

Intertextuality in Post-war Japanese Travel Writing: An Analysis of Sawaki Kōtarō's *Midnight Express*

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Abstract- 'Intertextuality' was first used by Julia Christeva in 1966. It argues that no text is a closed text. Instead, texts created are connected and are inherently interactive in nature. Intertextuality in travel writing may be as old as travel writing, as travelers often gather information about destinations before setting off for their journeys. Japan enjoys a long history of travel writing, and travelogues and memoirs are indispensable to its vast literature. India has been a popular destination among Japanese travelers, traversing the land and its cities and penning their memoirs, a few of which become bestsellers. These writings have played an essential role in bringing the country closer to Japanese readers. The present paper will examine one such popular post-war Japanese travelogue called *Midnight Express* 深夜特急 (1986) by Sawaki Kōtarō. While drawing upon the theory of 'intertextuality,' the paper traces two major pre-existing travelogues, *I Will Give Anything a Look* 何でも見てやろう (1961) by Oda Makoto and *Wandering India* 印度放浪 (1972) by Fujiwara Shinya and examines the intertextual relations present in these writings. The study aims to analyze *Midnight Express* by placing it in the perspective of the preceding travel writings in the Japanese language and map the trajectory of the construction of the Indian image.

Keywords: Intertextuality, Intertextual relations, Japanese Travel Writing, Indian Image, Sawaki Kōtarō.

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I. Introduction

India has long been a popular destination among travelers from Japan, visiting as solo travelers or as part of a tourist group exploring various cities of the country and recording their encounters and experiences while presenting a vivid picture of local life and people. The country has attracted visitors from all age groups, producing their writings in varying genres and formats. For native readers, these texts serve as a vital source of knowledge, occasionally generating a virtual amplification of the foreign land and its people. Much travel writing exists in Japanese about India, enjoying a wide readership, sometimes with multiple editions. The trend indicates the relevance and stature these writings claim in the country's literature and the importance given to the act of 'traveling' by its readers. The question that arises here is whether each of these writings presents a different shade of India or paints the country similarly. On a closer reading, one observes certain similarities in the narrative of these writings. Even though the writers with different backgrounds, travel to distinct locations during different parts of the year, with long gaps between their respective visits, the discourse constructed is delineated by certain common or similar narrative leading to the creation of a specific image of the country.

The paper examines a highly well-known Japanese travel writing called *Midnight Express* (深夜特急, Shinya Tokkyū) (1986) by Sawaki Kōtarō¹ and discusses its portrayal of India. The paper argues that to comprehensively understand *Midnight Express*, reading it in the context of preceding travel literature about India in Japanese is significant. So, while drawing upon the theory of 'intertextuality,' the paper traces two major pre-existing travelogues, *I Will Give Anything a Look* (何でも見てやろう, Nandemo Mite Yarō) (1961) by Oda Makoto and *Wandering India* (印度放浪, Indo Hōrō) (1972) by Fujiwara Shinya and through textual analysis examines the intertextual interactions present in these writings.

Intertextuality implies the interconnection and contact between texts. It means that any text is related to and, in specific ways, dependent on other texts. Existing texts have an impact on new text. Julia Krestiva, a Bulgarian French literary critic in 1966, coined the term. She first used this term in her essay, 'Word, Dialogue and Novel.' She argues that 'any text is constructed as a mosaic of quotations; any text is the absorption and transformation of other texts' (Krestiva, 1980, p. 66). It is important to note that the author is the first reader of the texts before producing one, making the presence inevitable (Zengin, 2016, p.300). Intertextuality indicates that the texts are inherently interactive rather than separate entities. As Allen (2000) puts it, 'The act of reading plunges us into a network of textual relations. To interpret a text, to discover its meaning, or meanings, is to trace those relations. Reading thus becomes a process of moving between texts.' (p.1). A text

is a product of these 'textual relations' that can be traced and established with 'intertextuality.' Though these textual relations shape a text, they are sometimes explicit and easy to find, while at other times, they are implicit.

Hulme (2002) (as cited in Hagglund, 2019, p.133) and Beilein and Schaff (2020) remark that travel writing is intertextual, suggesting the presence of earlier texts. Developing the argument further, Hagglund (2019) states that by decoding specific codes and motifs, intertextuality can corroborate the truth- value of the text- someone else has done or seen or said the same thing (p.133). Citing the influence of preceding works, Beilein and Schaff, in their seminal research 'Intertextual Travel Writing' (2020), argue that travel writers 'operate within the established literary contexts and aesthetic conventions, and their writing reflects their involvement in received strategies of representation.' (p.114).

