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A COUNTER CULTURE OF THE 1980s: OZAKI YUTAKA'S SONGS

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Introduction

In the 1960s, Japan experienced a high rate of economic growth. Japanese students played an important role in post-war politics during this period. Student movements, including the *zenkyōtō undō* (National Joint-Struggle Student Movement; 全共闘運動), *gakusei tōsō* (university movement; 学生闘争), and *anpo tōsō* (the conflict over the Japan–U.S. Security Treaty; 安保闘争), were prosperous. Students threatened the educational system and challenged state authority and legitimacy. In the next decade, the economy stabilized and the student-led movements no longer had a marketplace for their ideas. The standard of living for the Japanese people gained traction during the years 1964 until 1973.¹ In 1973, Japan experienced what was called the “oil shock.”

In the mid-1980s, “contrasting with America, which experienced a confused period due to a long-lasting Vietnam War, Japan stood on the top of the world economically and was about to begin its journey towards a booming bubble economy.”² In particular, in the latter half of the 1980s, Japan reached the peak of its economic growth and people were materially well off.³

Reflecting the mood of the culture at this time was the decline of Japanese folk music. Typically, in Japanese culture, it is music that speaks of its people’s trends and thoughts. During the 1960s and early 1970s, folk music was very popular. These songs included messages for, and elements

¹ Teruyuki Hirota, “*Kyōiku no rekishi shakaigaku: Sono tenkai to kadai* [Historical Sociology of Education: Developments and Issues; 教育の歴史社会学：その展開と課題],” *The Journal of Social Science* 57/3-4 (2006): p. 144.

² Azuma Hiroki, *Dōbutsuka suru posuto modan: Otaku kara mita nihon shakai* [Postmodern being Animalized: The Japanese Society from the Freaks’ Perspective] (Tokyo: Kodansha, 2001), p. 29.

³ Ugaya Hiromichi, *J poppu toha nanika* [What is J Pop?: Jポップとは何か] (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 2005), p. 128.

of anti-establishment movements and counter culture.⁴ However, folk music during this period went into a decline. Instead, there was a “band boom” during the 1980s. It was at this time when school violence became one of the main social issues, as there were serious problems concerning bullying and suicide in schools.⁵ Ozaki Yutaka (尾崎豊) (1965-1992) was an influential, leading rock musician during that period. His songs reflected an anti-society system, which typified schools and communities, and many young people supported him.⁶ For instance, there was a question about counter culture during the 1980s in the National Center Test for University Admissions for social studies in 2008. Ozaki was used as an example of a counter culture in their question.⁷ After his death in 1992, there were still a number of people who were attracted to his songs.⁸ More than forty thousand people attended his funeral.

⁴ Ochiai Shōhei, “Ozaki Yutaka no kokoro no fūkei [A Scene of Ozaki Yutaka’s Heart; 尾崎豊の心の風景],” *Asahi jānaru* [Asahi Journal; 朝日ジャーナル] (1988), p. 90; and Ugaya, *J poppu toha nanika*.

⁵ Yōko Shibata, “Ozaki Yutaka heno 120 tsū no tegami (尾崎豊への120通の手紙),” *Bungeishunjū* (文芸春秋) (1992), p. 419.

⁶ There were young people who ran away from home and left school to be free like Ozaki. Jōji Hashiguchi, “Ozaki Yutaka no jidai no yūtsu (尾崎豊の時代の憂鬱),” *Sekai* [The World; 世界] (1992), p. 195.

⁷ The exam had the following description: “Songs sometimes represent people’s feelings. In the 1980s, many buoyant tunes were created. Ozaki Yutaka made songs, such as ‘15 no yoru (15の夜)’ and ‘Sotsugyō (卒業)’ in which he expressed the young who have struggled and suffered [from the society and schools] and had powerful messages. His songs make us think about the meaning of ‘a counter culture’ during the time when school violence was a social issue.” Source: The National Center Test for University Admissions for social studies in 2008.

⁸ According to Sony Music Entertainment, more than one million seven hundred thousand copies of his 1996 album were sold. More than one hundred thousand copies have been sold each year since. “Botsugo 15 nen Ozaki ha dokohe: Kieta hankōshin [Where is Ozaki 15 Years after His Death: Disappearing Spirits of Defiance; 没後15年尾崎はどこへ：消えた反抗心],” *Asahi Shimbun* [Asahi Newspaper], April 24, 2007.

This paper will examine Ozaki Yutaka's lyrics, which include elements of the anti-society and anti-school system. It will particularly focus on why he was considered to be such a charismatic character who represented the anti-society movement of the 1980s. After presenting his biographical information, this paper will look at the introspective aspects of his lyrics. Next, the paper will examine the relationship between Ozaki's lyrics and anarchism. Lastly, there will be discussion of his philosophies and lyrics in his twenties, focusing on particularly Yoshimoto Taka'aki's concepts.

