

An Iconography of Hope: Reconciling Identities and Axiologies

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News commentary: Why quakes leave the Japanese unshakeable

March 15, 2011



“media exposition”

Iedema, R., Feez, S. and White, P.R.R. (1994) Media Literacy. Sydney, Disadvantaged Schools Program, NSW Department of School Education.

Headline

Why quakes leave the Japanese unshakeable

Ben Macintyre
The Times
March 15, 2011



Orientation (disaster event)

A woman looks for her husband's memorial tablet in the ruins of her house in the devastated town of Minamisanriku. Picture: AFP Source: AFP

Alongside the chaos and destruction wrought by the terrible earthquake and tsunami have been scenes of heart-breaking orderliness and self-control. Japan is prostrate and fearful, but there are no reports of widespread looting, panic or hoarding. There is, as yet, very little anger directed at the government.

Western news crews search the wreckage for images of fear and anguish, for outrage and despair, but the Japanese survivors avert their faces and cover their eyes if they weep.

Thesis (it can all be explained by gaman)

This extraordinary stoicism can be summed up by the Japanese word *gaman*, a concept that defies easy translation but broadly means calm forbearance, perseverance and poise in the face of adverse events beyond one's control. *Gaman* reflects a distinctively Japanese mentality, the direct consequence of geography and history in a country where the cycle of destruction and renewal is embedded in the national psyche. The Japanese are not earthquake-proof but, like their buildings and bridges, resilience has become inbuilt in a nation adapted to sway and bend under shocks that would shatter other societies.

Japan has known utter devastation before, and the horror of nuclear fallout, but its recovery after 1945, and the ensuing economic miracle, owed much to this uncomplaining tenacity, a collective pride in endurance, survival and reconstruction.

When the Japanese Prime Minister described Friday's earthquake as "our worst crisis since the war", he was deliberately invoking *gaman*: "In the past we have overcome all kinds of hardships. Each of you should accept the responsibility to overcome this crisis and try to create a new Japan."

Argument 1 (history and definition of gaman)

Gaman is part of the glue that holds Japanese society together, a way of thought instilled from an early age. It implies self-restraint, suffering in silence, denying oneself gratification and self-expression to fit in with the greater good. Originally a Buddhist term, it has come to signify self-denial, solidarity and a certain patient fatalism.

This hardiness and social cohesion enabled Japan to emerge from the devastation of world war and thrive. But the rigid order and self-abnegation that it implies are also what keeps the beleaguered "salaryman" at his desk, toiling away with grim determination. That rigid conformity, obedience and sense of national purpose helped to propel Japan recklessly into World War II.

Argument 2 (gaman is an essential part of being Japanese)

Phase 1: counter (source of external voices?)

Some in the West find the Japanese aloof and unfeeling in their reaction to disaster, and assume that “normal” human emotions are being suppressed. There is some evidence to support that view. The Kobe earthquake in 1995 that killed 6,400 people and wiped out about 2.5 per cent of Japanese GDP was greeted with gritty determination to rebuild the city. Only later did the psychological aftershocks become apparent, with higher rates of suicide and mental illness.

Phase 2: rebuttal

But to see this measured response merely as evidence of a bottled-up culture is to misunderstand how Japanese society is founded on a shared pride in recovery, and how deeply risk and response to adversity are bound up with being Japanese.

Japan lives on a psychological as well as a seismic fault line. Its founding gods were foul-tempered and ferocious. Successive earthquakes, tsunamis, typhoons and volcanic eruptions have left this land with an acute sense of vulnerability, but a corresponding mental sturdiness.

Every Japanese child is brought up to expect upheaval. Disaster Preparedness Day falls on September 1, the anniversary of the Great Kanto Earthquake of 1923 that killed 140,000. The importance of persevering and rebuilding in an uncertain natural world is reflected in traditional architecture, art and popular culture.

The cult television show Endurance (Za Gaman, in Japanese), in which contestants try to outdo one another by withstanding a gamut of unpleasant experiences, is a target of some mockery here, but it is more than mere entertainment in Japan, where physical and mental endurance are still so highly prized.

Argument 3 (Japanese are different from Westerners)

In the West, we look for reasons for natural disasters: we blame global warming, government failure or God. In the wake of Hurricane Katrina, some saw biblical retribution for the “sins” of New Orleans. The Japanese relationship to nature is different: Man is neither battling nature nor at its mercy, but part of it.

Japan is braced for nature's violence like no other country. Every bullet train has an automatic shutdown-switch that activates when an earthquake strikes. But as events at Japan's nuclear power plants show, safety technology has its limits. Disaster cannot always be prevented: it can only be coped with.

The Japanese are coping in ways that some find hard to relate to: with deep sadness, but without breast-beating, complaint or recrimination. It is hard to imagine any other people who, when the Earth buckles and their world collapses, form an orderly queue and wait.

The contrast is perfectly illustrated by the way the tragedy has been covered. Western reporters stand before a backdrop of utter desolation. Japanese reporters tend to find a wider view, with a standing building. They do not thrust microphones towards the homeless and bereaved, demanding to know how they “feel”. At a moment of acute national pain, the Japanese audience does not want to intrude.

???

In the novel *The Remains of the Day*, the British-Japanese novelist Kazuo Ishiguro brilliantly created the butler Mr Stevens, reserved, dignified, upholding the rules of correct behaviour, the epitome of British-style gaman. Such qualities may seem old-fashioned, but in quake-ravaged Japan they are a vital bulwark against even greater destruction.

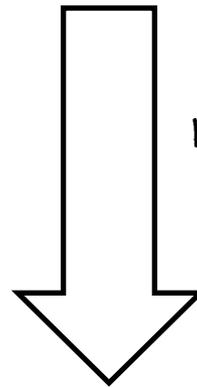
Reiteration

Japan endures 10 per cent of the world's seismic activity; recent days suggest that it may also be home to a disproportionate stock of the world's fortitude. We like to think that understated resilience in a crisis is a peculiarly British trait, but today the stiff upper lip is Japanese.

Intertextuality

Why quakes leave the Japanese unshakeable

The Times, March 15, 2011



reproduced in

Crushed, but true to law of 'gaman'

The Australian, March 16, 2011

Headline	CRUSHED, BUT TRUE TO LAW OF 'GAMAN'	<i>(thematized)</i>
Kicker	THE elderly and exhausted Japanese survivor...	
Orientation	Alongside the chaos and destruction wrought by the terrible earthquake and tsunami have been... Western news crews search the wreckage...	
Thesis	This extraordinary stoicism can be summed up by the Japanese word gaman...	
Argument 1	Gaman is part of the glue that holds Japanese society together... This hardiness and social cohesion enabled Japan to...	
Argument 2		
Phase 1	Some in the West find the Japanese unfeeling...	
Phase 2	But to see this measured response merely as evidence... Japan lives on a psychological as well as a seismic fault line... Every child is brought up to expect upheaval.	
Argument 3	In the West we look for reasons for natural disasters... This contrast is perfectly illustrated by the way...	
Reiteration	In the novel <i>The Remains of the Day</i> ... Japan endures 10 per cent of the world's seismic activity...	

Reuters Breakingviews

Japan's economy may prove surprisingly resilient

Japan's tragic earthquake and tsunami are unlikely to break the back of the world's third-largest economy. Experience with crises has shaped the Japanese ethos of "gaman" -- "enduring the unendurable".

