Shogun Study Guide

Shogun by James Clavell

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Introduction

Although not considered great literature by most critics, *Shogun: A Novel of Japan* made its author, James du Maresq Clavell, one of the most widely read twentieth-century novelists. The novel contains war, trade disputes, cultural clash, passion, death, and descriptions of beauty that have kept readers up until dawn. Such features make Clavell an "old-fashioned storyteller" who spins captivating yarns rather than an *artiste* like Virginia Woolf or Thomas Pynchon. Clavell's survival of a Japanese death camp gave him unique insight into human behavior and cultural differences, enabling him to produce a truly gripping story. In addition to penning a good book to curl up with, Clavell built a bridge of understanding from West to East by fictionalizing a historical encounter between them.

Shogun tells the story of an English pilot, John Blackthorne, in charge of five Dutch ships whose purpose is to break the Portuguese monopoly on Japanese trade. Instead, the pilot becomes embroiled in Japanese politics as Lord Toranaga Yoshi employs him as his secret weapon. *Shogun* uses straightforward storytelling techniques to keep readers riveted as they imagine themselves in the position of the English pilot. By the end, the reader has learned about Japan alongside Blackthorne as he attempts to survive.

That the West is interested in the East is proved by *Shogun's* success. In the first five years of its printing, 7 million books were sold. NBC did not risk much in sponsoring a film extravaganza. For twelve hours of prime time, 130 million people watched *Shogun,* The miniseries prompted sales of another 2.5 million books. Since the movie, even more people have read the book or watched the shorter 2.5-hour-long film.

Author Biography

A successful producer, director, screenwriter, and novelist, James du Maresq Clavell was also a war hero, carpenter, and political conservative who conversed with Roger Moore and corresponded with William F. Buckley. Clavell also contributed to arts and letters a bridge of understanding between the West and the East. Novels like *Shogun* enabled the West to gain an understanding and respect for Japan at a time when Japan was emerging as an economic world power.

Clavell, born on August 10, 1924, in Sidney, Australia, was the son of British colonists Richard Charles and Eileen (Collis) Clavel!. Clavell grew up hearing sea stories from his father and grandfather, both careerists in the Royal British Navy. They instilled in him a sense of pride and obligation for being British. Consequently, Clavell described himself as a "half-Irish Englishman with Scots overtones," not an Australian. The family moved to different Navy stations, such as Hong Kong, where Clavell spent much of his boyhood.

Clavell attended high school in England. After graduation, he enlisted in the British Royal Artillery the year World War II broke out. Like Peter Marlowe, in Clavell's 1962 *King Rat,* Clavell was wounded in Malaysia. He was captured by the Japanese and spent the rest of the war as a prisoner. He spent three and a half years in the notorious death camp Changi. where one in fifteen men survived. Clavell told an interviewer from the *Guardian* that in surviving he was conscious of living on "forty borrowed lifetimes."

The experience of Changi informs all of Clavell's Fictions, At Changi, Clavell found he could no longer believe in the idealist code of his father. It was replaced by an Objectivist code: the individual is paramount, loyalty is given to a small interdependent group, capitalism and free enteiprise guarantee freedom. The lessons he learned at Changi about human nature and the importance of bridging cultural gaps lay at the heart of his novels.

In 1946, back in Britain, a motorcycle accident ended his military career. With a disability discharge, he entered the University of Birmingham. April Stride, a friend of Clavell's sister, married Clavell on February 20, 1951. They had two daughters, Michaela and Holly. Through Stride, Clavell discovered film. Soon, the family immigrated to the United States where he had his first film success. *The Fly.* in 1958. He won a Screen Writers Award for his 1960 film *The Great Escape.* He achieved cinematic fame by writing and directing *To Sir with Love* in 1969. Clavell became a naturalized citizen in 1963.

A screenwriters strike in I960 gave Clavell lime to follow his wife's suggestion and write a novel about Changi. Writing proved difficult but Clavell received help from Herman Gollub, editor for Little, Brown and Company, and his blue pen. The result was *King Rat,* and a discovery that Clavell could write about the East in a way that made it accessible to Western readers.

Clavell wrote several novels after *King Rat,* including *Shogun* in 1975. and worked on a few more film projects. He died from a combination of cancer and stroke at his home in Vevey, Switzerland, in 1994.

Plot Summary

John Blackthorne is pilot of the Erasmus, the only remaining ship of five that left England with the goal of trading and pirating on behalf of the Queen of England. When the ship hits a serious storm, he is unable to fight the weather and the ship washes up near the coast of Japan. When Blackthorne wakes, he is in a Japanese house and is treated initially as an honored guest though his host knows that he and all the crew are bound to be summarily executed. As Blackthorne and the survivors from the crew fight to regain their freedom, the overseer of the village—Yabu—arrives, tortures one of the men to death and prepares to offload all the bounty from the Erasmus as his prize. Before Yabu can secure the items, a representative of a council that rules the region arrives and takes possession in the name of his lord, Toranga.

Blackthorne is taken to Toranga where he is initially treated as an oddity to be observed. However, it soon becomes evident that Blackthorne has the courage and dignity of a samurai, a traditional warrior of Japan. When chance puts him in a dangerous situation with Toranga, Blackthorne takes a chance and saves Toranga's life as well as the lives of those who are charged with protecting Toranga. With Toranga thus indebted to Blackthorne, the two men find an uneasy peace.

Blackthorne comes to understand and to believe in the Japanese culture. While he initially refuses to partake in their customs, he comes to realize the healing powers of regular bathing and the restorative power of the simple lifestyle common to these people. From massages to the diet, Blackthorne learns to set his own culture aside in favor of that of the Japanese people. Though he continues to hate some aspects of the life, including the fact that life is treated lightly because of the belief in reincarnation, he also comes to hate the ways of his crew-mates.

Toranga seems to be pushed steadily toward war against the other members of the ruling council but it is eventually revealed that he has planned the situation fully and aims at being sole ruler. Toward this end, he sacrifices the lives of many, including Mariko, a young samurai woman who has served as interpreter between Toranga and Blackthorne as Blackthorne begins working to learn the language. When Blackthorne's ship is burned, he is told it is an "act of God," but it is actually Toranga who caused the destruction. Toranga burns the ship as a concession to the Christians who now know that Blackthorne has plans to attack a trading frigate. This concession, according to Toranga, is the first of many that Toranga uses to keep the situation under control and to seek out his ultimate goal to become shogun.

Chapters One through Six

Chapters One through Six Summary

The prologue details the storm that sends the ship to land at Japan. The crew is in poor condition with many dead. In chapter one, John Blackthorne, pilot-major of the trading ship Erasmus, wakes in a very neat room. He is given food and realizes that he remembers little from the storm and the arrival in this bay. The ship is intact. A priest arrives who says that Blackthorne is going to die, but does not elaborate. A samurai arrives and the priest says the samurai's name is Kasigi Omi. The people gathered with the priest to threaten Blackthorne bow at Omi's arrival and when one man fails to bow, the samurai uses his sword to slice off the man's head. As everyone leaves, the samurai laughs aloud then hacks up the body into small pieces.

Blackthorne has no trouble getting someone to take him to his boat. He wants the rutter, a secret book containing information about ocean passages. He notes that he has a stolen Portuguese rutter which has information on the Magellan Straights, and that the mere possession of this information means the entire crew is to be executed and the ship burned. Blackthorne is not allowed entrance to retrieve the book.

Blacktorne is taken into the home of Mura, the headman of the village Anjiro in the province Izu because Mura believes that, as leader, Blackthorne deserves to be treated better than his men. However, Mura has no illusions that the daimyo will order Blackthorne's execution.

In chapter two, Blackthorne is questioned by the priest, Father Sabastio, who is one of the few who speaks English. Blackthorne believes that Father Sabastio is not translating the answers he is giving but has no way to tell for certain. Trusting his instincts that the daimyo, Kasigi Yabu, Lord of Izu, does not fully trust Sabastio, Blackthorne snatches the priest's wooden cross and breaks it. He catches the attention of Omi, nephew of Yabu, who advises that the men not be killed because of their apparent dislike of the priest. Yabu, after considering the situation, agrees. Blackthorne and the others are being held in a small pit. When they yell for food and water, a barrel of putrid fish and water is poured down on them. Sabastio tells them that this will continue as long as they yell and that one of them is to be executed. He tells them they must choose the man to die and that Blackthorne cannot be it. Omi notes that he senses the hatred coming from Blackthorne.

In chapter three, Yabu remembers his argument with his wife, Yuriko, upon his decision to disobey a direct order to remain in Yedo because of the potential for riches aboard Blackthorne's ship. He finds muskets, gold, silver, plate, coins and fancy clothing and prepares to make use of all of it, including the cannons mounted in the boat.

Yabu is massaged by a blind man who knows the true story of the death of Obata Hiro and Toranaga's grandfather, Toranaga being one of those assigned to care for the

underage ruler. Yabu is momentarily shocked when the man says that the sword used in the death of Toranaga's grandfather was not broken as many believe. Yabu's shock is because he has the sword in his possession. Yabu falls asleep and Suwa thinks about the fact that he is indebted to Su, the uncle of Yabu's enemy, Ikawa Jikkyu, and that he plans to kill Yabu at some point. Blackthorne and the others agree to draw straws to choose who will die and Vinck loses.

In chapter four, Blackthrone refuses to allow one of the men to be taken without a fight and leads in overpowering one of the guards before the samurai beat them back, taking one of the men who is tortured in boiling water. The man's screams unsettle the village, including Omi's mother who has come for a visit.

In chapter five, Kiku, a courtesan hired to pleasure Yabu, leaves the house the following morning pretending, for the sake of those watching, that she was very sore from the sex though she and a young boy had pleasured Yabu by hand instead. Blackthorne and the others remain in the pit until the priest arrives and says that Blackthorne is to come with him.

In chapter six, Omi forces Blackthorne out of the pit by threatening to boil the young crew member named Croocq so that Blackthorne agrees to obey. Omi drives the point home by urinating on Blackthorne's back. Yabu tells Omi that he plans to reward him by giving him land, armor, silk and other rewards, including a rock that he instructs Omi to name "The Waiting Barbarian." Omi is told to accompany the convoy of possessions taken from Blackthorne's ship to Yabu's home. He argues the point briefly that Yabu should keep the ship for himself but Yabu says that any war will be fought at sea. Just as he says this, Omi sees a ship rounding into the bay flying the flag of Toranaga.

Chapters One through Six Analysis

Many of Blackthorne's men soon come to voice the opinion that it is Blackthrone's fault that they are in their current situation. It is also revealed that there have been ongoing wars in this part of Japan for many years until the last ten years when a single man had set himself up as master over the region. The man's death means that the region is on the brink of turmoil as others battle for power and the man's seven-year-old son remains too young to rule.

Blackthorne is ordered by his host, Mura, to take a bath. He refuses, saying that everyone knows that bathing is not good for you. The host insists and when Blackthorne grows loud and rude, Mura uses karate and judo to subdue him. In tremendous pain and amazed that this small man could best him, Blackthorne agrees to the bath. Mura, it is noted, feels sorry for Blackthorne's humiliation but refuses to allow the disrespect and the foul odor emanating from Blackthorne.

Yabu was in Yedo, the capital of Toranaga, when he received word from Omi about the arrival of Blackthorne's ship. Yabu had been ordered to remain in the city but feels it is worth the risk to slip away. He tells his wife and consort to tell everyone that he is sick

and that he will be gone five days. He says that the trip is worth the risk he is taking by disobeying orders because he is in desperate need of money and weapons and hopes to find the cargo of the ship to be the answer to this problem. Yabu and Toranaga are on the verge of outright war at almost any time.

There is excessive description of the political and social hierarchy of the country. The important facts are that the man who had ruled for several years has died and left his young son in the hands of a panel of five advisers and those advisers must agree unanimously before taking action. The boy will reign when he is fifteen. The emperor names one shogun in any given region and that man holds ultimate power though few are wealthy enough to attain the emperor's attention on this. The emperor is a direct descendant from the sun god and the line is never broken. The emperor, who has no lands, is poor and depends on the generosity of his subjects. A generous subject can literally buy the title shogun.

Chapters Seven and Eight

Chapters Seven and Eight Summary

The province overlord, Toda Hiro-matsu, is Toranga's advisor. Hiro-matsu arrives as Yabu is working to complete the unloading of the ship. Hiro-matsu says that he plans to confiscate the goods and the ship in the name of Toranga but Yabu lies that he had planned to make a gift of the ship and was unloading the goods merely to keep them safe. Hiro-matsu orders that Yabu return with Blackthorne to Osaka aboard a galley piloted by a Portuguese named Vasco Rodriguez. Rodriguez takes Blackthorne aboard his ship which is a galley with rowers aboard. Rodriquez says that the Japanese will continue rowing far past what a normal man would endure and that they do it without complaint.

In chapter eight, there is a tremendous storm so that it seems the galley might sink. By now Blackthorne and Rodriguez have become better acquainted and Blackthorne pilots the galley for a short time while Rodriguez naps. Rodriguez has a package given to him by Father Sebastio and believes it to be Blackthorne's rutters. The package is sealed and Rodriguez has instructions from Father Sebastio to deliver them to one of two priests in Osaka. Rodriguez toys with the idea of breaking the seal but his religious ideals prevent him. As the storm worsens, Rodriguez's safety line snaps and he is washed overboard, leaving Blackthorne to take the galley safely into harbor. Blackthorne insists on going to shore to see if Rodriguez's body has washed up. In chapter nine, he does so and they find Rodriguez alive in the pounding surf. Yabu climbs down a dangerous cliff and drags Rodriguez to safety until the ship's doctor and stretcher arrives. It is during this time that Blackthorne realizes that the samurai who are with him are instructed to prevent him from harm. Yabu considers that this might win him Blackthorne's trust and that if he has a pilot who can teach other pilots, his potential for seafaring would increase dramatically. He likes the idea because no Japanese are comfortable in this area.

Chapters Seven and Eight Analysis

Hiro-matsu has been serving Toranga since he was fifteen, meaning that now, at sixty-seven, the actions for his master are second nature and his dedication and loyalty questioned by no one. He is tough and blunt and favors open warfare rather than the tense peace that is currently occurring in the country.

Rodriguez takes Blackthorne back aboard the Erasmus, reportedly to help Blackthorne search for his rutters though they are gone. Rodriguez says that he had already been aboard and that the possibility of finding Blackthorne's rutters was what prompted him to come though he later says that he was paid well for his efforts. Rodriguez comes to know Blackthorne better and notes that he likes him but that he also fears that there is something wrong about Blackthorne. This bothers Rodriguez so much that he considers

the desire to kill Blackthorne. He notes that it is not that Blackthorne is evil, but merely that there is something dangerous about him that threatens Rodriguez. When Blackthorne almost falls off the ship during a storm, he accuses Rodriguez of having made the ship lurch at that moment. Rodriguez denies it but the reader may wonder if this was Rodriguez's way of trying to rid himself of Blackthrone's presence.

Chapters Ten through Nineteen

Chapters Ten through Nineteen Summary

In Book II, the galley arrives safely in Osaka and Rodrigues regains consciousness. He offers Blackthrone the opportunity to copy his rutters and Blackthorne says that he already has which Rodrigues says is fair since he owes Blackthorne his life. Blackthorne is amazed by the size of Osaka. Blackthorne is taken for an interview with Toranga and is questioned through an interpreter, a Jesuit Priest named Martin Alvito. Alvito reveals that the spy who told Toranga of Blackthorne's arrival is Mura, the man who gave Blackthorne a place to stay immediately after his arrival in the country. Blackthrone initially points out that he and Alvito are enemies because their countries are at war and under questioning by Toranga admits that the religious differences are a ridiculous reason for war. He continues with the lie that the remainder of his fleet is somewhere near and that they had been separated during the storm, and that his role is to seek out trading partners. After some additional conversation, Father Alvito relays Toranga's instruction to Blackthorne with the information that he is being "detained" until Toranga decides otherwise.

Chapter twelve marks the arrival of Ishido Kazunari, another of the five who rule until the true ruler turns fifteen. Ishido purposely insults Toranga, prompting one of his samurai guards to leap to his defense. The plan is for Ishido to be killed at Toranga's hands which would prompt a change in the government. The samurai does not complete the deed and Toranga orders his death which Hiro-matsu, the boy's grandfather, agrees to carry out.

In chapter thirteen, Toranga has trouble sleeping for worry about a number of things, including whether Blackthorne has told the truth and whether Alvito translated accurately. Toranga denies Hiro-matsu's request to commit seppuku. The request is spurred by his shame because of his grandson's action. Toranga also denies the request by the young widow to commit seppuku, saying that she is young and will have more children.

In chapter fourteen, Blackthorne wakes after a hellish night in a cramped prison cell and finds himself face-to-face with a Friar named Domingo. Blackthorne implies that he is not an enemy of the Friar's home country, Spain, and the Friar eventually tells about the ships of his country. Blackthorne seems momentarily squeamish about lying but reassures himself that he has not lied, just has not volunteered information. Domingo says all in the prison are doomed to die, that the cell is merely a waiting place though obviously some wait much longer than others for death. Domingo begins teaching Blackthorne some words in Japanese and a great deal of history related to the trading of others who arrived in Japan more than a century ago.

In chapter fifteen, Blackthorne's name is called and he walks to the door of the cell, presumably to his death. He soon realizes that he is being taken from the courtyard and

is not going to be killed. There are a series of skirmishes and Blackthorne eventually finds himself with Yabu who is still seeking a way to use Blackthorne's knowledge to create a navy of his own.

In chapter sixteen, Toranga learns that he is now in the minority of the five rulers, standing alone against the other four, and that he is likely to be faced with war soon. He knows he needs to return to his own home away from the castle where his life is in danger. Toranga's interview with Blackthorne, this time with Hiro-matsu's daughter-in-law, Mariko, as interpreter. He covers a great deal of world history, including the fact that the Pope has granted China to Portugal in return for that country's attempt to spread Christianity there.

