surrender after WWII, but after this period a time of enlightenment centered on the cost of war occurred. “Mother Burning” is Soh Sakon’s famous modern Japanese poem that unflinchingly discusses the true relation of events that happened to the author as he and his mother fled the largest bombing raid ever carried out over Tokyo. In the poem he tells of his guilt at leaving his mother behind as he tried to escape with his own life. This modern poem encapsulates Japanese Modernism because it tells of the cost of war on the traditional values of family and honor to Japan (Morton 68), as does Okuizumi’s *The Stones Cry Out*.

Manase’s life was destroyed because he did not act as a subjective individual. In the war, he chose to presumably follow the captain’s orders and kill the lance corporal. This guilt forced him to subconsciously hide his true self behind a masked persona in order to fit in to his conception of traditional Japanese culture, but this truth would not be squelched. It kept haunting him in nightmares and through his obsessions, until it resulted in him killing his son in a flashback as he confused him for the lance corporal, as he almost killed his wife in a similar lapse of reality. As shown by the ending of the text, if Manase would have followed his own modern, subjective self, and saved the corporal, instead of objectively following the captain’s orders, he would have had a much different life. Again, this novel strongly advocates the modern importance of subjective choice to a formerly wholly collective Japan. In Japanese Modernism, the new subjective individual is

only whole when also embracing the traditional values of Japan; "the emphasis of the individual...and his capacity for self-improvement through more and better morality [could] hold the family and the village together" (Gluck 27). When Manase only chose the pre-modern option of following orders, he destroyed the cultural importance of values such as honor and respect towards others, and this resulted in the Japanese importance of familial life being utterly destroyed. But in finally choosing to subjectively defy the captain, Manase is demasked and tied to an older set of traditional Japanese virtues that the author suggests will also help to heal postwar Japan.

In Argentina Modernism is "a child of the Second Industrial Revolution" (Sharman 1) and also arrives to the region in the late nineteenth century into the mid-twentieth century. The formation of nation states and the incorporation of a capitalist free economy in the end of the nineteenth century led to an era in Argentina of the "expansion of the railway network, the advent of the telegraph and automobile travel, the growth of steam shipping, the arrival of cinema, radio, and the airplane, and the beginning of mass democracy" (Sharman 11). As with Japanese Modernism, in a fairly short period of time modernity vastly affected the traditional culture of Argentina. Argentine modernity was often welcomed with less skepticism than Japanese modernity; "the nations of Latin America were founded upon visions of modernity...blazing a trail through obscurantism and oppression toward a utopian future in which the full potential of humankind would be realized" (Miller 1), yet Argentineans, like the Japanese, still felt that modernity was both positive and negative.

As stated by Kantaris, "a new massive influx of European immigrants created 'a climate of social and linguistic ferment in which the old structures and old discourses, dominated by agrarian elite, were no longer adequate to the mediation of popular aspirations'" (Cited in Kefala 114). Borges and other Argentine authors of the era commented that Argentine Modernism strove to connect Argentine tradition with modern European innovation (Kefala 114). This is an important aspect of Argentine Modernism; the definitive aspect of European and American Modernism is the need to "make it new," to totally revise the format and content of the literature of this era away from traditional structures, but, also like Japanese Modernism, Argentine modern literature strove to both preserve its traditional heritage, but also revitalize it to fit European methods of the avant-garde. As Sharman states "one cannot sensibly choose between modernization and local 'traditionality.' The storm of modern development may blow hard but it does not suppress traditional popular cultures" (Sharman 16).

Borges believed that modern Argentina was flawed by the absence of tradition; he stated "what Buenos Aires needed badly...was ghosts'....Ghosts imply a common ground and a sense of harmony with the past. In a society where modern institutions founded on written law had eroded traditional beliefs and 'natural' bonds, the facts of sharing the same 'ghosts' opened up, symbolically, the possibility of retrieving the sort of deep

cultural awareness threatened by a modern republic itself driven by conflict” (Qtd in Sharman 116). Borges’ “Garden of Forking Paths” certainly fits his view of the conflict that modernity brings to traditional culture. Miller contends that “Latin America has been distinctive not only for a tendency to resist models of modernity imposed from without, but also from an enduring capacity—against all the odds—to generate affirmative visions of modernity from within. Social conflict was more about *how* to be modern than whether to be so” (1). And again, though Borges’ work reveals the conflict of the introduction of a new era, his message still is unique to Argentine culture, by both blending a new modern message with traditional values.

“The Garden of Forking Paths” recounts an unreliable protagonist during World War I, Yu Tsun, and he also wears a mask of deception because of his inability to subjectively follow his own code of ethics. He is a man of Chinese descent, who is a German spy, and a former professor of English; his one mission for the Germans is to identify where German troops should attack before his impending death. Yu Tsun wears many masks; he admits to being a spy, but this deceitful and masked persona, is not his true self. It is important to stress the torn identity of the Yu Tsun. His Chinese ancestry will serve as integral to him becoming unmasked in the end of the story, again suggesting Argentina’s tie to the importance both of new modern elements intermingled with traditional values. It is his ability to face his traditional ancestry that opens the possibility for him to witness his true subjective self, but his more recent societal connections to Germany serve as his doom. In both Okuzumi and Borges, this ability to blend both traditional values with a new sense of modern individuality is vital to not only the growth of their cultures, but also the preservation of them.