Despite their claims to have traveled without guidebooks and prior knowledge of the country, several Japanese travel writers tend to visit similar places, have similar experiences, and define India on somewhat similar lines. Sawaki embarks on his travels in 1974 for a year. However, his memoir was published in 1986 as *Midnight Express* in three volumes and later in 1992 in a set of six books, of which book 3 focuses on India and Nepal. Notably, *Midnight Express* is based on around a hundred letters the writer sent to his friends in Japan while traveling. The letters played a vital role in the book because if not for them, Sawaki would not have considered penning the travelogue (Sawaki, 2008, p.207). Interestingly, he could not retrieve a few of the letters he wrote from Calcutta (Kolkata). Sawaki had stayed in India for over three months and traveled primarily in northern and eastern India. Though India was not the only foreign country he had visited, neither was it that he was encountering the 'other' for the first time, still, the country seems to have left a significant imprint on his mind.

Oda went to the United States to study on a Fulbright Scholarship in 1958, and after completing his tenure, he decided to travel the world before returning to Japan. From the U.S., he went to Europe, visiting countries like the United Kingdom, France, Italy, Spain, Egypt, Iran, etc. *I Will Give Anything a Look* is based on these journeys. He arrived in India in March of 1960 and stayed for fifteen days. Fujiwara visited India in 1969 and 1970, and his memoirs first appeared in a series in *Asahigraph* and later as *Wandering India* in 1972. For his travels, Sawaki takes the opposite route from Oda and Fujiwara. He began his journey from East Asia, traveling via Hongkong, Thailand, and Singapore, entered India from Calcutta. He further continued his journey to London by bus. Calcutta, Varanasi, and Delhi were a few cities visited by the three travelers. While *Wandering India* focuses on India, Oda and Sawaki's accounts explore other Asian as well as European countries.

However, the present paper will concentrate on the discourse on travel in India. There is a gap of around a decade in the journeys of Oda as compared to those of Fujiwara and Sawaki, whose travels are around four years apart. Looking at the timeline of the publication of their subsequent works, the trajectory is even more interesting. Oda's *I Will Give Anything a Look* came out in 1961, not long after he returned to Japan. Fujiwara was still traveling when his writings were published in *Asahigraph*, while Sawaki took over a decade to publish *Midnight Express* after his travels. These travelogues are well-known in the field of post-war travel writing and studies in Japan. The writings are often considered standard reference books for travel and are featured among Japan's best 30 travel writings (Araki, 2016).

Midnight Express was awarded the Fifth Japan Adventure Fiction Association Award² in 1986 in the non-fiction critics category and the JTB Prize for Travel Literature³ in 1993. It is a best seller that claims to have sold more than six million copies, including digital and book formats,⁴ as the travelogue continues to inspire the next generation of Japanese travelers (Anushree, 2024). Fujiwara and Sawaki are termed as 'the founders of the journey of self-discovery' (自分探しの教祖, *jibun sagashi no kyōso*) who introduced the concept of 'budget traveling across Asia' (Hayamizu, 2008, p.69). Sawaki is also called the 'Master of Travels' (旅の巨匠, *tabi no shishō*) (Sawaki, 2008, p.278). An indication of the popularity of these travelogues is the recent Chinese translation of *Wandering India* and the Korean and Chinese translations of *Midnight Express*.

Sawaki claims to have not relied on any travel guidebook (Sawaki, 2008, p.110). However, he confessed to reading Oda's memoir as a middle school student preparing for his domestic travels (Sawaki, 2008, p.23). *I Will Give Anything a Look* left a profound impact on young Sawaki, so much so that 'apart from manga and samurai novels that he would love to read, there was no other book except this one that he read with such devotion' and apparently, after reading 'he was no more the same young man' (Maekawa, 2003, p.219). The book can be claimed to have led him towards his world travels. Sawaki's admiration for the senior scholar is also evident in *Midnight Express*. On the other hand, as per a conversation between Sawaki and Fujiwara published in *Playboy* in June 1979, Sawaki was unaware of *Wandering India* before embarking on his travels. While in India, he learned about the travelogue and read it after returning to Japan (Fujiwara, 1996, p.56).