In chapter eighteen, Yokodo, who is responsible for Yaemon, arrives and she tells Toranga that he should marry Yaemon's mother, Ochiba. Toranga says that he could never trust Ochiba but pretends he will consider the suggestion. Hiro-matsu is angry at Toranga because he seems to be letting people run over him. Toranga does not say anything to defend his actions. In chapter nineteen, there is extensive discussions among the powers related to the church, specifically as the situation applies to the Church and the ongoing trading endeavors. Blackthorne with his information is seen as dangerous and there are some discussions about the possibility of eliminating him.

Chapters Ten through Nineteen Analysis

Rodrigues gives Blackthorne information about Japan, including the number of Catholic converts. The numbers are staggering with Blackthorne unsure whether to believe Rodrigues though Rodrigues insists that he is not lying. Blackthorne, however, answers Rodrigues' questions about his own fleet with lies, saying that he had come ahead and that the other ships would be arriving soon. Rodrigues does not believe the story but notes that there is no way to be completely certain. The emerging relationship between the two men is further complicated by the fact that their countries are enemies.

Hiro-matsu's grandson asks to commit seppuku but is denied and ordered by Toranga to be executed instead, a dishonorable fate. He submits quietly and those who watch him go believe this means he will return in his next life as a great samurai. His infant son is also ordered killed for the father's misdeed. This leaves only the young wife and mother, now a widow, who requests the right to commit seppuku also. The attitudes are interesting in that the cruelty of the orders take the life of both a young man whose instinct is to protect his master and the life of an innocent child.

It is from Domingo that Blackthorne learns only samurais have names and that others are called "fisherman," "porter" or some other word to identify themselves. Children are usually called according to their rank and gender, "first daughter" for example. Domingo says that when a Japanese accepts the salvation of his religion, he gives that person a "Christian" name. When Blackthorne is taken away, he's glad to have listened so intently to the Friar's instructions. He now has a command of the language with a few words that carry some impact and understands already that he cannot show weakness.

He imperiously demands to be taken for a bath and some food after he is rescued by Yabu, actions that apparently gain Yabu's interest.

Toranga's two sons are Noboru, the oldest, and Sudara, the younger. Sudara is the heir because Noboru contracted the "pox" at age seventeen and has never recovered though he has also never died. Toranga notes that Noboru must have been a bad person in a former life to have to carry such a heavy burden, and that Noboru is the smarter and braver of the two but is unable to stand at heir.

Chapters Twenty through Twenty-Nine

Chapters Twenty through Twenty-Nine Summary

Upon the orders of Toranga, Blackthorne is being treated very well. At one point he is so happy to have escaped death that he launches into a hornpipe dance and Toranga, arriving unexpectedly, joins him. Mariko remains with him, Toranga giving her instructions to answer every question except those related to politics and then to tell Toranga about their conversations. Later, Toranga interviews Alvito who knows that there have been secret deals between Ishido and two of the others who rule for Yaemon.

In chapter twenty-one, Kiri, who is somewhat overweight, prepares to leave by ship with Blackthorne, Mariko and several others. Kiri is to ride in a litter and begins to cry inconsolably. When one of Toranga's consorts, a young woman named Sazuko, slips and falls, Kiri screams out her name and shouts instructions to care for the baby because Sazuko is pregnant. Everyone turns to look at Sazuko in that moment except Blackthorne who sees Toranga, in disguise with a veil and wig in place, trade places with Kiri who slips out of the curtained litter and rushes away to hide.

Ishido arrives and almost puts an end to the ruse and Blackthorne wishes he had not seen it. In chapter twenty-two, they pass through several check points and Ishido arrives again at the outer reach of the castle and the gateway to the city, with a request that Kiri deliver a scroll at their destination. Knowing that if Toranga reaches out of the litter his hands will give him away, Blackthorne pretends to have a fit and distracts the situation so that they escape intact. In chapter twenty-three, they are attacked by archers and many of the guards die. In chapter twenty-four, the guards are quickly replaced by warriors Toranga has on standby in the city. They reach the ship through yet another ruse. In chapter twenty-five, Mariko's husband, Buntaro, is trapped at the end of the jetty and prepares to kill himself rather than chance being captured but men arrive with a horse and Toranga shouts an order for him to escape.

In chapter twenty-six, the party is on the ship but the ship is blockaded in by fishing boats all armed with samurai ready to prevent Toranga's escape. Toranga asks Blackthorne, through Mariko, how to escape, and he says that it would take a cannon. Toranga initially plans to board a frigate that is about to leave the harbor and take over the ship but the galley cannot outmaneuver the frigate and so Toranga goes aboard with the plan to ask for help. Rodrigues is on board, his leg healing. Alvito and some other Christians are also on board and Toranga asks them for help. In chapter twenty-seven, those aboard the frigate are reluctant to fire cannons on the fishing vessels for fear that they will be banned from further trading with Japan—a very lucrative trading market. The captain agrees but only with some concessions, including a larger share of the profit from the Church, a promise that he will never be threatened with excommunication for his role in what is about to happen, and that the "heretic" remains with him, apparently referring to Blackthorne but Rodrigues sends Blackthorne back to the galley.

In chapter twenty-eight, Toranga remains on the frigate and Blackthorne sees an opportunity to slip from the harbor just feet from the frigate so that the first flaming arrows fired hits the frigate rather than the galley. The samurai fear harming the frigate and stop their attack. In chapter twenty-nine, Blackthorne awakes after a long sleep to discover that the galley is stopped, everyone is swimming, and that Toranga is interested in learning to dive.

Chapters Twenty through Twenty-Nine Analysis

Toranga has been warned by several, including Hiro-matsu, that he would never be allowed to escape the castle and that he will surely be called on to commit suicide by the other four ruling for Yaemon. Toranga, after being attacked by the archers so that the others know the ruse, says that he has left a letter at the castle, formally resigning from the duty. He says that the instructions from Yaemon's father demand a five-member panel of regents and that this means the remaining four—to comply with that order—will have to find a new member. Toranga predicts that they will not be able to agree. He believes that, in this manner, he has bought some time before war is imminent.

Mariko had apparently been involved in a political scandal when her father committed a crime and she did not report it. She tells Blackthorne that her husband had sent her away for a period of time but that he had done her a great honor by not divorcing her. When Buntaro is trapped at the end of the jetty and prepares to commit suicide, he is relieved to be facing the end of his public shame. Mariko notes that he knows how to swim but has apparently chosen not to. When Toranga orders him to escape, he hesitates and hates the fact that relief from his shame was so near and is now snatched out of his grasp. Blackthorne is angry that so many men died in protecting Toranga and even more angry when Toranga cheers the fact that Buntaro escapes without seeming to notice the many who died. It is noteworthy that the two men, though they are coming to respect each other more, do not understand that their cultures are vastly different but that each are honorable according to their customs. Toranga notes that the men who died will return shortly, reincarnated with rewards for their sacrifice. Blackthorne just notes that they are now dead.

Helping Blackthorne escape is a conscious decision by Rodrigues though they do not discuss the details. When the escape is underway, Rodrigues considers the possibility of ramming the galley but does not take it.

Chapters Thirty through Thirty-Nine

Chapters Thirty through Thirty-Nine Summary

Book III begins with Omi and Mura discussing whether everything is ready in the village for the arrival of Yabu and Toranga. Omi has spent a great deal of money on the preparations so that even the beach is raked and pristine. Omi's wife has pointed out that the potential for advancement in this case is great and that the money is well spent. There are many samurai on the beach and Toranga immediately realizes that he has been trapped. He steps off the boat as if he has nothing to fear and Yabu soon learns from those on the beach of Toranga's resignation. He is angry but Toranga points out the logic—that the council cannot legally act with only four members and so any order they give will be illegal. He then presents Yabu his own personal sword and Yabu is besotted by the public display of honor so that Toranga slips away in the galley long before Yabu begins to question anything told to him.

Mariko and Blackthorne are left behind when Toranga leaves and Blackthorne learns that his duty is to learn Japanese or that the entire village will be beheaded. In chapter thirty-one, Blackthorne is angry that the village is being held accountable for his ability to learn the language and threatens to commit suicide. When Yabu calls his bluff, Blackthorne puts the knife to his chest and would have done so except that Omi stops him, cutting his own hand in the process.

In chapter thirty-two, a courier from Osaka arrives with demands from Ishido and Yabu, at Omi's suggestion, pretends to cooperate. Blackthorne issues orders that everyone in the village is to correct his Japanese, every time he makes a mistake. Blackthorne has been given a house, servants, a generous allowance and is learning the life. He comes to realize that Fujiko never sleeps unless he sleeps so that anytime he is out roaming the shore at night, someone is trailing behind him. He initially believes they are worried that he will try to escape but comes to learn that they are just trying to protect him. One night a woman comes to him and he makes love, believing the woman to be Mariko. In chapter thirty-three, Mariko denies that it was she and tells him that is was his maid, sent to please him, though Blackthorne does not believe the story. There is a "demonstration" of the war tactics Blackthorne is teaching Yabu's men but the couriers from Ishido are killed before the end.

In chapter thirty-four, Toranga returns with Buntaro, Mariko's husband. Buntaro then comes to Blackthorne's house where he asks for lodging for a time. It is obvious that Fujiko does not like him but politeness will not allow her to refuse. In chapter thirty-five, Mariko is abused by Buntaro but refuses Blackthorne's protection. In chapter thirty-six, Toranga goes hunting with his son, Naga, and orders Naga to learn everything possible from Blackthorne so that he will have the knowledge to be an important part of Toranga's army. In chapter thirty-seven, Toranga learns that there is action among the council and that the loyalties are quickly being demanded so that it is becoming clear who is on Toranga's side and who is against him. There is no doubt that they will have

to attack soon but Toranga decides to take advantage of the surprise that would be his if he attacks during the rainy season. He notes that the samurai who go with him will be hot and wet, but will have surprise on their side. Later, with only Mariko, he listens as she tells him that he must say he plans to attack in order to scatter Ishido's forces to meet a threat that will not materialize.

In chapter thirty-eight, there is an incident involving a pheasant. Blackthorne had left it to age with instructions that no one would touch it. Neighbors were complaining about the stench so that the servants discussed the matter and the Old Gardener buried it. Fujiko asked Toranga what to do and Toranga had ordered the death of the Old Gardener. Blackthorne is enraged at the senseless death but Mariko tries to make him understand that the man had considered the task—and the death—an honor. With the onset of a horrific earthquake, Blackthorne comes to an epiphany about the situation and comes somewhat closer to understanding the customs. In chapter thirty-nine, Blackthorne hurries home to find his house destroyed and Fujiko severely burned. He tells the doctor that he does not want her to die and the doctor says Fujiko is young, strong and will recover. In chapter thirty-nine, Blackthorne is formally granted a fief by Toranga though Toranga refuses Blackthorne's plan to attack the Portuguese trading frigate and seems to have no faith in the possibility of building a navy with the help of Blackthorne's queen.

Chapters Thirty through Thirty-Nine Analysis

Early in this book it is revealed that Sazuko is a spy among Toranga's household and that she sent the word about Toranga's resignation. It is also revealed in this book that Lady Ochiba had given birth to a son, presumably the son of Taiko though he had slept with many other women and never gotten one pregnant, and that the firstborn son had "conveniently died." Toranga remembers these things and, it seems, had something to do with the child's death though it is left to the reader to determine whether this is the case.

Blackthrorne learns that Fujiko is the widow of the young man who was killed in Toranga's court and that her child, only months old, had been killed as well. He is angered at the killing and tells Mariko that he does not desire her as a consort but agrees to keep her with him because Mariko says that if she is refused, Fujiko will be an outcast and will probably have to commit suicide.

Buntaro and Mariko have an argument one evening and Mariko is ordered to explain to Blackthorne that her father was a traitor who had killed his lord, and that she, by the fact of being her father's daughter, was also guilty of the crimes. She says that Buntaro has refused her right to commit suicide though she asks each year on the anniversary of the event. Blackthorne drinks Buntaro into oblivion, noting that if the man is passed out he cannot harm Mariko. The next morning, Buntaro apologizes for his actions though Blackthorne tells him not to worry.

Mariko touches on a subject that has not been openly addressed—the prisoners at Osaka that include Kiri and Hiro-matsu. She correctly says that these continue to be a problem to Toranga in that he worries about their situation and their fate. Markio then tells Toranga that it is his duty to become Shogun—the country's supreme ruler—because to wait means leaving the country in turmoil for years to come. She tells him that he must marry Ochiba in order to accomplish this and Toranga roars out in anger. Mariko then asks whether she is to commit suicide at that moment or if she should wait until later, then pretends to faint, immediately prompting laughter from Toranga. Toranga also rewards Mariko's son generously and Mariko thanks him for allowing her to make him laugh. The relationship between the two continues to be an interesting study in contrasts because he has complete power over her and continues to deny her the right to commit suicide for her father's transgressions, and because Toranga seems less angry about her "befouled" heritage than either Mariko or her husband.

Chapters Forty through Forty-Six

Chapters Forty through Forty-Six Summary

In chapter forty, Blackthorne is taken to the tea house where Kiku is and spends an evening with Kiku and Mariko, learning for some time about the various sexual toys used to prolong the moment of "Clouds and Rain." Mariko leaves and Blackthorne spends the night. In chapter forty-one, Toranga learns that his half-brother, Zataki, is flaunting his alliance with Ishido and is on his way to see Toranga. Mariko goes to Toranga and apologizes for the fact that she could not arrange a better deal for Kiku's contract, the first indication that Toranga seems interested in Kiku as a consort for himself.

Blackthorne asks about the costs of some things, including the rebuilding of his house after the earthquake and resulting fire but Mariko assures him that Fujiko will take care of all the arrangements and that he need not worry about financial matters. It is here that Mariko reveals that Fujiko has money of her own and that she will draw from that if Blackthorne's financial situation demands it. Blackthorne seems confused that she would loan him from her personal money but Mariko assures him that it would not be a loan.

Omi realizes after talking with Blackthorne that Toranga lost his swords in a chasm during the earthquake and sends Mura and some other villagers to dig for the swords. While they are working, someone asks Mura if he has done anything about the new taxes being levied on the villagers. He says there is nothing to do but to pay them though they are exorbitant and one man says that it means the villagers will not be able to feed themselves over the winter. One of the villagers asks Mura what they are supposed to say if "the Holy Father asks about the weapons," and Mura responds that they are to tell him that "we are ready."

In chapter forty-two, Toranga tells Buntaro that he is to spend a night with Mariko in an attempt to "make peace." Zataki tells Toranga that he is ordered by the council to hand all his possessions over to his son and to commit suicide immediately. Toranga says he will give an answer the following day.

There is a meeting between Gyoko and Toranga. Gyoko, who is the woman who holds Kiku's contract and those of other girls like her, suggests that the tea houses such as the one she runs should be taken into a single area with rules like any other area of merchants. She suggests the addition of a new class of young lady that she calls "geisha" and Toranga agrees to think about it. Toranga tells her that he wants to buy Kiku's contract for himself, noting that it is easy to manipulate people. In chapter forty-three, Buntaro arranges an evening for Mariko and she agrees that if they return from their upcoming trips, they will begin life as husband and wife anew.

In chapter forty-four, Alvito gives Blackthorne a book that has been tediously compiled as a dictionary of Portuguese to Japanese language. Blackthorne is suspicious, saying that Alvito would never give away a book so valuable, calling it the "key" to Japan. In chapter forty-five, Mariko and Blackthorne, with adjoining rooms at the various inns during their travels, always spend the nights together. In chapter forty-six, the party arrives at Mishima where Mariko and Blackthorne again have rooms together. Rodrigues learns that Blackthorne is still in the area and that Toranga has Blackthorne's ship, and says that Blackthorne would easily win against Rodrigues in a battle at sea. Rodrigues goes to visit Blackthorne and it seems he plans to kill him though he says he had not really planned to do so. Rodrigues warns Blackthorne that they are friends but that he will not be lenient if there comes a time when the two meet at sea.

Chapters Forty through Forty-Six Analysis

When Blackthorne leaves the tea house, he almost reaches out to kiss Kiku but recalls at the final moment Mariko's teaching that he is not to show any public display of affection. Kiku and Blackthorne encounter Omi and Blackthorne notes that there seems to be jealousy in Omi's expression though he fights to hide it. Blackthorne later goes to Omi and tries to explain that he did not realize there was anything between the two but Omi dismisses the sentiment, saying that he has no hold over Kiku. Kiku's time with Blackthorne was actually arranged by Mariko at Toranga's behest though the reader does not, at this point, know what is being planned. Kiku will eventually be turned over to Blackthorne with Toranga's promise of a huge yearly allowance as soon as she gives Blackthorne a child.

Father Alvito is an interesting character and very unpredictable. Blackthorne does not like him and it seems in some ways that Alvito is not entirely honest. Then Alvito is backed into a corner by a situation involving a priest-in-training and when the situation turns ugly, Alvito is genuinely saddened. The complexity of this character will remain in question until much later in the story.

The relationship between Mariko and Blackthorne continues to grow. An interesting note on this point is that Buntaro creates an intimate dinner with what Mariko calls a perfect setting as an apparent effort to follow Toranga's order that the two resolve their differences. When Buntaro invites Mariko to spend the night, she seems somewhat reluctant and he tells her to go back to her own rooms to sleep. Now that the relationship between Mariko and Blackthorne has become so serious, it seems possible that Mariko simply does not want to spend the night with her husband because her heart has become involved with Blackthorne. While the two are traveling, they often spend nights together. When they stop for a few days at Mishima, Mariko arranges for them to stay in the inn together, ostensibly in separate rooms but privately without a chaperone. When Blackthorne asks if this is a wise arrangement, Mariko says that it is not, but that she relishes the privacy the two have in this situation.

Chapters Forty-Seven through Fifty-One

Chapters Forty-Seven through Fifty-One Summary

Blackthorne is relieved to find the Erasmus in perfect condition. Gyoko tries to maneuver it so that her son is made samurai in return for information she has. Buntaro asks Toranga for Blackthorne's head, having heard the rumors of Mariko and Blackthorne. Toranga loses his temper in an unusual display of emotion, telling Buntaro that he needs Blackthorne's head "on his shoulders" for the moment, but that he will grant the request at a later date. Toranga has pretended to accept his own defeat though notes that it is part of his plan which he believes to be his only chance for survival. Blackthorne asks Toranga to allow Mariko to divorce Buntaro and Toranga agrees to consider it.

