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academic article  
structural analysis  
worksheet literature  
reviews e...

[Family](#), [Father](#)



## **Publication**

What publishing company published the book? How reputable is it and how do you know? What are their review policies?

Reception

What (peer) reviews can you find? Where? What is the general consensus?

Who has cited this article, and in what kind of publication?

## **Who is the author and what is their academic background?**

Where are they working now (and at what capacity/rank)?

What else have they published (recently?), and how much is actually related to the topic of this article?

Explain the title. Does it really fit the thesis statement, or is there any shifting or gapping? What kind of shift/gap/miss and how does this affect the overall value/importance/usefulness of the article?

- The title of the essay, " Japanese without Apology: Yoshimoto Banana and Healing", means that Yoshimoto is distinctly Japanese and has no need to defend her authenticity.

- The title also implies that her unique literature underscores themes of spiritual healing.

- On a greater level, the writer implies that Yoshimoto is healing the scars of post-World War II Japan.

- The title of the essay fits the thesis statement and lends a sense of continuity and flow which add to the value of the article as a whole.

## Structure

What is the basic, overall format of the article?

- The basic, overall format of the article is a reading and character study of Yoshimoto's books in the context of traditional Japanese social roles.

Relevant themes of her works are examined sequentially.

## Epigraph(s)

Who, what (from when & where), and mostly, why? How is it connected to the rest of the article. How is it related to the thesis statement, or what is its function in the article otherwise?

- Sherif utilizes three epigraphs (two from Susan Sontag's works and one from Susan Napier's work). One of Sontag's epigraphs addresses the healing power of art, an appropriate epigraph for the essay.

- The other two epigraphs seem out of place and do not serve the thesis statement or the title at all. They are largely unnecessary.

## Thesis statement

Quote it (or them, if there is more than one) and explain where found (and how many times). Is it actually the point of the article, or did the author stray/lie/miss it somehow? Explain and support any issues you find with the thesis statement.

- THESIS STATEMENT is as follows: " Yet her writings do not harbor the darkness of much other modern Japanese fiction because her narrative concerns the processes of grieving and healing and exhibits a steadfast belief in the possibility of reintegration into society, even after extreme alienation or trauma" (p. 279).

- Sherif spends more time examining character dynamics from her various works rather than exploring the full ramifications of her thesis statement. It is a well-written thesis statement, however.

How is it divided, and what are the chunks about (summarize VERY BRIEFLY)? What is the thesis statement for each section? What are the sub-section subtitles (if any) and do they accurately convey/represent the thesis of each section? Explain any sub-section epigraphs. Basically, you need to MAP the article's argument (flow) here

- Introduction and defense of Yoshimoto's works, THESIS STATEMENT.

- "A Note on Shôjo" is a discussion of Yoshimoto's approach to sexuality. The thesis statement is: "Variously denigrated as narcissistic and nostalgic infantilism and exalted as a splendid escape from the rigidity of adulthood for all Japanese, regardless of age and gender, shôjo (adolescent female) identity/subjectivity became inextricably identified with Yoshimoto's writings."

- "The Last Good Man" is an examination of traditional Japanese male patriarchy. Its thesis statement is: "Although imagining the realm of the adolescent female as a positive world has become a virtual industry in Japan, it would be futile to portray the shônén, or adolescent male, in utopian terms."

- "An Unlikely Father and Daughter Pair?" examines Yoshimoto's relationship with her famous father (and Japanese writer), Yoshimoto Takaaki. Its thesis statement: "Initially one reason that Banana stood out from the brat pack of younger writers was because she had an exceedingly famous father in the world of letters."

- " The Horror of the Patriarch" examines how Yoshimoto mends her characters' spirits. Its thesis statement: " Initially one reason that Banana stood out from the brat pack of younger writers was because she had an exceedingly famous father in the world of letters."
- " Language and Contamination" examines the " pollution" of Japan's essence by outside nations, particularly in the novel N. P. Its thesis statement: " Yoshimoto's novel N. P. promotes an essentialist view of Japanese national identity."
- " Eroticizing the Mundane, Domesticating the Marginal" examines the controversial, if not disturbing, aspects of Yoshimoto's work. Its thesis statement: " While some readers may find comfort in discovering yet another affirmation of the uniqueness of the Japanese language and culture in Yoshimoto's works, there is another reason for the appeal of her writings: the frequent appearance of morally and socially controversial topics."
- " The Promise of Spirituality" examines Yoshimoto's recent quest for spiritual meaning in her work. Its thesis statement is: " In the 1990s, Yoshimoto exhibited a growing obsession with searches for spiritual meaning in her fiction."
- " A Temporary Sense of Hope" wraps up the essay, portraying Yoshimoto as a central figure in a Japanese literary canon that is more upbeat and hopeful. Its thesis statement: " Even so, her career has been distinguished by the surprising degree of attention her works have been given by the Japanese critical establishment, which often ignores popular writers, as well as by the

foreign press and readers, which had previously lavished praise only on canonical male authors and Nobel Prize winners."

### **Quotes/citations/support**

Which books/works from the topic-author get cited? From what period in the topic-author's career are they from? Have they been translated/published in English? Is the article-author citing the English or the Japanese version? Can you tell/does it matter (and why or why not)? How are the citations used (how do they function) in the article? What other support is used (or missing)? Are any other experts/academic works/fictional works, etc. cited? Who, what (when and where from) and why? Is it effective or decorative? How do you know?

- Yoshimoto cites Marika's Sofa (p. 287), an earlier work from 1983.
- She also cites a more recent passage from Amrita (p. 289), written in 1994.
- She also cites a passage from N. P., written in the 1990s (p. 291). She cites passages from one of her earliest works, Kitchen (p. 295) and a story, "Blood and Water", written in 1991 (p. 296).
- She also cites a passage from Hachiko's Last Lover, written in the late 1980s (p. 298). The author is citing English translations which function extremely well in the article.
- The citations underscore the thematic elements and character traits of Yoshimoto's prose that Sherif points out in her essay.

### **Specialized terminology/Jargon/Historical terms or concepts**

What are some key words from the article? Is any specialized terminology (literary, historical, Japanese cultural concepts, etc) used? Where and why? Is

it useful/practical in its specificity, or does it come across as jargon? And how much does that matter to the overall value/usefulness of the argument?

- There is very little usage of specialized terminology in this essay which makes it more accessible to the general reader. One oft-repeated term is a type of literary/cultural genre called *shōjo*. Some other terms are used which appear ornamental. The usage of the term *shōjo* helps the reader understand how Yoshimoto's writing is categorized and considered by the cultural elite of Japan.

## **Conclusion**

Critique the ending. How well does it match the introduction? How does it affect/match/support the argument and the overall quality of the article?

- The ending supports both the title and thesis statement as it describes Yoshimoto as a writer of international import, one who is succeeding at healing the rift between Western readers and Japan, one who is assuaging the guilt of Americans for the "Enola Gay" as well as one who is marketable.

- Sherif closes by stating that other (perhaps older) writers can address the omnipresent nuclear threat while Yoshimoto offers a vision of a more hopeful, "hipper" Japan.