II. Intertextuality in *Midnight Express*

Notably, specific motifs and tropes are common to *Midnight Express*, *I Will Give Anything a Look*, and *Wandering India*. In the travelogues, India is defined as a hot or extremely hot country, and the readers are often reminded of it in these texts. For example, the first page of the India- Nepal volume of *Midnight Express* introduces readers to the country that 'Calcutta was sticky hot' (Sawaki, 1999, p.9), indicating

its humidity. There are other instances, too, like ‘typical Indian heat,’ ‘strong scorching sun,’ etc., in *Midnight Express* for the unbearable Indian summers. While Oda, as soon as he lands in Delhi, finds it hot in March (Oda, 2006, p.370), Fujiwara, who stayed much longer, consistently reminds readers of the sweltering summers. Expressions like ‘summer sun bakes everything,’ ‘piercingly hot,’ ‘killer heat,’ etc. are just a few examples. However it is important to note that Fujiwara explored the northern regions of Kashmir and Himachal Pradesh and both Fujiwara and Sawaki experienced monsoon and winters in India that are mentioned in passing (Fujiwara, 1984, vol1, p.126, vol2, p.97; Sawaki, 1999, p.88).

Another theme that is commonly featured in travel writings is ‘death.’ Travelers seem to have ascertained that they saw ‘death’ in India. In the case of Oda and Sawaki, the quintessential city is Varanasi. Oda visited on a friend’s recommendation, while in the case of Sawaki, he arrives in the city with his Hippy friend and claims to have reached the cremation ghats ‘unexpectedly’ (不意に, fui ni) (Sawaki, 1999, p.167). Fujiwara visits cremation sites in different cities like Calcutta, Allahabad, etc. As far as linguistic resemblance is concerned, terms like white cloth (白布, hakufu; 白い布, shiroi nuno), smoke (煙, kemuri), wood (薪, maki), and water burial (水葬, suisō) often appear in the narrative. The writers are highly fascinated with ‘death’ that Sawaki and Fujiwara visit these sites several times, and separate chapters are attributed to the theme with titles such as ‘God of Death’ (死神, shinigami) in *Wandering India* and ‘Smell of Death’ (死の匂い, shi no nioi) in *Midnight Express*.

Based on the narrative, a specific image of the country is constructed. For Sawaki, India is a place where reason or interpretation does not apply (解釈というものが不用, kaishaku toiu mono ga fuyō) (Sawaki, 1999, p. 64). Oda instead uses the phrase ‘common sense’ (常識は通用しない, jōshiki wa tsūyō shinai) (Oda, 2006, p.372). Fujiwara indicates India to be a free place (なんでも自由, nandemo jiyū) (Fujiwara, 1996, p. 43), providing freedom from being human itself (Fujiwara, 1984 vol1, p.180). Sawaki describes India as a place that offers freedom from materialistic possessions (Sawaki, 1999, p. 105). For Fujiwara, India is brimming with zeal to live (熱, netsu); for Sawaki, it’s a land of vigor and vitality (生命力, seimeiryoku). India presents its travelers with a life-changing experience that ‘shook heart to the core’ (心を根底から揺り動かし, kokoro o kontei kara yuri ugokashi) (Oda, 2006, p.401) or with which one can ‘shake one’s life up’ (自分の人生を揺さぶりたい, jibun no jinsei o yusaburitai) (Sawaki, 1999, p.202). Invocation of such emotional reactions, life-changing experiences, recurring themes of heat, poverty, beggars, and depictions of death seem to be staple and conventional features of Japanese travel writing about India. The text of *Midnight*

Express is interspersed with experiences, expressions, and motifs which, in several ways, resonate with *I Will Give Anything a Look* and *Wandering India*.

Tracing Oda: Sawaki in *Midnight Express* quite clearly mentions Oda's writing as one of the dominant works that had a profound effect on him and was 'class apart' (別格のようなもの bekkaku no yō na mono) (Sawaki, 2009, p.218). Hence, perhaps it is only natural that many correlations can be drawn between the two works. Specific motifs in *Midnight Express* reverberate *I Will Give Anything a Look*. Sawaki in *Midnight Express* refers to an incident where, upon arriving at Bodhgaya station late in the night, he decides to spend the night on the road instead of looking for a hotel (Sawaki, 1999, p.80). He had done that earlier, too, at New Delhi station. He thinks he is not alone in doing so, as there are other homeless people to give him company. Yet, he is not the first Japanese traveler to have done so since Oda also sleeps on the road in Calcutta (Oda, 2006, p.386). To quote both Sawaki and Oda,

ガヤ駅で、駅へんで横になる。土の微かな温もりがシートを通して体に伝わってきた。大地の 熱に優しく包まれ、緊張が解けていくにしたがって、何千人のインド人と同じ空の下で夜を過ごしているということに、不思議なくらい安らぎを感じるようになってきた。(Sawaki, 1999, p.80)

(At Bodhgaya station, I lie down near the station. I felt the faint warmth of the earth through the sheet. I was gently enveloped in the heat of the land. I felt a strange sense of calmness sleeping on the road with a thousand other Indians under the same sky)⁵

(ニューデリーのバスターミナルで)、インドについたばかりの頃は、大勢の浮浪者と往来と一緒に寝るのは恐ろしいような気がしたが、大勢の方がかえって安心だということがわかってからは、何度か街路や駅前広場で一夜を過ごした。(Sawaki, 2009, p.33)

(At New Delhi bus terminal) when I had just arrived in India, it felt a little frightening sleeping with homeless on the road, but when I realized that it was instead assuring, I spent the night on the road or station many times.)

