



Against the Critics: A Methodological Defense of the Silver Edge as Creative and Scholarly Inquiry

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Abstract

This paper presents a methodological defense of The Silver Edge as a central component of a unified creative and scholarly research program. Although fiction is often treated as separate from academic inquiry, the novella is used here as a deliberate extension of the symbolic and comparative frameworks established in earlier studies. Drawing on comparative poetics, symbolic anthropology, hermeneutic interpretation, and narrative theory, the paper argues that creative practice can generate forms of knowledge that complement analytical scholarship. The Silver Edge provides a narrative environment in which twilight cosmology, spiritual reciprocity, and moral agency can be examined with precision. Through critical reading, cultural contextualization, and theoretical integration, the paper illustrates that the novella represents more than an optional creative component to the project, being an indispensable element of the intellectual structure underpinning the work. It explores the impact of critical narration and creative inquiry on symbolic structures, an area that could be abstract in critical writing, and the merits of creative work toward being an attuned, rigorous inquiry mode for the humanities.

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1. Introduction

Creative work within academic settings often encounters familiar misunderstandings about its scholarly value. There are those who claim that fiction lacks a place within academic knowledge. There are those who state that a creator can never objectively interpret their own creations. Others feel that elements based on the supernatural are not suitable for critical thought. Such views are grounded on presumptions that prove themselves empty when measured against the history of literary studies. Furthermore, one must consider those writers through whom narrative served as a methodological approach to philosophical questions and symbols through Eliot, through Borges, through Tanizaki, through Calvino, through Mishima, through Le Guin—all of whom incorporated their intellectual pursuits through stories that are not separable from their critical discourse (Eliot, Borges, Tanizaki, Calvino, Mishima, Le Guin).

To address these misunderstandings, the study places creative practice within a clearly defined symbolic and comparative method. This research directly addresses these points. First of all, it will be shown that creativity should not add to academic study but could instead be a form of research in its own right. In a world of symbolism and comparison, fiction writing can explore concepts by implying conflicts and pointing out patterns that are only theories in writing. The Silver Edge will thus be considered here for its methodological development of earlier work.

The argument builds on two previous studies. Samarathunga TC examined Japanese and Chinese twilight poems and identified a shared symbolic grammar of fading light, divine withdrawal, and moral uncertainty (Samarathunga, "Twilight Cosmologies"). Samarathunga TD developed the theoretical and hermeneutic principles that explain how such symbols produce meaning within cultural and cosmological contexts (Samarathunga, "A Theoretical Defense"). Together, these studies established the foundation of twilight cosmology, a framework in which thresholds, reciprocity, and the instability of borrowed brilliance shape ethical understanding.

The Silver Edge takes this work one step further, placing the same symbolic grammar into a narrative space. The novella allows the ideas to unfurl through character, conflict, and lived experience. It shows what twilight, spiritual reciprocity, and moral agency do when they are set under narrative pressure. In doing so, the study shows how creative work can operate as a genuine tool for understanding symbolic structures rather than as a decorative addition to scholarship. It also places the project within long-standing traditions in symbolic anthropology and interpretive theory, where meaning is understood to arise through the meeting of text, reader, and cultural context (Gadamer, Geertz).

This introduction serves as the backdrop to a study that approaches creative and critical work as interdependent. The successive sections follow the symbolic framework, detail some methodological principles underlying the research, and then demonstrate how the novella functions as a site of theoretical experimentation within such a unifying research design.

To clarify the structure of the project, this study follows a three-part research sequence that moves from comparative analysis to theoretical reflection and finally to creative practice. The first stage establishes a symbolic grammar of twilight, reciprocity, and borrowed brilliance through a close reading of Japanese and Chinese poetic traditions. The second stage develops the hermeneutic and anthropological principles that explain how these symbols generate meaning within cultural and cosmological contexts. The third stage, represented by the novella *The Silver Edge*, is not an optional creative supplement but the methodological continuation of this sequence, a narrative environment in which the same symbolic grammar is placed under narrative pressure. The central claim of this paper is that creative practice can function as a legitimate mode of symbolic inquiry within a unified research design, producing forms of knowledge that complement and deepen analytical scholarship.

2. Contribution to the Field

This work can be considered an addition to comparative literature, creative humanities, and symbolic analysis because it proves that one modern novella, through its potential to be a story further developing theoretical thought, can be a symbol-processing area, aiming to achieve its goals in a manner complementary to academic approaches being practiced today (Smith and Dean). In particular, this work demonstrates that fiction can be an area for symbolic structure processing, developing and illustrating these processes in a complementary manner to academic approaches.