In chapter forty-eight, Blackthorne requests the opportunity to visit with his crew and Toranga grants the request but Blackthorne is horrified by their living conditions, the fact that they are making no effort to keep their living area clean, and that they are crawling with lice. He admits that he does not want to be near them. In chapter forty-nine, Toranga calls on his son to slaughter his four children as a means of proving his fidelity. The son and daughter-in-law agree though the son returns shortly to say that the children have been removed. Toranga says that he had ordered this in order to test his son's loyalty. Hours later Toranga calls all his advisors together and orders two to commit suicide, accusing them of treason. He then says that his heir, Sudara, is "no longer my heir." Toranga then goes alone to his rooms, noting that he has no option now but to wait.

Toranga has Hiro-matsu come to his quarters. Toranga says that Hiro-matsu is the only person he fully trusts at the moment, that his plans to leave for Osaka have been nothing more than a ruse to gain time and orders Hiro-matsu not to share the information with anyone else. In chapter fifty, Blackthorne is aboard the Erasmus when Yabu arrives. He returns the silver that was taken from the ship and then tells Blackthorne that Toranga has ordered that Blackthorne is free—that he is to live as a samurai while in Japan but is free to leave if he pleases. In chapter fifty-one, Blackthorne, his crew and a large group of samurai sail the Erasmus to a new location, a cove safer in case of a "tai-fun." Blackthorne says good-bye to Mariko and prays that he will not lose her.

Chapters Forty-Seven through Fifty-One Analysis

Blackthorne notes that he does want to return to England though he has grown very attached to Japan and to its people. He especially feels this for Mariko and tells himself that he has not made any decision about what he plans to do as yet, but secretly admits that he has decided and that he is going to return to the sea.

There are rumors and intrigue immediately evident from the conversations related. These are presented to the reader with no indication of what is real and what is merely rumor, leaving it to the reader to determine what is important and what is to be believed. Toranga has become obsessed by the possibility of treason and even those likely to commit treason. He is leaving control of the generals to Hiro-matsu, explaining to Hiro-matsu that his reason for publicly disinheriting his son was because his son could not control those generals. Toranga seems to implicitly trust Hiro-matsu though there is no way to be certain that this is not some sort of subterfuge on his part as well. Meanwhile, Mariko has learned that Hiro-matsu is involved in some treasonous plot to keep Toranga from traveling to Okaka.

Chapters Fifty-Two through Fifty-Nine

Chapters Fifty-Two through Fifty-Nine Summary

Mariko arrives at Osaka and talks to Kiri and Sazuko, presenting them scrolls from Toranga and the message that he misses them and wants to see Sazuko's child, Toranga's youngest son. Blackthorne arrives on the Erasmus with only one of his crew, Vinck, and the samurai on board. He sends a spy to look for information and the man returns with details that include a message from Yabu, who sends a coded message that Blackthrone must be ready to sail at a moment's notice. Blackthorne is still talking to the man when a volley of arrows come from a nearby fishing boat, one impaling Blackthorne's informant who dies a painful death.

In chapter fifty-three, the following evening Blackthorne is at the birthday party for Ochiba. He carefully flatters her and ignores an insult by Ishido, going so far as to assure Ishido that he is no longer "barbarian." At one point, Mariko tells Ishido that she plans to leave the following day and that she will be taking Kiri and Sazudo with her along with Sazudo's infant son. Ishido refuses to say that Mariko is a hostage and she finally goads him into saying that she is free to leave when she wants which causes a stir among others who are being held against their wills. He does not, however, say she can leave and continues to deny that she can though denying that she is a hostage. The party is interrupted by news that Yodoko is dying. Mariko leaves with Yabu and Blackthorne right behind her though she is surprised at Yabu's public display of support. Later he berates her for her action and she does not tell him that Toranga ordered her to act as she did.

In chapter fifty-four, Mariko meets with Blackthorne under heavy guard. Blackthorne says that, though he did not understand all the conversation from the evening's events, he does know that Mariko was acting on Toranga's orders. He says that both he and she are there as "decoys" and that Toranga plans to "sacrifice" them both as part of his plan. In chapter fifty-five, Mariko, Kiri and Sazuko prepare to leave the castle walls but are intercepted by Ishido's men. Mariko's men fight valiantly but are greatly outnumbered and many are killed before Mariko takes the lead herself, sword in hand. When it is obvious that she cannot beat the warrior she is fighting against and that the warrior will not kill her, she retreats and says that, because she was unable to follow Toranga's orders to leave that day with the two other women, she will commit suicide at sundown.

In chapter fifty-six, Ochiba tells Ishido that he cannot possibly allow a woman of Mariko's rank to commit suicide because to allow it would inflame every woman in the battlement. Ochiba is called to Yodoko's bedside where the older woman tells Ochiba that she must marry Toranga, put Yaemon in his care, and that she must allow Mariko to leave unharmed. Ochiba admits to herself that she had been drugged by Yodoko prior to conceiving the first child and that she had seduced a peasant prior to the second,

explaining the fact that she had had children where none of Taiko's other lovers had conceived.

Mariko makes the preparations for her suicide but is stopped by Ishido who tells her that she and the others may leave at dawn the following day, and that anyone else who wishes to go may apply for a permit to do so. Mariko is helped inside by Blackthorne and no one stops them.

In chapter fifty-seven, Yabu kills one of the guards who instinctively feels that something is wrong and that they will not actually be allowed to leave at dawn. Kiri, Mariko and Blackthorne are waiting together for dawn and Kiri notes that they are all pretending that they are going to be allowed to leave though none of them actually believe it to be true. Yabu slips out through a catacomb of cellars to open the way for ninjas to enter the castle and a vicious attack is mounted. When Mariko, Kiri, Blackthorne and several others are cornered inside a strong room, the ninjas threaten to cause an explosion to gain entrance. Blackthorne, thinking it is he they want, tries to give himself up but Mariko tells him that she is the target of the attack and he manages to get a second door of the room open for their escape. Before they are all out, the explosion occurs and Mariko throws herself into it to avoid being taken alive. The ninja leader notes that his objective had been to take Mariko alive. Seeing her dying body, he leaves her and sounds the retreat. Blackthorne is beside Mariko when her pulse stops.

In chapter fifty-eight, the council convenes and Ishido says that the travel permits should be canceled. One man, a leper, disagrees and says that to do so would be to cast doubt and shame on the rulers because it will look as if they had never planned to honor the travel permits. Blackthorne regains consciousness briefly but his ears continue to ring and he cannot hear. He reminds himself to be patient, that the injury is similar to another time and that it will pass so that he regains his hearing. He is then bathed and massaged and sleeps again.

In chapter fifty-nine, Blackthorne is awakened in time to attend Mariko's funeral and then sleeps again. When he wakes next, the guards are gone and a priest, identifying himself as Michael, is present. Blackthorne is told that he has been ordered back to his ship and that the guards have all been removed. Then Blackthorne finds that he is going to be turned over the to captain of the ship where Rodrigues is pilot, likely to be killed. As he makes that realization, a Jesuit priest takes Blackthorne under his protection and tells him that he is free to leave. Blackthorne knows that it cannot be really happening until the priest says that the Erasmus has been destroyed by fire. Yebu calls for the galley to get underway immediately, fearing that Ishido will change his mind about allowing them to leave.

Chapters Fifty-Two through Fifty-Nine Analysis

As Yodoko lies dying, Ochiba thinks back to the death of her own husband and the scene that occurred as Taiko, ruler of Japan, was dying. He had called Toranga, saying that he wanted the warrior's advice. Toranga had asked permission to commit suicide,

knowing that he was the only real threat to Yaemon's inheriting the throne in the coming years. Ochiba had agreed but Yodoko had not, saying that Toranga should be made sole regent, taking Yaemon to raise as his own and to take the position as ruler after Toranga. Taiko takes a middle ground, naming Toranga chief among the regents to rule until Yaemon comes of age.

The politics of the situation comes to a head after the ninjas attack. It is during a meeting of the council that one man points out that the blame for the attack, and Mariko's death, will be blamed on the council and, by association, on Yaemon. The council member who points this out says that to do so now would be to invite those pitted with them against Toranga a reasonable cause to change sides. This political maneuvering is interesting on several levels, mainly because it so closely resembles what happens in modern political and social structures with leaders seeking ways to hold onto support.

When Blackthorne realizes that he is being turned over to the ship piloted by Rodrigues, he knows that he is going to be killed according to their laws. He immediately turns to the priest named Michael and asks to be allowed to commit suicide as a samurai. Michael understands the situation and begins working on a way out. Blackthorne knows that he is to be killed because his country is at war with the captain of the ship and its crew, and because he is bound to attack the trading ship as soon as he has control of the Erasmus. When Blackthorne insists on a reason he is being set free and learns that the Erasmus has been completely gutted by fire, he tries to disbelieve it but knows this would be the only reason that he would be released. The political issues along with the mercenary side of this situation come into play at this point. There are the Jesuits who are trying to control trade to some degree so that they can form alliances and gain monetary benefit. In addition, the Christians who trade, loan money and enter into other transactions are fostering a desire among the Japanese to become Christians solely for these benefits afforded to those who profess the faith. In addition, there are the maneuverings by the various factions who seek to maintain or regain control in the political arena. The spies, alliances and treason all combine to complicate the issues even more.

Chapters Sixty and Sixty-One

Chapters Sixty and Sixty-One Summary

In chapter sixty, Blackthorne arrives at Yokohama and finds the wreck of his ship. The ship is near the shore and he is horrified at the total loss. He is told that the men who were supposed to be guarding her have been executed and that a rogue wave had shoved the ship, tilting the oil lanterns and causing the fire. Blackthorne goes alone down the beach, still bemoaning the loss, with Vinck at his side. Suddenly Vinck seems to go crazy at the thought of being stranded in Japan and pulls a gun on Blackthorne. Blackthorne buries him on a hill overlooking the wreck of the Erasmus and prepares to again set out in the galley for Yedo where Toranga is waiting for them. Just as they are preparing to leave, a carrier pigeon arrives, barely escaping a hawk, with a message that they are to await Toranga's arrival in Yokohama. Blackthorne spends most of his time at the beach near the ship and counts his losses—the five ships he began the voyage with and almost all the five hundred crewmen.

Toranga arrives and Alvito arrives shortly after. Blackthorne, fully believing that the priests had something to do with the burning of his ship, heads toward Alvito but Toranga calls him off and Blackthorne reluctantly agrees. Then Toranga pretends to change his mind but cautions Blackthorne that Alvito is important for the moment though he does not tell Blackthorne specifically not to harm the priest, and watches to see what will happen. The two confront each other but there are only verbal insults and Blackthorne leaves. Toranga exalts in the knowledge that he has trained Blackthorne to this degree.

Toranga talks with Buntaro who continues to demand revenge for the affair he believes had gone on between Mariko and Blackthorne. Toranga tells Buntaro that Mariko had befriended Blackthorne on direct orders from Toranga and that there had never been anything deeper than their friendship. Then Toranga tells Buntaro that he had dissolved the marriage between Mariko and Buntaro prior to Mariko's departure for Osaka. Buntaro is surprised but Toranga says that the two had barely been civil to each other, that they had fought constantly, and that Mariko apparently made Buntaro miserable. He goes on to point out that a fight near Mariko's departure had been violent and that had prompted his decision for the divorce. Toranga then says that Mariko had denied the divorce, citing the shame that it would cause Buntaro. Buntaro says he does not understand why she would do this and Toranga says that Mariko had been adamant that Buntaro's honor not be subject to ridicule, and had therefore denied Toranga's offer of a divorce. The explanation, though apparently completely false, serves to pacify Buntaro's need for revenge.

Toranga, as he is talking over the current situation with several of the members of his council, reveals that he wasbehind the burning of the Erasmus and that he had done it in order to show his support for the Church.

Blackthorne is given a scroll by Toranga with a message from Mariko, citing her love, her part in the treachery that caused the burning of the Erasmus, and that her reason had been that destroying the ship means that Blackthorne himself is safe. She ends the missive by begging his forgiveness and urging him to build a new boat. Blackthorne is immediately caught up in that idea and Toranga pledges support for the project. Blackthorne decides that the ship will be smaller than the Erasmus by necessity—he does not feel confident of his ability to build a larger ship. He begins planning the weaponry and decides that he will name her "The Lady."

In chapter sixty-one, Toranga announces that he plans to hunt with his falcons and sends his young son, Naga, to draft the orders for the upcoming battle, an honor that Naga is pleased to have received. Naga is given some additional duties as well and Toranga says he expects that they will fight "soon." Toranga's thoughts then go to a recent conversation with Mariko in which he had told her that it would be necessary for her to share information with the High Priest so that the destruction of the Erasmus becomes necessary. Mariko says that she fears for Blackthorne's life because he will not be worth much as a hostage without his ship but Toranga assures her that Blackthorne's life is secure because he has the ability to build another ship.

Toranga hears the news that an important member of the opposition is dead, pretending surprise because he had already heard it the day before. Hiro-matsu believes this is the time to take control of a long stretch of an important road, a feat easier to accomplish because of the death of this man. Toranga also knows that his brother, Zataki, has promised to consider betraying Ishido though the possibility of Toranga marrying Ochiba may be a problem because Ochiba had been the prize Zataki had set on joining forces with Toranga.

Omi arrives with a young samurai who tells Yabu's role in the attack on the castle that led to Mariko's death. The samurai says that he knows that Yabu killed one of their own guards who threatened Yabu's plans and presents the details that prove it. Yabu denies it but Toranga believes it fully and orders that Yabu commit suicide before noon on this day. Yabu calls on Omi, his nephew and betrayer, to be his second in the act and Omi agrees. Yabu tells Omi that he does not blame him for the act and that he, Yabu, would have done the same. Yabu names Omi his heir and exacts a promise from Omi to take revenge against the samurai who accused him. Yabu then tells Omi that if he is to do everything he can to kill Yaemon if he should meet Yaemon on the battlefield. Yabu says that Omi should not wait until a battle but should put a price on Yaemon's head now. When Omi says that he has not the money nor the contacts, Yabu says that Gyoko, the woman who had overseen Kiku until selling her contract to Toranga, would be able to arrange it.

Toranga and the hunting party stop at an inn and he requests noodles and soya. Toranga calls for his secretary and orders that his son be reinstated as his heir. Toranga then tells Sudara that he plans to attack immediately. He says that Hiro-matsu is to lead a portion of the attack and Omi another. He then sends Sudara on his way and finishes his meal.

Toranga says that he plans for Kiku to be released from her contract with him in order to send her to Blackthorne. He knows that Fujiko is now expecting a child though she says that she is not yet certain. He also knows that she does not wish to marry Blackthorne. Fujiko tells Toranga that Kiku would not make a good wife but that Omi's mother hates Omi's wife and that this woman would make a good wife. Toranga comes to agree with her logic.

On the shore, Blackthorne makes plans to float the wreck of the Erasmus up to get it closer to shore so that it can be salvaged. Toranga notes the work in progress and thinks about the fact that he ordered the ship destroyed, just as he will order the new ship destroyed as a "sop" to the Christians. He says that there will eventually be travelers who arrive in the country, bringing ships for Toranga, but that Blackthorne's purposes lie in other quarters and that he will not be allowed to finish a ship of his own. Toranga says that he and Blackthorne will have plenty of time and that some years from now they will talk about the current situation and that Blackthorne will understand it all, including Toranga's instructions to Mura to feed the Christians misinformation in order to keep Blackthorne safe. Toranga then recalls his meeting with Kiku and her joy at his promise that she would become Blackthorne's wife, if, and only if, she could please him and keep him busily building his ship.

Toranga continues the hunt while thinking about his lifelong plan—to become shogun—that began the moment of Taiko's death. On the "twenty-first day of the tenth month," the two main armies clash. Toranga wins by late afternoon with forty thousand heads taken and Ishido captured alive just three days later. Ishido is buried alive with only his head sticking out of the earth and for three horrible days, lingers short of death while passersby "saw at the most famous neck in the realm with a bamboo saw."

Chapters Sixty and Sixty-One Analysis

Toranga's tale to Buntaro about his declaration of divorce is apparently a way for Toranga to create a peaceful situation between Buntaro and Blackthorne because Toranga still needs both of the men at his beck and call. Toranga has done little without an ulterior motive and this is no exception.

Toranga notes that he has become increasingly fond of Kiku and that is not a good situation. He does not elaborate but it seems that he may be seeking a way to sever his ties with her before he becomes overly fond of her. In these times, the taking of hostages and the killing of hostages is commonplace. It could be that Toranga is trying to keep the number of people who could be held hostage against his actions to a minimum. Toranga also knows that Kiku's recent miscarriage was actually performed on purpose, prompted by Gyoko because Kiku could not be certain that Toranga was the father and Gyoko feared that the child would be born with fair skin and blue eyes. Toranga seems to waver on the point of deciding Kiku's fate.

Toranga tells Sudara that he is reinstating Sudara as his heir and Sudara accepts the information with no outward emotion at all. Toranga is saddened by the lack of emotion.

It is interesting here that a samurai, by the very definition of the word, is stoic and almost without outward emotion. This reaction is generally admired by Toranga but in this case it seems that he wants Sudara's approval or some sign of happiness at the action. What Toranga is not considering is that he has toyed with Sudara's emotions through the entire situation and that Sudara also showed no hurt or anger when he was summarily removed as Toranga's heir. The situation is complex emotionally. Toranga then tells Sudara that he has just realized that it has been a long time since he has seen Sudara smile. Sudara asks if that means Toranga wants him to smile and it seems likely that he would have immediately smiled if his father had given the word, though he felt no emotional prompting. This also seems to make Toranga sad though he says that he has trained Sudara to be like this.

It is only as the book draws to a close that it is revealed that Toranga has spent his entire life planning a way to achieve the status of shogun. He has continually said this was not his goal and has gone so far as to tell others that to suggest such a thing was treason.