相手もいないが、私は別に悲しくも思わなかった。自分で自分の素晴らしい経験に興奮したのか、かえって気分がよろしいくらいだった。(Oda, 2006, p. 386)

(I had no company, but I did not feel alone. Perhaps I was too excited about this incredible experience; I felt pleasant.)

Sharing his experience, Oda states, 'I had no company, but I did not feel alone. Sleeping with such a large number of homeless people, I do not know if I was excited about this wonderful experience (経験に興奮したのか, keiken ni kōfun shita noka); I rather felt pleasant about it (気分がよろしいくらい, kibun ga yoroshii kurai)'. Oda resonates in *Midnight Express*, when Sawaki, fascinated with his

experience, says ‘getting enveloped in the land’s heat, as my nervousness goes away (緊張が解けていく, kinchō ga toketeiku). He further states, ‘Spending the night along with thousand others under the same sky, I felt a strange sense of calmness (安らぎを感じる, yasuragi o kanjiru).’ On minute observation, one finds that both the writers share their experience of getting the initial ‘nervousness’ and ‘excitement’ replaced by ‘calmness’ and ‘pleasant’ feeling. While Oda ‘did not feel alone,’ Sawaki was with a ‘thousand others.’ The only difference is that Oda slept on his coat, while Sawaki was well equipped with his sleeping bag. It is not only the experience that is similar; even the expressions used to describe the whole experience are alike. It is interesting to note that a foreigner who has visited the country for the first time may see local homeless because of various circumstances sleeping on roads, but what would have inspired him to do this without the prior knowledge that it has been done before?

Another example is Sawaki’s amusement at houseflies in India, which he observes hovering over food items and restaurant tables. However, when describing the whole experience, he had to borrow the words from his predecessor. Oda states, ‘In old times in China, people would say that food is so good that it is attracting flies’ (Oda, 2006, p. 380) and Sawaki, also referring to the same Chinese expression, states, ‘I don’t want to think of the Chinese expression that good food attracts flies’ (Sawaki, 1999, p. 47).

The affinity in the narrative is not just limited to *Midnight Express*. There are instances of encounters in Sawaki’s other work too, *The Power to Travel: Midnight Express Notes* (旅する力: 深夜特急ノート, Tabi suru Chikara: Shinya Tokkyū Nōto) published in 2008. *I Will Give Anything a Look* distinctly echoes when Sawaki tends to explain the relationship between money and travel.

贅沢な旅は、紀行文を書くための旅としては、かなり難しい旅だといえなくもない。(中略) 少なくとも『深夜特急』の場合には、金がないために摩擦が生じ、そのおかげで人との関わりが生まれ、結果として旅が深くなる(Sawaki, 2008, p.221)

(One can say that luxurious travel is inappropriate for writing a travelogue... At least in the case of *Midnight Express*, lack of money caused friction, and because of this, relations with people developed, deepening the journey.)

コジキ旅行には、それ相応の積極的な効用もあった。

まず第一に、各国の生活水準の差異が、身にしみてよくわかることである。(中略)

第二。お金という媒介がないから、人の親切が身に染みて判ることであ

る。(Oda, 2006, p. 279-80)

(Budget Travelling has its benefits. Firstly, one understands the difference in living standards in each country...

Secondly, since there is no money involved, one truly gets to understand the kindness of people around.)

Oda resonates when Sawaki says, ‘lack of money causes friction and because of which relations with people develop (人との関わりが生まれる, hito tono kakawari ga umareru) and the journey becomes intense.’ Oda, pointing out the similar relationship, remarks, ‘It is when there is no money that one truly gets to understand the kindness of people around (親切さが身にしみて判る, shinsetsusa ga minishimite wakarū).’ Two common points here are lack of money and the resultant ‘kindness,’ which in Sawaki’s case becomes a source or reason for creating ‘relations with people.’

