

An Anti-Franklin Philosophy? Bukowski's American Dream Part One: The *Tatemaie/Honne* Model

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ブカウスキーのアメリカンドリーム パート 1

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Introduction

*I have refused the discipline
Of Art and Government and
God and all that which
Destroys . . .*

This (Bukowski: 1996a; 180).

This paper (part one of two parts) will layout the theoretical underpinnings to be utilized in part two's examination of the writings of Charles Bukowski that focus on the pressures exerted upon adults by the mid to late 20th Century United States' systems of control. The model is formed from the works of Jacques Derrida, Jacques Lacan and Dr. Takeo Doi. The concepts of Derridian *différance* and Lacanian identity formation that have been utilized throughout this series of papers (see *Fundamental Theories Relevant to Identity Formation*, Kearney: 2003, for detailed analyses of the Derridian and Lacanian theories) will be combined with theories posited by Doi. Doi's theories concerning *tatemaie* ("face; official stance; public position or attitude") and *honne* ("real intention; motive") (Friedl: 13/07/00; <<http://enterprise.dsi.crc.ca/cgi-bin/j-e/nocolor/dict.html>>) will form the analytical model (A fuller discussion of these terms and theories will be undertaken below). This model, referred to as the *tatemaie/honne* model, will then be used in part two to examine Bukowski's representations of the post-adolescent experience.

The application of the *tatemae/honne* model to Bukowski's work will demonstrate the polarized operation of *tatemae/honne* in the narrators and characters of Bukowski's autobiographical fiction. The narrators and characters of Bukowski's works are presented with two choices: adhere to "American" *tatemae* and suffer in silence, or "speak-out," display *honne*, and break the pattern of silent suffering. The second choice, however, is just as problematic as the first, for in going against the established *tatemae* of the United States, one goes against the *natural* (the italics are meant to indicate a questioning of the validity/meaning of this term) rules of the society. The individual ignoring *tatemae* and working only with *honne* will have to drop out of the established, *normal* (see note to *natural* above) society and exist on its fringes. Bukowski chose this route himself, and it is from this position on the fringe of the United States' society that Bukowski became "the flop house laureate" (O'Neill: 1998; 11). Before examining Bukowski's texts, it is necessary to develop the *tatemae/honne* model that will be utilized in the analysis.

To do this, the theories developed by Dr. Takeo Doi in The Anatomy of Dependence and The Anatomy of Self: The Individual Versus Society, which are primary to *tatemae/honne*, will be employed. Derrida's concept of *différance* and its indication of the interplay between binary opposites and Lacan's concepts in *The Mirror Stage as Formative of the Function of the I as Revealed in Psychoanalytic Experience* (and the functioning of these concepts in the constitution of identity) will be read alongside Doi's concepts to expose the relationships between *différance* and identity formation and the *tatemae/honne* model, with particular attention being given to the *sheaf of différence*. The following briefly reiterates the link between the Derridian and Lacanian concepts discussed in *Fundamental Theories Relevant to Identity Formation* (Kearney: 2003), which are relevant to the development of the *tatemae/honne* model: the I, or the Self (the internal), and the world, or the Symbolic Order (the external), do not exist independently. They exist as one thing through their *différance*. The one cannot exist without the other. Each is dependent upon its *différance* to the other for its constitution. This premise will now be incorporated into the relationship, which exists between the Japanese terms *tatemae* and *honne*. In order to merge the above premise with the concepts of Doi, a brief discussion of his work in general, followed by a more specific examination of *tatemae* and *honne* will be undertaken. From this the *tatemae/honne* model, which will be used to examine the works of Charles Bukowski, can be constructed.

Amae

Dr. Takeo Doi is a Japanese psychiatrist who has worked in both the United States of America and Japan. He has published a number of works on the relationship between language and the psyche. His two major works are The Anatomy of Dependence, first published in 1971, and The Anatomy of Self, first published in 1985. The focus of The Anatomy of Dependence is on the Japanese word *amae* and the concepts surrounding it. *Amae* is the root of the Japanese verb *amaeru*. *Amaeru* is usually translated as "behave like a spoilt [pampered] child" (Yamada: 1972; 17). However, Doi realized the particular difficulty of translating *amae* into English, and this was the impetus for the psycho-linguistic concepts he developed in The Anatomy of Dependence.

