

論文の英文要旨

論文題目	Hope for Escape, Technique of Rebellion : From Victor Pelevin's Debut Work to the Present
氏名	Sasayama Hiroshi

This doctoral dissertation is a monograph on the contemporary Russian writer Victor Olegovich Pelevin (1962-). The two words "escape" and "rebellion" in the title represent the two typical forms that images of "freedom" or "liberation" can take in his works. In the works of the 1990s, Pelevin believed that he could achieve complete freedom by freeing himself from the old Soviet mentality and venturing out of the "here and now" to "somewhere other than here". But later, as Russia gradually recovers from the pain of the collapse of the Soviet Union, hopes of such an "escape" are lost, even though the stagnation brought about by the capitalist society that replaced the communist one has not been dispelled. Therefore Pelevin began to address the challenge of carving out a territory of freedom for an individual within the social hierarchy. Here we find the possibility of liberation through "rebellion" from the lower to the higher.

This paper analyzes this shift in Pelevin's creation from the theme of "escape" to "rebellion" in three chapters, in chronological order. The main subject of the first chapter is the group of works from his debut (1989) to "Chapaev and Void" (1996). Section 1 begins with an analysis of "Zombification" (1990), an essay that seems to be relatively low-profile in Pelevin's writing. In this essay, Pelevin, born in 1962, criticized the Soviet society's system of suppressing the individuality of its members and forcing them to conform to the logic of the group through education from an early age, using metaphors such as "zombies" and "body of the party". His politics, as manifested in this essay, set him apart from the postmodernist artists of the generation above him. Section 2 analyzes the motifs "dream/sleep", which frequently appears in Pelevin's early novels. It will be also attempted to compare his idea with

the writings of Y. Mamleev as Pelevin's ideological source, who was a representative of the unofficial culture of the Soviet period. Section 3 examines Pelevin's similarities to the postmodernist art currents of the Soviet period, known as "Sots-Art" (Conceptualism), as well as criticisms of them from Pelevin. This reveals the complex feelings that writer had for the postmodernist art of his own older generation. In the second and third sections of Chapter 1, I also argue that the oriental coloration of the work, now treated as synonymous with Pelevin, is a successor to the technique of using oriental thought as "an escape door" from communist dogma, which was seen as early as the 1960s and 70s such as ideas derived from Indian philosophy in the writings of Mamleev and the application of Buddhist "emptiness" to representational art by the Conceptualist artist I. Kabakov or A. Monastirskiy of the group "Collective Action". It is argued in this paper that Pelevin's temperament may be more compatible with existential philosophical attempt of Mamleev to defend the spiritual freedom of the individual under totalitarian oppression with his own interpretation of Indian philosophy's solipsism than the postmodernist aesthetic experiment.

Chapter 2 analyzes a group of works from "Chapaev and Void" to "The Sacred Book of the Werewolf" (2004). In both novels, the common motif "rainbow torrent" plays an important role in the plot. The first section extends the scope of the analysis to the representation of the "rainbow" that often appears in Pelevin's early works, and argues that this is a good representation of the Buddhist influence on his thought. The second section deals with "Generation "P"" (1999) and "Numbers" (2003), written between "Chapaev and Void" and "The Sacred Book of the Werewolf", as well as other short stories in the collection "DPP(nn): Dialectics of the Transitional Period from Nowhere to Nowhere" (2003), which includes "Numbers", and explains in detail the changes that occurred in Pelevin during this period. In the third section, I discuss what kind of changes were made to the motif "Rainbow Torrents" in "The Sacred Book of the Werewolf" after suffering a kind of creative setback when the setting of the stories moved from the Soviet Union to capitalist Russia.

Chapter 3 focuses mainly on the works since "Empire V" (2005). Pelevin's theory of power will be scrutinized here, which unfolded against the backdrop of the new nationalism that has emerged in Russia since Putin's arrival and feminism, which emerged to resist conservative gender views in Russia. In the first section, I argue that the motif "the disintegration of hierarchy," or the radical recombination of the relationship between superiors and subordinates, common to many full-length works of Pelevin since the turn of the millennium, is a pathway to freedom offered by the author in today's society in which people can no longer aspire to "escape" from there (a form of "hierarchy" here is man/woman, for example). The second section deals with the theme of Pelevin's confrontation with "neo-Eurasianism", the dominant nationalist ideology in contemporary Russia. It highlights his anti-nationalist ideology who seems to have not made his political position so clear in the past.

An important keyword for this dissertation is the term "postmodernism", excluding the original terms like "escape" and "rebellion". This is because the simplest and most popular answer to the question of what kind of writer Pelevin is is the definition "Pelevin is a postmodernist writer". But such a view is currently a stereotype in textbooks. If one accepts this view as a basic premise, and ends

up enumerating the parts of his work representing, for example, a “deconstruction of Soviet ideology” or “post-modern worldview in capitalist society”, the originality of his works compared to many other postmodernist writers will be underestimated. Then there may be a risk that, although we read Pelevin through postmodernism, we may end up reaffirming postmodernism through Pelevin. Therefore I use the thesis that "Pelevin is a postmodernist writer" not as a destination of our discussion, but as a foothold for moving deeper into his work.

Many critics and researchers, not only me, have tried to characterize Pelevin as a latecomer in Russian postmodernist literature by contrasting him with the writers of the previous generation. And in fact, it is the artist himself who is most aware of this point. Ever since the ideological trend of postmodernism came to dominate Russian criticism, and his own work is said to be a part of that trend, Pelevin has consistently shown great repugnance to that label. It not only appears in statements made in interviews, but even remains as a work that blatantly ridicules the postmodernist artistic methods of the older generation. It seems clear that the artists such as V. Sorokin, D. Prigov and older conceptualists who began creating works in the 1960s-1970s, when the foundation of the Soviet Union still seemed to have a certain degree of solidity, and the generation that began creating works during the period of “perestroika”, a time when the decline of the power of the nation (that would have actually paradoxically energized even the anti-authority oriented art) was obvious to all, had to take a considerably different approach to the "deconstruction" of Soviet "mythology".