Another instance, when Sawaki reminiscing about his travels tries to reason that it was an ideal route to start his journey from Hong Kong and enter India after traveling to Southeast Asian nations as it gradually prepared him for the country. Had he entered India directly, the shock would have been as intense as some ‘high-degree disorder’ (高度障害, kōdo shōgai) (Sawaki, 2008, p.108). He explains with an example of ‘high altitude acclimatization,’ which mountain climbers are usually recommended to take at regular intervals to avoid any altitude-related illness or mountain sickness. While explaining his route in *I Will Give Anything a Look*, Oda also mentions, ‘Because I entered India from the West or the Arab side, it was still better. What would have happened if I had entered India or the Arab world from the East? The differences would have overwhelmed the traveler more than similarities or other things. For example, India. I was just there for a few days, but even during that brief stay, I was completely taken aback by the ghostly nature of India, which made me fold my arms in disappointment’ (Oda, 2006, p.320). Oda’s bewilderment, which made him ‘fold his arms,’ echoes in Sawaki’s ‘high degree disorder.’

Oda’s influence is quite dominant in *Midnight Express*, as evidenced by the intertextual references in the narrative. Sawaki, like Oda, tries to survive on a dollar a day (Sawaki, 2009, p. 10). Oda stays in a temple in Delhi, and Sawaki chooses a Japanese temple in Bodhgaya. Oda visits an Art Museum in Calcutta (Oda, 2006, p.392), Sawaki goes to National Museum situated in Delhi (Sawaki, 2009, p.14), yet Oda’s thought resonates when he says that he was so overwhelmed by the situation in India that it was ‘similar to have not seen anything’ (何も見ていないのと同じであった, nanimo miteinai noto onajide atta), while Sawaki states that he visited the museum so many times that ‘there is nothing left to see

anything' (見たいものがなくなってしまう, *mitai mono ga nakunatte shimau*).

Encountering Fujiwara: Sawaki's inner journey, as depicted in *Midnight Express*, is punctuated by Fujiwara's *Wandering India*. For instance, the experience of traveling on a local Indian train. Fujiwara travels from Bombay (Mumbai) to Madras (Chennai), where he is supposed to change the train for Mysore. He had a second-class ticket but not a reserved seat. He describes the entire story of obtaining an upper berth seat by paying a coolie a handsome amount and then getting bored inside the compartment in a theatrical manner. He eventually exchanges his seat with the person sitting next to the window to watch the outside view, which he later regrets (悔いた, *kuita*) as he finds it too boring. Though the train compartment was full, he did not try to converse with the people around, preferring to doze off or stare at the smallpox spot on a passenger's face (Fujiwara, 1984 vol1, p.93). To describe his boredom, he repeatedly uses terms such as 'failure/ mistake,' 'just not amusing,' 'monotonous view,' 'plain horizon,' etc. He detests vendors selling 'wilted oranges, burnt fried cauliflowers, and other things in their dummy voice. Fujiwara remarks that 'to see ordinary Indians closely, one should travel in a third-class compartment (Fujiwara, 1984 vol1, p.179)'. Sawaki in India was aware of the special reservation office for foreigners traveling in first and second class, yet he 'wanted to travel in the third-class compartment where reservation is not required' (Sawaki, 1999, p.70). Though Swakai made an informed decision to travel in the third-class compartment from Calcutta to Patna, he was surprised as what he saw was 'beyond his expectations' (Sawaki, 1990, p.74). And when he finally gets to sit, for him, it was a 'worth the hard work' effort and something 'not regretful' (後悔しない, *kōkai shinai*). On the advice of a fellow traveler, he altered his itinerary to Bodhgaya. Interestingly, Sawaki gets treated with tea and samosas and he dutifully explains the terms to his readers in Japanese. Closely examining the expressions, one finds an intricate relation between expressions like 'regret- not regretful' and 'a failure- worth the hard work.' While Fujiwara silently gazes at the co-passenger, regretting his decision, Sawaki seems to have engaged in the conversation and 'gained something.' Further, Sawaki uses proper nouns like 'chai' and 'samosa' with explanations that contrast Fujiwara's random description of things sold by vendors. Yet one observation where Sawaki's description seems to align with Fujiwara's is when he sees people carrying big trunks and bedding at a station or bus stop. He uses a similar expression, 'absconding in the dark' (夜逃げ, *yonige*), to depict them (Sawaki, 2000, p. 13, Fujiwara, 1984 vol1, p. 88).

In another instance, Fujiwara links skin color to caste, whereas Sawaki oversimplifies the idea that all Indians have dark complexions. Fujiwara in *Wandering India* indicates that with a 3-4 month long stay in India, one grows

darker, clothes get dirty, and the reaction of the people around change.