Characters

Lady Mariko Akechi

The Dictator Lord Goroda was assassinated by General Lord Akechi Jinsai. As a punishment, the entire family was killed or ordered to commit *seppuku.* Lady Mariko, daughter of Akechi, was not allowed either privilege. Instead, Buntaro sent her to a province far to the north for eight years. There she studied Latin, Portuguese, and Catholic doctrine with the Jesuits. Even so, she is first and foremost a samurai and one of the most admired women in all Japan.

In Toranaga's falconry terms, Manko is a prize peregrine falcon. Such a falcon is to be enjoyed and hunted with for a time but then released. Like Toranaga's prize falcon, Mariko, once released, will appear to soar away but then come back and masterfully kill her prey. Throughout the novel, Toranaga trains Mariko on Buntaro and on Blackthorne. Then he releases her on Osaka There she performs beautifully and wins the release of hostages from Osaka.

Father Martin Alvito

Father Alvito (also known as Tsukku) is a Jesuit priest who has spent most of his life in Japan and understands Japanese culture. He has the highest respect for Japanese culture but still views the Japanese as inferior people who can never be ordained priests. Father Alvito, due to his understanding of the Japanese, always gives the correct advice to his superiors, but he is not always followed. Toranaga respects Father Alvito but knows that his Catholicism and his vows of obedience to the Pope cloud him. He is working on a dictionary that will rival previous dictionaries. He gives one to Toranaga for Blackthorne's use. For his efforts, Toranaga allows him to build a cathedral in Yedo.

Father Alvito should be the hero when the novel is viewed in terms of Clavell's Objectivist philosophy. He is a capitalist who knows the Japanese and who knows how to expand trade. But he is defeated and, eventually, exiled. Meanwhile, the Englishman who wants trade becomes the hero and a samurai who will never leave Japan.

Anjin

See John Blackthorne

John Blackthorne

John Blackthorne (also known as Anjin) is an Englishman who received a complete education in sailing and war from Alban Cardoc. He left his family to become the

greatest English pilot. Instead of realizing that dream, he becomes the Anjinsan, advisor on foreign trade and shipping to the Shogun Lord Toranaga. The process is not easy. Blackthorne dies to himself as a European in his suicide attempt and is reborn a samurai.

Blackthorne immediately impresses everyone by defying the Jesuit priest. Then he wins respect by his sailing ability. Everyone notices how he laughs at death and challenges the sea when at the helm. He makes the Japanese wonder about other Europeans and how strong they might be. However, while he sticks to bis European ways he is clumsy on land. It is only his education in the ways of the Japanese that makes him a man again. Blackthorne's mind is very methodical. It is the mind of a European at the earliest stages of the New Science and Enlightenment.

Toranaga realizes that Blackthorne is a special bird and sets him apart from his other falcons. Blackthorne is "a short-winged hawk, a hawk of the fist, that you fly direct from the fist to kill anything that moves, say a goshawk " It is the fierceness of the goshawk with a mix of unpredictability that makes Blackthorne such a fun bird for Toranaga to fly. While Manko was his favorite bird, Toranaga hunted with a peregrine falcon, but in the end, Toranaga is hunting with a goshawk. This symbolizes that Blackthorne has become the friend and advisor Toranaga needs in the first years of his Shogunate.

Lord Buntaro

Mariko's husband is the son of Hiromatsu and a ruthless war general whose loyalty to Toranaga is beyond question. Buntaro is desperately in love with Mariko but he has never come to terms with the shame her father brought on the Akechi family. Due to this torment, Buntaro has become an abusive husband. Buntaro, except for his anger, complements the perfection of his wife by being the perfect samurai. As a display of his warrior ability, he performs the Tea Ceremony and flower arranging with perfection.

Friar Domingo

Toranaga keeps Father Domingo alive in prison until he can find a way to get information from him. Blackthorne easily extracts information from Father Domingo on the Jesuits doings and other matters of Japanese politics For this help, Blackthorne wins his release, but when the cell guards call Father Domingo's name, he thinks it is for execution and dies of fright.

Captain Ferriera

Captain Ferriera is the military commander of the Jesuits. He wants to put Blackthorne to death immediately. He nearly does so against the wishes of his superior. Ferriera is for the Catholics what Buntaro or his father are to Toranaga, an absolutely dependable killer.

Lady Fujiko

The widow of Uragi, who was killed for insulting Ishido, is denied permission to commit *seppulcu* from Toranaga. Instead, she is ordered by Toranaga to be Blackthorne's consort. In this capacity, she runs his household. She proves her samurai mettle when she has a showdown with Omiover Blackthorne's guns. From that point on, against their wills, Fujiko and Blackthorne grow fond of each other, although Fujiko's wish to die at the end of six months is honored.

Goyoko

The woman who holds Kiku's contract is madam Goyoko. Her societal position gives her access to a realm of secrets. She trades several of these to Toranaga in exchange for his support in creating a red-light district and a new class of entertainment girls, called *geishas.*

Hiro-matsu

Hiro-matsu is "very good at killing" and one of the reasons Toranaga has never lost a battle. He is not just Toranaga's first general but his most trusted vassal Hiro-matsu, for his part, chose to serve Toranaga because he believes in Toranaga and he does not want to lose.

Hiro-matsu is the perfect warrior and the perfect samurai. His son, Lord Buntaro takes after him, except for Buntaro's uncontrollable rage. Toranaga loves Hiro-matsu so much that he must keep Hiro-matsu at a distance lest he tell him what the real strategy is. Finally, when Toranaga is satisfied his plan is working, he brings Hiro-matsu into his confidence. The old soldier is so happy that his master is doing precisely the opposite of rumor that he feigns illness lest he be unable to control his smile. Renewed in his faith, Hiro-matsu is the ideal man to carry out the battle plan, with his son, Lord Buntaro, leading the men directly.

Lord Ishido

Ishido is a peasant who has risen to be a powerful lord. He is in charge of the emperor's guard and the castle of Osaka. At first glance, he to have the upper hand against his rival, Toranaga. He gradually marginalizes Toranaga and uses every means in his control to bring him down. Ishido's downfall comes as a result of not knowing when to break the rules. His second problem is his love for Lady Ochiba, who has always loved Toranaga. Lastly, he thinks that the game for Shogun and the game with the Jesuits are separate.

Brother Joseph

When Brother Joseph (also known as Uraga) is denied ordination, he rebels against Father Alvito. Uraga sees that the Jesuits have no intention of ordaining any Japanese and this sets him against the Catholics. He leaves Alvito's service and Toranaga gives him to Blackthorne as an aid. Fearing that Uraga will give away all their secrets, the Jesuits have him assassinated.

Lord Yabu Kasigi

Lord Yabu is overlord of Izu, which sits next to the Kwanto, where the barbarian ship is towed. Thanks to his wife, Yunko, Yabu has a large army of samurai, and he dreams of being able to create a musket regiment. Further, he dreams of using a musket regiment to become Shogun. "Equally dangerous as ally or enemy," Yabu is a man of contradictions incapable of sticking to an agenda unless Yuriko or Omi are there to guide him. He is willing to prove his courage or defend his honor at the drop of a hat. This rashness puts him at Blackthorne's mercy several times. Although he betrays

Toranaga in the end, he more often protects him he carries out orders regarding the Anjin-san, he sees to it that one of Toranaga's key rivals is poisoned, and he defends Toranaga with his life. He is an opportunist hoping to wind up as Shogun, but until he does, Yuriko tells him to be Toranaga's best vassal.

Yabu enjoys the Night of the Screams given him by the boiling of Pieterzoon. The character of Yabu is an extreme character. Omi, for example, merely does his duty when he kills. Killing, on the other hand, sexually arouses Yabu nobody else in the novel takes such pleasure. His pleasure in killing and his betrayal of Mariko make him appear the embodiment of evil, but that is to misunderstand samurai. Except for his sexual perversion, Yabu is every bit the samurai Buntaro is, but he has too much ambition. His keen knowledge of swords proves this.

Kiku

Kiku is the woman that every man desires. Toranaga eventually buys her contract for pleasure and to put an end to Omi's distraction. Finding that Kiku is too much of a distraction except for a man who needs to be distracted, Toranaga gives her to Blackthorne.

Mura

The headman of the village and keeper of Blackthorne when he first arrives. He is a Christian and former samurai who now spies for Toranaga in hopes of regaining samurai status. He relays information about the villagers and the doings of Omi and Yabu.

Naga

Naga, another son of Toranaga, is not as smart as Sudani but he is a good son. Naga is a good warrior who helps Omi with the musket regiment. Toranaga, in order to appease the Jesuits, tells him that he will convert. This infuriates him but he will do it. He is loyal to his father but he is easily provoked.

In terms of falconry, Naga is a falcon who is being flown at the wrong bait. Naga's game is combat. Situations of intrigue, as with Omi and Jozen, are too complex for Naga. Still, his father loves him for his good heart and his combat abilities.

Lady Ochiba

The mother of the heir, Yaemon, and former consort of the Taiko. She is a bitter woman who has always loved Toranaga. When Yodoko, widow of the Taiko, dies she makes a request of Ochiba that she marry Toranaga. Ochiba cannot refuse such a request and, therefore, will do everything in her power to see Toranaga victorious, such as prevent Yaemon from arriving at Osaka.

Lord Omi

Lord Omi has the brains in the Kasigi clan, and although he wants to take his Uncle Yabu's place, he bides his time. It is Omi who recognizes that the real value is in Blackthorne's head, not his ship's hold. Therefore, he persuades Yabu to keep Blackthorne alive. It is also Omi who tames Blackthorne, by pissing on his back. Omi is also the mastermind behind the musket regiment. He leads the regiment with Naga.

Omi becomes a great leader by the end of the novel, but only after several distractions are removed. He is in love with and distracted by the courtesan Kiku□Toranaga takes her away and gives her to Blackthorne. His parents are also a stumbling block. When Yabu is ordered to commit *seppuku,* he orders□as his death wish□that Omi's parents be killed and that Omi take charge of the clan.

Vasco Rodrigues

Although a merchant at heart, Rodrigues knows who holds the power. He will not openly defy the Jesuits and risk losing the commission to pilot the Black Ship. His attempt to drown Blackthorne fails, as does his other murder plot. Instead he is tossed overboard, but he does not die because Blackthorne makes Yabu save him. Later, Rodrigues returns the favor by helping Blackthorne escape. Rodrigues also represents the assimilated European and a counterweight to Blackthorne's crew. He has a Japanese wife that he sincerely loves. Like Alvito, his Catholicism prevents him from total assimilation.

Jan Roper

Of the crew members, Jan Roper stands out for being a religious fanatic, a bigot, and incredibly angry. He goes far beyond Father Alvito's racism to denounce all Japanese as animals or demons.

Lady Sazuko

Toranaga's most recent consort. She might not be as brilliant as Mariko, but her convincing acting and her loyalty to her master cause everyone to face her when Toranaga and Kiritsubo switch places. It is her presence in Osaka that prevents Toranaga from attacking. After Manko's "poem," she can leave Osaka.

Father Sebastio

The first European Blackthorne meets is Father Sebastio. He tries to present the Dutchmen as heretics and pirates who should be executed at once. Blackthorne breaks his crucifix in order to show that he views Jesuits as his enemy

Lord Sudara

Sudara's love for his wife, Lady Genjiko, stands in marked contrast to the rest of his personality. Except when he is thinking of her, Sudara is the perfect heir to Toranaga□cold and calculating like his father.

Lady Kiritsubo Toshiko

Toranaga's number one consort is Lady Kiri. She mothers Toranaga's consorts and Mariko. She is also an information conduit for Toranaga. Mariko wins her release from Osaka.

Tsukku

See Father Martin Alvito

Uraga

See Brother Joseph

Lord Toranaga Yoshi

He has said a thousand times that he has no desire to be Shogun but that is exactly what Lord Toranaga Yoshi will become. Toranaga, the favorite of the Taiko when he was alive, is the Lord of the Kwanto□the wealthiest province of Japan. He is also the President of the Council of Regents. Toranaga is "the greatest falconer in the realm" and a brilliant maker of noh plays who has never lost a battle. Toranaga is a master of human character and strategy who hates to waste money or the lives of his vassals. As Father Alvito puts it, "we're all clay on the potter's wheel you spin."

Toranaga sees immediately that Blackthorne would make a good friend and advisor in all matters dealing with the outside world but not in his current state. Thus, Toranaga, amid all his other operations, makes sure that Blackthorne becomes the civilized Ajin-san. Only then can the barbanan help him become Shogun.

Toranaga, as designer, nearly approaches the status of a god. At the height of his knowledge, when only he knows the truth of the situation, he is sequestered in the highest tower of Yedo. Knowing he is there brooding, his men fear him. At other times, he startles his closest advisers with his knowledge and his ability to predict the way people will behave. His enjoyment of prediction and knowing make Blackthorne, in all his unpredictability, special to Toranaga. In the end, all his scheming brings him the Shogunate.

Lady Yuriko

Yabu's wife, Yuriko, guides Yabu as much as she can. By economizing, Yuriko has been able to afford more samurai for Yabu than should be possible on paper. This makes him a very desirable ally. Yuriko figures out that Toranaga is playing a game, and she tells Yabu how to use the situation to his advantage.

John Blackthorne

Pilot-major of the Erasmus, he is thirty-six and very sure of himself when he arrives in Japan. Blackthorne becomes known by his Japanese name, Anjin, because the sounds of his real name are impossible to say in the Japanese language. Many of the people call him "barbarian." He is also called "Ingles" by the pilot Rodrigues, indicating his nationality as English. Blackthorne is immediately frustrated by the language barrier and this seems to be a motivation for gaining a rudimentary control of the language fairly quickly—an unusual feat among those who arrive in Japan. Blackthorne soon comes to have a slight grasp of the political aspects of the country and finds himself allied with Toranga almost by default, having landed in the region under Toranga's control. Blackthorne eventually becomes a pawn in the political aspirations of Toranga, losing his boat to the need for Toranga to gain the approval of another group, the Christians.

Mariko

Mariko is the wife of Buntaro and is a Christian who was taught to speak Portuguese, Latin and knows Japanese, therefore serves as an interpreter for Toranga's interview with Blackthorne. Mariko is a samurai woman and teaches Blackthorne about various aspects of the Japanese history and culture. Mariko has a sense of duty but also feels that she is unworthy of life because of her father's act of treason soon after Mariko's marriage to Buntaro. Mariko says that she continually asks for permission to commit suicide in penance for the action of her father, and that her husband and Toranga continue to deny her this. Mariko is torn by her dedication to her country and her masters there—her husband and Toranga—and her duty to God. She admits this to Blackthorne, telling him that she cannot always resolve the two, but she tells Toranga that she never feels her Christianity interferes with her duty to him. Mariko dies as a sacrifice on Toranga's orders so that others being held hostage against Toranga's actions will be set free.

Father Sebastio

A Portuguese priest who is the first to speak to Blackthorne in a language he can understand. It is Sebastio who tells Blackthorne that he has arrived in Japan and that he is going to be killed.

Kasigi Omi

The samurai who is in charge of the village where Blackthrone lands. Omi immediately hates Blackthorne and all his men. Though Omi believes greatly in the dignity and honor of the samurai, he is also willing to be devious if it helps further his cause.

Baccus Van Nekk

The representative of the East India Trading company who is with the Erasmus on the voyage. He is nearsighted and must always stand very near anything he wants to see. Blackthorne refers to him as a friend.

Kasigi Yabu

The "diamyo" of Izu and Omi's uncle. Yabu takes possession of all of the goods from Blackthorne's ship and immediately begins planning what he will do with the bounty but gives it all up to Toranga's representative, going so far as to pretend that it was his own idea. Yabu commits treason and is ordered to commit suicide, which he does.

Mura

The headman of Anjiro who takes Blackthorne into his home after the storm forces the ship to shore. Mura is actually referred to as a spy but it is eventually revealed that Mura is acting on the orders of Toranga.

Midori

Wife of Omi. Midori is loving and clever and Omi loves her very much but his parents hate her. Toranga decides that he will order the divorce of Midori and Omi in order to free Midori to marry Blackthorne.

Kiku

The famous courtesan who stays with Omi while Yabu is visiting and later entertains Blackthorne at the tea house where she has rooms. She is a professional and her contract is eventually purchased by Toranga but she is then presented to Blackthorne as a consort.

Toda Hiro-matsu

The provincial overload who is loyal to Toranga, he is tough and blunt. He is also ready for war, preferring an outright conflict rather than the barely-veiled tensions that are currently the norm in the country.

Ishido Kazunari

Commander of the garrison in Osaka, he is enemy to Toranga. Ishido holds Toranga and his entourage hostage for a period of time until Toranga makes a daring escape. Ishido is pushed into a corner by Mariko and makes what some believe to be a series of mistakes. He is captured when he opposes Toranga in outright war and dies horribly at the hands of his enemies.

Kiri

Head of Toranga's household, she has been his faithful companion for more than thirty years. There's an interesting relationship between the two that includes some teasing. Kiri is held hostage after Toranga's escape until Mariko's arrival and eventual death.

Sudara

Toranga's youngest son and his heir. Sudara has a marked lack of outward emotion, a fact that seems to bother his father at one point though Toranga admits that Sudara was raised in this way on purpose.

Friar Domingo

A Friar of the Sacred Order of St. Francis who is imprisoned with Blackthorne, Friar Domingo says that the Jesuit Priests are responsible for his presence in the prison and that the priests are little more than gun runners and traders. He has been in prison more than a year upon Blackthorne's arrival, is in poor health but continues to preach and convert all who will listen to him. He is cared for by the other prisoners and has a small space to himself, a luxury in the cramped conditions of the prison cell.

Yaemon

The seven-year-old heir to the throne and the son of Ochiba. He is raised as the son of Taiko but his father is more likely a peasant who had a brief encounter with Ochiba. Yaemon is being groomed for the throne though there is some doubt that he will become of age to possess it because of the turmoil in the country and the number of people seeking control.

Taiko

The man who rules Japan until his death and the man supposed to have fathered Yaemon, Taiko dies before Yaemon came of age. On his deathbed, Taiko orders the establishment of a five-member council to rule until Yaemon comes of age.