The “episode that brought home” the implications of attempting to translate *amae* into English, thus strengthening his interest in the link between language and psyche, occurred while he was treating a woman “suffering from anxiety hysteria” (Doi: 1981; 18). The patient was “of mixed parentage.” The father was Japanese. The patient’s mother was English, but having been born and raised in Japan, the mother was fluent in both English and Japanese. Doi conducted the interview with the patient’s mother in English. However, while discussing the patient’s early childhood, the mother “suddenly switched from English and said quite clearly in Japanese, *kono ko wa amari amaemasen deshita* - “she did not *amaeru* much” (Doi: 1981; 18). When there was a suitable pause in the interview, Doi asked the mother “why she had used Japanese for that single sentence.” The woman’s response was that “[t]here’s no way of expressing it in English” (Doi: 1981; 18).

The implications of this episode coupled with the observations that Doi made during his clinical work formed the backbone of his “first research paper employing the *amae* concept.” This paper, titled *Shinkeishitsu no seishin byouri - toku ni toraware no seishin rikigaku ni tsuite*, (I have translated this as “The Dynamics of Undoing the Preoccupation’s of the Nervous Mind”) was presented to “the fifty-fourth conference of the Japan Psychiatric and Neurological Association in 1957” (Doi: 1981; 18). The research that started with this paper brought Doi along a path leading to the relationship between language and psyche.

Doi perceived that *amae* was the “emotion felt by the baby at the breast towards its mother” (Doi: 1981; 20). This was an “emotion” that Doi’s colleague, Professor Yushi Uchimura, head of the psychiatry department at the Tokyo University School of Medicine, noted as being apparent “even [in] a puppy” (Doi: 1981; 15). The question then arose of why *amae* “seemed to be peculiar to the Japanese” (Doi: 1981; 15). Doi identified this “emotion,” *amae*, in Freud’s work as what Freud termed “the child’s primary object-choice;” however, he noted that after Freud’s “introduction of the concept of narcissism,” little significance was attached to this concept (Doi: 1981; 20). The puzzle was not pieced together for Doi until he came across “Michael Balint’s *Primary Love and Psychoanalytic Technique*” (Doi: 1981; 20). In this work Doi recognized that what Balint was terming “passive object love” was what the Japanese language had designated as *amae*. Balint’s work also argued “that the European languages fail to distinguish between active love and passive love” (Balint: 1981; 20). Herein lay the key that Doi had been searching for: the link between psyche and language. *Amae* appears as a peculiarity and as a “phenomenon” in the Japanese psyche because the Japanese language alone has a term constituting it. *Amae* can, because it is a termed thing, be recognized and discussed. It has been named, and as a named thing it can be recognized in the sensible and contemplated in the intelligible. *Amae* becomes a “phenomenon” of the Japanese psyche because it is named. Since there is a term for *amae* in Japanese, it can be conceptualized. It is from this premise that the rest of Doi’s work focusing on the interdependence of language and psyche is grounded. Working from this scaffolding Doi, in *The Anatomy of Self*, formulates his theory of the interdependence of *tatema* and *honne* as an identified “phenomenon” in the Japanese psyche. The “phenomenon” exists in all cultures, but because of its grounding in the Japanese language, it becomes an identifiable “phenomenon.”

Tatemaie and Honne

At the start of this paper *tatemaie* and *honne* were defined as “face; official stance; public position or attitude” and “real intention; motive” respectively. It is important to note that these are *translations*. As translations they are, moreover, rudimentary in that their purpose is to provide native English speakers with meanings that are intelligible to their sensibilities. What follows is an attempt to illustrate the concepts associated with these Japanese terms. In performing this task the terms must be considered through the *sheaf of différance*. This method should aid in clarifying their inter-relation to one another, or the conceptualization of their “oneness.”

In a Japanese language dictionary, the definition of *tatemaie* is “principles or rules that have been established as natural and proper” (Doi: 1988; 36). The use of the phrase, “have been established,” connotes the construction of these “natural and proper” rules by humans. Doi utilizes the following statement made by Mokutarou Kinoshita (1885-1945) during “a round-table discussion on scientific technology and literature” to illustrate his claim “that *tatemaie* refers to conventions created by people on the basis of consensus” (Doi: 1988; 36):

Since it is no doubt impossible for most people to understand by its name alone what kind of *tatemaie* this thing called the “science novel” has, I think it is first necessary to clearly define its boundaries (Kinoshita: 1983; 25).