USA Today

Foreigners flee Japan as nuclear crisis worsens

Thomas, a San Francisco native who runs the Toriizaka Art gallery in Tokyo, says she trusts that the Japanese ethos of *gaman*, a resilient spirit of endurance, will help the country rebuild.

CTV

Japanese resilience shines in light of tragedy

The apparent contradiction can perhaps be understood in terms of the uniquely Japanese concepts of "shikata ga nai," which roughly translates as "it can't be helped," as well as the virtue "gaman" which defies easy translation, but encompasses the concepts of self-restraint, patience and perseverance in the face of suffering.

Christian Science Monitor

A nuclear meltdown in Japan? Not if these brave workers can help it.

One noble trait that the Japanese admire is *gaman*. It is their word for the ability to persevere, endure, and overcome, with patience.

Headline	SYMPATHY FOR JAPAN, AND ADMIRATION	New York Times March 11, 2011
Orientation	Our hearts are all with the Japanese today, after...	
Thesis		
Phase 1	It's not that Japan's government handles earthquakes particularly well...	
Phase 2	But the Japanese people themselves were truly noble... There's a common Japanese word, " <i>gaman</i> "...	
Argument 1	Japan's orderliness and civility often impressed me... Japan has an underclass... But compared to other countries... Japan's civility masks problems... But it was striking to see...	
Argument 2	This stoicism is built into the Japanese language...	
Argument 3	Uncomplaining, collective resilience is steeped into the Japanese soul...	
Argument 4	One factor may also have to do with our relationship with nature. Americans see themselves as...In contrast, the Japanese conception is that...	
Reiteration	I find something noble and courageous in Japan's resilience and perseverance...	

米各紙、日本人の「がまん」「地震への備え」に注目

2011年3月13日

【ニューヨーク＝田中光】東日本大震災をめぐり、米国でも日本人の対応や、震災への備えに注目する報道が相次いでいる。米ニューヨーク・タイムズ紙（NYT）のコラムニストは日本人の「ガマン」を称賛する一方、ウォールストリート・ジャーナル紙（WSJ）は日本の耐震対策をたたえた。

「日本語には英語にはないガマンという言葉がある」。そう指摘したのは阪神大震災を取材したことがあるNYTの元東京支局長のニコラス・クリストフ記者だ。「日本の立ち直る力と忍耐力は立派で勇気のあるもので、来る日でも見ることができるだろう」とブログで書いた。

またWSJの12日付の社説は、地震大国の日本が「どれだけ地震に備えてきたかを忘れてはならない」と主張。NYTの12日付の1面記事も、多くの人たちが高台に逃れた点など、津波に対する住民たちの警戒心が人命を救った可能性に言及した。

Various American papers are paying attention to Japanese “*gaman*”, “earthquake readiness” 13 March, 2011

(New York, Hikaru Tanaka) America continues to report on Japanese response and readiness towards the earthquake in Northern Japan.

American New York Times columnist lauds Japanese ‘*gaman*’, while Wallstreet Journal praises Japanese anti-earthquake strategy.

“There’s a Japanese word ‘*gaman*’ that doesn’t have an equivalent,” the former NYT bureau chief who has covered the Kobe earthquake Nicholas Kristof points out. (...)

National stereotyping

...each writer will analyze the whole spectrum of ethnic experience in light of his single chosen term. Though they may frequently differ among themselves as to where the quintessence of “Japanliness” may be found, they all share the same simple faith in the idea that Japan’s vast and variegated tradition may be summed up in one “key word” (Dale 1986:57)

“What is interesting in this review of the history of Nihonjinron that... the same social values – such as *on* and *giri* – are evaluated from time to time, and the institutions that are the epitome of virtue and goodness at one time turn into the curse of the nation at another.” (Befu 1993:125)

Befu 1993; Iwabuchi 1994; Aoki 1999, etc.

...as political utility

...the relationship between the West's Orientalist discourse on Japan and Japan's discourse on itself is characterised by a profound complicity. Both tend to use the Other to essentialise the Self and to repress the heterogeneous voices within. This perspective opens up a dimension of power/knowledge alliance *within* the nation and *between* nations; how the discursive construction of dehumanised Others has been subtly utilised by the power bloc to instill nationalist sentiment into people's minds; how the heterogeneous voices of people within the nations have been repressed through the homogenising discourses of an imaginary "us" versus "them" (Iwabuchi 1994).

1930s	war
1940s	defeat
1950s	communism
1960s	economic recovery
1980s	economic war
...	
2010s	?

Headline SELF-DENIAL WEARS THIN FOR JAPANESE July 7, 1989

Orientation Regard Mr. Suzuki, the composite salaried worker...
Mr. Suzuki may be a hackneyed stereotype, but his existence is real...

Thesis The answer, in a word, is *gaman*...
To *gaman* is to deny oneself expression...
“*Gaman* is the way of life. That’s what they teach you...
Even Japanese-style perseverance has its limits...”

Argument 1 For one, Japan has become affluent enough...

Argument 2 Employment practices, too, show less restraint...

Argument 3 And on the political scene...

(...)

Reiteration After 120 years of frantic modernization and national sacrifice, the old saw about Japan being a “poor island nation without natural resources” is losing its logic. Yet all indications are that the ethos of *gaman* is here to stay...

SELF-DENIAL WEARS THIN FOR JAPANESE July 7, 1989

To *gaman* is to **deny oneself expression**, gratification and in some cases **dignity** for the greater cause of **yielding** to another or fitting harmoniously **into a group**...

...the incongruity of American and Japanese cultural values is a recurring theme in the debate over economic friction. The capacity of Japanese workers and consumers to make sacrifices is seen by some foreign observers as somehow **unfair**. The deck seems **stacked against** the petulant Americans.

One author, James Fallows, a columnist for the Atlantic magazine, goes so far as to suggest that *gaman* -- although he does not call it that -- is somehow linked to Japan's massive trade surplus because consumers are **repressing** desires and **distorting** market forces that might ordinarily spur them to buy more imports.

"Japan now has enough money to do anything it wants. Why do rich people keep living this way?" he wrote, referring to the **shabby** housing, the **lack** of leisure and the **pitiful** purchasing power of the Japanese. "The answer to this question is crucial, because it essentially determines whether the world's trade battles with Japan will ever end. If most Japanese people agree with the outside view -- that Japanese life is **needlessly hard** -- then trade imbalances will start working themselves out.

“...the epitome of virtue and goodness at one time turn into the curse of the nation at another.” (Befu 1993:125)

Repercussions

“When culture is seen as infrastructural, as determining all of the forms of social and economic life, history is made irrelevant, and social praxis is emptied of any element of liberating force and illuminative power, since everything is seen as a symptom of the higher spirit, that enduring, omnipresent yet ineffable entity which is called ‘the Japanese spirit.’”

(Dale 1986:20-21)

“...if these declarative models describe an idealized state and carry positive valence, then it behooves Japanese to act and think as described to achieve the idealized state of affairs, to treat the descriptive model as a prescriptive one... Not to behave as prescribed is not only unusual and strange: it is “un-Japanese” and against the normative standard of the society.” (Befu 1993:116)

我慢ならんよ: No More Gaman (coping)

被災地と被災地外の人のためのストレス対処法: Surviving (coping?) strategies for those who are affected by the Earthquake/Nuclear crisis inside and outside of Japan.