Ochiba

Mother of Yaemon and widow of Taiko, she is being held hostage by one of the Regents. It is noted that Taiko had many consorts and that none conceived except Ochiba who conceived twice and gave birth to two sons. Toranga questions Yaemon's parentage and Ochiba admits that Yeamon is more likely the son of a peasant than of Taiko.

Toranga

A member of the council of regents charged with ruling the region until Yaemon comes of age following the death of Yaemon's father, Taiko. Toranga denies any political aspirations other than serving Yaemon but is actually seeking a way to become shogun and will do anything toward that end.

Father Alvito

The Jesuit Priest who interprets for Toranga and Blackthorne during their first meeting. Father Alvito is involved in the political wrangling but seems to be genuine in his caring for others, including Mariko.

Objects/Places

Erasmus

The war trading ship piloted by John Blackthorne, as the story opens, this is the only remaining ship of five.

Rutter

A small book that contains details of the observations of pilots who have sailed a particular area. Details include headlands, channels and magnetic compass courses between various ports. Blackthorne notes that rutters are not always perfect and that the only way a pilot can be certain of an area is to go there once for himself.

Izu

The name of the province where Blackthorne and his crew land following the storm.

Anjiro

The name of the village where Blackthorne and his crew land following the storm.

Seppuku

Also known as hari-kari, this is the act of suicide committed by a warrior. Men disembowel themselves with their swords and women slash their own throats.

Crimson Sky

The code of Toranga's followers to commit to war.

Santa Teresa

The frigate under Rodgues's command.

Osaka

Where Kiri and the others are held as hostages against Toranga's appearance.

Yokohama

Where the Erasmus is destroyed.

The Lady

The name Blackthorne plans for the ship that is to replace the Erasmus.

Social Concerns

James Clavell was a successful producer, director, screenwriter, and novelist who contributed greatly to the increase in understanding between the West and the East.

His work included novels like Shogun: A Novel of Japan, which enabled the West to gain an understanding and respect for Japan at a time when Japan was emerging as an economic world power.

Although not considered great literature by most critics, Shogun: A Novel of Japan made Clavell one of the most widely read twentieth-century novelists. The novel contains war, trade disputes, cultural clashes, passion, death, and descriptions of beauty that absorb the reader. Clavell's own survival of a Japanese death camp gave him unique insight into human behavior and cultural differences, enabling him to produce a truly gripping story. In addition to penning a good book to curl up with, Clavell built a bridge of understanding from West to East by fictionalizing a historical encounter between them.

Shogun portrays Japan during its transition from feudalism to a nation-state ruled by an enlightened warlord. This moment occurs in the quarter-century of jostling for power that occurred after the end of the Ahikaga Shogunate, which had ruled the country since 1336. The Ahikaga reign ended when Yoshiake, the Shogun, lost a battle against Oda Nobunaga. Yoshiake shaved his head and became a Buddhist priest. The civil wars that followed during the sixteenth century began to end when Oda Nobunaga, whose military strategy relied on guns, was assassinated in 1582. His ablest general, the peasant Hideyoshi Toyotomi, unified the country in 1590. With a unified Japan following him, Toyotomi invaded Korea twice: 1592-93 and 1598. He died during the second invasion and Japan withdrew from Korea. Five years of uncertainty followed his death before leyasu Tokugawa completed Toyotomi's attempt to make Japan one nation.

Tokugawa defeated his rivals in October, 1600, at the Battle of Sekigahara. He became Shogun in 1603. Tokugawa insured the survival of his accomplishment by resigning in 1605 and helping his son carry on the Shogunate. Tokugawa's Shogunate established a peaceful kingdom for 250 years.

Then the Americans, in 1853, forced the Japanese from isolation. In 1868, the emperor was restored and the reign of Shoguns ended. Under the emperor, the previously isolationist country took part in world affairs energetically. Its attempt to create an empire brought the country into World War II. Defeated by the United States in August of 1945, much of Japan came under American supervision for almost thirty years.

Techniques

Shogun is a work of historical fiction. The strength of historical fiction is not in its accurate rendition of events but in its faithful portrayal of the historical moment. Thus, Shogun's narrative is faithful to the reality of 1600—a rather barbaric Europe meets a highly civilized and war-torn Japan—even if it strays from accurate chronology. Clavell researched his subject exhaustively. For four years, he read accounts of visitors to Japan in the sixteenth and seventeenth century, as well as historical studies. He visited Japan.

He fleshed out his novel by adding descriptions of the art of gardening and the Tea Ceremony. Some of the descriptive phrases used in the novel are actually paraphrases of the accounts he read. For example, much of what Rodrigues says about the Japanese can be found in the writings of the Jesuit Father Joao Rodrigues, who visited Japan in the late seventeenth century. This Rodrigues said the Japanese are "so crafty" they have "three hearts." Finally, the inspiration for the novel came from the story of Will Adams, who actually did shipwreck in Japan in 1600 and became a samurai.

Shogun's narrator is a straightforward example of third-person omniscient: the narrator is all-knowing. However, the narrator has some interesting limits. For example, the positions of the Portuguese forts or other Jesuit matters are never revealed, nor are the real workings of the Council against Toranaga. In fact, the narrator only reveals information that Toranaga would have known. Toranaga has spies everywhere, and he receives detailed reports from his generals, his ladies, and Lady Mariko. Furthermore, he has orchestrated all the major events of the book as if he were the director of a play. The idea that Toranaga is in fact the narrator is supported by the narrative shifts throughout the novel to first person when he is alone. An example of this occurs at the end of the novel. The paragraph begins with "he thought" and ends with Toranaga saying, "this is the chance I've been waiting for." Toranaga is thus revealed as the narrator, and the book is therefore the book he has been writing to advise future generations.

Because of the rich cast of characters in the work, Clavell uses several structural elements to connect events and characters into a disciplined narrative. One structural element is chronology. The novel proceeds from the spring of 1600 to November 21, when Toranaga launches his battle plan, Crimson Sky. Along the way, flashbacks to previous events fill in the past. The novel, accordingly, is a historical account. Abetting the chronological structure are the motifs of chess and falconry. The two metaphors are used to explain how the past is mixed with the present by Toranaga as he maneuvers to become Shogun.

Clavell's division of chapters into six books is also a structural element. Each book ends with a significant development in Blackthorne's education or Toranaga's plan. Book One establishes the situation in Japan and ends with Blackthorne saving lives. At the end of Book Two, Blackthorne is saved in return. This trading of lives ties the characters together and builds loyalty between them. In Book Three, Blackthorne dies and is

reborn a samurai. From this point, Toranaga plays a larger role as he begins to implement his strategy to become Shogun. Blackthorne's hopes to use his snip, Erasmus, in Book Four are part of Toranaga's plans, and the ship is destroyed in Book Five. Book Five also contains the climatic "poem" of Mariko, which unlocks Osaka and kills several samurai. Book Six wraps up the loose ends and ends in Toranaga launching Crimson Sky.

A third pattern in the book is the cultural reciprocity between Toranaga and Blackthorne. The two men educate each other in the ways of the world. Toranaga takes time out of his battle plans to make sure Blackthorne is properly educated in the ways of the Japanese. In return, Blackthorne tells Toranaga about Europe.

This new knowledge enables Tornaga to deal with the Jesuits and, eventually, to evict them from Japan.

Another organizing pattern concerns the characters and their love affairs, which are either reflective or codependent. The illicit love affair of Mariko and Blackthorne is matched by Omi's affair with Kiku. Both affairs must be resolved for Toranaga to win. Toranaga's light-hearted affairs with his ladies, especially Kiri, can be contrasted with the lustful courtship of Lord Zataki and Lord Ishido for Lady Ochiba. More positively, the relationships of Lord Sudara and Lady Genjiko and Rodrigues and his wife represent the ideal of pure love. All of these structural elements interlock to form the novel.

Thematic Overview

Shogun tells the story of an English pilot, John Blackthorne, in charge of five Dutch ships whose purpose is to break the Portuguese monopoly on Japanese trade. Instead, the pilot becomes embroiled in Japanese politics as Lord Toranaga Yoshi employs him as his secret weapon. Shogun uses straightforward storytelling techniques to keep readers riveted as they imagine themselves in the position of the English pilot.

By the end, the reader has learned about Japan alongside Blackthorne as he attempts to survive.

Clavell's book is a celebration of heroic deeds that changed the course of history for people all over the world. In this context, heroes are figures who withstood the aggressions of Spain or bravely sailed into the unknown oceans to discover new lands, people, and riches. Such historic figures as Queen Elizabeth I are thus described in glowing terms. The Portuguese of the past— those who belonged to the first Age of Exploration under Prince Henry the Navigator—are praised for braving the unknown and connecting the entire world in the minds of sailors and governments. Clavell contrasts these European heroes with Japanese notions of heroism.

In Clavell's Japan, winning money, plundering cities, and destroying other cultures are not considered heroic. Instead, heroism in samurai terms consists of fulfilling one's duty, being loyal, fighting bravely and well against a worthy opponent, and being a master of strategy. Thus, Yabu is a hero because he is brave and a good swordsman.

Buntaro, the master archer, is renowned for his ability as master of the Tea Ceremony.

Toranaga, a legend in his own time, epitomizes Sun Tzu's Art of War with his mastery of strategy as well as his accomplishments in the techniques of peace and governance.

While the rituals are different, there is a great similarity between the two notions of heroism. To be a hero, whatever the standard, takes grit. Blackthorne's performance piloting a ship leaves spectators in awe.

Lady Mariko's incredible performance at Osaka shows the heroism of great determination; she comes close to canonization for her deeds. Heroism can also be shown in a small person like Mura who faces the much larger Blackthorne in order to do his duty— give the barbarian a bath. And everyone respects a woman of lesser stature than Mariko, like Fujiko, who bravely defends Blackthorne's honor against Lord Omi. The comparison of heroic ideals in the novel is one of many ways Clavell encourages multicultural understanding.

There are two levels of cultural exchange and multiculturalism in Shogun. On the first level, the cultural clash between the Japanese and the Europeans provides a litmus test of intelligence. The smartest and most successful characters are those who both understand cultural differences and try to use them for their own benefit. The second

level is for the reader. Clavell gives the reader insight into the Japanese perspective in order to facilitate cross-cultural understanding.

While many scenes of information exchange build a bridge of understanding between Blackthorne and Japan, the physical exchange matters more. When Blackthorne insults Omi by saying he will urinate on him, Omi relieves himself on Blackthorne instead. In any situation this would be insulting. However, when Yabu asks why he did not urinate in Blackthorne's face, Omi proves he is an intelligent man: "to do it in his face—well, with us, to touch a man's face is the worst of insults, neh? So I reasoned that I might have insulted him so deeply he would lose control." In this very charged moment, Omi has recognized that Blackthorne is different, but has engaged with him in a memorable, reasoned way.

Yabu, on the other hand, would have ruined any future relations with Blackthorne.

Another physical means of cultural exchange occurs when Blackthorne breaks the Jesuit's crucifix. Whereas Blackthorne totally assimilates himself to the Japanese way of life, in return the sole change of the Japanese is an end to being dominated by the Jesuits. As a result, Clavell's decidedly pro-Japanese book suggests that European culture was more elastic. That is not to say that the Japanese could change, for Mariko becomes nearly European in attitude. But in political terms, Japan chose isolation instead of openness after a very limited experience with outsiders. The Europeans, on the other hand, set out to explore the entire globe, and then fought to conquer it.

A unifying theme in Shogun is the importance of knowledge acquisition and the ability to pass on knowledge. Two models of education are presented in the novel: those of Toranaga and Ishido. Ishido believes in learning necessary skills and insists that his samurai learn the arts of war, how to fight and follow orders. Toranaga believes that "samurai should be well versed in the arts of peace to be strong for the arts of war." Thus, his samurai are accomplished poets, swimmers, writers, and warriors.

Blackthorne's teacher, Alban Caradoc, agrees with Toranaga. He teaches Blackthorne the skills of a pilot-navigator as well as the more important lesson that "when the storm's the worst and the sea the most dreadful, that's when you need your special wits. That's what keeps you alive."

The Jesuits also use Ishido's model. They set up schools, write grammars, and teach religious values in order to maintain control. Their art of war is to split allegiances through religious indoctrination so that they maintain their monopoly on trade. Although the Jesuit dictionary comes in handy for him, Blackthorne rejects their tutelage in preference for Toranaga's star professor, Lady Mariko, whose most valuable lesson to Blackthorne is inner peace through meditation.

Those in Toranaga's camp, and Toranaga himself, are also open to learning from Blackthorne. He teaches the hornpipe dance to Toranaga and the ladies, he offers the generals lessons about war tactics, and he lectures to anyone who is interested about geography and European politics. In exchange, Blackthorne learns how to be a

samurai. To do this requires mastery of two lessons: patience and transformation. Education, in the novel, is not simply the means of learning information but the process of changing and broadening one's perceptions.

Themes

The Importance of Political Aspirations

Political aspirations drive the majority of this story in one way or another. While Blackthorne's arrival in Japan could be viewed as an act of God because it is a storm that causes the ship's landing on the shores of the country, it is political aspirations by the Queen of England that prompts Blackthorne's voyage in the first place. Trading is an important form of wealth in England in this time period and Blackthorne's efforts are aimed at making money for himself and his crew, but also for earning wealth for England to support the Queen. Blackthorne's arrival in Japan causes a stir because Omi realizes that he can climb politically by telling his overlord, Yabu, about the wealth of the ship's cargo and Yabu gives up the cargo to Toranga for the same reason.

Even more evident is the political wrangling by Toranga as he uses everything and everyone at his command to achieve his ultimate political goal of becoming shogun—or supreme ruler—of the region. Blackthorne comes to play an important part in Toranga's aspirations. The Church is vital to Toranga's success and though Toranga himself says that he does not believe in the Christianity preached by the priests, he knows that he needs their support in order to succeed. Meanwhile the Church come to realize that Blackthorne—with his ship, the Erasmus—is a threat to the trading ventures that are vital to the continued wealth of the Church. Toranga uses this knowledge to buy the Church support by destroying the Erasmus, eliminating the immediate threat on this vital trade. As is revealed at the close of the story, every action by Toranga has been choreographed toward the ultimate political aspiration of becoming shogun.

The Importance of Honor

The sense of honor among the Japanese people of this period may seem skewed to other cultures but was vital to their lives. This honor includes the idea of guilt by association and is seen in vivid detail in the story of Mariko. Mariko is a samurai woman by her own admission. Her father plans and executes a political plot that ends in his death. The shame of having known about the plot and not having done anything to stop it is so complete that Mariko wishes to commit suicide—a ritual in Japan that is carried out by many in an effort to regain lost honor for any number of reasons. Mariko is denied the option of committing suicide, apparently because of her value to several people including Toranga himself. Mariko notes that she continues to request the right to commit suicide each year in an effort to rid herself of the dishonor of her father's actions but continues to be denied. What is interesting here is that Mariko would never stoop to committing suicide after being denied the right by her husband and her lord because to do so would be an even greater dishonor.

The Need to Adapt

Blackthorne and his men are hardcore seamen who are set in their ways and dedicated to their roles in the voyage. When they find themselves in a completely foreign culture each fights it in their own ways. However, after a relatively short period of time, Blackthorne comes to realize the wisdom in adapting to the situation rather than continuing his quest to change the situation to fit his life. He comes to understand specific aspects of the Japanese way of life, including that they respect specific actions. For example, Blackthorne is very afraid when he first meets Toranga but forces himself to "count to six" before acknowledging the man's presence and returning a bow. While Blackthorne admits that he is afraid, he does this in an effort to command respect. He also submits to regular bathing and eventually comes to accept the traditional food and manners. Meanwhile, the crew continues to do things their own way. When Blackthorne comes back to visit the crew, he finds them drunk on a homemade wine they have brewed themselves. They are living in horrible conditions and everything about them repulses Blackthorne who has adapted so well to this new way of life. After the burning of the Erasmus, Blackthorne is angry and disappointed but he has one member of his crew with him and that man goes stark raving mad at the thought of being stranded in a foreign country.

Style

Point of View

The story is written in third person from an omniscient perspective that is often limited to a particular character. In most cases, the viewpoint is limited to that of either Blackthorne or Mariko. This is really the only option open to the author that would preserve the integrity of the story line. For example, the reader sees Toranga's actions usually through the viewpoints of others. On rare occasions, the reader catches a brief moment of his inner thoughts. This changes at the end when Toranga's thoughts are presented in full, giving the reader the details that tie the story together. Through this method, the author is able to keep the reader guessing about specific points throughout the book which builds suspense. The story opens from Blackthorne's viewpoint, presenting readers with information about the voyage up to this point, the men who crew the ship Blackthorne pilots, and some insight into Blackthorne's life and personality. While the viewpoint remains somewhat limited to Blackthorne's perspective early in the story, there are omniscient glimpses into other characters that provide a greater understanding of the story.

Setting

The story is set in Japan in the year 1600. The time is identified by Blackthorne as he is talking to the Jesuit Priest Martin Alvito. Blackthorne's first words are that he and Alvito are enemies because their countries—Portugal and England—are enemies and have been for the past twenty years, "since 1580." There are a number of aspects of the story that illustrate this time setting. The mode of travel and the fact that there is limited information about ocean passages is one. The fact that ships' pilots covet information collected first-hand by other pilots is another example. Blackthorne dreads bathing because he believes it to be detrimental to the health, a common misconception of the time period. Another example occurs when Rodrigues is injured and Blackthorne continually tries to keep the room closed to fresh air because it is an accepted fact that the introduction of fresh air will likely cause disease in a man in Rodrigues's weakened condition.