The paper also expands the study of East Asian symbolic grammars by examining how twilight cosmology, spiritual

reciprocity, and moral agency can be explored across genres and modes of expression. By placing *The Silver Edge* in dialogue with classical Japanese and Chinese poetic traditions, the study contributes to ongoing conversations about cross-cultural literary analysis and the interpretive value of symbolic structures (Yu, Yip, Turner).

Moreover, the project also addresses contemporary theoretical approaches that focus on the role of aesthetic experience in scholarly study. Different scholars, such as Rita Felski and Eve Sedgwick, suggest that the act of interpretation has also been influenced by the role of attachment, as opposed to the role of distance (Felski, Sedgwick). This analysis will also attempt to develop this idea and explore the use of narrative experimentation in the illumination of abstract ideas related to symbols and ethics as explored in analytical discourse.

Collectively, these points place the work within the context of an emerging literature that recognizes creative practice as a serious form of scholarly work.

Apart from these, the project also corresponds with existing models in contemporary research, where creative practices are considered a recognized area of scholarship in itself. Robin Nelson's "triangulation of knowledges" categorizes creative practice, critical reflection, and scholarship as interlocking practices, which come close to matching the design of this project in its attempt at an interlocking design. Brad Haseman's "performative research" model states that there is some "knowledge that can only be produced in artistic practices." This principle was reflected in *The Silver Edge*'s production of insight by using "narrative experimentation" (Haseman). Estelle Barrett and Barbara Bolt's focus on "material thinking" further goes on to support that creative practices are capable of yielding conceptual frameworks that are not possible within critical discourse (Barrett and Bolt). Graeme Sullivan's model of artistic cognition further states that creative practices are a "site of cognition" (Sullivan). By placing it within these pre-existing models, it is further asserted that it is not an unusual or supplementary system of practices in conducting research.

Study in this paper fills a gap in current creative-critical scholarship by demonstrating how a single symbolic grammar can be examined across both analytical and narrative modes within a unified research design. While many practice-based studies argue that creative work can complement scholarship, few show in detail how a creative text can function as a methodological extension of a comparative symbolic analysis. By integrating classical East Asian poetic traditions, hermeneutic theory, and a contemporary novella into one coherent symbolic inquiry, this project offers a model of creative-scholarly integration that is not yet represented in existing literature.

3. Fiction as a Scholarly Tool

3.1. A Tradition of Creative and Critical Work

The idea that a writer cannot be, or cannot be only, a scholar has never stood the test of historical inquiry either. The greatest thinkers have constantly traversed and crossed the frontiers between invention and critique. Eliot transformed the art of literary critique while creating a new kind of poetry himself (Eliot). Borges constructed a labyrinthine world of fiction, a world of metaphysics and the boundaries of knowledge that could be intuited, not only deduced (Borges). The worlds of Tanizaki, Calvino, Mishima, and Le Guin

explored storytelling as a tool for thinking, an experimentation ground for notions of beauty, ethics, and cultural identity imagined in the figures, images, and worlds of fiction (Tanizaki, Calvino, Mishima, Le Guin). Their fiction was not a departure from their intellectual activity, but the activity itself, an actual method of inquiry.

This lineage reveals one thing. A critical practice and academic inquiry are not opposites. They are actually different approaches to the same questions, and they both sharpen and deepen one another. The scholar-writer is not the exception to the rule. The scholar-writer has roots in a long and honored tradition of thinkers that think best when thinking in stories.

3.2. Fiction as a Site of Theoretical Experimentation

The Silver Edge is not an escape into fantasy.

It cleanly creates a narrative space where symbolic ideas can move, change, and show their inner strains dynamically. Inside that space, the story borrows brilliance that is not one's own, the ethics of entering into spiritual agreements, the fragility of human agency, and the consequences that arise when a sacred order is unsettled.

These questions mirror the themes explored in the earlier comparative study (Samarathunga, "Twilight Cosmologies"), but the narrative lets them surface in a different way. Rather than being presented as arguments, they are lived through the characters and their choices.

Fiction can reveal how symbolic structures behave when placed under narrative pressure. It can show how a moral agent responds to uncertainty, how a cosmology shapes human action, and how a spiritual contract alters the boundaries of ethical responsibility. Contemporary theorists have suggested that narrative is a form of reasoning that generates knowledge through imaginative engagement (Herman, Nussbaum, Ricoeur). In this sense, *The Silver Edge* is not separate from scholarship. It functions as one of its instruments.