ブログ アーカイブ

▼ 2011 (3)

▼ 3月 (3)

Ceremony: Call for ideas

Apple Eating!: For those who aren't "there" & anyb...

被災地に居ない、友達もいない、部屋も汚い、とにかく疲れてる: When I am not "there"...

崩壊しそうな自己紹介: SELF INTRODUCTION



Umi

カリフォルニア州オークランドの、ただでさえ鬱なのに、地震以降は日本にいる母親や友達に心配で見事に発狂

寸前な大学生。我慢や作り笑いよりは、むしろ発狂したい。「冷静」じゃない人、「日本人」じゃない人、日本にいない人などオープンな、力の抜けたビデオや言葉を紹介したいです。単なるおふざけだけではないという経緯はこちら

→<http://nomoregaman.blogspot.com/2011/03/blog-post.html>
Oakland, CA, I am becoming insane because of the earthquakes and

2011年3月16日水曜日

被災地に居ない、友達もいない、部屋も汚い、とにかく疲れてる: When I am not "there", but "here",

以下の文章は2011年3月11日に書かれたもので、このブログを作るに至った経緯を紹介しています。

※長い文章な上に、墨痕も多いし、ビデオも不正確コードかもしれないので、そんな人はこちらを見て引き返すのが良いかも。

([HTTP://WWW.YOUTUBE.COM/WATCH?v=AR6FZ4H8WHW](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AR6FZ4H8WHW))

今回の東日本大震災で、日本にいる大切な人々が被災しました。海外にいると、日本に居るのとは違った視点の情報が入ってくるので、私個人としては地震そのものよりも、放射能汚染を心配しています。

連日の「日本人は頑張っている」等の報道によって、現地に「日本人」でない知り合いを思ったり、あるいは「もう頑張れない」とは普段から言いづらい日本の状況、そして未だに続く、しかし「頑張っている」美談に消されてしまった9/11の報道の在り方などを思い出します。

また「その場」にいない無力感にもさいなまれます。心配だと大切な人々に伝えても、私が得た情報を伝えても、かえって大切な人を責めさせたり、「大丈夫、あなたはここにいないんだから心配しないで」と笑われます。

こちらの人に「家族や友達は大丈夫？」と聞かれて、辛いにも「く血縁関係のある家族や友達は大丈夫だよ」と応えることが出来たとしても、「家族」と認定されない大切な人々や、自分がそこで生きていた感覚が思い出され、すべては被害者の数や、生き物としての生存、壊れた家屋の有様だけでは説明の出来ない。

<http://nomoregaman.blogspot.com>

我慢ならんよ: No More Gaman (coping)

I am becoming insane because of the earthquakes and nuclear fear, worrying about my mom and friends. Gaman is an **evil** thing. It's better to go insane, than **faking smile** or **biting your lips**. I would like to introduce videos and literature that are open for non-Japanese and all marginalized groups, as well as those who are not in Japan, but distressed.

I read "Japanese are doing great and inherently disciplined to Gaman (coping/persevering /enduring)" in many media, everyday. This excludes so many people in Japan who are not "Japanese" or are in difficult socio-economic situations, and cannot gaman, yet this **suppresses** people's ability to articulate "I can't take it anymore". It is very similar to how the media portrayed 9/11 during and after the time of crisis, emphasizing how "resilient" New Yorkers were, putting all energy toward "staying strong", which **silenced** many voices underneath

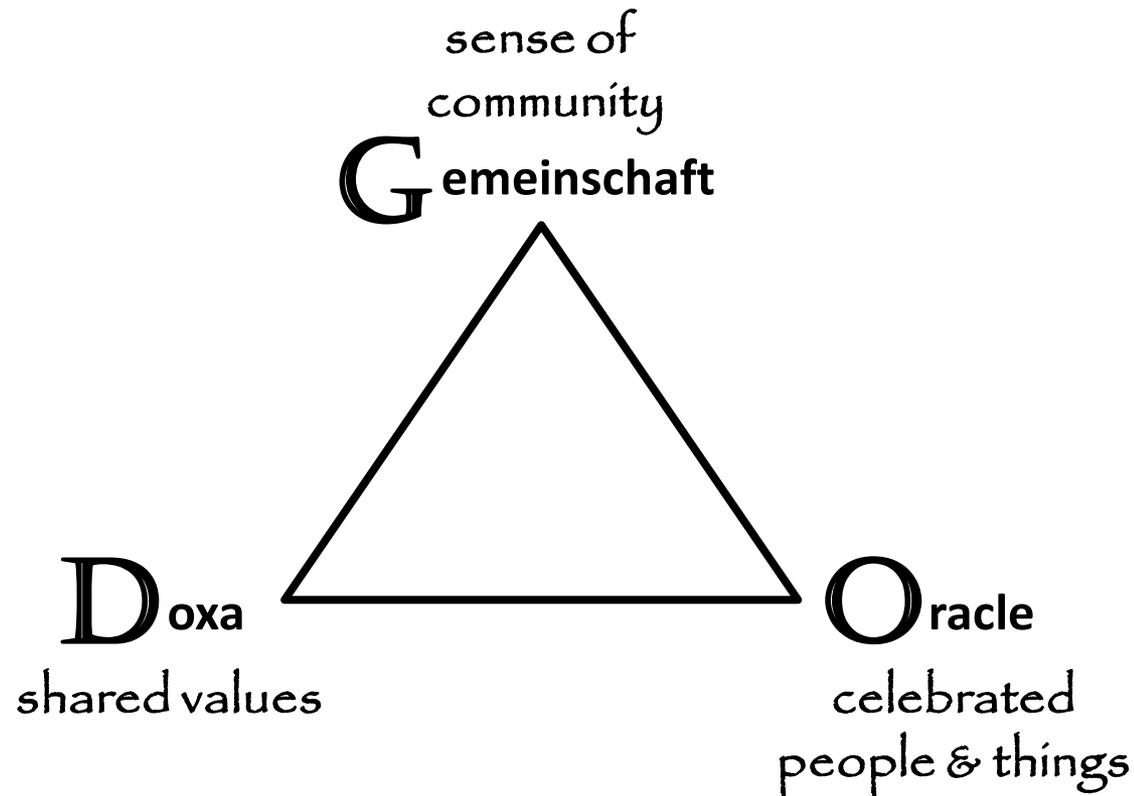
National stereotyping

Mouer, R. and Sugimoto, Y. (e.g. 1980)