Ozaki Yutaka's Biography

Ozaki Yutaka was born on November 29, 1965 at the Self-Defense Forces Central Hospital in Tokyo as a second child of his father, Kenichi (健一), and his mother, Kinue (絹枝). They had an elder son, Yasushi (康), who was five-years older than Yutaka. Ozaki's father was on staff at the Defense Agency (防衛庁). His mother suffered from various illnesses and was hospitalized frequently when Ozaki was a young boy. As Ozaki's mother was often ill, his father often brought him to and from school each day. As Ozaki reflected on this circumstance, he mentioned that he missed his mother and often felt lonely.

In April of 1972, Yutaka entered *Nerima Higashi Shōgakkō* (練馬東小学校). When he was a second grader, he began to learn a *shakuhachi*⁹ (尺八). The next year, since he had expressed an interest in music, his parents bought him a keyboard harmonica, which he often played. When Yutaka was a fifth grader, his family moved from Tokyo to Saitama. The move required him to change schools and, as such, became a defining moment in his life. He was required to transfer to *Asaka shiritsu daiichi shōgakkō* (朝霞市立第一小学校), and he had to "leave his friends...and establish his position in a new classroom."¹⁰ He struggled with the transition and experienced bullying at the hands of his classmates, which resulted in his refusal to attend school. In Chikushi's¹¹ interview with him, Ozaki reflected on this experience. He said, "When I was a fifth grader, I moved to Asaka. I could not make friends. I did not want to go school, so I

⁹ *Shakuhachi* is a five-holed Japanese vertical bamboo flute.

¹⁰ Ochiai, "Ozaki Yutaka no kokoro no fūkei," p. 91.

¹¹ Tetsuya Chikushi (筑紫哲也) is one of the well-known journalists.

did not attend it for about six months.”¹² It was during this period of time, while staying home, that he began playing his brother’s guitar. This is when he learned how to play the guitar, which later played an important role in his music life. As his friends acknowledged Yutaka’s music talent, they began to recover their friendship. In his last year of elementary school, Yutaka became a class representative. Even though he had a difficult beginning, academically, he was very successful.

In April 1978, Yutaka entered *Nerima Higashi Tyūgakko* (練馬東中学校) in Tokyo. He chose to return to his previous school district, where he had many close friends. Ochiai Shōhei states, “This problem child discarded his face of a student refusing to attend school. He was a superior student there, and with his cheerful character, he became the president of a student body.”¹³ Even though his academic work was excellent and he worked as the student body president, Yutaka also disobeyed school rules and teachers. For instance, one of his friends was rebuked for a teacher by having long hair and was forced to shave it off, leaving a very close-cropped haircut. Yutaka became angry at this perceived offense and left home with his friends. For this violation of the rules, he was suspended from school for one week. It was during this period of time when he began to form a music band. In ninth grade, he was required to shave his head bald as punishment for smoking. However, he did not quit and was even confined to his home because of this.

Yutaka, even though he displayed many instances of rebellion, was a very smart student and who even passed the high school entrance examinations, which earned him a place at the Japan Ground Self-Defense Force Youth Technical School (*Rikuji syōnen kōka gakkō*; 陸自少年工科大学校). This school only accepted 1 of every 20 applicants. However, Yutaka was aware of the school’s policy requiring students to have bald heads, so he chose to decline the offer of attending this school. Instead, he entered *Aoyama Gakuin Kōtobu* (Aoyama Senior High School; 青山学院高

¹² Tetsuya Chikushi, “Shinjinrui no kishu tachi [Flag-Bearers of the New Human; 新人類の旗手たち],” *Asahi jānaru* [Asahi Journal; 朝日ジャーナル] (1985), p. 49.

¹³ Ochiai, “Ozaki Yutaka no kokoro no fūkei,” p. 91.

等部) in April 1981. While attending this school, he formed a band called “Noa (ノア)” and had his first live music concert in Tokyo in December. When he entered eleventh grade, he was working part-time, so he could purchase a piano.

Yutaka, in spite of his academic success and prowess, constantly rebelled against the school’s rules and quarreled with his teachers earning him suspension after suspension. Finally, in 1983, he was suspended for an indefinite period of time. It was during this period that he auditioned for a position at a music company and won. He debuted in December 1983 with the album “*Seventeen’s Map* (17歳の地図)” at the age of 18.¹⁴ In March 1984, he officially dropped out of school.