4. Methodological Positioning

4.1. Epistemic Status of Creative Knowledge

The practice of creativity in this endeavor is a form of knowledge that is not primarily analytical while nevertheless collaborating with it. The activity of analysis isolates symbolic patterns and constructs a theoretical explanation. The activity of creativity is oriented toward a form of knowledge that is experienced when there is a narrative embodiment, a form of knowledge that is a result of putting symbolic structures into a lived situation. The function of creativity is not one of testing propositions but of dramatizing how symbolic structures behave when placed in a lived situation.

In such a research design, creative knowledge becomes a form of supplement to inquiry. Analytical inquiry demonstrates the symbolic grammar of twilight, reciprocation, and borrowed luminosity. However, creative inquiry tests the power of such grammar by immersing it in a world of narrative in which characters are forced to operate in accordance with such grammar. In a manner of speaking, a novella does much more than explain certain ideas in a theoretical domain. It does so by providing certain insights based on tensions, contradictions, and morality that are necessarily purely abstract in an expository domain of scholarly inquiry. Based on such a requirement, creative

inquiry informs a space of analytical inquiry.

4.2. Integrated Hermeneutic and Anthropological Method

This subsection outlines the methodological framework that guides the study and explains how hermeneutics, symbolic anthropology, poetics, and creative practice work together as an integrated approach to interpretation (Gadamer, Geertz, Smith and Dean, Turner).

This project engages in an interdisciplinary method that integrates creative practice, poetics, symbolic anthropology, and interpretation. It approaches literary texts in relation to the spaces of meaning that occur regardless of the intended path of the author, but also in recognition that creative practices themselves can be a true mode of inquiry. This is in line with a substantial tradition of interpretation in which meaning is generated at the intersection of the text, the reader, and culture (Gadamer, Geertz).

For reasons of methodological validity it is necessary to point out that, via a commitment to methodological integrity, a balanced and integrated method is adopted in using creative practice in this research that goes well beyond an impressionistic or ad-hoc one. The symbolic grammar uncovered in our comparative analysis forms a key foundation here, and *The Silver Edge* is analyzed via a direct parallel application of our methodic and anthropologic principles employed in our poem analysis. The interpretation is derived from textual evidence, cultural readings, and coherent theoretical foundations for meaning-making that reach no farther than a textual or theoretical meaning, and not intended by individual authoring or biographical experiences. Thus, *The Silver Edge* is properly treated as a self-contained text that finds meaning from its internal structures.

Such a methodological approach retains its integrity with regard to the steps of interpretation done in accordance with a fixed set of interpretation norms. Also, it retains the autonomy of interpretation of the text itself, according to which the interpretation of the text will be guided by the significations produced in accordance with the structuring of the text and not by the intention of the author of that text. In conclusion, the interpretation remains free of biographical assumptions and is grounded in textual and cultural evidence (Gadamer, Geertz). Building on this foundation, the same interpretive principles are applied to the novella to ensure continuity between the poetic analysis and the narrative reading (Gadamer, Geertz).

The symbolic grammar developed in this comparative analysis provides this critical base, and in this instance, it means that this novella will also be read in accordance with these same levels of hermeneutic and anthropological principles as in effectively analyzing these poems.

The argumentation developed in these readings is grounded in evidence drawn directly from the text, supported by culturally accepted interpretations and established theoretical models of meaning. It does not rely on authorial intention or experiential accounts but on the symbolic structures present within the work itself. *The Silver Edge* in this instance thus becomes an independently self-constituted text so as to arrive at these various levels of meaningful construction based in this structure, this imaging, and these narrative contradictions.

Visuality is methodologically relevant here precisely because it actualizes the logic of relationship implicit in the research

design. In other words, by charting the relationship of symbolic analysis to hermeneutic reflection and creative practice, the image helps to illustrate how these elements

operate not in separate motions but in relationship to one another as a system.

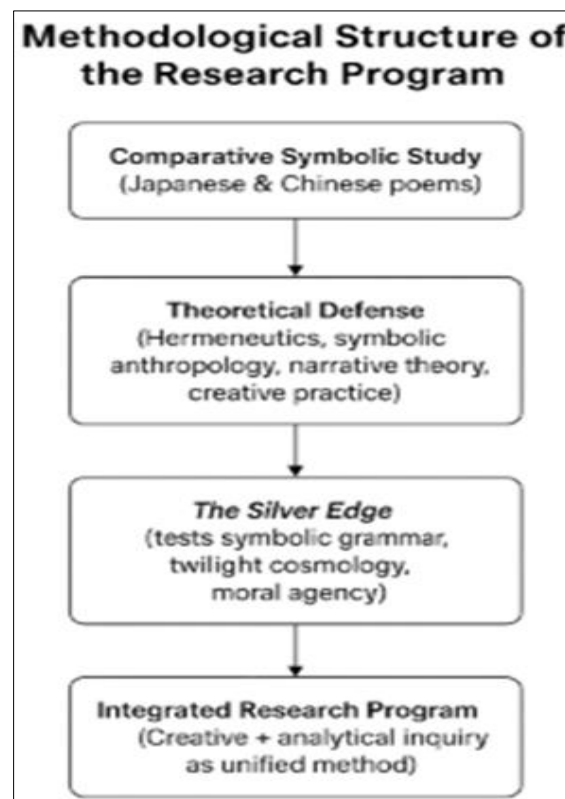


Fig1 : A visual summary of how symbolic analysis, theoretical reflection, and creative practice function as interconnected components of the unified research design.