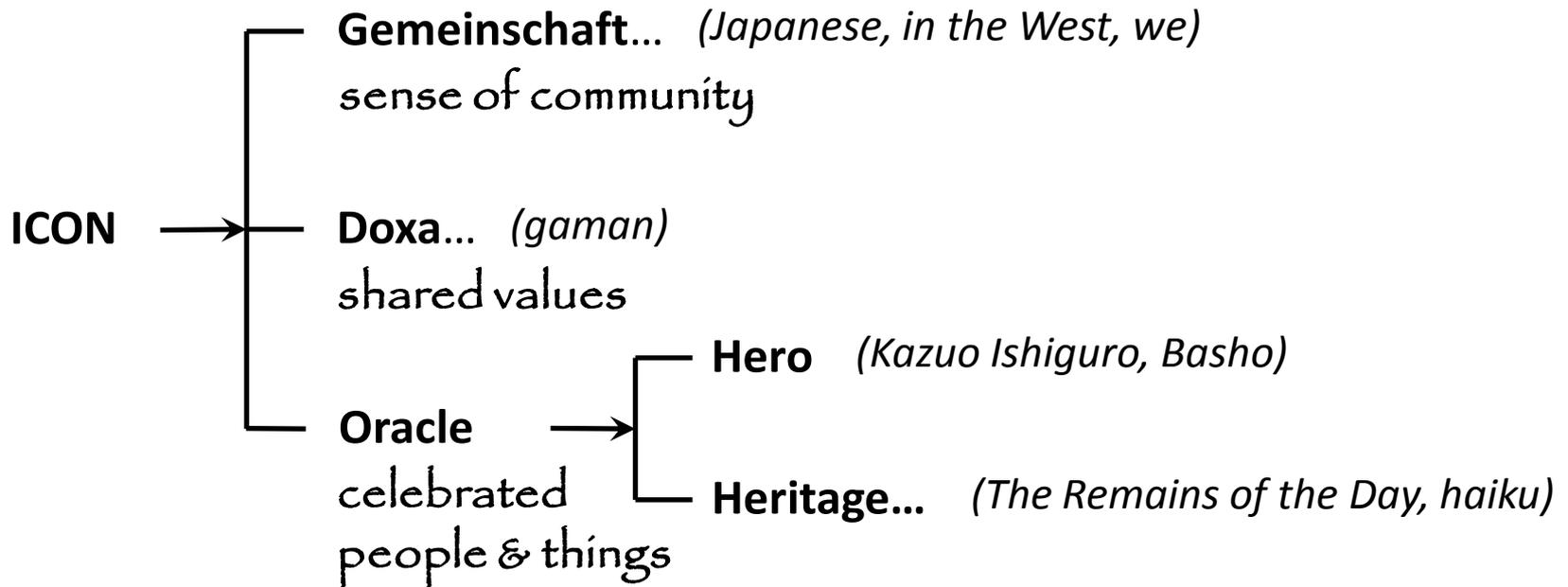
1. Reliance on anecdotes as evidence
2. Linguistic reductionism
3. Simplistic notion of Japan/the West as a monolithic whole
4. Elevation of “Japan-centric” intuition to a sacred pedestal
5. Use of non parallel comparisons
6. Absence of a reflective perspective / moralizing tendencies

Functional iconography

Tann, Ken (2010) "The Language of Identity Discourse", Paper presented at the Free Linguistics Conference 2010, The University of Sydney, Australia.



Identity representation as choice



1. “Anecdotism”

Oracle
celebrated
people & things

SYMPATHY FOR JAPAN, AND ADMIRATION

Japan’s orderliness and civility often impressed me during my years living in Japan, but never more so than after the Kobe quake. Pretty much the entire port of Kobe was destroyed, with shop windows broken all across the city. I looked all over for a case of looting, or violent jostling over rescue supplies. Finally, I was delighted to find **a store owner who told me** that he’d been robbed by two men. Somewhat melodramatically, I asked him something like: *And were you surprised that fellow Japanese would take advantage of a natural disaster and turn to crime?* He looked surprised and responded, as I recall: *Who said anything about Japanese. They were foreigners.*

WHY QUAKEES LEAVE THE JAPANESE UNSHAKEABLE

The Times

March 15, 2011

Oracle
celebrated
people & things



A woman looks for her husband's memorial tablet in the ruins of her house in the devastated town of Minamisanriku.

THE elderly and exhausted Japanese survivor was carried by piggyback into the medical centre and gently placed in a chair. As her rescuer left the room, she struggled to her feet and bowed.

2. “Reductionism”

Doxa
shared values

WHY QUAKES LEAVE THE JAPANESE UNSHAKEABLE

Alongside the chaos and destruction wrought by the terrible earthquake and tsunami have been scenes of heart-breaking orderliness and self-control. Japan is prostrate and fearful, but there are no reports of widespread looting, panic or hoarding. There is, as yet, very little anger directed at the government.

Western news crews search the wreckage for images of fear and anguish, for outrage and despair, but the Japanese survivors avert their faces and cover their eyes if they weep. ***This extraordinary stoicism can be summed up by the***

Japanese word gaman, a concept that defies easy translation but broadly means calm forbearance, perseverance and poise in the face of adverse events beyond one’s control. Gaman reflects a distinctively Japanese mentality, the direct consequence of geography and history in a country where the cycle of destruction and renewal is embedded in the national psyche.

3. “Homogenization”

WHY QUAKES LEAVE THE JAPANESE UNSHAKEABLE

In the **West**, **we** look for reasons for natural disasters: **we** blame global warming, government failure or God. In the wake of Hurricane Katrina, some saw biblical retribution for the “sins” of New Orleans. The **Japanese** relationship to nature is different: Man is neither battling nature nor at its mercy, but part of it.

(...)

The contrast is perfectly illustrated by the way the tragedy has been covered.

Western reporters stand before a backdrop of utter desolation. **Japanese** reporters tend to find a wider view, with a standing building. **They** do not thrust microphones towards the homeless and bereaved, demanding to know how they “feel”. At a moment of acute national pain, the **Japanese** audience does not want to intrude.

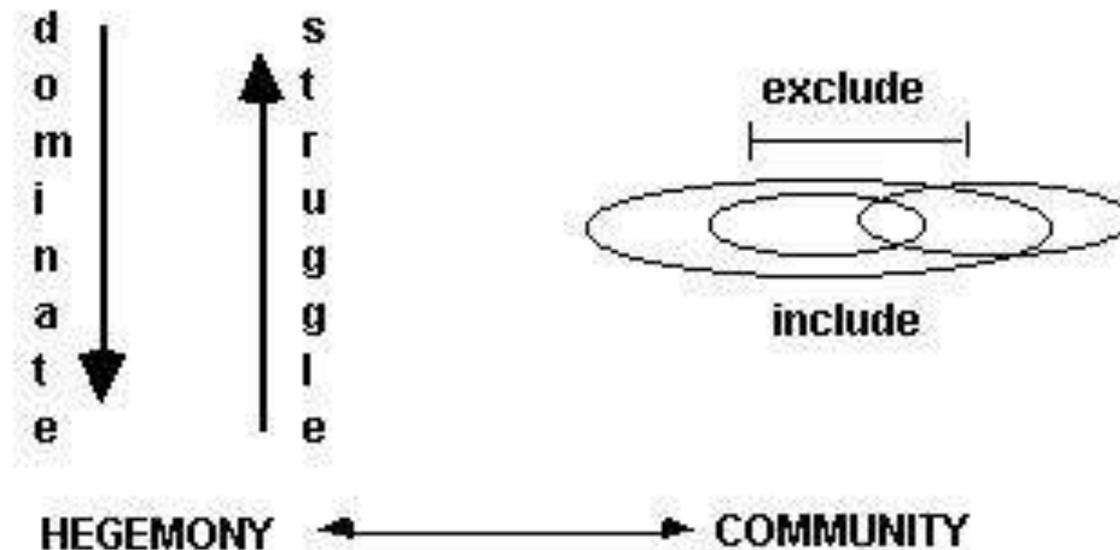
6. “Moralizing tendencies”

SYMPATHY FOR JAPAN, AND ADMIRATION

I find something **noble and courageous in Japan’s resilience and perseverance**, and it will be on display in the coming days. This will also be a time when the tight knit of Japan’s social fabric, its **toughness and resilience, shine through**. And my hunch is that the Japanese will, by and large, work together — something of a contrast to the **polarization and bickering and dog-eat-dog** model of politics now on display from Wisconsin to Washington. **So maybe we can learn just a little bit from Japan.** In short, our hearts go out to Japan, and we extend our deepest sympathy for the tragic quake. But also, our deepest admiration.