This story was published in 1941, while WWII was underway; though

Argentina remained neutral for most of the war, as it did for WWI, it aligned with allied forces near the war’s end. War is an obvious and important part of this work, but so is the tumultuous period of twentieth century Argentina. Early in the twentieth century there was great conflict between conservative forces and radicals; the radicals supported democratic elections and fair elections, but struggled to obtain power. In 1919 Argentina’s “Tragic Week” resulted in the death of 700 people and over 4,000 injured by police forces on striking workers. 1930 to 1943 is known as Argentina’s “Infamous Decade” which is “characterized by electoral fraud, persecution of the political opposition, and pervasive government corruption, against the background of the global depression” (Felipe 3). Close to when Borges published “the Garden of Forking Paths,” Argentina “embraced updated versions of nationalist populism as an alternative to the failures of democratic modernity” (Spektorowski 210). And Borges definitely

takes issue with modern nominalism on the grounds that its desire for particularity ends in a self-regarding affirmation of uniqueness. Nationalism narrowly conceived would be the extreme face of this nominalism. Nationalism foregrounds the question of what counts as belonging to, and what falls outside

the confines of, a so-called given national context....In response to nominalistic nationalism, Borges's [sic] recourse to eternal time and other topoi of tradition is an affirmation of supranationalism. (Sharman 111)

"The Garden of Forking Paths" directly relates to the violence and upheaval of modern Argentina. Its main concern, like *The Stones Cry Out*, is to speak towards the importance of subjective choice embracing both the new elements of Modernism while preserving important traditional, cultural elements integral to one's sense of self, free of societal personas.

Again, as with *The Stones Cry Out*, this work leaves a lot unanswered. The reasoning behind why Yu Tsun is a masked character is largely left unsaid, but again there are clues within the text. Presumably the guilt of war, and his inability to make subjective choices, forces him to wear his persona, taking him away from true self. The work opens with a connection to WWI and Yu Tsun's immediate identification as a German spy within the war. The backdrop of war, and the fact that Yu Tsun only immediately identifies himself as part of the war reveals his connection to the war with his sense of his own identity. This one-sided and removed persona of only a German spy suggests a connection of guilt, trauma, or remorse in connection to his war experience. Before the events in the story take place, he does not associate himself with his rich and varied cultural identity and ancestry, though of course the work will reveal to him the importance of this as it progresses. Also Yu Tsun's ability to make such an indiscriminate and rash decision as to choose a name out of the phone book, Stephen Albert, to key German authorities to bomb the city of Albert, points to his feeling, learned from his war experience, that his life and life in general is meaningless.

The plot unfolds to reveal to Yu Tsun his connection with his ancestry and the potential of his subjective true self. British Captain Richard Madden has discovered the Yu Tsun is a spy, and the plot twists towards an expected detective story structure, but it is soon replaced by the mysticism that is an accepted part of Argentine Modernism. The character of Madden predictably hunting down Yu Tsun, could serve as Manase's obsession served him in *The Stones Cry Out* – it is the means to reveal to Yu Tsun his true self, but this does not entirely seem to be the case. Madden certainly is essential for Yu Tsun to discover his true identity, but he only serves to shed one of the layers of Yu Tsun's persona, and that is the outer-most layer of being a German spy. But, the greater scope of the story involves Yu Tsun needing to choose between this societal life as a spy, his persona, or his true identity with his connection to his ancestral past.

The story unravels to mysteriously reveal Yu Tsun's ancient ancestor's connections to his present actions through the use of the concept of a labyrinth. As Yu Tsun is escaping Madden to find Dr. Albert's house, the narrative shifts to that of mysticism again. The journey to Albert's house becomes in itself a labyrinth, as Yu Tsun must always turn towards the left to get to his destination. Once there, he soon magically learns that this random name he chose out of a phonebook is actually the one person who

has figured out the mystery of Yu Tsun's great grandfather Ts'ui Pen. Ts'ui Pen discovered the existence of parallel universes where myriad possible scenarios for existence are consecutively happening at all times. This seemingly implausible connection of finding the one person who reveals not only his past to him, but also has discovered his great grandfather's idea of parallel time, appears as factual and accepted within the narrative with decisive purpose in, again, full connection to the uniqueness of Argentine Modernism.

As Miller states, "The idea that to be truly free, to be 'fully human,' individuals must...not bound by any single mode of apprehending reality, can be found in many early-twentieth-century Latin American texts....It is perhaps no coincidence that in Latin America [literature]...reason does not necessarily exclude passion or imagination or intuition; and the view that reason is one source among others rather than the fount of all knowledge" (23). This is certainly the case with "The Garden of Forking Paths;" rational thought is replaced by mysticism as if it were a part of reality, just as was seen in Japanese Modernism. This ability to infuse the mystic as an accepted part of reality again showcases the comfortable preservation of traditional Argentina within the new modern environment.