The overall research design consists of a three-step methodological sequence. The first step consists of comparative symbolic analysis. This step reveals a grammar of twilight, reciprocity, and borrowing of brilliance in Japanese and Chinese poetic traditions. The second step consists of theoretical and hermeneutic reflection. At this step, principles of symbolic anthropology and theories of interpretation develop an understanding of how such symbols produce meaning in cultural and cosmological contexts. The

final step consists of creative practice, which in this case expands this sequence to examine how these self-same symbolic patterns might operate in a narrative context. The novella itself becomes the space in which this grammar of twilight, reciprocity, and borrowing of brilliance becomes subjected to narrative pressure so that its own tensions and transformations become apparent in ways that underscore character, action, and experience.

Symbolic Element	Function in Poems	Function in Novella
Twilight	Threshold, divine withdrawal	Ethical pressure point, spiritual instability
Borrowed brilliance	Reliance on external power	Manabu's spiritual contract
Reciprocity	Moral balance	Consequences of spiritual agreement

Fig 2: A comparative table illustrating how key symbolic elements behave differently in classical East Asian poetry and in the narrative structure of *The Silver Edge*

Figure 2 offers a clear comparison of how symbolic elements behave across poetic and narrative forms. Twilight, borrowed brilliance, and reciprocity each carry distinct functions in classical East Asian poems, where they signal divine withdrawal, reliance on external power, and moral balance. In the novella, these same elements shift under narrative pressure. Twilight becomes a moment of ethical strain, borrowed brilliance takes shape as a spiritual contract, and reciprocity reveals its consequences through lived experience. This table helps clarify the symbolic grammar at the heart of the project, showing how meaning transforms when ideas move from verse into story.

There is a definite progression of methodological elements which informs this integrated research design. The comparative research settles upon a grammar of symbolism of twilight cosmology which informs Japanese and Chinese poetry. The theoretical framework which follows sets out the principles of hermeneutic and anthropological discourse which inform symbolic systems. The final element of this research design is the role of the novella as a site for this symbolic grammar to be tested out and developed in a lived environment. All of these elements contribute to a research arc where artistic practice becomes not a supplement to research but a research tool.

In this view, creative practice is not something added onto research. It is one of the ways research happens. Work in the creative arts has shown that artistic processes can produce their own forms of understanding, which stand alongside analytical discourse rather than simply extending it (Smith and Dean). Lens makes fiction here as a tool for clarifying symbolic structures. By placing them inside narrative situations, it becomes possible to see their tensions, contradictions, and ethical stakes with greater clarity. The methodological framework is supported by current theories of reading and interpretation. Rita Felski writes that analysis is a product of attachment, resonance, and aesthetic experience, not only of critical distance (Felski). Similarly, Eve Sedgwick argues that reparative reading, which searches for meaning in imagination and openness rather than in suspicion, is also valid (Sedgwick). These ideas together explain how narrative experimentation might illuminate symbolic or ethical concerns that analysis alone might never make material or straightforward.

The project also benefits from the principles of symbolic anthropology, the methodical study of the ways in which meanings are conferred through symbolic chant, story, image, and ritual. The work of Victor Turner and Edith Turner illustrates the ways in which symbols work in the experience of everyday life, the ways in which symbols contribute to moral and spiritual understanding (Turner, Turner). The project approaches *The Silver Edge* as a story, a place in which symbolic structures may be examined, developed, and explicated.

Within this integrated framework, creative practice functions as a fully legitimate mode of inquiry, allowing symbolic structures to be tested, clarified, and extended in ways that analytical interpretation alone cannot achieve (Smith and Dean, Haseman).

5. The Silver Edge and Twilight Cosmology

With the methodological framework established, the analysis now turns to how twilight cosmology operates within the narrative structure of *The Silver Edge*.