インドでのカーストというのは肌の色でもあるわけです。日本からインドへ行くと、最初のうちは色も白いし、身なりも汚れていないわけですよ。それが、二か月、三か月いるにしたがって、色も黒くなって、服も汚れてくる。そうすると、まわりの反応も変わってくる。カーストが次第に下がってくるんだね。乞食の対応もだんだん変わってくる。僕は最初の旅のとき、半年くらいで乞食から無視された。無視されるとこれが意外と寂しいもんですよ。(Fujiwara, 1984 vol1, p.39)

(Caste in India is related to skin color. When one arrives in India from Japan, in the beginning, one is fair, and the clothes are not dirty. As you stay in India for 2-3 months, the skin becomes darker, and clothes get dirty. And with that, people's reactions towards you change. The caste further goes down. Even beggars' reactions change. During my first trip, beggars ignored me for about six months. And surprisingly, I felt bad about it.)

この格好で歩いていると、シタール売り、や数珠売りから声をかけられなくてすむ。色はすでにインド人のように黒く、痩せて、目ばかりギラギラさせている。私はほとんど土地の人間になりきったつもりで歩いている。(Sawaki, 1999, p. 165)

(Walking in this outfit, I am no longer chased by sitar or bead sellers. My skin color is as black as Indians now, I have lost weight, and my eyes glare. I am walking as if I were a local person.)

According to Fujiwara, after spending a few months in India, even beggars' reaction towards him gradually changed, and they ignored him during his first trip (乞食から無視された, kojiki kara mushi sareta). A similar explanation can also be noticed in *Midnight Express* when Sawaki wanders in Indian men's outfits on the roads of Varanasi. He grew dark and thin and was no longer chased by sitar or bead sellers.

One is again conspicuously reminded of *Wandering India* when Sawaki defines Varanasi as a place of complete 'disorder/imbalance' (無秩序, muchitsujo), as previously for Fujiwara India was a place of 'strange balance' (奇妙な秩序, kimyō na chitsujo) (Fujiwara, 1996, p.15).

Both Fujiwara and Sawaki further comment on the significance of travel as follows.

Citation A: 旅を続けているうちにすべてあいまいになってしまう。白か黒か、善か悪か分からなくなってくる。何かはっきりしたことを言える自信がなくなってくる。(Sawaki, 2000, p.20)

(While traveling, everything becomes ambiguous. It is difficult to distinguish between black and white, good or bad. One loses confidence in saying anything clearly)

ぼくは 旅 を続けた。。。多分に、愚かな旅であった。(中略) 歩むごとに、ぼく自身とぼく自身の習って来た世界の虚偽が見えた。(中略) 世界は、よかった。(中略) 悪くも良くもすべてはよかった。(Fujiwara, 1984vol.2, p.106)

(I kept traveling. Perhaps it was a foolish journey... with each step, I saw the deceit in myself and the world I belong to... the world was good... good or bad, everything was good).

Citation B: 一つまた一つと国境を越えていっても、その国のことを理解する契機すら持てない。僕には何も学べなかったという思いがあるんです。(中略) 僕にわかったのは、何も分からなかった、ということです。覚えているのは、誤解によって喜んだり、悲しんだりしたこと、ぶつぶつと独り言を言って、自問自答したことばかりで。外国のことは分からなかったけど、自分のことが少し分かるようになった。(Sawaki, 1999, p.211)

(Crossing borders one after another, yet there is no chance of understanding a country. I feel I did not learn anything... All I understood was I did not understand anything. I sometimes felt happy and sad due to misunderstandings; I would murmur, question, and answer myself. I did not understand anything about the country, but I did get to understand a little about myself.)

ぼくはここで、自分の目の前にある風景というもの、つまり世界というものを、理解するなにかの手掛かりを得た(Fujiwara, 1984, vol2: 89)

(I got some clues from the view before my eyes to understand the world.)

Citation A is a concluding remark on the India leg of Sawaki's journey when he was about to cross the border. While Fujiwara seems to have seen 'deceit in himself and his world,' Sawaki 'does not understand anything.' Sawaki does not romanticize India and instead differentiates between 'black and white,' 'good or bad' and takes a distinct stance from Fujiwara for whom 'good or bad, everything was good.' Citation B is part of Sawaki's conversation with Koretsune Keisuke, a Japanese national he met in India. Fujiwara, through his travels, claims to have 'gained some clue to understand the world,' contrary to which for Sawaki, not only 'there is no chance to understand a country,' instead everything became 'ambiguous' (あいまい, *aimai*). He continues, 'I did not understand anything about the country, but I did understand something about myself' (自分のことが少し分かるようになった, *jibun no koto ga sukoshi wakarū yō ni natta*). Though

Sawaki does not mention any country and tries to generalize the statement, it appears at the end of the India- Nepal volume of the travelogue. However, more interesting to note are the visible similarities in the expressions used to define the approach toward travel. Further, for Fujiwara, traveling in India is a ‘silent bible’ (無言のバイブル, mugon no baiburu) (Fujiwara, 1984 vol1, p.9) as he hardly engages himself in any conversation with the local people. Sawaki tries to explain his travels as everything but silent. He states he was ‘sometimes happy, sometimes sad due to some misunderstanding, talking to himself, questioning and then answering’ (Sawaki, 1999, p.211). He tries to converse with others (sometimes leading to misunderstanding) or with himself by questioning and answering.

