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Picasso's Paintings as Allusions: A Comparative Study of Abe Kōbō's *The Ruined Map* and Paul Auster's *Ghosts*

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I. Introduction

Paul Auster (1947–), an American postmodern writer, wrote *The New York Trilogy* (1987): *City of Glass* (1985), *Ghosts* (1986), and *The Locked Room* (1986) under the strong influence of French contemporary philosophy and American Renaissance literature. Hence his *Ghosts* tends to be viewed in relation to postmodernism or Nathaniel Hawthorne (1804–1864).¹ Therefore, the relationship between *Ghosts* and non-Western literature has not been argued. However, this paper takes a different approach toward *Ghosts*. The purpose of this paper is to argue the relationship between *Ghosts* by Auster and *The Ruined Map* (Moetsukita Chizu, 燃えつきた地図, 1967) by Abe Kōbō (安部公房, 1924–1993), a Japanese avant-garde novelist, through the medium of paintings by Pablo Picasso (1881–1973). The significance of this comparative study is that the influence of Japanese literature on American literature is argued, since comparative literature studies in Japan have a tendency to argue Western literature's influence on Japanese literature. In addition, I also write of the relationship between existentialism in Abe's *The Ruined Map* and postmodernism in Auster's *Ghosts*. Hence, contemporary literature but also latter 20th-century philosophy, such as existentialism and post-structuralism.

The similarity between Abe and Auster has been pointed out in previous studies: Patricia Merivale and Susan Elizabeth Sweeny indicated that Abe and Auster similarly described missing persons in a manner like unto Hawthorne's

1. For example, Alison Russel wrote, "Auster's novels also deconstruct logocentrism, a primary subject of Jacques Derrida's subversions. Logocentrism, the term applied to uses and theories of language grounded in the metaphysics of presence, is the 'crime' that Auster investigates in *The New York Trilogy*" (98).

Wakefield (1835) (18). Also, according to Merivale, both of Abe and Auster have written “postmodernized” detective stories reminiscent of “The Man of the Crowd” (1840) by Edgar Allan Poe (1804–1849) (107). Hence, in America, novels by Abe and Auster have been regarded as postmodern versions of Hawthorne and Poe’s works, but set in cities, which Abe and Auster describe urban cities.

From a Japanese perspective, Tatsumi Takayuki (巽孝之), a prominent scholar of American literature in Japan, pointed out that Auster’s literature shares some specific elements with Abe’s, as well as arguing that Auster was influenced by Poe, Hawthorne, and Franz Kafka (1883–1924) (195). Umezu Akihito (梅津彰人) also noted that both Abe and Auster showed concern about problems of identity and relationships with others through their works (155).

Despite these connections, little attention has been given to the fact that Auster himself said that he read Abe Kōbō’s *The Woman in the Dunes* (*Suna no Onna*, 砂の女, 1962) and *The Ruined Map* in a discussion with Shibata Motoyuki (柴田元幸, 1954–), who translated Auster’s works into Japanese (Auster and Shibata 9). In fact, there are many similarities between Abe’s and Auster’s writings, especially in relation to the so-called “anti-detective novel” discussed by Stefano Tani.² Previous researchers have pointed out such resemblance, but did not clarify their influence on each other. In order to elucidate these mutual influences, this comparative study focuses on yet another possible connection that we can discover from reading *Ghosts*, if Abe’s *The Ruined Map* influenced Auster’s *Ghosts*. These two works often made allusions to paintings by Picasso. With this as a clue, I will discuss and compare the characteristics of the two works. The aim of this study is to map the relationship between them through the medium of paintings by Picasso.

II. The “Picasso lithograph” in Abe Kōbō’s *The Ruined Map*

This part focuses on the “Picasso lithograph” (Picasso no sekihanga, ピカソの石版画), described in Abe’s *The Ruined Map*, and the next chapter discusses how Auster wrote *Ghosts* under the influence of the “Picasso lithograph” in Abe’s *The Ruined Map*. In *The Ruined Map*, a detective searching for a missing

2. According to Tani, postmodern anti-detective novels feature the absence of a center, a unifying system and a solution (39–40).

person in an urban space paradoxically loses his identity in the middle of his investigation.³ Allusions to painting are used in this text, and the “Picasso lithograph” is found in a room of a client who asked the detective to search for her missing husband:

The first noticeable thing on entering the living room was a cylindrical kerosene stove with its flicking circle of blue flame. Then, in the middle of the room was a round table, with vinyl throw, printed with a lacy design, that reached all the way to the floor. Bookcases occupied half of the left wall and the rest was taken up by a window. On the facing wall was a Picasso lithograph, perhaps clipped out of some magazine, depicting a girl looking up and to the left. The fact that it had been framed indicated it had a definite importance for the owner. Next to it was a cutaway sketch of an engine, Formula I, three times the size of the Picasso. (10)

居間に入ってすぐのところに、円筒型のストーブが、青い焔の輪をゆらめかせている。中央に、円テーブル。レース模様をプリントした、ビニール製のカバーが、長く床までとどいている。左の壁の半分を、本棚が、あとの半分を、窓が占めている。正面の壁には、多分雑誌から切り取ったのだろう、左と上を同時に見ている女を描いた、ピカソの石版画。一応額縁におさまっているところをみれば、それなりの迎えられ方をしているにちがいない。しかし、その隣には、ピカソの額の三倍もある、フォーミュラ・1の透視図面。(Abe Kōbō *Zenshū* 119)

The above passage refers explicitly to “a Picasso lithograph, perhaps clipped out of some magazine, depicting a girl looking up and to the left”;⁴ however, in previous studies, little attention has been given to this “Picasso lithograph” with the exception of Watanabe Hiroshi (渡辺広士), who pointed out a resemblance between the interior of the house and Picasso’s paintings (152). Incidentally, Picasso depicted “a girl looking up and to the left,”⁵ but such depictions mainly featured on canvases or copperplate prints in drafts for *The Weeping Woman* (1937) in the 1930s. It was in the latter half of the 1940s

3. Richard Swope categorizes Auster’s *City of Glass* within the “urban Wakefield” (218). Abe’s *The Ruined Map* also depicted the “urban Wakefield,” as someone who disappeared in the urban space, like the protagonist from Hawthorne’s *Wakefield*.

4. “多分雑誌から切り取ったのだろう、左と上を同時に見ている女を描いた、ピカソの石版画。”

5. “左と上を同時に見ている女を描いた、ピカソの石版画。”

that he started producing lithographs. Hence, the “Picasso lithograph” in *The Ruined Map* is an imaginary picture existing only in Abe’s work.

Before we discuss the significance of the “Picasso lithograph” in *The Ruined Map*, it will be useful to be aware of the relationship between Abe’s works and Picasso. Tomoda Yoshiyuki (友田義行) made several important statements on this. In his study, he noted that the object of the bull featured in *The Face of Another* (Tanin no Kao, 他人の顔, 1966), a movie with screenplay by Abe Kōbō and directed by Teshigahara Hiroshi (勅使河原宏, 1927–2001), was derived from the bull in Picasso’s *Guernica* (1937) (Tomoda 239–40). In a discussion on *The Ruined Map*, Abe said that the cinematic techniques in the novel were imported from the movie (Sasaki, Teshigahara, and Abe 315). What these statements make clear is that cinematic technique, which uses Picasso’s work in the movie *The Face of Another* is imported into the novel *The Ruined Map*.⁶

On the other hand, Franz Kafka (1883–1924) also described a picture of a lady clipped from a magazine in the opening of *Metamorphosis* (*Die Verwandlung*, 1915):

What has happened to me? he thought. It was no dream. His room, a regular human bedroom, only rather too small, lay quiet between the four familiar walls. Above the table on which a collection of cloth samples was unpacked and spread out — Samsa was a commercial traveler — hung the picture which he had recently cut out of an illustrated magazine and put into a pretty gilt frame. It showed a lady, with a fur cap on and a fur stole, sitting upright and holding out to the spectator a huge fur muff into which the whole of her forearm had vanished! (89)

Gregor Samsa, the protagonist of *Metamorphosis*, “hung the picture which he had recently cut out of an illustrated magazine and put into a pretty gilt frame”⁷ featuring a lady in fur clothes.⁸ It may be possible to argue this picture and its

6. *The Ruined Map* was adapted into a movie by Teshigahara Hiroshi in June 1968. In this movie, there is no “Picasso lithograph” in the room but “a cutaway sketch of an engine, Formula I,” which is depicted in the preceding quotation of *The Ruined Map*. Abe Machi, who was an artist and Abe’s wife, painted “a cutaway sketch of an engine, Formula I,” which was put on a wall of her atelier (N. Abe 117).