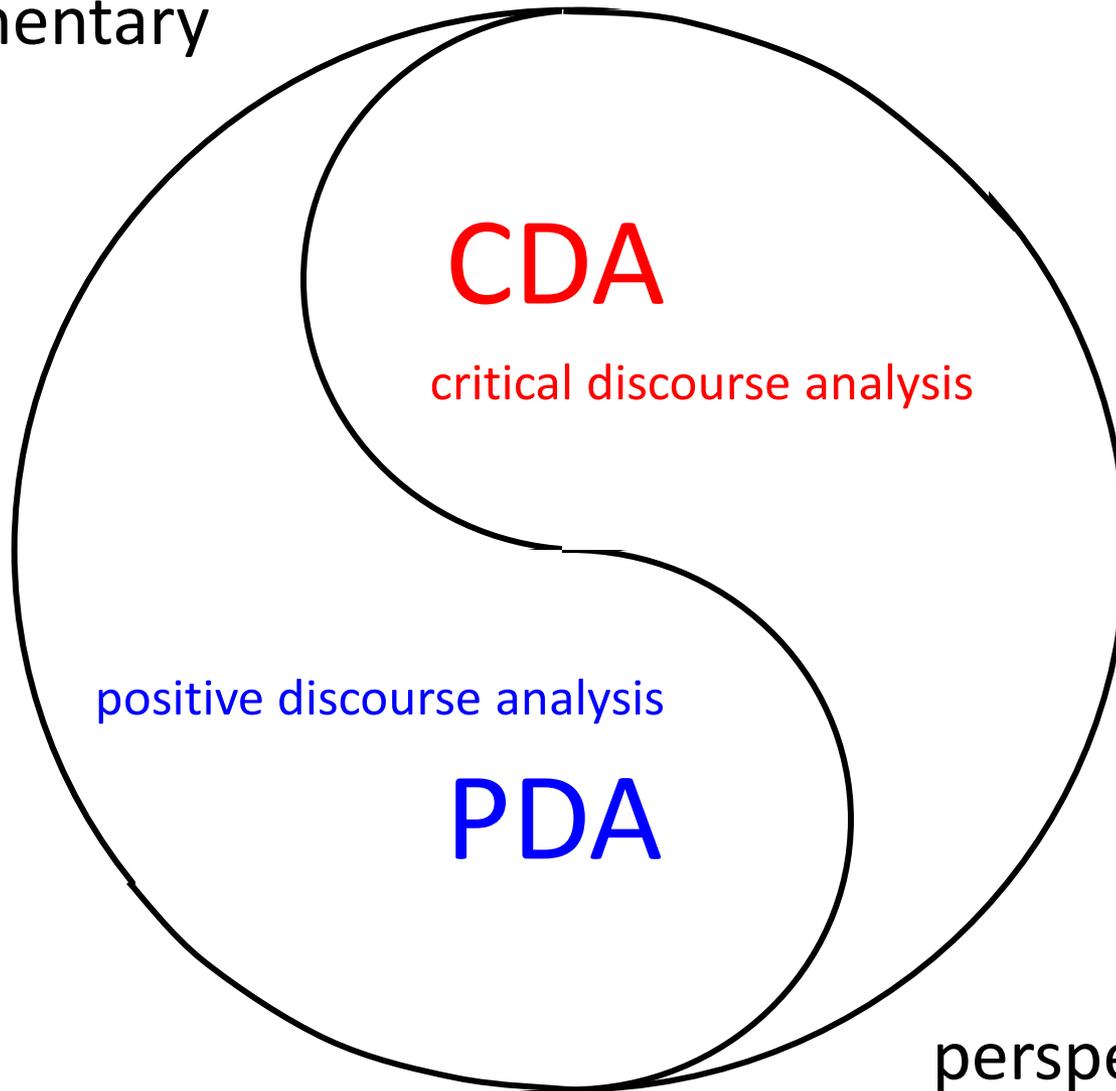
Positive Discourse Analysis

Martin, J R (2006) "Positive Discourse Analysis: Power, Solidarity and Change", in *Journal of English Studies*, 4(14), 21-35.



- 1) Feeling
- 2) Voice
- 3) Narrative

“complementary



perspectives”

Feelings

Martin, J.R. (2004) 'Mourning: how we get aligned', in *Discourse and society*. Vol. 15 (2-3), 321-344.

Martin, J.R. and White P.R.R. (2005) *The Language of Evaluation, Appraisal in English*. London & New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

WHY QUAKES LEAVE THE JAPANESE UNSHAKEABLE *appreciation*

Alongside the **chaos** and **destruction** wrought by the **terrible** earthquake and tsunami have been scenes of heart-breaking orderliness and self-control.

Japan is prostrate and fearful, but there are no reports of widespread looting, panic or hoarding. There is, as yet, very little anger directed at the government.

Western news crews search the **wreckage** for images of fear and anguish, for outrage and despair, but the Japanese survivors avert their faces and cover their eyes if they weep.

Feelings

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WHY QUAKES LEAVE THE JAPANESE UNSHAKEABLE *affect*

Alongside the chaos and destruction wrought by the terrible earthquake and tsunami have been scenes of **heart-breaking** orderliness and self-control. Japan is **prostrate and fearful**, but there are no reports of widespread looting, **panic** or hoarding. There is, as yet, very little **anger** directed at the government. Western news crews search the wreckage for images of **fear and anguish**, for **outrage and despair**, but the Japanese survivors avert their faces and cover their eyes if they **weep**.

Feelings

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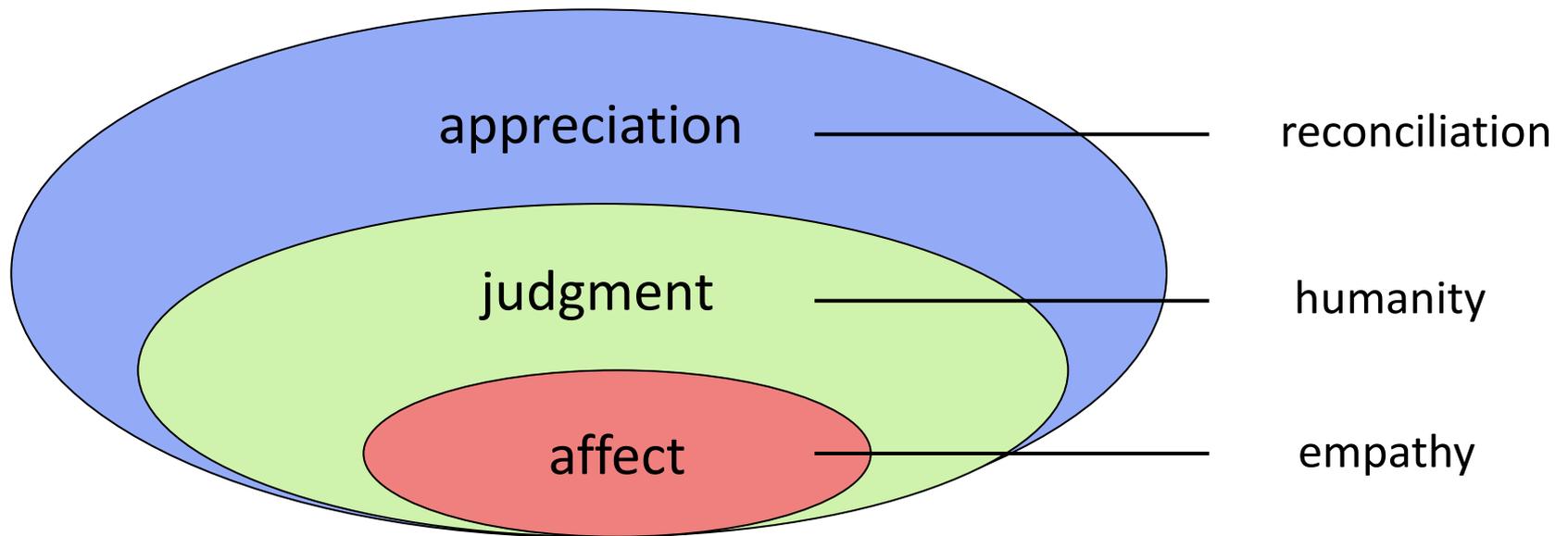
Martin, J.R. and White P.R.R. (2005) *The Language of Evaluation, Appraisal in English*. London & New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