Language and Meaning

The overall tone of the story is one of hope though there are intense scenes of despair and even hatred. Blackthorne is a strong character with definite ideas about life and honor. Cast into a completely different culture, he is initially unforgiving and hates the situation though he comes to accept that at least some of the ways of the Japanese people are acceptable and are even better than those he believed to be correct prior to his arrival in Japan. One of the biggest problems for Blackthorne is the lack of sanctity of life exhibited by the Japanese. The people believe fully in reincarnation and so never

consider that the loss of a life in an honorable manner is a bad thing. In fact, committing suicide is perfectly acceptable and honorable if one has done something dishonorable or even untoward. The killing goes so far as to include infants, women and children who are held responsible for the loss of honor of a family member. In one case, the samurai who makes a step toward defending Toranga in a situation in which this movement is not acceptable is put to death along with his infant son. Mariko's father committed a treasonous act and she pleads for the right to commit suicide each year on the anniversary of the deed. This sense of responsibility and honor are all-important and play an overriding role in the tone of the story. Set in Japan, the story includes a great many words and phrases in Japanese. These are explained in various ways. For example, when Blackthorne or someone else speaks in Japanese, the words follow immediately in English so that the reader knows what was said. This is somewhat distracting in some ways but is ultimately successful in keeping the reader on track. Phrases such as shogun, anjin, geisha, consort and hai are also explained so that the reader has full understanding.

Structure

The book is divided into six "books." Each is titled only by number, such as Book One, Book Two and so on. These books roughly divide the various aspects of the story line. For example, the final section, Book Six, describes Toranga's resolution to the problems that have been presented throughout the book. In addition, these parts are divided into chapters. The sections contain varying numbers of chapters, with as few as two chapters in the final part. There are sixty-one chapters in all, of widely varying lengths. These are presented basically in chronological order so that the story flows in the order of occurrence. Historical background necessary for the full understanding of the story, such as the warring politics of the country and the animosity between England and Portugal, are presented largely through conversations. For example, Mariko explains much of the Japanese history to Blackthorne so that the reader has a better grasp of the situation. These are effective methods of background presentation and are adequate to the story.

Historical Context

Early Modern Europe

Portugal, due to the efforts of Prince Henry the Navigator, had a jump start on Europe in the race for colonies. The Pope, during the fifteenth century, further aided Portugal by repeatedly renewing its monopoly on African trade. The Spanish, who had finally unified their nation, were eager to join the race and asked the Pope where they should go. As a result, the Pope drew the Papal Line of Demarcation dividing the world between Spain and Portugal in 1493. Spain was able to make better use of its colonial efforts and soon became the most powerful nation in Europe. In 1580, Spain absorbed Portugal and all her colonial possessions. Spain's zeal for colonies and the inflationary spirals produced by the continuous influx of gold and silver from the New World soon led the superpower into decline.

The first signs of Spanish decline resulted from bad luck and obstinacy The King of Spain, Philip II, was determined to defeat the English and Queen Elizabeth. Philip II commissioned a series of Armadas□naval assaults□against England. Each Armada was beleaguered by storm and then trounced by the faster and smaller English vessels assisted by the Dutch. The Armadas bankrupted the Spanish crown. After the Armadas failed the British and the Dutch began to steal colonies.

Jesuits

In 1540, after treading through papal red tape and a vote of confidence from his followers, nobleman and war veteran Ignatius of Loyola became leader of the Jesuits, the Society of Jesus The Jesuits vowed absolute obedience to the Pope and placed their work ahead of prayer. The group became renowned for its learning and its universities. Due to their unique governing rules and their learning, the Pope used Jesuits as emissaries to European courts and sent them to explore the world, make converts, and open up trade. Thus, Jesuits quickly took over the cause of the Catholic Church in Spanish and Portuguese colonies

According to Church records, the Pope sent the Jesuits to take over trade in Japan because he realized that only the no-nonsense Jesuits would have a chance at success. Contact with Japan was made with the arrival of the Portuguese in 1543, who brought guns, knowledge of fortifications, and the pox in exchange for money and silk. Not until the Jesuit St Francis Xavier arrived in 1549, however, did the trade become profitable. Xavier won converts everywhere he went. In his wake, the Jesuits established schools and threatened traditional Japanese thought. Xavier died while attempting to enter China. The Jesuits took command of trade in Asia and soon had 300,000 Japanese converts to Catholicism.

Will Adams

The adventures of John Blackthorne are loosely based on the story of Will Adams. He was an English pilot who shipwrecked on the coast of Japan in 1600. By 1603, he had become a samurai and an advisor to the Tokugawa Shogun Adams, who changed his name to Anjin Miura, was allowed to establish a Dutch trading post. As advisor to Tokugawa, Adams enabled the removal of religion from trade. This pleased Tokugawa, who wanted to curtail the influence of European religion on the Japanese. The Dutch, therefore, came as merchants□without priests□and gained access to Nagasaki. The Jesuits and everyone else were barred. Just as the Jesuits feared, this enabled the persecution of Christians to flare up on several occasions over the next two centuries. Like Toranaga, Tokugawa allowed Adams to build a ship, but not wanting to return to the days of naval battles that marked the civil wars, he gave the ship away and ordered a larger one. Adams was made a samurai□the only westerner to be so honored□and a monument was erected to him at his death in 1620.

Japan

Shogun is a portrait of Japan as it transitioned from feudalism to a nation-state ruled by an enlightened warlord. This moment occurs in the quarter-century of jostling for power that occurred after the end of the Ahikaga Shogunate, which had ruled since 1336. The Ahikaga reign ended when Yoshiake, the Shogun, lost a battle against Oda Nobunaga. Yoshiake shaved his head and became a Buddhist priest.

The civil wars that followed during the sixteenth century began to end when Oda Nobunaga, whose military strategy relied on guns, was assassinated in 1582. His ablest general, the peasant Hideyoshi Toyotomi, unified the country in 1590. With a unified Japan following him, Toyotomi invaded Korea twice: 1592-93 and 1598. He died during the second invasion and Japan withdrew from Korea. Five years of uncertainty followed his death before Ieyasu Tokugawa completed Toyotomi's attempt to make Japan one nation.

Tokugawa defeated his rivals in October 1600, at the Battle of Sekigahara. He became Shogun in 1603. Tokugawa insured the survival of his accomplishment by resigning in 1605 and helping his son carry on the Shogunate. Tokugawa's Shogu-nate established a peaceful kingdom for 250 years. Then the Americans, in 1853, forced the Japanese from isolation. In 1868, the emperor was restored and the reign of Shoguns ended. Under the emperor, the previously isolationist country took part in world affairs energetically. Its attempt to create an empire brought the country into World War II. Defeated by the United States in August of 1945, much of Japan came under US supervision for almost 30 years.

1975

By the mid-1970s, Japan had regained its sovereignty. Although it would be asked to apologize for various war atrocities committed during WWII, Japan by 1975 controlled all its islands, renewed a treaty of mutual defense with the United States (1970), and rebuilt its economy into one of the top non-communist industrial economies of the world. Soon the Japanese economy would be second only to the United States. The oil crisis of the 1970s hit Japan particularly hard. The Japanese responded by creating programs to reduce Japan's dependence on foreign oil through conservation and alternative energy sources.

Critical Overview

Critics often responded to Clavell's *Shogun* with begrudging admiration, as if compelled by the force of the story to take the book seriously. An early book review in the *New York Times Book Review,* by Webster Schott, began "I can't remember when a novel has seized my mind" like *Shogun.* According to Schott, "Clavell is neither literary psychoanalyst nor philosophizing intellectual. He reports the world as he sees people□in terms of power, control, strength.... He writes in the oldest and grandest tradition that fiction knows " Common themes in later criticism of Clavell tended to focus on three themes Clavell's brilliant storytelling, the work as a historical novel or fiction, and the work's multiculturalism. It is easy to point out the historical inaccuracies of the novel, but its entertainment value and its understanding of broader historical themes to light led most critics to forgive Clavell's manipulation of historical fact.

A reviewer in *The New Yorker* desperately wanted to disparage the book, going so far as to say Clavell's novel was a throwback to the "derring-do" of Enrol Flynn. But the review shifted to admiration in a blink with the recognition that "Clavell does have a decided gift for storytelling, and he makes a heroic effort to provide the right atmosphere." Still, the reviewer sneered at the anachronism of modern slang in the novel given the effort to render the atmosphere with veracity.

D. J. Enright, in the *New York Times,* was somewhat condescending in calling *Shogun* "a tourist guide to medieval Japan." Yet Enright noticed some of Clavell's achievements in the book, noting that Clavell in some ways captured a sense of Japan's literary art in his massive work. Noting that the Japanese "are masters of the miniature," he suggested that Clavell was doing them an honor by writing his novel with such massive amounts of detail□from the way to wear a sword to a description of a Tea Ceremony. Julian Barnes, in the *New Statesman,* also commented on Clavell's attention to minutiae, noting that "Each page" of the novel "is the length of a short story, and scarcely a one passes without some new extravagant delight." Nonetheless, Barnes also criticized Clavell's sometimes clumsy attempt to mix Elizabethan English with modern slang.

Henry Smith, an educator and historian of Japan, took an evenhanded approach. He pointed out where Clavell bent fact and discussed the numerous problems with Lady Mariko being a real person□someone of her stature in 1600 would have been sequestered, not cavorting with a barbarian But historical accuracy, for Smith, was not nearly as important as plausibility. After all, Clavell set out to write an entertaining tale through which Westerners could learn something about Japan in 1600. Smith determines that despite the inaccuracies, Clavell succeeded in contrasting the East and West. However, Smith noted, "[Clavell] is in effect delivering a polemic against the Christian church for instilling in Western man his (in Clavell's view) distorted attitudes to sex, death, and cleanliness "

Terry Teachout focused on Clavell's literary intentions. Teachout quoted Clavell saying that his goal was to "be a bridge between East and West" though writing stories that

entertain and "pass on a little information." Teachout noted that between the incredible success of his novels and the huge viewing of the television miniseries, Clavell succeeded in being a bndge Clavell, said Teachout, "is now among the most widely read authors of the century." As Susan Crosland, using material from an interview with Clavell, notes, Clavell's position as a bridge comes honestly After purging himself of the horror of Changi in *King Rat,* Clavell began an investigation into his captors' history and psychology, discovering that his former enemies shared with him a common humanity.

In Book Two of *Shogun,* a phrase from Edgar Alan Poe's 1849 poem "A Dream within a Dream" appears. The poem recurs amidst the crucial scenes in Osaka castle and on the last page of the novel. These literary references led Burton R. Pollm to observe a great subtlety on the part of Clavell in terms of the novel's structure. Pollin suggested that Clavell masterfully complicated the position of Toranaga as choreographer through the use of highly charged lines from a great writer. Each time the poem is referred to, said Pollin, "we are being informed about a key" to the mystery of the overall strategy of the book Pollin's article is the nearest a critic has come to treating Clavell's novel as serious literature.

Clavell, as many critics admit, wanted to entertain and impart information to his readers. In that he succeeded, but few critics have wanted to treat his work as a serious literary effort. The popularity of the novel has not changed that opinion.

Criticism

- Critical Essay #1
- Critical Essay #2

Critical Essay #1

Hubbell is a graduate student in History at the State University of New York, Stony Brook. In the following essay, he discusses the usefulness of Clavell's insight into the historical problems of the scientific mind and the intricacies of societal adoption of technology.

A list of historical inaccuracies in Clavell's *Shogun* would include the following: Will Adams, the model for Blackthorne, did not actually play such a large role in the formation of the Tokugawa Shogunate. Though Adams did become samurai and an advisor to Tokugawa, it was not until 1603. Soap, a very expensive item in 1600 Japan, would not have been used with such abandon nor on a barbarian. Birthdays were not celebrated, thus making the climatic scene at Lady Ochiba's birthday party implausible. Ishida Mitsunari, Tokugawa's rival, was not as powerful as the fictional Ishido, and he was defeated in October of 1600. His execution was typical for the time, not the gruesome and lingering death in the novel. Lady Mariko was modeled onHosokawa Gracia, whose husband was Tadaoki. Together, they were the most cultivated pair of the time. She was the most famous of all Christian converts, but he was not a brute. High-ranking ladies lived somewhat sequestered lives, and it is not imaginable that she would sleep with a barbarian such as Blackthorne. The Jesuits brought guns and cannons in 1543, not with Adams. In fact, naval battles played a part in the Japanese civil wars of the 1570s (one side even had ironclads with gun accompaniments). With the establishment of the Tokugawa Shogunate, such barbaric practices ceased, and Japan did indeed isolate itself from the world rather than forge ahead with industrialism.

But what do these historical inaccuracies matter? Insight into historical periods and persons are of greater value than details. An understanding of history by a society is crucial to the formation of its future direction. Clavell, who was writing in the 1970s when Americans were getting nervous about a reascendant Japan, provides a work of cross-cultural experience which helps in that formation. Facilitating understanding of self and others is within the purview of the historian, but historians, unlike novelists, are too often uninterested in playing this role.

Simon Schama, a historian of Dutch culture, reflects on this problem in "Visualizing History." There he does not lament the limited knowledge of history held by most people but urges today's historian to be less reclusive; he suggests that historians are to blame for the widespread lack of interest in history. He writes, "if [historians] want history to have real resonance in the public world, they had better start learning how to practice their trade in the noisy bazaar of contemporary culture, in the museum ... in the cyberarchive ... and in the worlds of film and television." Schama also reminds us that history writing, historically, has not always been boring. In the hands of Sir Walter Scott or Thomas Carlyle, history was enjoyable to read. And in the enjoyment of reading history both the past and present are understood.

Indeed, Thomas Carlyle, in his 1829 essay "Sign of the Times," says much the same thing He offers his contemporaries insight into their times not, as the title suggests, to

be a doomsayer but to take stock of where the society is and where it is going. In doing this, he characterizes nineteenth-century Europe as a Mechanical Age where society is mechanic rather than dynamic. For Carlyle, man in a mechanical society believes that only in "Mechanical contrivances did any hope exist for him." Opposed to this is the dynamic society, which focuses on "the divine and spiritual" and refuses to calculate life in terms of "Profit and Loss." Either position alone would be extreme. Carlyle suggests that by understanding the present time and the history behind it, it is possible to form a society in between the dynamic and the mechanic. This problem is not too far from the problem faced by Clavell's Toranaga

Clavell's *Shogun* gives the historian insight into a historical moment. More specifically, Clavell provides a persuasive demonstration of the differences between three mentalities struggling for dominance First, Toranaga continues to channel the brilliance of his nation toward a pursuit of the noble ideals of the samurai code. Father Alvito, also a brilliant mind, exerts his reason and deploys technical schemes for the furtherance of the Church. Blackthorne's mechanistic mind represents the man who will eventually triumph over the other two the rational economic man who pursues the application of the best technique for the ultimate end, profit.

Putting these three minds together in a struggle illuminates a historical problem for the technological historian seeking an explanation for industrialization. Why did industrialization take off in Europe in the seventeenth century, and why was it victorious? The key component to understanding the rise of industrialization is noticing the increasing tendency amongst people to value the exclusively rational mind. For example, Blackthorne repeatedly pulls back from being overwhelmed by a scene or by the confusion of a moment. Faced with the incredible spectacle of Osaka he struggles to force his mind to rationalize what he observes. Blackthorne repeatedly says to himself, "Concentrate. Look for clues." Again and again, Blackthorne is the empirical scientist taking stock of details and gathering information. It is his presence of mind and search for details that always allows him to see the right thing like Toranaga switching with Kin.

Blackthorne developed this mental technique out of his training as a pilot, where alertness and attention to detail could mean life or death. But his ability to adapt this as a technique of survival is a sign of a mechanistic mind. Such a mind is essential to the world of industry, which requires the adaptation of ideas to reality in order to work more efficiently.

Complicating the notion of the mechanical mind is Father Alvito, representative of the Jesuits, who has a mind just as capable as Blackthorne. Jacques Ellul, writing in *The Technological Society,* says that the Jesuit mind was trained to work like Blackthorne's; they had "a precise view of technical possibilities, the will to attain certain ends, application in all areas, and adherence of the whole of society to a conspicuous technical objective." The objective of the Jesuits, however, was dynamic to borrow Carlyle's term not mechanic. The Jesuits aimed to please the Pope and to please God. They were interested in rendering technique and eventually machinery into existence not for the sake of creating the most efficient systems but for the Church.

Toranaga is similar to Father Alvito. He, more than anyone, knows what is technically possible. Yet he is locked into conserving his society's samurai code and stopping its advancement of technology. The samurai were so well-trained that had Toranaga pursued Yabu's plan of making a mechanized army of samurai, he would have had a truly awesome military. However, Toranaga preferred to maintain his dynamic society and bring to fruition the development of the samurai's art.

Clavells novel gives us a means of seeing these three minds interact, demonstrating that the scientific mind is not "natural" but comes into being through a historical process that involved collision with other cultures. First, there are the Jesuits, whose technology and ability was a huge breakthrough in terms of European institutions. The only thing preventing the Jesuits from being a stock trading corporation was its vows. Second, there is the pilot, Blackthorne, who employs his to claim power over a situation. Clavell consistently shows how Blackthorne forces himself to focus on the situation rather than give into fatigue, fear, or overwhelming novelty. Because Blackthorne can do this, he will survive all his crewmembers. Vinck, for one, loses his mind because he had not sufficiently developed his mind□he dies, like a computer dividing by zero, because he cannot compute the loss of Erasmus. The type of mind that Blackthorne exhibits will become the ideal for the Europeans. Lastly, Toranaga could have industrialized Japan and thus joined the colonial race by leaping ahead of Europe but he did not. He saw that the Europeans, for all their technical gadgets and aptitude, were hampered by money. Alternatively, Japan□purged of outside influence□possessed ample opportunity for self-perfection within its very technical samurai code.

The idea that Europe's only contribution to the world was its trove of machines or its obsession with technical thinking is not Clavell's invention. In Sir Thomas More's *Utopia* of 1517, the author presents a perfect society, and these people provide Europe with an ideal societal model. In return, the only thing of value Europe can offer is the printing press. Clavell's *Shogun* has a similar paradigm. The highly advanced civilization of the Japanese views Europe as useless except for its few technological advances. In terms of daily refinement and *culture,* the barbarians, well, stink. But their ships and their weapons□muskets, fortifications, cannon, fire arrows, and soldier formations□must be reckoned with. The historian's problem grows worse, must a society be either dynamic or mechanic? This was Carlyle's question of 1829, and we made much progress with it since.