7. “絵入り雑誌にあったのを切りとって、こざいかな金箔の額に入れてかけておいた絵” (*Henshin* 5).

8. Many translations of Kafka’s *Metamorphosis* were published in 1950s Japan. For

“aura” in the relationship with Charles-Pierre Baudelaire (1821–1867) or Walter Benjamin (1892–1940), I will begin by arguing the influence of Leopold von Sacher-Masoch (1836–1895) upon Kafka. Kafka depicted this having drawn influence from *Venus in Furs* (*Venus im Pelz*, 1870) by Masoch (Schaffner 194). Discussing Masoch’s influence upon Kafka, Hirano Yoshihiko (平野嘉彦) insisted that this picture was depicted for stimulating sexual desire and deprived of original “aura” because the picture is “cut out of an illustrated magazine” (211).

In the above-noted quotation, Abe also depicted a picture “clipped out of some magazine.” According to Maeda Ai (前田愛, 1931–1987), a Japanese literary critic who discussed the relationship between Japanese literature and urban space in *Text and the City: Essays on Japanese Modernity* (Toshi Kukan no naka no Bungaku, 都市空間のなかの文学, 1982), the room of the “Picasso lithograph” and its “lemon-yellow curtains” (lemon iro no curtain, レモン色のカーテン)⁹ represent the protagonist’s sexual desire toward the missing person’s wife (450).¹⁰ Hence, Abe intentionally repeated Kafka and depicted a picture “clipped out of some magazine,” which represents sexual desire. The central problem of the influence of Kafka on Abe is the relationship between the picture and its missing “aura.” Because a lithograph is made by technological reproducibility, the “Picasso lithograph” in *The Ruined*

example, Takahashi Yoshitaka (高橋義孝, 1913–1995) translated Kafka’s *Metamorphosis* from the publisher Shinchōsha (新潮社) in 1952. From the quotation, we can see that the depiction of the room in *The Ruined Map* by Abe Kōbō resembles that of the Japanese translation of Kafka’s *Metamorphosis*. This means that Abe wrote *The Ruined Map* under the influence of Kafka in Japanese translation.

9. The color of “lemon-yellow” has been regarded as a color of paint in Japanese literature, for instance “Lemon” (lemon, 檸檬, 1925) by Kajii Motojirō (梶井基次郎, 1901–1932). It is characteristic that Abe combined the metaphor of “lemon-yellow” with the existence of residents in urban space.
10. Namigata Tsuyoshi (波瀾剛) researched the relationship between disappearance (Shissou/Jouhatsu, 失踪/蒸発) and urbanization (toshika, 都市化) in 1960s Japan, and wrote that this woman, who lives in an apartment-house (danchi, 団地), depends on an illusion of family within the collapse of the family system (140–41). Cf. Namigata, Tsuyoshi [波瀾剛]. “Abe Kōbō Moetsukita Chizu Ron: Sakuhin nai no Dokusha, Shosetsu no Dokusha, oyobi Doujidai no Dokusha wo megutte” [On Abe Kōbō’s *The Ruined Map*: Regarding Readers in the Work, Readers in the Novel, and Readers in Contemporaries, 安部公房『燃えつきた地図』論—作品内の読者、小説の読者、および同時代の読者をめぐって]. *Bungaku Kenkyu Ronshū Vol. 14* [Collected Essays on Literature 14, 文学研究論集 第14号], 1997, pp. 131–52.

Map and the picture in *Metamorphosis* are similar in that both pictures are a “copy” of the “original” ones. According to “The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility” (*Das Kunstwerk im Zeitalter seiner technischen Reproduzierbarkeit*, 1936) by Walter Benjamin, “what withers in the age of the technological reproducibility of the work of art is the latter’s aura” (104). The picture in *Metamorphosis* lacks its “aura” because it is “cut out of an illustrated magazine,” as stated above.