5.1. Continuity of Symbolic Grammar

The symbolical frameworks discovered in *Twilight Cosmologies* recur, with obvious purpose and logical consistency, throughout *The Silver Edge*. Twilight serves as a boundary area between the human and the spiritual realms, an area where certainty disappears and the human faculty of moral agency is brought into question. This boundary area corresponds with the Twilight, as evoked in the Japanese as well as the Chinese poem under investigation in the earlier study, which marks the departure of the divine and the emergence of the spirit ambivalence (Samarathunga, "Twilight Cosmologies", Yu, Yip).

In the novella, twilight becomes the moment when Manabu first encounters the spirit, and it marks the beginning of his movement from borrowed brilliance toward earned wisdom. The symbolic grammar remains consistent. Divine withdrawal becomes the central crisis, and the protagonist must navigate the consequences of relying on a power that is not his own. This continuity shows that the novella is not a departure from the earlier symbolic analysis. It is an extension of it, expressed through narrative rather than verse. Borrowed brilliance refers to the reliance on a light or power that does not originate from the self, a symbolic condition that carries ethical and cosmological consequences in both the poetic traditions and the novella (Samarathunga, "Twilight Cosmologies", Yu, Yip).

5.2. Fiction as Comparative Bridge

The novella thus also acts as a cultural bridge. It derives from spirit folklore in Japan, from ideas of cosmic reciprocity from China, and from contemporary concerns with merit, success, and moral accountability. These components do not integrate into one cultural essence. Rather, they engage with each other as if they were using the comparative method from the initial study.

This interaction is examined through a structural comparative method that maps recurring symbolic functions across cultural contexts while preserving their distinct cosmological logics.

Japanese traditions often portray spirits as beings whose presence demands ritual respect and moral awareness (Foster). Chinese narratives emphasize the ethical consequences of spiritual contracts and the balance between human action and cosmic order (Bender). *The Silver Edge* brings these traditions into conversation by placing its protagonist within a symbolic system shaped by both ritual dignity and moral reciprocity.

5.3. Twilight a Ethical and Cosmological Pressure

Twilight in the novella is not only a visual motif. It is a symbolic pressure point. It marks the moment when Manabu's choices carry the greatest weight, when the boundaries between human agency and spiritual influence become most fragile. This mirrors the role of twilight in the classical poems, where the fading of light signals a shift in moral and cosmological order (Turner, Geertz).

By placing its central ethical conflict within this symbolic frame, the novella demonstrates how narrative can test the durability of a symbolic system. It shows how a character responds when the structures that guide meaning begin to dim. In this way, *The Silver Edge* becomes a narrative laboratory for examining twilight cosmology in action.

Reciprocity refers to the moral balance created through exchanges between humans and spiritual forces, a principle central to both the poetic traditions and the novella (Yu, Bender).

6. Micro Close Reading

These close readings show how the symbolic grammar identified in the comparative study becomes active within the narrative, revealing dimensions of twilight cosmology that remain abstract in analytical discussion.

A close reading of selected moments in *The Silver Edge* helps clarify how the novella extends the symbolic system developed in the earlier comparative study. These examples show how narrative form can illuminate symbolic structures that appear in the classical poems, allowing the reader to see how twilight cosmology operates within lived experience rather than abstract description.

A strong parallel is found within Manabu's initial meeting with the spirit. It is presented within the context of the image of the dusk, which is conveyed as a light that "hesitated on the edge of the world". This is similar to the twilight stage found within the Japanese shadow journey poem, which is a light that is fading to indicate the end of the presence of the deity, thus the commencement of the spiritual ambiguity (Samarathunga, 'Twilight Cosologies', Yu).

A second example appears later in the novella when the spirit's influence begins to wane. The narrative describes the change through imagery of dimming silver, a visual metaphor that mirrors the Chinese poem's motif of light receding into cosmic disorder (Yip). In the poem, the fading of brightness represents the instability of human reliance on external power. In the novella, the same symbolic logic is translated into narrative action. Manabu must face the consequences of depending on a brilliance that was never fully his own.

A third moment reinforces the continuity of symbolic grammar. When Manabu attempts to sever the spiritual contract, the scene is framed through a landscape where shadows lengthen and the horizon loses definition. This imagery recalls the liminal spaces described by Victor Turner, which symbolic thresholds create conditions for transformation and ethical testing (Turner). The novella uses such a symbolic environment to dramatize the tension between agency and dependence, the very tension that was central in the earlier poetic analysis.

The novella does not merely borrow motifs from the poems. It translates their symbolic structures into narrative form, allowing the reader to witness how twilight cosmology shapes action, emotion, and ethical decision making. Through these close readings, it becomes clear that *The Silver Edge* functions as a narrative laboratory where symbolic ideas are tested and made visible.