Clavell's fictionalization of the founding of the Tokugawa Shogunate is not historically accurate, as any glance at a history of Japan will confirm. However, as a piece of historical fiction, Clavell could be ranked with the nineteenth-century novelists whose purpose was to bring the past alive. For the historian, this is an effort that, like the guns of the barbarians, must be considered and used. The historical issues so crucial to the age of European imperialism, and the geometry of war as well as the decline of religion and the philosophy surrounding technology, are all present in *Shogun.* Clavell's historical accuracy lies there□discerning the issues of a particular epoch.

Clavell's novel must also be seen in the context of the mid-1970s. Without trying to call attention to itself, the success of the Japanese economy reminds the West that its

industrial dominance is about to be questioned. As in the novel, the East conquers the man from the West and domesticates him quite happily.

Source: Jeremy W Hubbell, in an essay for *Novels for Students,* Gale, 2000.

Critical Essay #2

An American educator and historian, Smith has written widely on Japanese history and was the editor of Learning from "Shogun": Japanese History and Western Fantasy *(1980). In the following essay, Smith relates Clavell's sources and manipulation of Japanese culture and history in Shogun.*

When confronted with an extremely popular modern novel which is based on histoncal themes the first instinct of the historian, naturally enough, is to ascertain the 'historicity' of the work. The models for the major characters in James Clavell's *Shogun* are easy to recognize but Clavell has considerably rearranged and refashioned the events and personalities of the time about which he writes.

These changes can be summarized briefly. The model for Blackthorne, the protagonist of *Shogun* is Will Adams (1564-1620), the circumstances of whose arrival in Japan in April 1600 as pilot of a Dutch ship correspond closely to those of Blackthorne Blackthorne's eventual rise to the position of adviser and retainer of Yoshi Toranaga roughly parallels the career of Adams; a key difference is that Clavell telescopes these events into a single summer, whereas in reality the intimacy of Adams and the historical Tokugawa leyasu grew over a matter of years. Clavell also inflates the heroic stature of the histoncal Adams by having Blackthorne actually save Toranaga's life, by having him introduce effective warfare with guns to Japan (something which had been accomplished several decades before), and above all by having him fall in love with the wife of one of the great feudal lords of Japan.

The depiction of the military struggle for national supremacy in *Shogun* corresponds to historical fact in broad outline, although the intricate subplots of the novel are wholly of Clavell's invention. Toranaga's scheming rival Tshido' is vaguely modelled after the *daimyo* Ishida Mitsunari (1560-1600), who did in fact organize the coalition against leyasu that was defeated at the Battle of Sekigahara in October 1600. The historical Ishida however, was not nearly so powerful as his counterpart in *Shogun,* nor was his execution in 1600 anything like the gruesome punishment meted out to Ishido at the very end of the novel. Similar and even greater liberties have been taken with the other *daimyo* who appear in *Shogun,* for many of whom it is even difficult to locate a specific model.

The model of Blackthorne's lover, the Lady Toda Mariko, is Hosokawa Gracia (1563-1600), whose husband Tadaoki (1563-1645) was one of the most cultivated men of his time and is done somewhat of a historical disservice by being transformed by Clavell into the boorish 'Buntaro.' The historical Gracia was one of the most famous of all the Christian converts in Japan of her era, and is revered to this day as a saint by Japanese Roman Catholics. While she was indeed versed in both Portuguese and Latin, the historical Gracia never served as an interpreter for Ieyasu. Nor did she even meet Will Adams, and she certainly would never have had a love affair with him or any other European seaman.

It is this transformation of a chaste Catholic heroine of the sixteenth century into a modish Madame Butterfly that has tended to shock and sometimes offend the sticklers for historicity. Edwin Reischauer, the distinguished American historian of Japan, has written indignantly that Clavell 'freely distorts historical fact to fit his tale' when he stoops to having such an 'exemplary Christian wife' as Hosokawa Gracia 'pictured without a shread of plausibilty as Blackthorne's great love, Mariko.'

These charges raise some difficult questions. As a novelist, is Clavell not free to transform his characters as he pleases? The author himself has claimed that there were really no exact 'models' for die characters in *Shogun,* simply 'sources of inspiration' drawn from the pages of history. He did, after all, change the names of virtually all the historical characters (one notable exception being Gra-cia's maiden name, Akechi). 'I thought, to be honest,' Clavell has said, 'that I didn't want to be restricted by historical personality.'

The more serious charge against Clavell is that of historical plausibility. Granted that the historical Will Adams never laid eyes on the historical lady Gracia, was that sort of liaison conceivable in Japan of the year 1600? Here the answer would certainly be that it was not. The *daimyo* ladies of sixteenth-century Japan were strictly sequestered and rarely had the chance to meet any men other than immediate family. Nor can one imagine any Japanese woman of good breeding entering the bath so casually with another man□much less a 'barbarian.' The only sort of woman who would have behaved with the sexual candor of Mariko in that era would probably [have] been a prostitute (such as *Shogun's* 'Kiku').

The issue of historical plausibility arises on other occasions in *Shogun.* A number of these relate to details about Japanese customs. The careful historian might insist, for example, that such a rare imported luxury as soap would not have been used to bathe a captured barbarian, or that traditional Japanese never celebrated birthdays (as Lady Ochiba does late in the novel), or that the Japanese did in fact eat meat from time to time (contrary to Mariko's claim of total avoidance). In these and other small ways, *Shogun* will strike the historian as a somewhat flawed depiction of Japanese customs in the year 1600.

Rather more of a problem is the question of Japanese psychology and behavior as represented m *Shogun.* Were samurai in fact given to beheading commoners on a whim and the hacking the corpse into small pieces? Were all Japanese of that era (or any other era, for that matter) so utterly nonchalant about sex and nudity? Would a peasant really have been summarily executed for taking down a rotting pheasant? Was *'karma?* in fact such an everyday word among the Japanese of the year 1600? Although precise answers to these questions are not always easy, it can certainly be said that in every case Clavell exaggerates and often distorts the historical reality.

But the real problem is to understand *why* James Clavell has depicted the Japanese in ways that occasionally strike the historian as implausible. Most of the errors of detail were surely unintentional, and probably reflect nothing more than the inadequacy of the English-language materials on which Clavell, who reads and speaks no Japanese, was

obliged to depend for his information. As a practical matter it must be admitted that such authenticity is probably of little concern to the average Western reader of *Shogun,* who knows almost nothing about Japan or its history.

But the exaggeration of Japanese behaviour, particularly with respect to attitudes about such matters as love, death, food and bathing, is clearly intentional on the part of Clavell, since in every case he strives to contrast the values of the Japanese with those of Blackthorne and his fellow Europeans. Even more importantly, the final message of the author is that, as the confused Blackthorne comes to realize, 'much of what they believe is so much better than our way that it's tempting to become one of them totally'. Whereas Western man, as symbolized by Blackthorne, is depicted as ridden with shame over sex, obsessed with a fear of death, raised on an unwholesome diet of animal flesh and alcohol, and terrified of bathing, the Japanese are represented as paragons in each particular. They view sex and nudity as wholly 'natural', are able to face death with composure and even eagerness, eat only fish (preferably raw), rice, and pickles, and of course are wholly addicted to the pleasures of the hot bath.

It is precisely this rather didactic contrast that gives *Shogun* so much of its interest, both for the average reader and for the historian. Clavell is in effect delivering a sermon on the errant ways of the West. More specifically, he is delivering a polemic against the Christian Church for instilling in Western man his (in Clavell's view) distorted attitudes to sex, death, and cleanliness. This anti-christian tone runs throughout *Shogun* and manifests itself most clearly in the depiction of the European Jesuits. Although no responsible historian would claim that the Jesuits were without their faults as missionaries in Japan, it is hard to find the priests of *Shogun* as anything but caricatures. While the Jesuits did indeed for a time rely on the silk trade to finance their mission, they were scarcely the greedy villains of *Shogun.* ever ready to stoop to crude assassination plots to thwart their rivals.

The preferable religious attitude, *Shogun,* insistently implies, is the meditative and fatalistic posture of the Japanese samurai, as epitomized by the great warrior Toranaga. About halfway through the novel there appears a description of Toranaga in a state of religious reverie; it is an effective summary of the type of mysticism which Clavell seems to advocate:

Now sleep, *Karma* is *karma.* Be thou of Zen. Remember, in tranquility, thai the Absolute, the Tao. is within thee. that no priest or cull or dogma or book or saying or teaching or teacher stands between Thou and It. Know that Good and Evil are irrelevant, I and Thou irrelevant. Inside and Outside irrelevant as are Life and Death. Enter into the Sphere where there is no fear of death nor hope of afterlife, where thou art free of the impediments of life or the needs of salvation... .

While drawing freely on elements of Asian mysticism (*karma,* Zen, Tao), this sermon is a personal statement by James Claveil. A more authentically Japanese Zen Buddhist, for example, would certainly be far more respectful of 'teachers' and the idea of 'salvation'. Yet the Zen spirit is certainly there, and the message is that the West has

much to learn from Asian meditational practice an idea to which many of Clavell's devotees would seem to be hospitable.

In a sense, then, *Shogun* is a story of a spiritual quest. It is of course skillfully woven in among other stories that of a tragic love affair and that of a ruthless power struggle so that the sermon never becomes obtrusive. But it is a very important element in the overall logic of *Shogun.* Even less apparent to the normal reader is the fact that this 'quest' is closely related to James Clavell's personal experiences with the Japanese. As a young soldier in the British army, Clavell was captured by the Japanese in Southeast Asia in 1942 and spent the remainder of the war in Changi prison on Singapore. While his experience understandably left him with many hostile feelings about the Japanese, he grew in time to respect his captors, for much the same reasons that Blackthorne does. In short, the story of Blackthorne's progress, from horror over his captors "barbarity' to respect for their 'civilized' values as even more 'civilized' than those of the West, is also the story of Clavell himself.

It is in order to dramatize this theme of spiritual quest in *Shogun* that the author tends in various ways to idealize, over-simplify, and sometimes distort Japanese values and attitudes. And it is here that the historian can perhaps step in to right the balance a little.

One common form of exaggeration in *Shogun,* is the depiction of values which were historically limited to a certain segment of Japanese society as though they were universally 'Japanese'. Take the simple example of eating meat. Mariko tells Blackthorne that the Japanese never eat meat. This was in fact true at the time only of the Buddhist clergy and the Kyoto aristocracy; the samurai class of which Mariko was a member was in fact fond of meat and frequently consumed wild game. One hastens to add that in terms of contrast with the Europeans, Clavell's depiction is still basically valid. Even samurai ate only wild game, and never raised animals or even fowl for consumption; and never did their level of meat consumption even approach that of the highly carnivorous Europeans of all but the lowest classes.

Another type of simplification which the historian is anxious to pick out is anachronism. An appropriate example here might be that of sexual attitudes, a matter of fundamental East-West contrast as depicted in *Shogun.* Here the problem lies primarily in the characterization of European seamen as squeamish about sexual matters as Blackthorne is. The depiction of Western sexuality in *Shogun* conforms instead to the stereotype known as 'Victorian' although many people now question whether such prudishness was in fact typical of the nineteenth century.

In this process of trying to 'deidealize' the sharp Europe-Japan contrasts that appear in *Shogun,* however, the historian soon learns two important lessons. The first is that we still do not really know the answers to many of these questions about the historical evolution of Japanese attitudes to sex, love, death and other such basic human preoccupations. Nor, for example, do we really know what the Japanese of different classes ate in the sixteenth century. Nor indeed can we give a satisfactory explanation of the historical development and psychological workings of the peculiar samurai practice of ritual disembowelment *(seppuku).* The lament of French historian Lucien

Febvre in 1941, would certainly still apply to Japan: 'We have no history of Love. We have no history of Death. We have no history of Pity or Cruelty, we have no history of Joy.' We cannot, quite simply, answer the hard historical questions about the stuff of which a popular novel like *Shogun* is made.

The second realization provoked by *Shogun* is that no matter how much the historian seeks to qualify the rather stark contrasts between Japan and the West that run through *Shogun,* there remains little doubt that in many ways Japan had by theyear 1600 evolved customs and attitudes that really do seem to have been at sharp variance with those in the West. One has only to peruse some of the fascinating reports of European visitors to Japan to realize this. As the Italian Jesuit Alessandro Valignano (the model for Father Carlo dell'Aqua in *Shogun)* wrote in 1583, 'The things which they do are beyond imagining and it may truly be said that Japan is a world the reverse of Europe'. This metaphor of Japan as a 'topsy-turvy' land, where everything is done in precisely opposite manner, is one that has appeared again and again in Western descriptions of Japan ever since.

Western understanding of Japan has, we may hope, reached the point where we can dismiss the 'topsy-turvy' argument as Europocentnc nonsense. This is not, however, to deny the reality of general differences between Japan and the West□provided of course that one remains alert to the wide diversity among different classes in Japan and among the many cultures that make up 'the West.'. It is precisely the general differences that make Japan such a fruitful and fascinating object of study for the West; by understanding Japan, we come to understand ourselves. It was the genius of James Clavell to mobilize this learning process as a central theme of *Shogun.* It remains the task of the historian to probe the roots and refine the limits of Blackthorne's lessons.

Source: Henry Smith, "Reading James Clavell's Shogun," in *History Today,* Vol 31, October, 1981, pp 39-42

Quotes

"Omi began to laugh uproariously. The street was empty now. When his laughter was exhausted, he grasped his sword with both hands and began to hack the body methodically into small pieces." Chapter 1, p. 34.

"In spite of Blackthorne's hatred he had to admire Yabu's courage. Half a dozen times the waves almost engulfed him. Twice Rodrigues was lost but each time Yabu dragged him back, and held his head out of the grasping sea, long after Blackthorne knew that he himself would have given up." Chapter 9, p. 175.

"One thing is certain: the barbarian will never leave. Neither alive nor dead. He is part of the realm forever." Chapter 13, p. 210.

"The position of the Church here is, regrettably, so intermixed with politics and with the silk trade, that everything touches the safety of the Church. And while I live, by my hope of salvation, no one will jeopardize the future of the Mother Church here!" Chapter 19, p. 293.

"He watched as the figure vanished for a moment, then reappeared, darted into the litter, and jerked the curtains closed. For an instant their eyes met. It was Toranga." Chapter 21, p. 336.

"This Rodrigues pilot is as strange as the English pilot. Why are they so very special? Is it their training? It's unbelievable what they do, neh? How can they sail around the earth and walk the sea as easily as we do the land?" Chapter 27, p. 415.

"A bath did not make him feel clean. Sake did not take away the foulness from his mouth. Incense did not unclog the stench from his nostrils." Chapter 33, p. 538.

"He bowed with just the right amount of carelessness, strode off arrogantly as any samurai of quality would. Then, because he had treated her very correctly, and to repay Omi for the unnecessary coldness in his bow, instead of going back into her house at once, she stayed where she was and looked after the Anjin-san to give him greater honor." Chapter 41, p. 677.

"Like the Taiko and Goroda before him, he had to tolerate the Christian priests because the priests were as inseparable from the Portuguese traders as flies from a horse, holding absolute temporal and spiritual power over their unruly flock. Without the priests there was no trade." Chapter 43, p. 727.

"Nothing was wrong with eta and everything was wrong with eta, those are my crew there, my own people, and these are heathen and foreign and enemy ..." Chapter 48, p. 831.

"It's good to kill sometimes. Very good. Sometimes it's very special and then it's better than a lusting woman." Chapter 56, p. 982.

"When Blackthorne regained consciousness, he knew that Mariko was dead, and he knew how she had died and why she had died. He was lying on futons. Grays guarding him a raftered ceiling overhead, dazzling sunshine hurting him, the silence weird. A doctor was studying him. The first of his great fears left him. I can see." Chapter 58, p. 1032.

"Through the fog in his head Blackthorne heard Ferriera say it again and laugh louder, and add something about an accident and the Hand of God and your ship's burned to her spine, so you'll never harm my ship now, though you're still heretic and enemy, and still a threat to the Faith." Chapter 59, p. 1069.

"That year, at dawn on the twenty-first day of the tenth month, the Month without Gods, the main armies clashed. It was in the mountains near Sekigahara, astride the North Road, the weather foul—fog then sleet. By late afternoon Toranga had won the battle and the slaughter began. Forty thousand heads were taken." Chapter 61, p. 1152.

Adaptations

Shogun, produced by Shogun Productions, appeared in 1980 as a television adaptation of twelve hours and five parts. The NBC-sponsored film was made in Japan for $22 million. Eric Bercovci and Clavell wrote the script. Orson Welles narrated and Jerry London directed Richard Chamberlain as the Pilot, Toshiro Mi-fune as classic an actor in Japan as John Wayne or Clint Eastwood in America as Toranaga, and Yoko Shimada as Lady Mariko. Clavell was also paid one million to be executive producer. It is estimated that 130 million viewers watched the five parts when they aired. One of the most surprising features of the film was the lack of subtitles during the first part of the series. This feature forced viewers into the position of Blackthorne until he had learned Japanese. In 1981, a 2.5-hour movie was cut from the longer series.

In 1989, *Shogun* provided enough material for Infocom to make a computerized adventure game. While the characterization and graphics of the product were rated highly, as an adventure game it was not received very well.

In 1990, with investment from Clavell, the novel was adapted to the stage under the direction of Michael Smuin. "James Clavell's Shogun, the Musical," with lyrics and script by John Driver, bends the novel's around Shakespeare's *King Lear.* Instead of a struggle for power, Taiko divided his realm between rivals. The play was unsuccessful both commercially and critically.

Topics for Further Study

Under the Tokugawa Shogunate, the Japanese rejected the attempt to modernize samurai techniques with guns and continued to fight with swords. During World War JJ, the Japanese proved they could fight very well with guns. After the war, the Japanese established a constitutional government, which prohibited them from having offensive military capabilities. What is the role of technology in war? What is the current attitude in Japan towards the use of the military and sophisticated weapons systems?

Research the Tea Ceremony and the art of flower arranging in Japanese culture. How do these two arts function in Clavell's novel and why is Buntaro's mastery of them so important?

Clavell is an advocate of Objectivism. What is this theory of social relations? Does *Shogun* support this way of viewing society or not? How does the samurai code challenge Objectivism?

The Japanese in 1600 were intolerant of other nations and ethnicities; they preferred to exist in isolation from the world. Is it possible to behave this way today? What economic and technological developments have affected a culture's ability to remain isolated? Give specific examples.