If *tatemaie* is constructed through consensus with “clearly define[d] boundaries,” then it is derived from humans. Thus, when *tatemaie* is considered, it is done so with the awareness that it is not a purely external condition imposed upon subjects/people. As Doi explains, “*tatemaie* always implies the existence of a group of people in its background who assent to it” (Doi: 1988; 36). The *naturalness* of *tatemaie* is not before humans or detached from humans: it is derived from or created by humans. The awareness of its “human” origins denotes its cultural and human aspects. An important point of this comprehension of *tatemaie* is that since these are rules and conventions constructed by people, they “can therefore be overturned by people” (Doi: 1988; 36).

In explaining *honne* Doi positions it with *tatemaie*. The two terms only exist through *différance*, the one term defining the other through its differing from it. The relationship between *tatemaie* and *honne* is one of *différance*. *Tatemaie* and *honne* are two aspects of the one thing. Doi’s Japanese definition of *honne* reveals *tatemaie* and *honne* as existing only through *différance* quite clearly:

. . . *honne* refers to the fact that the individuals who belong to the group, even while they consent to the *tatemaie*, each have their own motives and opinions that are distinct from it, and that they hold these in its background. In fact, these individual, personal ways of viewing the *tatemaie* can themselves be said to be *honne* (Doi: 1988; 36-37).

If *tatemaie* is constructed by “the individuals who belong to the group,” and if those individuals possess their “own . . . distinct” *honne*, and if those individuals then construct *tatemaie*, then the inter-influentiality of the two terms can be argued. Any individual whose *honne* is being considered

can always be perceived as being a member within a group, even if that grouping is humanity itself. *Honne* then refers to the condition identifying a distinct perception of *tatema*, but a perception that none-the-less is constituted by the very *tatema* it is perceiving. Doi explains the relationship in the following passage:

. . . *honne* exists only because there is *tatema*, and *honne* manipulates *tatema* from behind. In this way, *tatema* and *honne* are in a mutually defining and mutually constituting relationship. Without one, the other cannot exist" (Doi: 1988; 37).

Tatema and *honne*, in the manner that Doi explains their relationship in the above passage, are functioning along the premise of the Derridian *sheaf of différance*.

Two terms in the Japanese language that share the associations attached to *tatema* and *honne* are *omote* and *ura*. While the terms *tatema* and *honne* are not frequently used in everyday language, the related terms *omote* and *ura* are used quite often. To demonstrate the prevalence of the awareness of the inter-dependency of the terms associated with dialectical concepts, as they are manifested in the Japanese language, a brief section on the usage of *omote* and *ura* follows.

Omote and Ura

Doi links *omote* and *ura* to their "Latin counter parts recto and verso" in that they "are paired opposing concepts" (Doi: 1988; 23). A Japanese to English dictionary translation of *omote* gives it as "the face; the surface; the right [correct] side; the head; the front" (Yamada: 1972; 733). *Ura* is translated as "the back; the reverse [wrong] side; the opposite side; the rear" (Yamada: 1972; 1101). With some of the English terms, "the right [correct] side" and "the reverse [wrong] side," and "the front" and "the rear," the "recto and verso" aspect of the "paired opposing concepts" is quite easily discernible. However, in the translation of *omote* and *ura* from Japanese to English there is slippage. With some of the English translation terms, there is an absence of the "paired opposing" set connotation: what is the opposing term to "head" to complete the set? *Omote* can mean head in Japanese, but when it is used as such, it always implies something of the mind, the *ura*, that lies within the head. In this sense, *omote* would never be used to refer to the head in only a physical context. For example with the phrase "My head hurts," *omote* is not used. In cases where only the physical aspect of the head needs to be communicated Japanese language utilizes the term *atama*. The phrase "My head hurts," then in Japanese would be "*Watashi no atama ga itai*." *Atama* in Japanese is not part of a paired opposing set. It should be evident from the above that in translation from Japanese to English slippage occurs in the concepts associated with the Japanese terms and their English counterparts. In Japanese *omote* always implies *ura*. To overcome this slippage, we must consider not the translations of the terms, but rather the usage of the Japanese terms.