WHY QUAKES LEAVE THE JAPANESE UNSHAKEABLE *judgment*

Alongside the chaos and destruction wrought by the terrible earthquake and tsunami have been scenes of heart-breaking **orderliness** and **self-control**. Japan is prostrate and fearful, but **there are no reports of widespread looting, panic or hoarding**. There is, as yet, very little anger directed at the government. Western news crews search the wreckage for images of fear and anguish, for outrage and despair, but the Japanese survivors **avert their faces and cover their eyes** if they weep.

Recontextualization

Martin, J.R. (2002) 'Blessed are the Peacemakers: Reconciliation and Evaluation', in C. Candlin (ed.) *Research and Practice in Professional Discourse*. Hong Kong: University of Hong Kong Press. pp.187–227.



Paul Keating's speech in Redfern Park

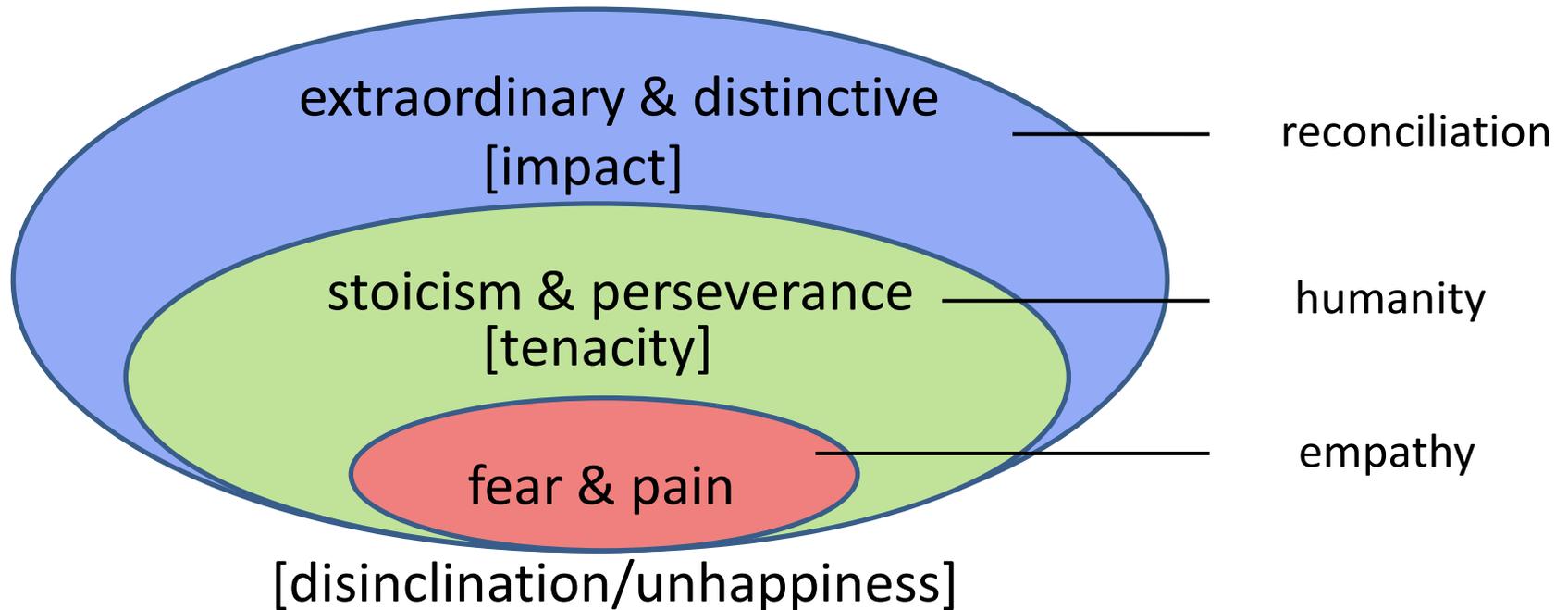
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Western news crews search the wreckage for images of **fear and anguish**, for **outrage and despair**, but the Japanese survivors avert their faces and cover their eyes if they **weep**.

This **extraordinary stoicism** can be summed up by the Japanese word **gaman**, a concept that defies easy translation but broadly means **calm forbearance, perseverance and poise** in the face of adverse events beyond one's control.

Gaman reflects a **distinctively** Japanese mentality, the direct consequence of geography and history in a country where the cycle of destruction and renewal is embedded in the national psyche.

Charging up icons...



...can be summed up by the Japanese word **gaman**.

Charging up icons...

The New York Times
The Opinion Pages
March 11, 2011

...In those first few **frantic** days, when people were still alive under the rubble, some died unnecessarily because of the government's incompetence.

But the Japanese people themselves were truly **noble** in their **perseverance and stoicism and orderliness**. There's a common Japanese word, "**gaman**," that doesn't really have an English equivalent, but is something like "toughing it out." And that's what the people of Kobe did, with a **courage, unity** and common purpose *that left me awed*.

affect



judgment



appreciation

Reconciling through icons...

WHY QUAKE LEAVE THE JAPANESE UNSHAKEABLE

Gemeinschaft

Oracle: Hero

In the novel *The Remains of the Day*, the British-Japanese novelist Kazuo Ishiguro

Oracle: Heritage

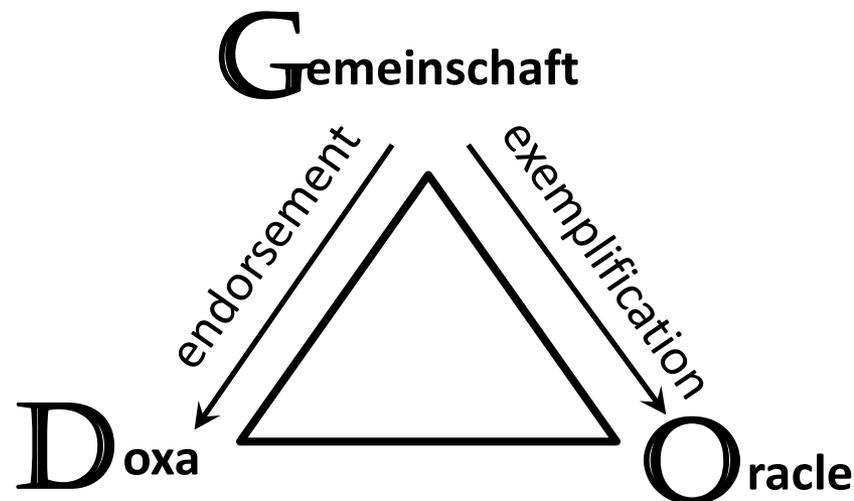
brilliantly created the butler Mr Stevens, reserved, dignified, upholding the rules

Doxa

of correct behaviour, the epitome of British-style gaman. Such qualities may seem

old-fashioned, but in quake-ravaged Japan they are a vital bulwark against even

greater destruction.