Also in accordance to the idea that reality is multi-faceted, and not only based on rational thought in Argentine Modernism, a popular theme is the idea that time is not only linear; "modern time does not just flow ceaselessly forward; it constantly interrupts itself, habitually rehearses the rupture with time that precisely defines modernity as an epochal new beginning....In this schema, the present, which is by definition the most recent moment that gives birth to the new, is always the most prominent" (Sharman 9). Borges "wrote repeatedly—obsessively—about the stubborn contradiction between conventional linear time and the (Greek) time of eternity....The interest of the relationship between tradition and modernity, and between eternal and linear time, lies in their messy entanglement, not in their separateness" (Sharman 110). Within "The Garden of Forking Paths," Borges presents this discussion of time with his lost and masked protagonist to ask the reader to consider the reason behind war and one's actions in such a time when subjective choice is gone.

With the new information that the text reveals about time and its relation to life, the previous detective plot of Madden chasing him is lessened in importance. The story shifts to the common modern theme of personal subjective responsibility. Yu Tsun states early in the text that "man will resign himself each day to more atrocious undertakings; soon there will be no one but warriors and brigands; I give them this counsel: *The author of an atrocious undertaking ought to imagine that he has already accomplished it, ought to impose himself upon a future as irrevocable as the past*" (2876). Before he learns from Dr. Albert the existence of parallel time, he already acts in accordance to it in some ways. Just as Madden only serves to reveal part of Yu Tsun's true identity, so too does the new information about the labyrinth and parallel time. It is true that Yu Tsun in learning about his ancestry and the vast information his great grandfather discovered about time

and space could have made Yu Tsun realize the importance of individual life, but for him this realization is only brief. He does state to Dr. Albert that in "every possible [universe] 'I am grateful to you and revere you for your re-creation of the garden of Ts'ui Pen'" (288o). He is able to see his real self briefly and is demasked for a moment, but he ends the narrative only using this information to further hide within his created persona, thus rejecting his true identity.

This new idea of time becomes yet another false persona as a means of protection from the narrator's apparent lost self. Yu Tsun uses his great grandfather's knowledge to reject his true self when he states to Dr. Albert that in many universes they are friends, but in this one he is his enemy moments before he kills Dr. Albert to fulfill his societal obligation to his German spy persona. He excuses his actions by stating that if there are countless possibilities of existence, then it is predetermined that he kills Dr. Albert in this life. But, Borges' message is similar to Okuzumi's in its call for subjective questioning against war. Yu Tsun failed to see that though time may be circular with myriad realities, he must operate in the only existence he knows. Like Manase in *The Stones Cry Out*, he could have made a conscious choice to, again, defy military orders, and save lives. One of the lessons of Yu Tsun's great grandfather, and Borges to the reader, that Yu Tsun fails to see, is that one action affects the world in countless ways. If Yu Tsun would have chosen to let Dr. Albert live, the hundreds of people in the city of Albert would also go on living, changing and creating myriad possibilities of reality; "the embrace of circular time affirms the possibility that things might always be otherwise than they currently are. It is an affirmation of hope, now, at this moment, in this irreversible, iron chronology....Instead of Hitler, we would see the 'return' of former civil times, of a differently colored history" (Sharman 132). In his one conscious choice to kill under orders the one man who discovered this truth, he kills himself and many others. Yu Tsun chooses to follow orders and remain masked and alienated from his true identity, denying his rich ancestral past.

Argentine Modernists strove to be an agent of social change with modern messages of hope through personal responsibility; Argentine authors were "in fact crucially engaged with social and cultural renovation" (Kefala 115). As has been discussed Borges, like Okuzumi, speaks to readers of the importance of subjectively questioning one's actions in turbulent times such as war, yet, this story differs from *The Stones Cry Out* in that Yu Tsun does not embrace his true self at the close of the novel, and thus in large part this work shows the tragedy of only accepting a new modern persona. As with the upheaval of modern Argentina, many Argentineans faced decisions about what they believed in and how to identify themselves. "The Garden of Forking Paths" shows the danger of one only associating oneself with new modern values, and not the valuable past. If Yu Tsun would have chosen to subjectively spare Dr. Albert, and indirectly all the people living in Albert, and remained tied to the knowledge that Dr. Albert could have offered him invaluable knowledge about his own traditional past, then the story suggests that Yu Tsun could have come to understand a more rich and complex identity. Borges' fiction leaves readers with a message of the importance of subjectively choosing how to

define oneself within a new modern landscape; he contends that modern Argentina can both embrace the new era and also preserve the vital elements of Argentina's past.

The Stones Cry Out and "The Garden of Forking Paths" support that individual subjectivity is needed in order for both Japanese and Argentine culture to move forward into the modern era; individuals from both cultures must subjectively decide to embrace the new elements of Modernism while preserving important traditional values unique to their respective cultures. Both Okuzumi and Borges depict the unveiling of masked identities with this clear modern message of subjective accountability in the crucial time of war. Their message of conscious choice, between one's past and one's future, in current tumultuous times still holds value today.

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Rachel McCoppin, Ph.D is Associate Professor, UMC Liberal Arts & Education Department, University of Minnesota Crookston.