There are more references in *Midnight Express* resonating with Fujiwara. Referring to the Indian journey Fujiwara in *Wandering India* states, ‘I don’t know, but I just went to lose everything... when I went for the first time’ (無茶苦茶に、何でもかんでも、負けに行ったんじゃないかな, mucha kucha ni, nan demo, makeni ittan janaikana) (Fujiwara, 1984 vol.1, p.21). This ‘losing’ indicates the transformation Indian travels brought in him. Sawaki, as if responding to this ‘losing,’ in the conversation with Koretsune given at the end of the volume, records Koretsune’s statement that ‘I don’t want to lose to this country (India)’ (この国に負けたいようにしたい, kono kuni ni makenaiyō ni shitai) (Sawaki, 1999, p.225). Presenting a counter-narrative, Sawaki further claims himself to be a ‘survivor’ (生還者, seikansha) (Sawaki, 2000, p.23) of the Indian journey ‘hinting at resistance and a sense of aversion towards any change that traveling in India may bring’ (Anushree, 2022, p.19).

Fujiwara is evoked in *Midnight Express*, but it is difficult to identify him in the travelogue unless both writings are read from a broader perspective. Though Sawaki does not explicitly mention Fujiwara, in his attempt to present a unique or distinct view from the earlier writing, as evident by the intertextual connections, Sawaki appears too conscious of his predecessor in his narrative.

III. Decoding Intertextual Connections

Midnight Express exhibits a sophisticated network and web of intertexts. Sawaki is seen to be referencing both Oda and Fujiwara. *I Will Give Anything a Look* and *Wandering India* are so intricately woven into the fabric of *Midnight Express* that reading Sawaki alone does not present an entire picture. Though he indicates his admiration towards Oda, the senior writer does not appear in the narrative except once. Sawaki is neither crediting nor referring to or quoting him. All lived experiences in his writing are claimed to be his alone. Sawaki seems to be ‘tracing’ Oda in his journey and his expressions. However, this tracing is not literal. He is not following Oda in his footsteps or retracing them by visiting the same cities and places. When he spends the night at Bodhgaya station, stays at a Bodhgaya temple,

visits a national museum, and watches a Hindi film, he executes his choices and puts his decisions into action. Instead, Sawaki appears to be charting his path and destinations after Oda.

On the other hand, with Fujiwara, there are certain linguistic similarities in the narrative, such as when Sawaki refers to being ignored by beggars and street vendors. Sawaki depicts his train experience as distinct from Fujiwara. In defining the significance of travels, Sawaki seems to be reconfiguring his stance, presenting a distinct narrative. He often chooses to deviate or depart while negotiating with Fujiwara. Sawaki may seem to have his perspective or view of things, but even in deviation, as shown by these intertexts, they interestingly stem from Fujiwara's accounts. Sawaki certainly charts his journey and writing, yet his predecessor's works help carve that path. Graham Allen defines intertextuality as 'systems, codes, and traditions established by previous works of literature,' which he further emphasizes are 'crucial to the meaning of the work of literature.' (Allen, 2000). These recurring motifs of shared experiences, observations, and descriptions in similar linguistic expressions as witnessed in *Midnight Express* are nothing but 'systems' and 'codes' supplied by *I Will Give Anything a Look* and *Wandering India*.

When *Midnight Express* was published, Oda's and Fujiwara's travelogues were well-established and were bestsellers in travel writing in Japan. Sawaki is placing and aligning his observations within the framework of the preceding works. Sawaki's awareness of Oda's writing influenced his real journey and travel account. In contrast, Fujiwara's impact becomes more apparent during introspection of India travels. Aligning his discourse with Oda, a prominent figure in Japanese literary circles, Sawaki exhibits 'double engagement with other writers' journeys and their texts' (Beilien & Scaff, 2020, p.124). In deviating from Fujiwara, Sawaki is carving his identity as a travel writer and providing a rationale for his perceptions and journeys. While *Wandering India* is an emotional and passionate yet complex subjective account of young Fujiwara, Oda tries to be objective and thinks of himself as a traveler who is visiting the country for a brief time and is aware that he can leave anytime he wants (Oda, 2006, p.391). Sawaki has positioned himself, aligning his thoughts with Oda's while deviating from Fujiwara's. Hagglund Betty (2019), in her essay about 'intertextuality, summarises that 'Despite the fact that most travel texts are presented as single voiced, the extensive level of intertextuality in many texts means that there are in fact many voices in each one. Juxtaposing the various voices creates relationships. The reader does not hear the single voice of the travel writer, but a multiplicity of voices.' (p.134) In *Midnight Express*, at least as far as India accounts are concerned, multiple implicit voices can be traced. Intertextual connections are easy to detect when the narrative is overtly alluding to a specific source or, in the case of

linguistic similarities. However, such detection becomes difficult when it is implicit or some deviation is taking place, as observed in the case of *Wandering India*.