After this, his music career began to be commercially successful; he was continuously recording, and his albums were sold out. At the time of his death, Yutaka recorded 6 albums, including “*Seventeen’s Map*,”¹⁵ “*Tropic of Graduation* (回帰線),”¹⁶ “*Through the Broken Door* (壊れた扉から),”¹⁷ “*The Roadside Tree* (街路樹),”¹⁸ “*The Birth* (誕生),”¹⁹ and “*Confession for Exist* (放熱への証).”²⁰ He also recorded 20 singles during his nine-year career. Again, in spite of success as a musician, trouble plagued him. Nevertheless, Many youth followed and admired him. In 1986, escaping from trouble with those who managed him, he went to New York City and stayed there for one year. He became addicted to drugs, was arrested for two months. In May 1988, he married Shigemi, and his son Hiroya was born in July 1989. However, on April 25, 1992, he was found dead in a stranger’s home. It was determined that he died of a pulmonary edema.²¹

¹⁴ Ochiai, “Ozaki Yutaka no kokoro no fūkei,” p. 89.

¹⁵ It was put on sale on December 1, 1983.

¹⁶ The date of sale was on March 21, 1985.

¹⁷ It appeared on the market on November 28, 1985.

¹⁸ The date of sale was on September 1, 1988.

¹⁹ It was put on the market on November 15, 1990.

²⁰ The date of sale was on May 10, 1992.

²¹ The true cause of his death is still unknown. Some have argued it was a homicide. In support of this theory, fans collected more than one hundred thousand signatures to have the case of death re-examined.

A Journey of the Search for Self

As stated earlier, Ozaki produced six albums during his career. A determination of his feelings and messages can be ascertained from lyrics he wrote. Ozaki recorded three albums while he was in his teens. It was during this period that his main themes were of loneliness and his consequent struggles with society. Ochiai analyzes that “it took five years for him [Ozaki] to sing ‘*Machi no fūkei* (A scene of the town; 街の風景)’ after he entered a junior high school...there was ‘the youth’ where he experienced going to a high school, growing like an adult, and having his change of voice at once...However, a scene of his heart showed feelings of absence and loneliness.”²² In 1985, Ozaki wrote *Shelly*.

シェリー俺は転がり続けて こんなとこにたどりついた シェリー俺はあせりすぎたのか むやみに何もかも 捨てちまったけれど シェリーあの頃は夢だった 夢のために生きてきた 俺だけど シェリーおまえの言うとおりの 金か夢かわからない暮しさ	Shelly, continuing to stumble, I've arrived at this kind of place Shelly, was I too impatient? I recklessly threw everything away, but Shelly, that time was a dream I lived my life for dreams, but Shelly, just like you said This is a life in which we don't know if it is money or a dream
転がり続ける俺の生きざまを 時には無様な格好でささえてる	I'll continue to stumble; I'm supporting my way of life In an unsightly manner
シェリー優しく俺をしかってくれ そして強く抱きしめておくれ おまえの愛がすべてを包むから	Shelly, scold me gently and then hold me tightly Because your love embraces everything
シェリーいつになれば 俺は這い上がれるだろう シェリーどこに行けば 俺はたどりつけるだろう シェリー俺は歌う 愛すべきものすべてに	Shelly, I wonder when I'll drag myself up? Shelly, I wonder where I'll arrive? Shelly, I sing to all of the things that I love

²² Ochiai, “Ozaki Yutaka no kokoro no fūkei,” p. 91.

Yamashita determines that Ozaki expresses “his impetuosity, pureness, and interior of self-denial.”²³ This song reveals his experience of being suspended from and dropping out of high school. He continuously expresses his inability to realize his dreams of being free. There is only reality, which looks endless. He pauses and reflects, “Was I too impatient?,” “I wonder when I’ll drag myself up?” and “I wonder where I’ll arrive?”

Additionally, in *Shelly*, Ozaki uses the technique of finding answers to his own questions and asking others to agree with him. He sings:

シェリー見知らぬところで 人に出会ったら	Shelly, what should I do if I meet someone at a strange place?
どうすりゃいいかい シェリー俺ははぐれ者だから	Shelly, I’m lost, so I can’t smile well as you do
おまえみたいに うまく笑えやしない シェリー夢を求めるならば	Shelly, if I search for my dreams, I won’t be afraid of loneliness, shall I?
孤独すら恐れはしないよね シェリーひとりで生きるなら 涙なんか見せちゃいけないよね	Shelly, if I live my life alone, I shouldn’t show anyone my tears, shall I?

Since he is unsure of his own answers, he seeks the agreement of others with his opinions. By doing so, he shares his weakness with others.²⁴ In *Shelly*, Ozaki also writes “what should I do if I meet someone at a strange place?...I’m lost, so I can’t smile well as you do...if I search for my dreams,

²³ Etsuko Yamashita, *Ozaki Yutaka no tamashii: Kagayaki to kunō no kiseki* [The Spirit of Ozaki Yutaka: A Track of His Brightness and Distress; 尾崎豊の魂：輝きと苦悩の軌跡] (Tokyo: PHP Kenkyūsho, 1993), p. 221.

