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**THE DISCOVERY OF JAPAN IN AMERICAN LITERATURE AT THE BEGINNING OF THE
19th CENTURY: THE TRANSNATIONAL PHENOMENON OF YONJIRO NOGUCHI'S
LITERARY ACTIVITY**

The paper focuses on the first stage in adaptation of the Japanese cultural tradition in American literature represented by Yonijiro Noguchi – a writer, poet and critic, underevaluated in contemporary criticism. He was the first Japanese interpreter of his national culture for the West. Noguchi, being a bilingual Japanese and American poet, was involved in literary discussions of the age about a new language of poetry and wrote resonant critical essays: “The Spirit of Japanese Poetry” (1914), “The Spirit of Japanese Art” (1915), “Japanese Hokkus” (1920), “Japan and America” (1921), “Hiroshige” (1921) that were evaluated by Pound, Eliot and Yeats who had been influenced by this East-West cross culturalism.

In “The Spirit of Japanese Poetry” Noguchi is as critical as Pound of the Western tendency to wordiness, emphasizing *hokku* as real poetry. In “Vorticism” essay Pound acknowledged his indebtedness to the spirit of *hokku*. Pound’s early poems clearly reflect an accord with Noguchi’s ideas. Noguchi’s “What is a Hokku Poem” reveals affinity with Pound’s notion of poetic language, declaring that the poetic language must be active, not suggestive, direct, and not symbolic. The aim of *hokku* is to understand the spirit of nature and not to express the poet’s emotions.

The examination of Noguchi’s critical insightfulness into the *hokku*’s poetics that expanded the scope of Anglo-American poetry, already rich in varied achievements, provides a better understanding of his impact on the Anglo-American modernism.

The aim of the paper is to reveal the direct Japanese contacts that influenced Pound’s, Eliot’s and Yeats’s modernist poetics. The direct link between Japanese poetics and imagism through Noguchi should not be overlooked.

Yonijiro Noguchi’s efforts in initiating the American poets into the Japanese poetry and drama Noh gives grounds to regard him as the most influential and memorable Japanese poet and critic of the age, representing important link between countries.

Key words: Japanese poetry, *hokku*, modernism, imagism, Yonijiro Noguchi, transnational phenomenon, American poetry.