Free trade, without religious or governmental interference, is championed in the novel. What do you think Clavell would say about debates over U.S. trade with China and the protests against the World Trade Organization in early 2000?

Compare and Contrast

1600: Europeans rarely, if ever, take baths, thinking that it leads to illness. The Japanese, on the other hand, bathe often and prize cleanliness

Today: It is normal in all industrial nations for people to bathe often. Body odor and dirtiness are disapproved of by most people.

1600: Japan is a wealthy nation with a vast supply of silver and other commodities. Due to political strains, it cannot trade with China directly. Europe, except for the inflationary economy in Spain, is doing everything it can to increase its trade and gain wealth.

Today: Japan (despite a recession in the early 1990s), Europe, and the United States are the most powerful economies in the world. They meet on a regular basis to iron out trade issues for their mutual prosperity.

1600: Technology, in the form of weapons, printing, and navigation, are dynamic forces facilitating change in society. Governments are still capable of allowing technology to thrive or be stifled. European governments, who are competing among themselves, take advantage of any technological edge they can. The Japanese decide to reject the onslaught of new technologies.

Today: Japan is one of the leading producers and users of information technologies. Both in Japan and in the West, technology has become a necessary component of economic vitality.

What Do I Read Next?

The challenges of adapting Clavell's novel to film are documented in a 1980 book, *The Making of James Clavell's 'Shogun.'* The book furthers understanding of the novel by explaining the decisions made during filming.

Henry Smith edited a book in 1980, which helps clarify the relation of the novel to the understanding of Japanese history *Learning from 'Shogun': Japanese History and Western Fantasy,* shows how Clavell unmasks the myths that the West has of Japan and clarifies the history Clavell fictionalizes.

King Rat (1962) is based on Clavell's experiences in the death camp Changi. The story records one day in the life of an American prisoner of war, Peter Marlowe.

In 1963, an increasingly successful Clavell returned to his boyhood haunts in Hong Kong to research his next book. Published in 1966, *Tai-Pan* tells the tale of Hong Kong's strange establishment as one of the most successful centers of trade in the world through the fictional character Dirk Struan's attempt to build a trading dynasty. An apparently poor booty of the Opium Wars for the British, Hong Kong blossomed almost immediately after its founding in 1841 to profit from a third of all imports into China.

Published in 1993, *Gai-Jin* is Clavell's story of Japan in 1862, when it came out of isolation. The novel picks up where *Tai-Pan* leaves off. In this novel, a descendant of *Shogun's* Toranaga reviews the history of 1600 for clues on how to deal with foreigners, the establishment of Hong Kong, and trade in the 1860s.

Gina Macdonald's *James Clavell: A Critical Companion* (1988) provides a guide to Clavell's novels. Macdonald gives an in-depth biography and places Clavell within the literary tradition of adventure waters like Daniel Defoe and Robert Louis Stevenson. She then devotes a chapter to each of Clavell's novels

First published in 1719, Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* follows its hero as he confronts other cultures and uses his technical abilities in ways remarkably similar to John Blackthorne.

The Japanese noh play has been warmly embraced in the West, with such notable writers as William Butler Yeats and Bertolt Brecht writing their own. This form of drama began in the fourteenth century with the family of Kanzea. Nobuko Albery has fictionalized the struggle to establish one of Japan's most cherished art forms in her 1986 novel *The House Of Kanzea. Saga of Fourteenth Century Japan.*

Clavell's Toranaga is based on Tokugawa leyasu, whose final victory in 1600 established the Tokugawa Shogunate as ruler of Japan for 250 years. In 1988, Conrad Totman published a biography of this historical figure, *Tokugawa leyasu: Shogun.* Although written by a Westerner, the work is an honest treatment of one of the great leaders in Japanese history.

James A. Michener, an admitted fan of Clavell, wrote several novels about Japan. One of them, *Sayonara* (1990), tells the story of Major Lloyd Gruver, who is stationed in Japan during WWII. Graver falls in love with a Japanese woman and encounters great difficulty as a result.

Key Questions

Under the Tokugawa Shogunate, the Japanese rejected the attempt to modernize samurai techniques with guns and continued to fight with swords. During World War II, the Japanese proved they could fight very well with guns. After the war, the Japanese established a constitutional government, which prohibited them from having offensive military capabilities.

1. What is the role of technology in war? What is the current attitude in Japan towards the use of the military and sophisticated weapons systems?

2. Research the Tea Ceremony and the art of flower arranging in Japanese culture. How do these two arts function in Clavell's novel and why is Buntaro's mastery of them so important?

3. Clavell is an advocate of Objectivism. What is this theory of social relations? Does Shogun support this way of viewing society or not? How does the samurai code challenge Objectivism?

4. The Japanese in 1600 were intolerant of other nations and ethnicities; they preferred to exist in isolation from the world. Is it possible to behave this way today? What economic and technological developments have affected a culture's ability to remain isolated? Give specific examples.

5. Free trade, without religious or governmental interference, is championed in the novel. What do you think Clavell would say about debates over United States trade with China and the protests against the World Trade Organization in early 2000?

Topics for Discussion

Describe Blackthorne's personality. What is it about his personality that brings him to Japan and that makes him able to adapt to the Japanese way of life?

How does Blackthorne come to meet Mariko? What is it that keeps the two close together for a great deal of time? How does their relationship change over the course of time? Why?

Who is Toranga? What is his role in the government of the region? How does he come to be in this role? What is his ultimate goal and how does he achieve it?

Who is Yaemon? Ochiba? What are their roles in the government of the region? How do these two come to be involved in the lives of Blackthorne?

Describe the role of the priests, the church and the traders in the lives of the people of Japan. How does this complex situation come to impact Blackthorne? What is it about Blackthorne that makes him valuable to the people of Japan? What is it about him that makes him a threat?

Who is Omi? Yabu? What is their relationship? Compare the lives and attitudes of the two men. What is the fate of each? What does Yabu say about Omi's final actions toward him?

What do you think happened to Blackthorne after the end of this book? Support your opinion with material from the book.

Literary Precedents

Historical fiction became popular in the early nineteenth century when Sir Walter Scott wrote Waverly, in 1814. Scott's novel attempts to interest readers in history by showing how historical events affect private lives and individuals. Another great work of this genre is Leo Tolstoy's War and Peace, which was written in the mid-nineteenth century about Russian experiences in the war with Napoleon. First published in 1719, Daniel Defoe's Robinson Crusoe follows its hero as he confronts other cultures and uses his technical abilities in ways remarkably similar to John Blackthorne.

Clavell's Toranaga is based on Tokugawa leyasu, whose final victory in 1600 established the Tokugawa Shogunate as ruler of Japan for 250 years. In 1988, Conrad Totman published a biography of this historical figure, Tokugawa leyasu: Shogun. Although written by a Westerner, the work is considered an honest treatment of one of the great leaders in Japanese history.

Further Study

Alden, Daunl, *The Making of an Enterprise: The Society of Jesus in Portugal, ItsEmpire, andBeyond. 1540-1750,* Stanford University Press, 1996

Daunl Alden's *The Making of an Enterprise* tells how the Jesuits were instrumental in the consolidation of the Portuguese Empire First for Portugal and then for the Spanish, the Jesuits perfected the technique of colonial exploitation to the benefit of the investors and the Church

Rand, Ayn, *Atlas Shrugged,* Plume, 1999

Clavell believed in the philosophy of Objectivism This philosophy was codified by Ayn Rand in *Atlas Shrugged,* originally published in 1957, as a theory holding that all individuals operate out of self-mter-est This theory is explicated m the story of Dagny Taggart's encounter with a libertarian group seeking an end to government regulation

Roberson, John R, *Japan Meets the World' The Birth of a Superpower,* Millbrook Press, 1998.

Roberson details the Japan's interaction with the world from the arrival of the Portuguese in 1543 to the Nagano Olympic Games Roberson focuses on the internal politics of those 400 years as Japan made decisions about how to deal with the rest of the world

Sun Tzu, *The Art of War,* edited by James Clavell and translated by Thomas Cleary, Delcorte Press, 1983.

Sun Tzu's 2,000-year-old classic contains the philosophy of the warrior, such as "To win without fighting is best" Although written for the Chinese warrior, Sun Tzu's book has been used by warriors of all nations and has recently found a readership amongst businessmen.

Tames, Richard, *Servant of the Shogun. Being the True Story of William Adams, Pilot and Samurai, the First Englishman in Japan,* St. Martin's Press, 1987

Tames's biography of William Adams gives the full story of the English pilot who shipwrecked off the coast of Japan in 1600. Adams eventually became a samurai and married a Japanese woman Although he went on a few trading expeditions, he lived out his life as advisor to the Tokugawa Shogun until he died in 1620

Tracy, James D , *The Political Economy of Merchant Empires: State Power and World Trade, 1350-1750,* Cambridge University Press, 1991

Tracy presents an in-depth analysis of the role played by merchants and their shipping expeditions in early modern state formations in Europe

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David Galens

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Sara Constantakis, Elizabeth A. Cranston, Kristen A. Dorsch, Anne Marie Hacht, Madeline S. Harris, Arlene Johnson, Michelle Kazensky, Ira Mark Milne, Polly Rapp, Pam Revitzer, Mary Ruby, Kathy Sauer, Jennifer Smith, Daniel Toronto, Carol Ullmann

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Product Design
Michelle DiMercurio, Pamela A. E. Galbreath, Michael Logusz

Manufacturing
Stacy Melson

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Introduction

Purpose of the Book

The purpose of Novels for Students (NfS) is to provide readers with a guide to understanding, enjoying, and studying novels by giving them easy access to information about the work. Part of Gale's□For Students□ Literature line, NfS is specifically designed to meet the curricular needs of high school and undergraduate college students and their teachers, as well as the interests of general readers and researchers considering specific novels. While each volume contains entries on □classic□ novels

frequently studied in classrooms, there are also entries containing hard-to-find information on contemporary novels, including works by multicultural, international, and women novelists.

The information covered in each entry includes an introduction to the novel and the novel's author; a plot summary, to help readers unravel and understand the events in a novel; descriptions of important characters, including explanation of a given character's role in the novel as well as discussion about that character's relationship to other characters in the novel; analysis of important themes in the novel; and an explanation of important literary techniques and movements as they are demonstrated in the novel.

In addition to this material, which helps the readers analyze the novel itself, students are also provided with important information on the literary and historical background informing each work. This includes a historical context essay, a box comparing the time or place the novel was written to modern Western culture, a critical overview essay, and excerpts from critical essays on the novel. A unique feature of NfS is a specially commissioned critical essay on each novel, targeted toward the student reader.

To further aid the student in studying and enjoying each novel, information on media adaptations is provided, as well as reading suggestions for works of fiction and nonfiction on similar themes and topics. Classroom aids include ideas for research papers and lists of critical sources that provide additional material on the novel.

Selection Criteria

The titles for each volume of NfS were selected by surveying numerous sources on teaching literature and analyzing course curricula for various school districts. Some of the sources surveyed included: literature anthologies; Reading Lists for College-Bound Students: The Books Most Recommended by America's Top Colleges; textbooks on teaching the novel; a College Board survey of novels commonly studied in high schools; a National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) survey of novels commonly studied in high schools; the NCTE's Teaching Literature in High School: The Novel;and the Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA) list of best books for young adults of the past twenty-five years. Input was also solicited from our advisory board, as well as educators from various areas. From these discussions, it was determined that each volume should have a mix of □classic□ novels (those works commonly taught in literature classes) and contemporary novels for which information is often hard to find. Because of the interest in expanding the canon of literature, an emphasis was also placed on including works by international, multicultural, and women authors. Our advisory board members□educational professionals□ helped pare down the list for each volume. If a work was not selected for the present volume, it was often noted as a possibility for a future volume. As always, the editor welcomes suggestions for titles to be included in future volumes.

How Each Entry Is Organized

Each entry, or chapter, in NfS focuses on one novel. Each entry heading lists the full name of the novel, the author's name, and the date of the novel's publication. The following elements are contained in each entry:

- Introduction: a brief overview of the novel which provides information about its first appearance, its literary standing, any controversies surrounding the work, and major conflicts or themes within the work.
- Author Biography: this section includes basic facts about the author's life, and focuses on events and times in the author's life that inspired the novel in question.
- Plot Summary: a factual description of the major events in the novel. Lengthy summaries are broken down with subheads.
- Characters: an alphabetical listing of major characters in the novel. Each character name is followed by a brief to an extensive description of the character's role in the novel, as well as discussion of the character's actions, relationships, and possible motivation. Characters are listed alphabetically by last name. If a character is unnamed□for instance, the narrator in Invisible Man-the character is listed as □The Narrator□ and alphabetized as □Narrator.□ If a character's first name is the only one given, the name will appear alphabetically by that name. □ Variant names are also included for each character. Thus, the full name □Jean Louise Finch□ would head the listing for the narrator of To Kill a Mockingbird, but listed in a separate cross-reference would be the nickname □Scout Finch.□
- Themes: a thorough overview of how the major topics, themes, and issues are addressed within the novel. Each theme discussed appears in a separate subhead, and is easily accessed through the boldface entries in the Subject/Theme Index.
- Style: this section addresses important style elements of the novel, such as setting, point of view, and narration; important literary devices used, such as imagery, foreshadowing, symbolism; and, if applicable, genres to which the work might have belonged, such as Gothicism or Romanticism. Literary terms are explained within the entry, but can also be found in the Glossary.
- Historical Context: This section outlines the social, political, and cultural climate in which the author lived and the novel was created. This section may include descriptions of related historical events, pertinent aspects of daily life in the culture, and the artistic and literary sensibilities of the time in which the work was written. If the novel is a historical work, information regarding the time in which the novel is set is also included. Each section is broken down with helpful subheads.
- Critical Overview: this section provides background on the critical reputation of the novel, including bannings or any other public controversies surrounding the work. For older works, this section includes a history of how the novel was first received and how perceptions of it may have changed over the years; for more recent novels, direct quotes from early reviews may also be included.
- Criticism: an essay commissioned by NfS which specifically deals with the novel and is written specifically for the student audience, as well as excerpts from previously published criticism on the work (if available).

- Sources: an alphabetical list of critical material quoted in the entry, with full bibliographical information.
- Further Reading: an alphabetical list of other critical sources which may prove useful for the student. Includes full bibliographical information and a brief annotation.

In addition, each entry contains the following highlighted sections, set apart from the main text as sidebars:

- Media Adaptations: a list of important film and television adaptations of the novel, including source information. The list also includes stage adaptations, audio recordings, musical adaptations, etc.
- Topics for Further Study: a list of potential study questions or research topics dealing with the novel. This section includes questions related to other disciplines the student may be studying, such as American history, world history, science, math, government, business, geography, economics, psychology, etc.
- Compare and Contrast Box: an □at-a-glance□ comparison of the cultural and historical differences between the author's time and culture and late twentieth century/early twenty-first century Western culture. This box includes pertinent parallels between the major scientific, political, and cultural movements of the time or place the novel was written, the time or place the novel was set (if a historical work), and modern Western culture. Works written after 1990 may not have this box.
- What Do I Read Next?: a list of works that might complement the featured novel or serve as a contrast to it. This includes works by the same author and others, works of fiction and nonfiction, and works from various genres, cultures, and eras.

Other Features

NfS includes □The Informed Dialogue: Interacting with Literature,□ a foreword by Anne Devereaux Jordan, Senior Editor for Teaching and Learning Literature (TALL), and a founder of the Children's Literature Association. This essay provides an enlightening look at how readers interact with literature and how Novels for Students can help teachers show students how to enrich their own reading experiences.

A Cumulative Author/Title Index lists the authors and titles covered in each volume of the NfS series.

A Cumulative Nationality/Ethnicity Index breaks down the authors and titles covered in each volume of the NfS series by nationality and ethnicity.

A Subject/Theme Index, specific to each volume, provides easy reference for users who may be studying a particular subject or theme rather than a single work. Significant subjects from events to broad themes are included, and the entries pointing to the specific theme discussions in each entry are indicated in boldface.

Each entry has several illustrations, including photos of the author, stills from film adaptations (if available), maps, and/or photos of key historical events.

Citing Novels for Students

When writing papers, students who quote directly from any volume of Novels for Students may use the following general forms. These examples are based on MLA style; teachers may request that students adhere to a different style, so the following examples may be adapted as needed. When citing text from NfS that is not attributed to a particular author (i.e., the Themes, Style, Historical Context sections, etc.), the following format should be used in the bibliography section:

□Night.□ Novels for Students. Ed. Marie Rose Napierkowski. Vol. 4. Detroit: Gale, 1998. 234-35.

When quoting the specially commissioned essay from NfS (usually the first piece under the □Criticism□ subhead), the following format should be used:

Miller, Tyrus. Critical Essay on □Winesburg, Ohio.□ Novels for Students. Ed. Marie Rose Napierkowski. Vol. 4. Detroit: Gale, 1998. 335-39.

When quoting a journal or newspaper essay that is reprinted in a volume of NfS, the following form may be used:

Malak, Amin. □Margaret Atwood's □The Handmaid's Tale and the Dystopian Tradition,□ Canadian Literature No. 112 (Spring, 1987), 9-16; excerpted and reprinted in Novels for Students, Vol. 4, ed. Marie Rose Napierkowski (Detroit: Gale, 1998), pp. 133-36.

When quoting material reprinted from a book that appears in a volume of NfS, the following form may be used:

Adams, Timothy Dow. □Richard Wright: □Wearing the Mask,□ in Telling Lies in Modern American Autobiography (University of North Carolina Press, 1990), 69-83; excerpted and reprinted in Novels for Students, Vol. 1, ed. Diane Telgen (Detroit: Gale, 1997), pp. 59-61.

We Welcome Your Suggestions

The editor of Novels for Students welcomes your comments and ideas. Readers who wish to suggest novels to appear in future volumes, or who have other suggestions, are cordially invited to contact the editor. You may contact the editor via email at: ForStudentsEditors@gale.com. Or write to the editor at:

Editor, Novels for Students
Gale Group
27500 Drake Road
Farmington Hills, MI 48331-3535