On the other hand, it is possible to say that “aura” in *The Ruined Map* is paradoxically discovered through metaphors of “picture” and “frame.” In *The Ruined Map*, the word “frame” is used to depict the landscape of urban space:

The view became fainter and fainter, transparent almost to the point of extinction, and only my face emerged like a picture printed from a negative. I had had enough of distinguishing myself. For this human filing cabinet with its endless filing-card apartments was merely the glass frame, each encasing its own family portraits. (7–8)

風景は、ますますはるかに、ほとんど存在しないほど透明になり、ネガから焼きつけられた画像のように、自分の姿だけが浮かび上がる。自分で自分の見分けがつけば、それで沢山なのだ。そっくり同じ人生の整理棚が、何百世帯並んでいようと、いずれ自分の家族たちの肖像画をとりまく、ガラスの額縁にすぎないのだから…… (*Abe Kōbō Zenshū* 117)

But precisely because a picture frame was attached to it, it seemed a landscape, and because I was convinced it was a landscape, it became transparent. If the frame were removed, the mist would be quite ordinary. Insofar as it could not be touched with the hands, it was no different from a wall of concrete in its nontransparency. (126)

だが、額縁がついているからこそ、風景に見え、風景だと思ひ込むから、透明なのではないか。……額縁をはずせば、ただの霧。……手にふれられないというだけで、不透明さの点では、コンクリートの壁も変わらない。…… (*Abe Kōbō Zenshū* 194)

The “landscape” (*fūkei*, 風景) of urban space as the setting for this detective story is not “a priori” but discovered through the metaphor of “picture frame” (*gakubuchi*, 額縁) in these quotations. The problem of “frame” (*parergon*) has

been argued by many philosophers, such as Immanuel Kant (1724–1804) and Jacques Derrida (1930–2004). According to Derrida's *The Truth in Painting* (*La Vérité en Peinture*, 1978), “frame” is “a *parergon*, a hybrid of outside and inside, but a hybrid which is not a mixture or a half-measure, an outside which is called to the inside of the inside in order to constitute it as an inside” (63). Therefore, this shows that Abe and Derrida commonly wrote about “frame” which paradoxically discovers its inside. In addition, Karatani Kojin (柄谷行人, 1941–), one of the most well-known critics in Japan, also wrote that “landscape” is not “a priori” but discovered in modernity (*kindai*, 近代) through a frame like “category” of “understanding” (Kant) or “symbolic forms” (Cassirer) in *Origins of Modern Japanese Literature* (*Nihon Kindai Bungaku no Kigen*, 日本近代文学の起源, 1980) (22). According to Karube Tadashi (苅部直, 1965–) it is an “important essence of urban space” (*toshi no jūyō na seishitsu*, 都市の重要な性質) that invents “transparent” “landscape” in *The Ruined Map* (46–47). In such a “landscape,” there is a “human filing cabinet with its endless filing-card apartments” (*sokkuri onaji jinsei no seiridana*, そっくり同じ人生の整理棚), which emphasizes an exchangeable namelessness of urban residents. Hence, it is possible to say that they are deprived of their “aura” as “singularity” (*tandokusei*, 単独性) in the same way as with the case of technological reproducibility. But the protagonist’s “face emerged like a picture printed from a negative”¹¹ in the “transparent” “landscape” by using the metaphors of “picture” and its “frame.” In this process, he became able to distinguish himself as someone whose singularity is paradoxically discovered. Judging from the above, the “Picasso lithograph, perhaps clipped out of some magazine” represents urban residents whose “aura” as singularity is discovered paradoxically through being put into a “frame.”

In this novel, the metaphor of “picture” is used just before the protagonist goes missing in urban space:

When I considered things, there was absolutely no basis for me to think of myself as being an office worker. It was merely a far-fetched self-portrait. It did not necessarily mean that by deceiving myself, the truth was any different. Was I still incapable of getting a clue about my own name? Suddenly a numbing pain shot from the nape of my neck to my forehead.

11. “ネガから焼きつけられた画像のように、自分の姿だけが浮かび上がる” (*Abe Kōbō Zenshū* 7–8).