Epidictic discourse

McCormack, Rob (2009) "Epidictic discourse: renewing vision, vibe and values", in Proceedings of the Australian Council for Adult Literacy 32nd Annual Conference.

"More and more we experience current events, especially tragic events, as calling out for the answering voice of epidictic rhetoric, a voice able to give collective expression to the suffering, the outrage, the tears, the deep desire for solidarity, a solidarity in suffering, in healing and in renewal."

"ceremonial situation" "concerned with deepening the emotional identification of people at a ceremony..."

"builds community by deepening our feeling of community, our sensus communis."

Wednesday, March 16, 2011

“A personal message from George Takei
about the quake and tsunami in Japan.”

Recontextualization

Gaman is a word to be spoken and heard in this place where each face tells a story of **pain**



This is George Takei.

Days ago we watched in collective **horror** as the earth shook and the waters rose in Japan. *Thousands lost their lives many thousands more are still unaccounted for and countless remain without food, clean water, shelter or power in the bitter winter.* Today we must act with collective **resolve**; in Japanese we say **gaman** which means to endure with **fortitude and dignity**. In the spirit of **gaman** I ask you for help today.



Gaman, gaman, gaman sturdy and sure keep faith and endure.

A personal message from **George Takei** about the quake and tsunami in Japan.

Gaman is a word to be spoken and heard in this place where each face tells a story of pain

Oracle

This is **George Takei**.

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Doxa

Gaman, gaman, gaman sturdy and sure keep faith and endure.

Even small amounts given with great amounts of heart can make a real difference.

At times like this **we** are all **Japanese** – Domo Arigato.

Gemeinschaft

Please help by donating today and sharing this message.

Intertextual repercussions...

March 16, 2011

Thinking Out Loud

Literature & Art for Intentional Living by TM Willingham

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Lessons from Japan

Courage is grace under pressure. -Ernest Hemingway



With at least 3000 dead and thousands more missing as a result of the recent **9.0 magnitude earthquake and devastating tsunami** that followed, Japan faces a monumental reconstruction expected to cost more than \$60 billion, a disaster unparalleled in Japan since WWII. And yet the Japanese, for the most part, have exhibited resiliency, grace and patience.

Japan, says foreign reporters and observers, has remained largely free of the looting and social unrest that mark other disasters around the world and in the U.S.. Japanese citizens, their lives torn completely asunder, their homes and neighborhoods and cities laid to waste, with little food or water and no electricity, are mostly calm and cooperative.

American Robert Dujarric, director of the **Institute of Contemporary Japanese Studies** at the Temple University campus in Tokyo, was stuck in a bullet train for nearly a day, after the earthquake shut everything down (**Calm in the Face of Latest Disaster**)

"Basically," he said, "if you have to spend 16 hours in a stationary train and an additional nine hours getting home, do it in Japan."

There was no rioting, complaining, demanding or peppering of railroad employees with questions about when the train would resume operations, said Dujarric. People just waited.

仕方がない

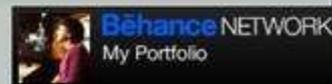
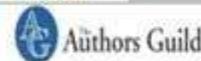
Shikata ga nai

History and culture, girded by two particular philosophical traits, have a lot to do with Japanese patience and resiliency: *Shikata ga nai*, which translates to something like "It can't be helped," or "That's just the way it is", and *gaman*, the virtue of patience and perseverance in the face of suffering.

Shikata ga nai has been treated at length in studies and writings about Japan. In "The curse of *Shikata ga nai*", the philosophy is taken to task for evoking a political apathy, a certain passivity and resigned fatalism.

Like our **Serenity Prayer**, though, there's a fine line between resignation and acceptance. The trick is knowing whether something is truly beyond our control or whether we're simply choosing not to assert control. Under the circumstances, "It can't be helped" seems a reasonable response to a situation beyond most people's control, and to which *gaman* is reasonable and heroic response.

Proud Member



Welcome!

I enjoy creating thought provoking and informative content, and collaborating with other groups and individuals to create programs and experiences that inspire community engagement, and empower individuals to live intentionally and meaningfully in our world, which is also my own personal goal in life.

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Please drop me a **line** if you have questions.

Thanks!
Theresa Willingham

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Coming Soon

The Power of Love Notes (Create Space, Fall 2011)
The Florida Allergy Handbook (University Press of Florida, Spring 2012)

Suite 101 Work

Free Choice Learning Provides Natural Path to Knowledge Bed Bug Infestations in the

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Title	LESSONS FROM JAPAN	March 16, 2011
Quote	Courage is grace under pressure – Ernest Hemingway	
Orientation	With at least 3000 dead and thousands more missing... Japan, says foreign reporters and observers, has remained largely...	
Thesis	History and culture, girded by two particular philosophical traits...	
Argument 1	<i>Shikata ga nai</i> has been treated at length in studies and writings...	
Argument 2	The idea of <i>gaman</i> has actually evolved in Japan... <i>Gaman</i> frames the stoicism for which the Japanese are famous.	
Argument 3	But <i>gaman</i> can also be a quintessentially American trait. We can exercise <i>gaman</i> and <i>shikata ga nai</i> in traffic, at work, in dealing with unemployment and health care issues, in store and bank lines, in day to day communications with one another.	
Reiteration	Today, we are all Japanese... The ability to live with <i>gaman</i> and <i>shikata ga nai</i> lies within all of us...	

Reconciling through icons...

LESSONS FROM JAPAN

Doxa

Gemeinschaft

But *gaman* can also be a quintessentially American trait, invoked by no less

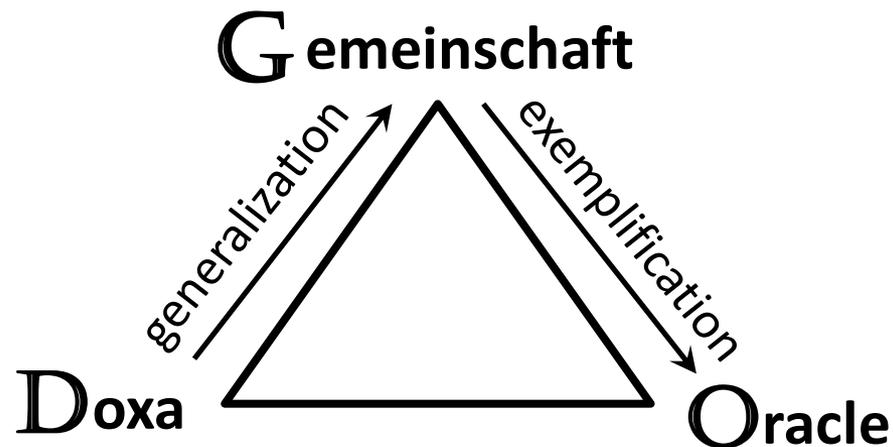
Oracle

than Ernest Hemingway, who when asked by reporter Dorothy Parker, “Exactly

what do you mean by ‘guts’?” famously replied, “I mean, grace under

pressure.” (“The Artist’s Reward” the New Yorker 5 (30 November 1929, pages

28-31).