When the Japanese speak of something's *omote-ura*, they are "referring to the two sides of" the thing. Yet the concepts associated with *omote-ura*, as with *tatema-honne*, are not polarized. This makes them unlike Western conceptions of binary oppositions. *Omote* and *ura* function on

a “dialectical relationship” (Doi: 1988; 23), yet one where the usage of one implies the other. They are two aspects or sides of the one thing. The concept is expressed quite clearly in the Zen analogy that makes use of a cup to explain the interrelationship of “paired opposing concepts:” “A cup has an inside and an outside” which are different and “distinct” but they constitute one thing, a cup (Low: 1991; 35). Without one, the other cannot exist. The operation of the Derridian *sheaf of différance* should be easily recognizable in these Eastern concepts. The one is defined, brought into existence, through its differing with the other. They cannot exist alone. The cup analogy works well at illustrating this principle, for without an inside it would not be a cup: it would be unable to hold the liquid. The generation of the inside is also the generation of the outside, for inside without outside is open space without differentiation.

Common usage in the Japanese language of *omote* and *ura* indicate an understanding of this principle. For example, Doi points to the terms *omote-ji*, “the material used for [the exterior of] a kimono or a business suit” and *ura-ji*, “the material used for the lining”(Doi: 1988; 23). In cases where the terms are used independently the “one term implies the other.” For example “*omote o tateru*,” which Doi translates as “to put up a front” (Doi: 1988; 23), similarly to the English phrase, puts the emphasis on what lies behind the front. Other phrases Doi refers to, *omote o tsukurou* - “to keep up appearances;” *omote o haru* - “to keep up a facade” (Doi: 1988; 23), all when used by native Japanese speakers have the emphasis on the *ura* that lies beneath. All of the English phrases above function like their Japanese counterparts. The difference between the two cultures lies in the concentration or frequency of usage. Japanese apply these concepts to many situations. Even a common, “genuine,” display will be referred to as consisting of both *omote* and *ura*, of *tatemae* and *honne*. The one is always present in the other. The concentration of this concept is not as prevalent in English. One may “speak openly,” or “be frank” and we may or may not take her or his words at “face value,” but sometimes we do. In Japanese the concept operates so that even the most “genuine” display is considered as being constructed from both *omote* and *ura*, *tatemae* and *honne*. A Japanese expression that is commonly used that displays this feeling is: “Somehow, when I try to put it into words, it sounds like a lie” (Doi: 1988; 31). The indication here is that “a partial shadowing” always accompanies the “act of using words” (Doi: 1988; 31). This may bring some illumination to the underpinnings of the image of the quiet, restrained Japanese national identity. A suspicion of words has placed “reserve” in the position of privilege “over eloquence” (Doi: 1988; 33).

From the above discussion of the Japanese terms *omote* and *ura* and *tatemae* and *honne* the implication that can be drawn is that the concept of *différance* is inherently built into Japanese sensibilities of communication. It is understood that “*honne* exists only because there is *tatemae*, and *honne* manipulates *tatemae* from behind. In this way, *tatemae* and *honne* are in a mutually defining and mutually constituting relationship. Without one, the other cannot exist” (Doi: 1988; 37). *Tatemae* and *honne* resist polarization. This is an indicator of *différance*. What is unique (used here with caution) to the Japanese language (and perhaps other Asian language systems) is that the resistance to polarization is stressed, rather than the stress being placed on the polarization of the terms.

The *Tatemaie/Honne* Model

In relation to Lacan's concepts of the formation of identity, *tatemaie* may be held to be the Symbolic Order. The external "principles or rules," the *tatemaie* or Symbolic Order, are "precisely a product of socialization" (Doi: 1988; 46). *Honne* or the I, or individual Self, "is the expression of self-consciousness" (Doi: 1988; 46). Doi held that "socialization and self-consciousness [were] intimately related" and that the process begins "in the home environment during infancy and childhood and, later, through the human relations developed in school and social situations outside the home" (Doi: 1988; 46) [examples of the above situations as they are represented in the works of Bukowski are discussed in *The Struggle Against Matrixing: Bukowski Fighting from the Corner* (Kearney: 2004)]. This coincides with Lacan's theory of the 'mirror stage' as it is discussed in *Fundamental Theories Relevant to Identity Formation* (Kearney: 2003; 106-109). From the concepts of Derrida, Lacan and Doi a model can be developed to examine what is perceived to be the polarized relationship that exists between the world and the I. This concept will be termed the *tatemaie/honne* model.