The nausea, which I had fortunately forgotten about since I came here, again rose from deep within me. There was no doubt that I had quite forgotten even my name. The only thing left was the consciousness that I was myself. (284)

そもそも、自分を勤め人だと決めてかかっていることからして、考えてみれば、なんの根拠もないことだったのだ。こじつけの自画像にしかすぎなかったのだ。自分をだましたところで、事実までがだまされてくれるとはかぎるまい。……現に、おまえは、肝心の自分の名前でさえ、まだその手掛りもつかめずにいる始末じゃないか！

いきなり、首筋から額にむかって、しびれるような痛みがつきぬける。ここに辿り着いてから、せつかく忘れかけていたむかつきが、再び脇腹の奥からせり上がってくる。たしかにぼくは、名前も忘れてしまったようだ。あるのは、自分が自分であるという自覚だけ。(Abe Kōbō Zenshū 301)

In searching for a missing person, he had memory blackout through an identity crisis and paradoxically became a missing person, too. In this passage, his identity as an “office worker” (tsutomebito, 勤め人) was nothing but “a far-fetched self-portrait” (kojitsuke no jigazō, こじつけの自画像). He forgot his name and thought, “the only thing left was the consciousness that I was myself.”¹² This “myself” (jibun, 自分) was discovered paradoxically through his identity crisis. It will be possible to say that this substance is a nameless existence discovered by “phenomenological reduction” against essence or identity. The “Picasso lithograph” represents such an existential substance with “aura” and “singularity” in urban space. In consequence, from Kafka to Abe, they share common problems related to the “aura” of pictures.

III. *The Weeping Woman in Paul Auster’s Ghosts*

Next, this research will discuss the allusions to paintings in Auster’s works. In *City of Glass*, Auster also describes some paintings. Daniel Quinn, the protagonist of this novel, responded to a telephone call meant for someone else and pretended to be a detective. Abe’s influence upon Auster is expressed in a scene where Quinn went to his client’s house.

12. “あるのは、自分が自分であるという自覚だけ。”

She opened the door for Quinn. As he crossed the threshold and entered the apartment, he could feel himself going blank, as if his brain had suddenly shut off. He had wanted to take in the details of what he was seeing, but the task was somehow beyond him at the moment. The apartment loomed up around him as a kind of blur. He realized that it was large, perhaps five or six rooms, and that it was richly furnished, with numerous art objects, silver ashtrays, and elaborately framed paintings on the walls. (16)

From this passage, we realize that there are “framed paintings on the wall,” which are associated with Abe’s “Picasso lithograph” in that they were framed. In contrast to a description of the room in *The Ruined Map* quoted above, we find that Auster depicted the room arrangement or furniture less than Abe. In an interview with Joseph Mallia in 1987, Auster talked about detailed description by an author who makes us think of Abe Kōbō:

There’s a way in which a writer can do too much, overwhelming the reader with so many details that he no longer has any air to breathe. Think of a typical passage in a novel. A character walks into a room. As a writer, how much of that room do you want to talk about? The possibilities are infinite. You can give the color of the curtains, the wallpaper pattern, the objects on the coffee table, the reflection of the light in the mirror. But how much of this is really necessary? Is the novelist’s job simply to reproduce physical sensations for their own sake? When I write, the story is always uppermost in my mind, and I feel that everything must be sacrificed to it. All the elegant passages, all the curious details, all the so-called beautiful writing—if they are not truly relevant to what I am trying to say, then they have to go. (10–11)

In this part of the interview, Auster says that “a writer” can write too many details of a room, such as “the color of the curtains” or “the wallpaper pattern.” His reference to “the color of the curtains” might allude to the image of “lemon-yellow curtains” in Abe’s *The Ruined Map*. Hence, Auster was possibly referring to Abe. I will give an example to show acceptance of *The Ruined Map* in the United States: For example, William Joseph Currie argued that Abe wrote so many details that *The Ruined Map* became stifling (176). Auster shortened such details and emphasized the importance of storytelling, but he

did not abbreviate “framed paintings on the wall” and depicted it in *City of Glass* with reference to *The Ruined Map*.

Having clarified the influence of Abe’s *The Ruined Map* on Auster’s *City of Glass*, I will now explain the allusions to paintings in Auster’s *Ghosts*. It was pointed out in this chapter that Auster described the scene at a client’s house in *City of Glass* and used allusions of paintings in *Ghosts*. These allusions were derived from the “Picasso lithograph” in Abe’s *The Ruined Map*. This “Picasso lithograph” was repeated with some differences in *Ghosts*.

The setting of *Ghosts* is New York in 1947. In this novel, Blue, a detective and a protagonist of the story, was asked to oversee Black by White. It was said that *Ghosts* was influenced by Nathaniel Hawthorne’s *Wakefield* (Lewis 55). Blue, who finally disappeared, leaving his girlfriend, “the future Mrs. Blue,” was compared to the case of *Wakefield*.