Reconciling through icons...

LESSONS FROM JAPAN

Gemeinschaft

Today, we are all Japanese, all able in some way to empathize with the loss and sorrow so many a world away are facing, but no different than the sorrow we

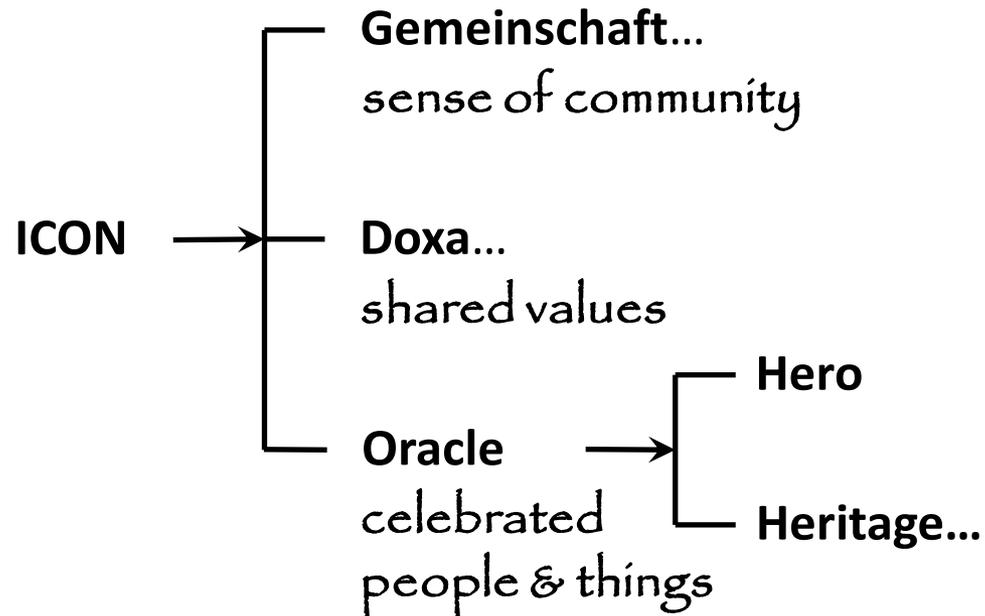
know we'd face, and have faced, under similarly trying circumstances. The

ability to live with *gaman* and *shikata ga nai* lies within all of us equally, and

has the potential to transform our world into a stronger more caring one that rises above petty human meanness and can make heroes of all of us.

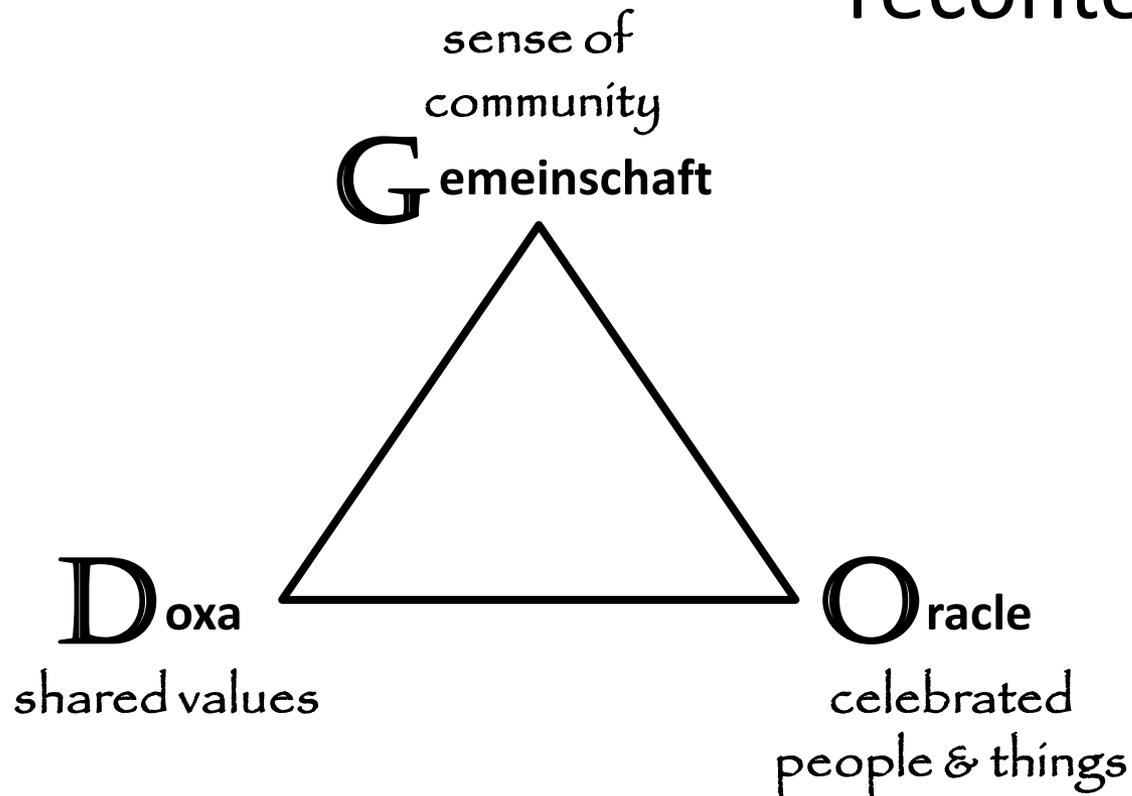
To recap...

1) Identity representation as choice



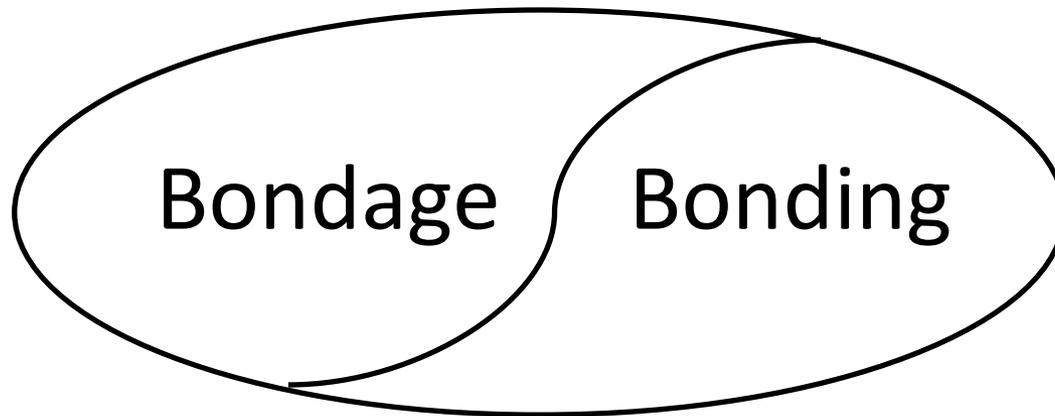
To recap...

2) Identity representation as recontextualization



To recap...

3) CDA and PDA as
complementary perspectives



To recap...

4) Iconography as a CDA/PDA tool for investigating intertextuality



Some PDA and Iconography references

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