7. Cultural Specificity

Having examined how twilight cosmology operates within the narrative, the study now turns to the cultural frameworks that shape the symbolic logic of the supernatural figure (Shirane, Geertz). The analysis focuses on symbolic functions rather than attempting to represent the full diversity of East Asian spiritual traditions.

The supernatural creature in *The Silver Edge* has its roots in specifically cultural traditions rather than a generalized world of fantasies. Its behavior, ethics, or meaning comes out of traditional worldviews of both Japanese and Chinese

cultures. In both cases, it has had a long history of influence in literary traditions.

By operating in this manner, the narrative prevents the tendency to see the supernatural themes in East Asia as equivalent, and instead embeds each component within the logic that is native to it (Shirane, Geertz). The novella refuses to combine the Japanese and Chinese traditions into a single cultural essence, and rather structures the meeting between the traditions so that both have their own systems of symbolic logic. These parts do not combine into a single cultural essence. They interact with the other as if they were using the comparative method from the initial study.

In Japanese folklore, spirits are typically depicted as entities that exist in relation to which one is compelled by their presence to observe rituals of respect, intuition, and relational obligation. The traditional legend of kami and yōkai speaks of a world in which the distinction between human existence and the realm of spirits is preserved through skills of etiquette, reverence, and the maintenance of relational balance (Foster). The spirit in the novella represents this tradition through its quiet grace and through its awareness that Manabu must recognize the weight of their meeting.

One such field where Chinese literary heritage exerts its strong influence is related to "the moral implications of spiritual contracts wherein the interplay between human initiative and the cosmos becomes a matter of utmost significance" (Niranjana 88). Spirit stories revolve around notions of balance, debt, and rebalancing moral karma when such debt is not repaid (Bender 145, Yu). Such a phenomenon is present in the novella in terms of the spiritual contract Manabu signs with the spirit wherein his very existence is held hostage to such a notion of cosmic accountability. Manabu's succeeding deviations in his discharge of such obligations are reflected in the Chinese notion of karmic imbalance wherein "the world around him turns upside down, whereupon his dependence on borrowed luminosity starts to tell" (Niranjana 88).

Spirit stories revolve around notions of balance, debt, and the rebalancing of moral karma when such debt is not repaid (Bender 145, Yu). This dynamic appears in the novella through the terms of the spiritual contract Manabu enters with the spirit. When he begins to falter in fulfilling the obligations of this agreement, the narrative reflects the Chinese symbolic logic of karmic imbalance, revealing how borrowed brilliance carries consequences within a cosmological system of accountability.

Through the embedding of the supernatural figure in the above-mentioned culturally specific symbolic logics, *The Silver Edge* escapes the threat of the homogenization of the spiritual patterns in the East Asian tradition and, instead, approaches each spiritual tradition as a separate system of meaning. The symbolic universe in the novella is thus determined by the Japanese logic of relationship obligation and the Chinese logic of cosmological reciprocity, which define the ethical dimension of Manabu's odyssey. This culturally rooted approach thus validates the methodological continuity between the above-mentioned chapters and the rest of the project's chapters.

These cultural frameworks do not merge into a single East Asian essence. Instead, they coexist within the narrative in a way that reflects the comparative method used in the earlier scholarly work. The novella stages an encounter between traditions that share thematic resonances but remain distinct

in their cosmological assumptions. This approach aligns with the broader study of symbolic systems, where meaning emerges through the interaction of cultural forms rather than through their simplification (Shirane, Geertz).

In doing so, *The Silver Edge* demonstrates that the supernatural being itself can be anchored in these particular traditions so that the symbolic systems developed in the novella are not arbitrary constructs. Such anchoring lends *The Silver Edge* the weight it must contain if it is to be a useful scholarly object, and the richness and variety that must be accommodated if the twilight cosmology can be properly developed.

By grounding its supernatural figure in these culturally specific symbolic logics, *The Silver Edge* avoids the homogenization of East Asian spiritual motifs and instead treats each tradition as a distinct system of meaning. Symbolic world of the featured novella shaped by the interplay of Japanese relational obligation and Chinese cosmological reciprocity, addresses the ethical stakes of Manabu's journey. This culturally anchored approach reinforces the methodological continuity of the project, showing how symbolic analysis, hermeneutic reflection, and narrative embodiment work together within a unified research design.

8. Responding to Concerns

8.1. The Writer Scholar and Questions of Bias

One of the most common concerns about creative-critical work is the risk of authorial bias. Critics often assume that a writer cannot subject his or her own fiction to rigorous scholarly analysis. This assumption overlooks the long history of writer-scholars who produced both influential creative work and influential criticism.