²⁴ Ikuko Ishii, “Ozaki Yutaka no sekai: Sono sarakedasu yowasa ni kyōkan suru kōkōseitachi [The World of Ozaki Yutaka: High School Students Who Empathize with His Revealed Weaknesses; 尾崎豊の世界：そのさらけ出す弱さに共感する高校生たち],” *Kyōiku* [Education; 教育] 38/6 (1988): p. 67.

I won't be afraid of loneliness, shall I?" This part of his prose reflects a social phobia people may potentially have had during that time. The main character in *Shelly* is distressed about his inability to seek his own future and also losing his confidence,²⁵ reflecting Ozaki's struggles.

Similarly, *15 no yoru* (A night at 15; 15 の夜) is another song which demonstrates Ozaki's loneliness and struggle as a teen. This was his debut song.²⁶ He wrote:

<p>落書きの教科書と外ばかり見てる 俺 超高層ビルの上の空届かない夢を 見てる やりばのない気持の扉破りたい 校舎の裏煙草をふかして見つけれ ば逃げ場もない しゃがんでかたまり背を向けなが ら 心のひとつのも解りあえない大人 達をにらむ</p>	<p>I spend all my time looking at a textbook of scribbles and outside in the sky above the extremely high tall buildings, I see unreachable dreams I want to bust down the door of feelings with no outlet smoking a cigarette behind the school building, if I'm found out, I have nowhere to run crouching in a heap, with my back to them, I glare at the adults who have no idea about how I feel.</p>
<p>そして仲間達は今夜家出の計画を たてる とにかくもう学校や家には帰りた くない 自分の存在が何なのかさえ解らず 震えている 15 の夜</p>	<p>And my friends are making plans to run away from home tonight In any case, I don't want to go back to school or home I am all in a tremble, not knowing what my existence means A night at 15</p>
<p>盗んだバイクで走り出す 行き先 も解らぬまま 暗い夜の張りの中へ</p>	<p>I race off on a stolen motorcycle, not having destination in mind into the pall of the dark night,</p>

²⁵ Yamashita, *Ozaki Yutaka no tamashii*, p. 223.

²⁶ It was on sale on December 1, 1983. He had just turned 18 years old.

誰にも縛られたくないと	逃げ込	escaping into this night, because I
んだこの夜に		don't want to be bound by anyone
自由になれた気がした	15の夜	I felt I was free, a night at 15

Ozaki's purpose, during his teenage years, was to realize his dreams, which would, in part, determine his reality. He struggled with authority and the rules of society constantly, which inevitably influenced his view of schools and society in general.

The most striking phrase of "*A night at 15*" is "A night at 15 when I felt I was free (自由になれた気がした 15の夜)." Ozaki's lyrics sound "defenseless and passionate in a daredevil manner. However, when we read [his words] very carefully, we can understand that he has calm eyes on the other hand."²⁷ Ozaki understood that he would never be truly free from society. He knew that he could only be free temporarily. He sings "I felt I was free, a night at 15." This does not mean he was free. He only felt he was free; however, "he knew even though he races off on a stolen motorcycle and he keeps seeking for true freedom and singing, he would be still unsure of how he would get freedom and he expresses this struggle in this song."²⁸ Tawara also supports this point: She postulates that one of the heartrending sorrows was that he did not sing "a night at 15 when he was free," but "[a night at 15 when] he felt he was free."²⁹ Ozaki critically and objectively analyzed the society and himself and struggled as a result.

As a musician, Ozaki had much influence with the youth. What attracted him to them was his ability to express, in great detail, his feelings and opinions. For the youth, he was their representative. For instance, one fan said, "[One of the attractive points are his words.] Particularly, "*A night at 15*," I thought that he sang songs by expressing feelings I cannot describe in words and that he was thinking about the same thing [I feel]."³⁰ Ozaki viewed "being an adult" as "discarding one's heart." He did not like the idea of growing up.

²⁷ Machi Tawara, "Ozaki Yutaka 17 sai no mochīfu [A Motif of 17 Years Old; 17歳のモチーフ]," *Bungeishunjū* (文芸春秋) (1992), p. 383.

²⁸ Ishii, "Ozaki Yutaka no sekai," p. 66.

²⁹ Tawara Machi (俵万智) is a well known writer and poet.

³⁰ Kodaka Yoshinori, *Gokokuji: Ozaki Yutaka heno dengon* [Temple Gokokuji: A Message to Ozaki Yutaka; 護国寺：尾崎豊への伝言], vol. 1 (Tokyo: Rimu Shuppan, 1992), p. 13.