From infancy *tatemaie* and *honne* play on each other forming a fluctuating field, which can be held to be identity. The argument that identity is constituted from *tatemaie* (the Symbolic Order) invites the charge that, if so, all people would have the same identity. This criticism may be addressed by a point Harold Pinter made in a speech at The National Student Drama Festival in Bristol in 1962:

I'm not a theorist. I'm not an authoritative or reliable commentator on the dramatic scene, the social scene, any scene. I write plays, when I can manage it, and that's all. That's the sum of it. So I'm speaking with some reluctance, knowing that there are at least twenty-four possible aspects of any single statement, depending on where you're standing at the time or on what the weather's like. A categorical statement, I find, will never stay where it is and be finite. It will immediately be subject to modification by the other twenty-three possibilities of it. No statement I make, therefore, should be interpreted as final and definitive. One or two of them may sound final and definitive, they may even be almost final and definitive, but I won't regard them as such tomorrow, and I wouldn't like you to do so today (Brown: 1972; 15-16).

Pinter's point here is one of interpretation. *Tatemaie*, although seeming to be finite, is open to interpretation, a different interpretation for every single interpreter. Even the interpreter's interpretation is "immediately . . . subject to modification." No two individual's can occupy exactly the same position for interpretation; thus, no two graspings of *tatemaie* can be identical. From this it can then be drawn that no two *honne* will be constituted exactly the same. This was a point recognized by Doi when he stated that *tatemaie* could "be overturned by people" (Doi: 1988; 36). *Tatemaie* is interpreted by humans. This interpretation constitutes their *honne*. However, *tatemaie* is also constantly being reconstructed by humans since the possession of *honne* calls for a constant reinterpreting of *tatemaie*. Moreover, there are different *tatemaie* operating not only through different languages and cultures but also within different groupings within what may be

called the “same” society. Considering this may account for what are called “national” or “ethnic” characters. While this will not be investigated in this paper, the following illuminates the point: the *tatemae* of Japan constitutes a “national” character of reserve over eloquence when held in juxtaposition with France for example. Yet both cultures produce “eloquent” and “reserved” individuals of varying degrees: the variations in degree are based upon the differing productions of *honne* that result from the myriad interpreting positions that each individual occupies. The individual *honne* of each member of the group is based on the situation that no two individuals perceiving *tatemae* do so from the exact same position.

Conclusion

The *tatemae/honne* model functions on the *sheaf of différence* where *tatemae* and *honne* are in constant play and fluctuation. One may display parts of their *honne* to family or close friends but keep these parts from acquaintances or colleagues. One may have negative *honne* toward doing something at work, but intentionally repress it and display only *tatemae* to maintain a more “pleasant” work environment. These are situations of the *tatemae/honne* model that Doi would hold as healthy: “the dual structure constituted by *tatemae* and *honne* fulfils a major role in maintaining psychic balance. We could even describe it as the sense of balance itself” (Doi: 1988; 45). However, a healthy ratio of *tatemae/honne* is not always maintained. Moreover, individuals are “not always self-consciously aware of the distinction between *tatemae* and *honne*” (Doi: 1988; 38). Doi’s example of this is “a male teacher,” “earnest in teaching one of his female students.” His actions may be simply “observing the *tatemae* of his profession,” or there might be secret “deeper feelings for the student” (Doi: 1988; 38-39). The teacher may not be aware of his *honne*. According to Doi, the inability to recognize one’s own *honne* may lead to a loss of control where the “*honne* can run rampant in ways that are extremely grotesque” (Doi: 1988; 40). Although Doi does not address the case of over emphasis on *tatemae*, it may be deduced that this situation would be just as “unhealthy,” for its lack of balance. Denial of one’s own *honne*, may lead to feelings of emptiness or to one being something of an automaton to *tatemae*. In the works of Bukowski instances of *tatemae/honne* imbalance are frequent. What follows in part two of this paper is an analysis, utilizing the *tatemae/honne* model, of Bukowski’s autobiographical works that examines the overbearing and abusive systems of control that pressure adults within the mid to late 20th Century *epistēmē* of the United States.

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