Equally active in their fiction with direct consideration of philosophical and aesthetic considerations were Eliot, Borges, Tanizaki, Calvino, Mishima, and Le Guin. Also at work in each of them were critical essays that contributed in their own way to how literature is interpreted by readers and scholars [Eliot] [Borges] [Tanizaki] [Calvino] [Mishima] [Le Guin]. Their activity in both capacities did not impeach their scholarship. It enhanced it. It demonstrated that creative imagination and critical thinking could grow out of the same soil. Their activity in fiction did not impair their scholarship. It added to it.

This work, too, adheres to that tradition. The text analysis in "The Silver Edge" does not require a fluctuating concept based upon individual intention and/or private meaning. The text is viewed independently, apart from its author's intentions, and its interpretation is subject to predetermined models according to hermeneutic and symbolic principles. This text analysis also adheres to conventions recognizing the autonomy of the text together with its reader in constructing its meanings [Gadamer] [Geertz].

8.2. Fiction as Evidence

Another concern is whether fiction can serve as evidence within scholarly research. This question arises from the assumption that only analytical prose can produce legitimate knowledge. Contemporary narrative theorists challenge this assumption. They argue that stories generate insight by placing ideas within lived situations, emotional contexts, and

ethical dilemmas (Herman, Nussbaum, Ricoeur). Fiction does not replace analysis. It complements it by revealing how symbolic structures behave when they are embodied in narrative form.

Contemporary narrative theorists argue that fiction does not merely illustrate pre-existing ideas but actively generates knowledge by placing concepts under narrative pressure. Paul Ricoeur describes narrative as a mode of understanding through which human action, temporality, and ethical conflict become intelligible. Similarly, David Herman's work on story logic emphasizes that narrative constructs cognitive models that reveal patterns of meaning unavailable to abstract analysis alone. In this sense, *The Silver Edge* does not function as an example appended to theory, it is a site where symbolic structures are tested, strained, and made epistemologically productive.

In this project, the novella functions as a narrative experiment that tests the symbolic system developed in the earlier comparative study. It allows the reader to see how twilight cosmology shapes action, emotion, and moral responsibility. The story becomes a site where theoretical concepts are explored through character, setting, and conflict

8.3. Concerns About Cultural Representation

Some critics may worry that the use of East Asian supernatural motifs risks essentialism or cultural flattening. This concern is addressed by grounding the novella in specific Japanese and Chinese traditions rather than treating them as interchangeable. The spirit's dignity and relational expectations reflect Japanese conceptions of kami and yōkai (Foster). Its contractual logic and moral reciprocity draw from Chinese narratives of spiritual obligation and cosmic balance (Bender, Yu). These influences remain distinct within the narrative, thus not collapsing into a single cultural category.

The problem of essentialism has been well-documented within cross-cultural literary analysis, and the use of supernatural themes from various East Asian traditions is especially prone to it, being potentially conflated as equivalent to, or manifestations of, the "Asian" perspective. The current project is well aware of this problem and wishes to state that any danger of essentialism is specifically avoided within the current analysis. The symbolic worlds of Japan and China have their own particular cosmologies, religious practices, and narratives, which would all be erased were they treated as part of a cultural essence.

By being aware of the differences existing in these traditions and presenting the novella in the context of comparisons, the analysis escapes the trap of generalizations. In this respect, it treats cultural particularity as depth, and not mere decoration.

8.4. Concerns About Scope

A final concern relates to the size of the corpus. Some may argue that two poems and a single novella cannot support broad claims about symbolic systems. This study does not attempt to generalize across all East Asian literature. Instead, it focuses on a specific symbolic grammar and examines how it operates across genres. The goal is depth rather than breadth. The symbolic continuity demonstrated through close reading and narrative analysis shows that the selected texts form a coherent field of inquiry.

9. Scope and Methodological Strength

9.1. Fiction as Complementary Evidence

This is an intentionally focused project. Rather than surveying a wide range of texts, it examines a small, but symbolically coherent corpus that includes two classical-style poems and a single novella. The design permits depth of analysis and close attention to the symbolic structures that connect the works. Fiction is used, not as a substitute for scholarly argument but rather as complementing evidence that discloses how the symbolic ideas behave when set into narrative situation. This strategy is supported by recent understandings of narrative as a mode of reasoning that can clarify ethical and cultural questions through lived experience (Herman, Nussbaum, Ricoeur).

9.2. Depth Rather Than Breadth

That is where the strength of the project lies in its depth. Working with a limited number of texts, the study shows very well how twilight cosmology may continue across genres and cultural settings. The symbolic grammar outlined in the poems serves as a framework which the novella tests, stretches, and reinterprets.