The most important point of *Ghosts* is that every woman character cried in this novel. For instance, during an investigation into Black, Blue saw a woman who cried at mealtime with Black (183–84). And “a blowsy tart named Violet” often began to “cry” (190).

Let us examine the meaning of weeping of “the future Mrs. Blue” in more detail. Nathaniel Hawthorne wrote a scene in which a protagonist, who previously disappeared, accidentally met his wife in the crowd of London in *Wakefield* (137). Auster also depicts a scene in which the disappeared Blue happened to meet “the future Mrs. Blue” again in Manhattan:

It is as though some spectre has suddenly materialized in front of her, and the ex-future Mrs. Blue gives out a little gasp, even before she sees who the spectre is. Blue speaks her name, in a voice that seems strange to him, and she stops dead in her tracks. Her face registers the shock of seeing Blue—and then, rapidly, her expression turns to one of anger. (195)

In this scene, she was walking with a man Blue had never seen before. She saw Blue as a “spectre,” and then she left while “weeping” (196). The most important point of *Ghosts* is that every woman character cried in this novel.¹³ This is a specific feature of *Ghosts*, which is not found in the other two works

13. In the same period, Anne Vincent Buffault’s *The History of Tears (Histoire des Larmes, 1986)* argued on representations of tears in French culture; such as French literature and diaries.

of *The New York Trilogy: City of Glass* and *The Locked Room*. Blue also cried after this scene:

He might have been dead for all she knew, and how can he hold it against her for wanting to live? Blue feels tears forming in his eyes, but more than grief he feels anger at himself for being such a fool. He has lost whatever chance he might have had for happiness, and if that is the case, then it would not be wrong to say that this is truly the beginning of the end. (196)

After the future Mrs. Blue left, Blue felt “tears forming in his eyes” because he had “lost whatever chance he might have had for happiness.” Hence, the reason why he cried was that he lost other possibilities. Debra Shostak argues that Auster wrote “narratives of missing persons” from “the point of view of those left behind,” according to “the process of mourning” (66). Based on Shostak, it is not too much to say that tears and crying in *Ghosts* mean “the process of mourning” for the loss of other possibilities. In view of the fact that *Ghosts* is categorized as a detective novel in hard-boiled style, Auster wrote Blue as a “Weeping Man” to relativize the masculinity of men who do not cry in hard-boiled novels.¹⁴

The expression of “the future Mrs. Blue” indicates that Blue will get married to her. Auster also used the expression “future wife” in his essay *The Invention of Solitude* (1982) to refer to a future wife of his, Lydia Davis (1947–), who was also a future translator and a future novelist in her own right (117). According to Auster, he wrote *City of Glass* to imagine what would have happened to him if he had not met his wife (Auster, McCaffery, and Gregory 16). Hence, it is possible to say that *Ghosts* depicted “spectre” as other possibilities if Auster had not married his wife. Therefore, Auster paradoxically introduced his biographical matters into his novels.

Notably, there is another “Weeping Woman” in *Ghosts: The Weeping Woman* painted by Pablo Picasso. It is not surprising that he knew the painting because he worked as a translator of art books during his stay in France (1971–1974). This painting pictured a weeping woman with colorful paint: blue, black, white, brown, gold, gray, green, and violet. These colors are

14. Yasui Nobuko (安井信子) argued the relationship between American literature and tears, and pointed out that fewer characters cry in hard-boiled novels such as those of Ernest Hemingway (1899–1961) (319).

used in *Ghosts* as the names of characters, such as Blue, Black, or White.¹⁵ The painting's model was Picasso's lover, Dora Maar (1907–1997), and it deepened a theme of *Guernica* (1937).¹⁶ *Guernica* pictured a woman holding her dead child and represented the “process of mourning” for the child.

With reference to Picasso, the sources of the character's names are quite suggestive. In his Blue Period (1901–1904), Picasso painted pictures with blue backgrounds to mourn the death of a friend, Carlos Casagemas (1881–1901). Therefore, the blue color represented the “process of mourning.” In *Self Portrait* (1901), he pictured himself in black clothes against a blue background. In general, self-portrait is a kind of self-referencing painting. In addition to that, there is a self-referencing relationship between Blue and Black in *Ghosts*.