In travel writing, readers usually encounter untraveled lands, uncharted territories, unfamiliar people, and their cultures. With intertextuality, readers encounter previous travelers and their accounts in the text. It is said that travel writing should not be read in a 'vacuum,' as the society and times the traveler was born in or the motivation of traveling have a considerable impact on their writing. However, the intertextual reading suggests that the text should not be read in isolation vis a vis the preceding travel account as well. Reading Sawaki alone may give the impression that the accounts are based on travelers' unique experiences. Sawaki, in his book *Power to Travel: Midnight Express Notes* (2008), asserts that 'there is no textbook for traveling. The Traveller makes their textbook during the travels' (p.288). However, the intertextual references show that not only travelers' itineraries, destinations, but their experiences, facts, views get shaped by the so-called 'culturally established tropes' (Beilein & Scaff, 2020, p.114) provided by the earlier writings. The route chosen is one's own, but the journey may arrive at similar conclusions.

Intertextuality aids in tracing the thread of such encounters, indicating that travel writings are not as independent and transparent as they seem. It equips readers with a 'lens mechanism' to read the travel texts, which, as Thompson describes, are 'always a constructed, crafted artifact, which should never be read naively as just a transparent window on the world' (Thompson, 2011, p.30). Intertextuality makes it possible to decode the consciousness of the writer as well as the limited sphere of experience of the travel writers. Sawaki is not as detached from the socioeconomic conditions in Japan at the time his work was to be published as it may appear, and he may also be somewhat sensitive to the expectations of his audience. Sawaki, through his narrative of *Midnight Express*, does not let his readers feel the time lapse between his actual journey and the publication. He refrains from referencing India and Japan's economic, political, or social situation. Another pertinent question is why Sawaki did not try to revisit the country since he had lost his letters? One reason he gives is that it was Calcutta as his 'body could never forget the experience physically' (Sawaki, 2008, p. 207). Another reason possibly lies in *I Will Give Anything a Look* and *Wandering India*, where India is described as a country that remains the same and never changes (Oda, 2006, p.385; Fujiwara, 1984 vol.1, p.148,166). Oda clearly remarks on revisiting the country after a gap of six years in 1966, saying, 'India was India. It had not changed (Oda, 2006, p.428). It can be said that while penning his travelogue, Sawaki is reminiscing India through Oda and Fujiwara's travelogues.

IV. Conclusion

The strands of intertextual connections can be seen throughout *Midnight Express*. It is an active site where old references are meeting new experiences. The in-depth textual analysis shows that *Midnight Express* invokes Oda, and Fujiwara, and Sawaki oscillates between the two. As Beilein & Scaff argue, 'travel writing is always an intrinsically intertextual genre because even narratives of discovery refer to culturally and literary encoded frames of reference' (Beilein & Scaff, 2020, p.113); we come to know that a careful selection of the content is done in terms of language and content. It can be said that *I Will Give Anything a Look* and *Wandering India* provided Sawaki with a template, and he is just reaffirming what had already been written, keeping his narrative formulaic to specific motifs.

It is significant to note that with such intertextual references, *Midnight Express* is considered a significant writing in post-war Japanese travel literature. The question arises here: Even if intertextual references are present, what are the implications of such references? For Sawaki, it certainly builds the narrative of his writing. In the case of travel writing studies, it is related to the representation or construction of the image of the country and the universalization of the discourse. Travel texts with such intertextual references are produced and reproduced, confirming and reconfirming a particular image. Mapping the texts through intertextuality, rather than analyzing an individual's work, is crucial to provide a much broader perspective. With the intertextual references, the Indian image produced by Oda and Fujiwara is further reinforced by *Midnight Express*. The paper delineates the intertextual connections through textual analysis and indicates the potential and agency of such references in the image construction.

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 3. JTB紀行文学大賞 (JTB Kikō Bungaku Taishō)
 4. <https://prtimes.jp/main/html/rd/p/000000943.000047877.html> accessed on Sep 07, 2024.
 5. All translations by the author.