The following words in the second stanza reflect this idea: “The adults are always telling me ‘Get rid of your heart, get rid of it.’ But I don’t want to do so (大人達は心を捨てろ捨てろと言うが俺はいやなのさ).” The lyrics of this song also reflect his limitations of being a teenager. He grieves by singing “what a tiny, meaningless, powerless night at 15 (なんてちっぽけでなんて意味のないなんて無力な 15 の夜).” He sought freedom, continuing his journey of “searching for self.”³¹ He sings “A night at 15, I kept searching for freedom (自由を求め続けた 15 の夜).”

Ozaki also wrote “*Bokuga bokude arutame ni* (So I can be myself; 僕が僕であるために).”³² This song also describes his struggles and feelings of loneliness:

心すれちがう悲しい生き様にた め息もらしていた だけどここの目に映るこの街で僕 はずっと生きてゆかなければ	I let out a sigh at this sad life of misunderstandings but I have to keep living in this town before my eyes
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僕が僕であるために勝ち続けな きゃならない 正しいものは何なのかそれがこ の胸に解るまで 僕は街にのまれて少し心許しな がら この冷たい街の風に歌い続けて る	I have to keep winning so I can be myself until I know in my heart what a right thing is swallowed up by the city, I’ll forgive my heart a little and in the wind of this cold town, I’ll keep singing
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Here he uses the phrase “the town,” which implies the society. He insists that, while realizing he is swallowed up by the society, he keeps seeking for

³¹ Yoshiki Sakurai, “Gendai shōhi shakai ni okeru seisyōnen ikusei no paradokkusu: Kyōikusha toshite no Ozaki Yutaka” [現代消費社会における「青少年育成」のパラドックス：教育者としての尾崎豊], *Bulletin of Studies in General Education at Kagawa University* 45 (1994), p. 123.

³² This song was put as the last song in his first album “*Jyūnana sai no chizu* [Seventeen’s Map; 17歳の地図],” which was on sale on December 1, 1983. Ozaki was 18 years old.

meaning and expresses his feelings, which are against the society. Ishii notes that Ozaki often uses the word “town” in his songs. For instance, this term appears in 19 out of 29 songs in his first three albums: “A town in which love disappear,” “a lonely town,” “I was wandering a town in which I have no place to go at night,” and “I ran out into a town, and I was left...” are examples of this. All phrases connate “the town, a place in which he [Ozaki] realizes his loneliness.”³³ He did not like school, so he ran out of town. However, in trying to be free from school and society, Ozaki ended up lonely in the “town” anyway.

As the analyses above show, Ozaki describes his loneliness and defiance about school and his struggle with society through his songs. He was often seen as a “dark, tacky, heavy, and freak” person.³⁴ However, Yamashita insists that Ozaki’s lyrics are not necessarily negative and dark. They are not all about grief and lament.

His lyrics also include a positive message for his young audience. For example, in “*15 no yoru*,” he depicts a boy who reflects on himself and thinks about his own existence in society. This boy does not want to go home or go to school and seeks freedom; in other words, he is about to “depart from the existing society, the adult society.”³⁵ In this sense, he is positive.

This concept overlaps Terayama Shūji’s (寺山修司) views on “*iede* (running away from home; 家出).” Terayama held that running away from home was not a negative, bad thing or that it was not an escape from reality; rather, it is a departure for seeking and establishing self.³⁶ Terayama states that “I think almost all youth should run away from home...for being a yakuza (gangster), singer, or athlete, everything should start with this ‘*iede*.’”³⁷ Similar to Terayama’s views on *iede*, Ozaki also held that getting out of the existing society was a positive departure for the self.

³³ Ishii, “Ozaki Yutaka no sekai,” p. 66.

³⁴ Yamashita, *Ozaki Yutaka no tamashii*, p. 40.

³⁵ *Ibid*, p. 85.

³⁶ Yamashita, *Ozaki Yutaka no tamashii*, p. 85.

³⁷ Shūji Terayama, “*Iede no susume* [A Recommendation of Running Away from Home: Jump without Planning; 家出のすすめ：行きあたりばったりで跳べ],” *The Student Times*, July 20, 1962, p. 6.

Inclination toward Anarchism

A possible image that depicts Ozaki's early life is that of a teen that was against society, including the educational system.³⁸ This image matches well with his own difficulties in school and his ultimate rebellion against it. His lyrics are replete with anger, resistance, and contradiction. In particular, “*Sotsugyō* (Graduation; 卒業)” and “*17 sai no chizu* (Seventeen's Map; 17歳の地図)” describe his anarchistic views.