Let us now return to the relationship between the “Picasso lithograph” in Abe Kōbō's *The Ruined Map* and *The Weeping Woman* in Paul Auster's *Ghosts*. I have discussed earlier the likelihood that Auster was influenced by Abe's *The Ruined Map* and depicted a client's room and “framed paintings on the wall” in *City of Glass*. The image of paintings is also seen in *Ghosts*. In the latter half of the story, Blue disguised himself as a salesman to make contact with Black and entered his room:

The room is much as he imagined it would be, though perhaps even more austere. Nothing on the walls, for example, which surprised him a little, since he always thought there would be a picture or two, an image of some kind just to break the monotony, a nature scene perhaps, or else a portrait of someone Black might once have loved. Blue was always curious to know what the picture would be, thinking it might be a valuable clue, but now that he sees there is nothing, he understands that this is what he should have expected all along. Other than that, there's precious little to contradict his former notions. (219)

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15. Shimojo Keiko points out that the characters' names “are reflections of one person as all the colors can be reduced to one” (72). Namely, it can be said that all the characters of *Ghosts* are doubles of the protagonist. This comment suggested that Blue and Black as Blue's double are parts of one person: “The Weeping Woman.”
 16. Brigitte Léal wrote about *Guernica*: “[I]t would seem that the profile of the Woman at the window holding the lantern is that of Dora Maar” (396). Cf. Léal, Brigitte. “For Charming Dora’: Portraits of Dora Maar.” *Picasso and Portraiture: Representation and Transportation*, edited by William Robin, The Museum of Modern Art, 1996, pp. 384–407.

Blue thought that there would be some pictures such as “a portrait of someone Black might once have loved,” but he found that there were no such paintings. He “was always curious to know what the picture would be,” which indicates an important point of influence of Abe on Auster. It was pointed in the previous part of this article that the “Picasso lithograph” is not a real picture but an imaginary one in *The Ruined Map*. This scene indicates the possibility that Auster tried to detect the identity of the “Picasso lithograph” but failed. Hence, Abe’s *The Ruined Map* left its marks on Auster’s *Ghosts* as well as *City of Glass*. However, Auster wrote about pictures cut out from some magazines in Blue’s room:

Next to that there is a portrait of Walt Whitman. And finally, directly to that poet’s left, there is a movie still of Robert Mitchum from one of the fan magazines: gun in hand, looking as though the world is about to cave in on him. There is no picture of the ex-future Mrs. Blue, but each time Blue makes a tour of his little gallery, he pauses in front of a certain blank spot on the wall and pretends that she, too, is there. (225)

Blue put “a movie still of Robert Mitchum from one of the fan magazines” on the wall. This suggests influence from “a Picasso lithograph, perhaps clipped out of some magazine” in Abe’s *The Ruined Map*. Therefore, Auster paraphrased the “Picasso lithograph” and adapted it into his novel.

Robert Mitchum (1917–1997) was an actor who played the role of a detective in the movie *Out of the Past* (1947). The story of this movie is explained in *Ghosts*. Mitchum “as an ex-private eye who is trying to build a new life for himself in a small town under an assumed name” (191). He wanted to escape from his past as a detective, but a gangster finally killed him because “the past catches up with Mitchum” (191). This is quite similar to Abe’s *The Ruined Map*, in that a detective strived to free himself from the past. The protagonist of *The Ruined Map* finally thought, “I would forget looking for a way to the past”¹⁷ (299) and became a missing person in urban space.

As mentioned above, the hidden image of *The Weeping Woman* represented other possibilities. In the same way, the reference to *Out of the Past* has connection with other possibilities too. The following quotation is a scene in which Blue thought about the relationship between past and possibilities in

17. “過去への通路を探すのは、もうよそう” (*Abe Kōbō Zenshū* 311).

that movie:

He has been marked by the past, and once that happens, nothing can be done about it. Something happens, Blue thinks, and then it goes on happening forever. It can never be changed, can never be otherwise. Blue begins to be haunted by this thought, for he sees it as a kind of warning, a message delivered up from within himself, and try as he does to push it away, the darkness of this thought does not leave him. (193)

Because his present life is “marked” by the “past,” other possibilities are absent. Blue was “haunted” by this idea. This word “mark” suggests Derrida’s notion “mark” in his “Signature Event Context” (1971), because both Auster and Derrida connected “mark” with the notion of possibilities.¹⁸ According to Derrida, “mark” as “écriture” (written words) has “the possibility of disengagement and citational graft” to be cut off from the original context and can have infinite possibilities of meaning (“Signature Event Context” 12). By the same token, it may be argued that the protagonist of *Ghosts* disappeared from his present life (context) and got “other possibilities” in the end of the story. After he disappeared, the narrator said that “[a]nything possible” and “[a]nd from this moment, we know nothing” (232). These statements indicate that the meaning of disappearance in *Ghosts* is to get other possibilities. Hence, Auster applied post-structuralism to repeat the story of missing person and wrote the postmodern version of Abe’s *The Ruined Map*.

