Research Visit Report

Theme: Yugoslavia as Utopia: Memories and Identity of Exile Writers

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Publications and presentations:
Article: Diasporatic Literature of Eastern Europe (Ed., Mitsuyoshi Numano, *Diaspora*, Univ. of Tokyo Press, in Japanese, forthcoming)
Presentation: "Tape-Recorder As a Medium of Narrating Trauma" (Vancouver, ACLA 2011.4)

Research carried out during the program:
The research grant assisted me financially during my stay at Harvard University. Various research resources at Harvard allowed me to explore the question of shifting identity of Yugoslavian exile writers.
A part of the research results was presented at the American Comparative Literature Association 2011 annual meeting. The aim of the presentation was to consider how contemporary writers express their own trauma in "autobiographical" work. Two contemporary writers were analyzed in comparative perspective. One is Japanese author Kenzaburo Oe (b. 1935) and his *Changeling* (2000). The story is about the suicide of a film director who was both a relative of the author and his old friend. The protagonist tries to overcome his friend's death, having conversations with the late friend through the tape-recorder which his friend left for him; meanwhile the protagonist starts to remember another trauma which happened in his old days, when his country was under the American occupation. The other is a Serbian-Canadian-Jewish writer, David Albahari (b.1948), and his story *Bait* (1996). Like Oe's, this story deals with two traumatic periods: World War II and the dissolution of Yugoslavia. Listening to his mother's story in the 1940s, the protagonist-narrator turns his thought toward his homeland, which he left recently. In both stories the tape-recorder plays the role of medium to connect past to present, blending collective and individual suffering.