Sotsugyō was written and appeared on the market on January 21, 1985. He was 19 years old. This particular song was one of the most well-known, powerful songs among the 71 songs he recorded. He wrote:

校舎の影芝生の上すいこまれ る空 幻とリアルな気持感じていた チャイムが鳴り教室のいつも の席に座り 何に従い従うべきか考えてい た ざわめく心今俺にあるものは 意味なく思えてとまどってい た	On the grass, in the shadow of the school building, I'm taken in by the sky I felt both illusionary and real feelings The chime sounded, and I took my usual seat in the classroom I thought about what I should be following My bustling heart, I felt as a loss as what I have now seems meaningless
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Ozaki seems to want to point out that because everything is meaningless; he feels lost and the path is eluding him. His rebellion has put him at odds with the prevailing culture in which he lived, and because of this attitude, he could not “belong.” The lyrics further describe his anarchism. He sang:

行儀よくまじめなんて出来や しなかった 夜の校舎窓ガラス壊してまわ った 逆らい続けあがき続けた早く 自由になりたかった	I couldn't have good manners, or be really serious Breaking the window glass at the school building at night I kept on being defiant, I kept struggling, I just wanted to hurry up and be free
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³⁸ Ochiai, “Ozaki Yutaka no kokoro no fūkei,” p. 89.

Yamashita notes that Ozaki always wanted to be himself and find freedom, which is not bound by anything. This view is similar to the romantic school irony.³⁹ The rebellious spirit, which Yamashita also calls “irony,” refers to the anti-spirit on one’s thoughts and words, the system, and social rules.⁴⁰ By opposing society and the school system, Ozaki emphasized the idea of anarchism.

Furthermore, in the later part of *Sotsugyō*, Ozaki reveals a stronger message:

信じられぬ大人との争いの中で	In my disputes with adults who
許しあいいったい何解りあえただ	can't be trusted
ろう	In forgiving one another, what can
うんざりしながらそれでも過ごした	we understand?
ひとつだけ解ってたこと	I was fed up with it, but I lived
この支配からの卒業	with it
	The one thing that I knew was
	That I was graduating from this
	control

These lyrics express the thought that adults do not understand him. In fact, in an interview, which was conducted before this song was released in 1985, Chikushi asked Ozaki, “Your songs include a lot of messages about defiance against schools and protests against the fact that things which were made by adults suppress people.”⁴¹ Ozaki replied: “Yeah...to me, adults get under control without giving us a chance to explain and brainwash children.”⁴² So, in *Sotsugyō*, he sings:

卒業していったい何解ると言うの	What can we learn after
か	graduating?
思い出のほかに何が残ると言うの	What stays with us other than
か	memories?
人は誰も縛られたかよわき小羊ならば	If all people are bound and are
	weak lambs,

³⁹ Yamashita, *Ozaki Yutaka no tamashii*, p. 78.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Chikushi, “Shinjinrui no kishu tachi,” p.50.

⁴² Ibid.

先生あなたはかよわき大人の代弁者なのか	Are you the spokesman for the feeble adults, teacher?
俺達の怒りどこへ向かうべきなのか	Where should our anger be directed?
これからは何が俺を縛りつけるだろう	What will bind me from now on?
あと何度自分自身卒業すれば	How many more times will I graduate
本当の自分にたどりつけるだろう	Before I find my true self?
仕組まれた自由に誰も気づかずにあがいた日々も終る	No one realizes that freedom is something that's been devised
この支配からの卒業	The days of struggling will end
闘いからの卒業	And we'll graduate from this control
	We'll graduate from this battle

When we carefully scrutinize the words above, we can determine that he already knew that even if he graduates from a school and becomes free, he would encounter another control of society (the adults' world) and he would still struggle with this control. That's why he sings, "how many more times will I graduate before I find my true self?" Graduation from a high school was an insignificant matter and graduating is not an absolute graduation; it is a graduation "from this control" and freedom is only freedom that is already contrived and programmed by adults.⁴³

Moreover, *17 sai no chizu* depicts a seventeen-year-old boy who was wandering in the town and reflecting on his life. In this song, Ozaki delivered a message of not giving up a dream in life:

口うるさい大人達のルーズな生活に縛られても	Even if undisciplined lives of nagging adults hold you back
素敵な夢を忘れやしないよワオ!	Never give up precious dreams, wow!

He also encouraged people to be themselves:

⁴³ Tawara, "Ozaki Yutaka 17 sai no mochīfu, pp. 385–386.

手を差しのべておまえを求めな	You reach out, but I won't need you
いさ	in this town
この街	No matter what lifestyle I fall into
どんな生き方になるにしても	I will never give up being myself,
自分を捨てやしないよワァオ!	wow!