IV. Conclusion

This study discusses the relationship between Abe Kōbō’s *The Ruined Map* and Paul Auster’s *Ghosts*, given the fact that Auster said that he read Abe’s novels. In this article, I explored what we can find from *Ghosts*, if Abe influenced Auster. From the contents of this paper, it is concluded that Auster was influenced by Abe and thus introduced the metaphor of Picasso’s *The*

18. At first, Derrida delivered this lecture on J. L. Austin (1911–1960) and speech act theory at a Montreal conference in 1971, and this was collected in his *Margins of Philosophy* (*Marges de la philosophie*, 1972). An English translation of this essay appeared in *Glyph* in 1977.

Weeping Woman. The “Picasso lithograph” in *The Ruined Map* was an unreal lithograph invented in Abe’s imagination, whereas Auster recreated the image of the painting with some differences.

Abe’s “Picasso lithograph” was derived from Kafka’s *Metamorphosis* and cinematic techniques in Teshigahara Hiroshi’s movie. Although the picture in *Metamorphosis* lost the “aura” through being cut out of a magazine, the “Picasso lithograph” represented paradoxically nameless existentialistic substance with “aura” in urban space.

In *Ghosts*, all women cried and their tears were shed in the “process of mourning” for ghosts as lost possibilities. And the hidden image of Picasso’s *The Weeping Woman* is represented as the names of main characters, such as Blue or Black. In this way, from Abe’s literature to Auster’s, the images of paintings were recreated with some modifications. The difference between Abe and Auster can be regarded as the difference between Abe’s existentialism and Auster’s postmodernism. The detective’s disappearance in *The Ruined Map* is meant to be a nameless existence in the 1960s Japan. On the other hand, the protagonist in *Ghosts* finally became a missing person and obtained “other possibilities” as a postmodern subject. Auster repeated the genre of the “anti-detective novel” that which Abe tried to write in *The Ruined Map*, and applied postmodern philosophy to his *Ghosts* in order to depict postmodernity in 1980s America.

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Abstract

Most literary criticism of *Ghosts* (1986) by Paul Auster (1947–) have focused on the relationship with postmodernism and American Renaissance literature. By contrast, this research compares Paul Auster's *Ghosts* with *The Ruined Map* (1967) by Abe Kōbō (1924–1993) through the medium of allusions to paintings by Pablo Picasso (1881–1973). Both Abe and Auster commonly wrote about disappearance and identity crisis in urban space. In *The Ruined Map*, there is a “Picasso lithograph” in the room of a client who asks a detective to find her missing husband. This lithograph, clipped out of a magazine and depicting a woman looking up and left, was quoted from *Metamorphosis* (*Die Verwandlung*, 1915) by Franz Kafka (1883–1924). *Metamorphosis* contains a picture, which depicted a woman and lost its “aura” through being clipped out of a magazine. Being influenced by Kafka, the “Picasso lithograph” appears in *The Ruined Map*. This lithograph paradoxically represents existentialistic material in urban space through phenomenological reduction. In *Ghosts*, it is important that all female characters cry. Their tears represent the “process of mourning” that works against “ghosts” as lost possibilities. At that time, Jacques Derrida (1930–2004) also argues the theme of possibilities. Auster connected the theme of disappearance from the present life (context) with possibilities as well as Derrida. Moreover, there is another hidden “Weeping Woman.” She is Picasso's *The Weeping Woman* (1937). The names of main characters of *Ghosts*, such as Blue or Black, indicate the colors in *The Weeping Woman*. Hence, Auster wrote *Ghosts* under the influence of Abe, Picasso, and Derrida.

Keywords: Abe Kōbō, Paul Auster, Pablo Picasso, paintings as allusions, urban space, comparative literature

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