This method reflects the principles of symbolic anthropology, where meaning is often revealed through detailed examination of specific cultural forms rather than through broad generalization (Turner, Geertz).

9.3. Coherence of the Symbolic System

The symbolic system at the center of the study is coherent and internally consistent. Twilight functions as a threshold, spiritual contracts carry moral weight, and the fading of light signals shifts in cosmological order. These elements appear in the classical poems and reemerge in the novella in ways that demonstrate structural continuity. The coherence of this system strengthens the methodological foundation of the project. It shows that the texts are not arbitrarily grouped but are connected through shared symbolic logic.

9.4. Integration of Comparative and Creative Methods

The project also demonstrates the methodological strength of integrating comparative analysis with creative practice. The comparative study identifies symbolic patterns across Japanese and Chinese traditions (Yu, Yip). The theoretical defense clarifies the interpretive framework (Samarathunga, "A Theoretical Defense"). The novella then tests these ideas within a narrative environment. This integration reflects a growing recognition within the humanities that creative practice can serve as a rigorous mode of inquiry when it is grounded in clear theoretical and cultural frameworks (Smith and Dean, Felski, Sedgwick).

9.5. Alignment with Established Scholarly Traditions

Ultimately, the project is a good fit for established academic traditions that focus on literature as a place of meaning. The hermeneutic interpretation is informed by a concern for dialogue that is expressed in the ideas of Gadamer on hermeneutics (Gadamer). In turn, the part of the project that looks at symbols is informed by Turner on transformation. Lastly, the part that is concerned with culture is informed by academic literature on Chinese/Japanese folklores (Foster, Bender, Shirane). Each example shows that it is not a unique or isolated idea being developed.

10. Limitations and Scope

This study is deliberately circumscribed. It deals with only two classical-style poems and one novella—a slender corpus, one that provides the space for close attention to symbolic continuity, rather than broad generalization. The intent of the study is to explore how a certain symbolic grammar works across generic and cultural contexts, not to make broad claims for coverage regarding East Asian cosmologies or supernatural traditions. A larger corpus would necessitate a different methodological design and would doubtless shift the focus away from the detailed symbolic analysis attempted here.

The research also recognizes that such cultural traditions are disparate and internally multilayered. Japanese and Chinese symbolic systems show some common resonances, yet they remain unique in their own cosmological assumptions and narrative conventions. This project does not try to combine these traditions into some sort of unitary interpretation framework. It considers the interaction between them as a productive site for comparative investigation, following previous scholarship in folklore, literature, and symbolic anthropology (Foster, Bender, Shirane, Turner, Geertz).

Another limitation is the use of creative work as part of this research process. Though the novella provides a narrative environment in which symbolic structures can be tested, it is not considered empirical evidence in the scientific sense. Its value lies in its ability to illuminate theoretical concepts through lived situations, emotional tension, and ethical conflict. This approach stands in tune with contemporary understandings of narrative as a reasoning practice, but does not replace analytics by argumentation (Herman, Nussbaum, Ricoeur).

Finally, the study is premised on an understanding that interpretation bears the stamp of positionality on the part of the researcher. Even as personal intention may not figure in the analysis, writing and interpretation of fiction are acts steeped in the socioeconomic and cultural contexts of researchers, their intellectual training, and aesthetic sensibility. This limitation is addressed through the use of established hermeneutic and comparative frameworks that help maintain interpretive rigor (Gadamer, Smith and Dean, Felski).

These constraints, rather than detracting from the project, strengthen it by being clear markers of the project's scope as well as contributing to the methodological consistency of the project. In focusing upon depth, specification, and symbolic continuity, this project proposes a specific, defensible, and coherent contribution to comparative literature studies, the humanities, and symbolic analysis.

11. Conclusion

The Silver Edge demonstrates the necessity of continuing from comparative symbolic analysis to hermeneutic reflection and finally to creative practice in being a projectful investigation. The novella serves as a space where the concepts of twilight cosmology, reciprocity, and the Silver Edge of Borrowed Brilliance are subjected to the pressure of the narrative form in which the tensions and implications lie abstract in the discourse of analysis. Thus, The Silver Edge is not only optional but also the necessity of the unified research design in being a projectful investigation.

In this way, the research offers a model of how creative work might expand and develop upon, rather than simply

reproduce, symbolic research. It helps to further debates in comparative poetics, symbolic anthropology, and the creative humanities by demonstrating how one symbolic grammar might be analyzed through different forms of meaning-making.

It does so by opening the path for future studies that will treat fiction not as an accessory to scholarship, but as one of its most precise instruments, one capable of generating forms of understanding that emerge only when ideas are lived, tested, and transformed within narrative experience.

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