In this song, he describes concepts of not following the society, being against the adults, keeping one's own life, and seeking for a place to be one's self. The main theme of this song seems to be one's self and not be influenced by the society.

Not only do the words express Ozaki's philosophies and messages, but his singing style also shows his passion. When he sang, he used his entire body to express himself. He lied down on the stage and shook his body. He sometimes sang with dripping-wet clothes. One of his most remarkable episodes was when he performed in Shibuya, Tokyo on August 4, 1984. He was so excited and jumped off the foothold, which was seven meters high. His enthusiasm earned him a broken leg, but he kept singing and completed his concert that day. This accident only made him more popular.⁴⁴ Sakurai states that Ozaki's use of his entire body during performances while delivering messages of struggle, along with yelling, only made him more of an endearing character to his fans and the public.⁴⁵ With his manner of expression, his popularity increased, and his messages of anarchism combined with his rebellion against society made him a powerful figure.

A New Journey in his Twenties

During his early career as a rock musician, his lyrics reflected those things with which he struggled. By describing the school situations and using the analogy of "the town," he expressed his defiance and opposition against authority as demonstrated by society and adults. Many of these concepts and messages were included in his first three albums, which were all created from 1983 to 1985. Later in his career, his songs began to

⁴⁴ Chikushi, "Shinjinrui no kishu tachi," p. 49, and Yamashita, *Ozaki Yutaka no tamashii*, p. 103.

⁴⁵ Yoshiki Sakurai, "Gendai shōhi shakai ni okeru seisyōnen ikusei no paradokkusu," p. 128.

include different types of messages. In other words, the boy Ozaki transformed himself into a somewhat mature adult, now in his twenties. After he turned twenty, he took a one-year break and stayed in New York City in 1986. As stated earlier, it was during this time when he began his habit of using drugs. After his return to Japan, he resumed his music career. When he was in his early twenties and while jailed for using drugs, he married Shigemi,⁴⁶ and later their son, Hiroya, was born. In the interview right after being released from the detention house, he stated, “I want to describe “a map of the twentieth” (*nijyūdai no chizu*; 二十代の地図) as I feel a social responsibility.”⁴⁷ He began to deliver his messages as a person who stands on the side of the adults to whom he once wrote while he was a teen.⁴⁸

Still writing songs about being true to oneself and in support of freedom, the songs written during his twenties included a wider perspective than those written during his teen years. For instance, some songs were geared toward the nation, world, and antiwar. In *Kaku* (The Core; 核), he wrote:

ねえねえもしかしたら俺の方が正 しいかもしれないだろう 俺がこんな平和の中で怯えている けれど 反戦反核いったい何が出来るとい うの 小さな叫びが聞こえないこの街で	Hey hey maybe I may be right I become frightened in the middle of this peace Antiwar antinuclear what can we do In the town in which small shouts cannot be heard.
--	--

Interviewed in 1988, Ozaki shared his opinions about *Kaku*. Reflecting on his experience of writing that song, he admitted “I came to a point where I

⁴⁶ Yutaka proposed to her from the jail in writing and they married on May 12, 1988. Shigemi Ozaki, “Otto Ozaki Yutaka tonon 6 nenkan [The Period of 6 Years with Husband Ozaki Yutaka; 夫尾崎豊との6年間].” *Bungeishunjū* (1993): pp. 289–90.

⁴⁷ Ishii, “Ozaki Yutaka no sekai: Sono sarakedasu yowasa ni kyōkan suru kōkōseitachi,” p. 70.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

would accept heavy stuff.”⁴⁹ In addition, his background of having a father who worked for the Defense Agency led him to write this kind of song. He also shared that as a child, he sometimes discussed with his elder brother the issue of whether or not Japan should have the Self-Defense Department. This illustrated the point that Ozaki held an anti-nuclear position.⁵⁰ Moreover, he criticized the nation in *Love Way*.⁵¹

Love Way 言葉も感じるままにやが て意味を変える	Love Way soon words will change their meanings as they feel
Love Way 真実なんてそれは共同条 理の	Love Way the truth is a lie of the principles of joint reasons
原理の嘘	Love Way all that has been given to live for
Love Way 生きる為に与えられてき たもの全ては	fights fights deprives and loves,
戦い争い奪って愛し合う Love Way	Love Way

These words remind us of Yoshimoto Taka’aki (吉本隆明). In *kyōdō gensō ron* (A theory of communal illusion; 共同幻想論), he states that by sharing the community’s thoughts, ideas, and concepts, the nation (e.g., ethic and laws) is created. He wrote, “Communal illusion is a pattern of notions which were created by human behaviors in this world.”⁵² Similar to Yoshimoto’s idea, Ozaki insisted that existing matter in the nation are lies and fantasy. Thus it was apparent that he liked reading Yoshimoto’s books.⁵³ It can be surmised from some of the song lyrics that Ozaki’s philosophies and ideas were influenced by Yoshimoto.

全てのものが置き換えられた幻想 の中で	In the illusion that everything was replaced
犯してしまっている気付けない過 ちに	The mistakes we committed and cannot realize

⁴⁹ Ochiai, “Ozaki Yutaka no kokoro no fūkei,” p. 91.

⁵⁰ Chikushi, “Shinjinrui no kishu tachi,” p. 51.

⁵¹ It was on sale on October 21, 1990. He was 24 years old.

⁵² Taka’aki Yoshimoto, *Yoshimoto Taka’aki* (Tokyo: Kodansha, 1972), p. 18.

⁵³ Yamashita, *Ozaki Yutaka no tamashii*, p. 223.

清らかに安らかに生まれて来るもの	Things which are to be born in peace and purely
全ての存在は罪を背負わされるだろう	All existing things will carry on sins
	Love Way Love Way
	Love Way Love Way

Here Ozaki viewed the world as an illusion. And in seeing the world as an illusion, he ends up with the conclusion that “love” is what is most important for people. It was, though, interesting that he intentionally avoided using the word love (*ai*; 愛) in Japanese in his song, and that he used the word “love way” instead. According to him, “I wanted to draw a picture of love by making it concrete, not by using the word love.”⁵⁴ This technique itself seems to be his fantastic notion. In addition, Ozaki disclosed his experience of being addicted to drugs: “I was in the midst of an illusion and an auditory hallucination [after being on a drug]. Why did I use drugs? In the first place, I wanted to analyze the reality in depth and face it up.”⁵⁵

In his last concert tour, which lasted from May to October in 1991, he visited many places across Japan. The title of this tour was “the birth.” He wrote the following messages⁵⁶ in prose to his fans in its brochure:

永遠の胸	An Eternal Heart
資本主義が世界を滅亡させる前に。	Before the capitalism ruins the world
共産主義が世界を見捨てる前に。	Before the communism abandons the world
僕らは世界に永遠の成功を与え、	We give the world the eternal success

⁵⁴ This was Ozaki’s quote from a music magazine, *Guitar Book*, in December 1990.

⁵⁵ Ozaki Yutaka, *Futū no ai* [An Ordinary Love; 普通の愛] (Tokyo: Kadokawa Shoten, 1993).

⁵⁶ Ozaki Yutaka, “An Eternal Heart,” *The Birth* (May), 1991.

僕らは至上の幸福を手にしよ う。	We will obtain the supreme happiness
新しい思想によって。	By a new thought
新しいパラダイムによって	By a new paradigm
同志よ・・・、僕らは今、	Friends...we now
永遠の成功を胸に抱えているん だ。	Hold the eternal success in our hearts.

At the end of this prose, he wrote “from Ozaki Yutaka to fellows (尾崎豊より同志へ).”⁵⁷ He viewed his fans as like-minded people, who stand in the same field and share their feelings. As seen in the words above, we can see Ozaki’s growth and maturity as an adult.

Conclusion

Ozaki Yutaka was one of the most influential rock musicians in the 1980s. His lyrics reflected well the social factors and people’s feelings. He struggled particularly during childhood, as well as with friendships at his new school. He felt as though he did not belong. In junior high school and throughout high school, he rebelled against his teachers and did not follow the school rules. During the latter part of those years, he began his music career. Because of his background, his songs and messages were very real and powerful. His lyrics expressed his loneliness. He also expressed his defiance against the society and school as a teen. Some of his songs had an anarchistic message. Being influenced by Yoshimoto Taka’aki, Ozaki viewed the world as an illusion. Yamashita evaluates him as “a poet, writer, and artist who was obsessive about and value his words” and “a thinker who expresses his thought and philosophy with rhythms and his body and who moved people’s hearts.”⁵⁸ After Ozaki’s death, Yoshimoto had a dialogue with Ozaki’s father, Kenichi. Yoshimoto described that Yutaka was “a person of the words” who described things using different settings, scenes, and characters in his songs.⁵⁹ As Yoshimoto’s analysis demonstrates, Ozaki was a musician who inspired a number of people

⁵⁷ Shibata, “Ozaki Yutaka heno 120 tsū no tegami,” p. 420.

⁵⁸ Yamashita, *Ozaki Yutaka no tamashii: Kagayaki to kunō no kiseki*, p. 1.

⁵⁹ “Yoshimoto Taka’aki, Ozaki Kennchi, and Yamashita Etsuko no taidan,” *Takarajima* 30/10 (1993).

through his words. In this sense, this was one phenomenon during the 1980s. Almost two decades after his death, his songs still attract people today.

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