

National Drag

Crossed Genders and Alternate Histories



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Bellini Colloquium

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3:30 pm, Washington 315*

*What if Osaka were an independent state under a secret agreement made at the time of the Meiji Restoration? What if, during the siege of Osaka in 1614, daimy ŌToyotomi Hideyoshi's grandson had survived, and his line been concealed down to the present? This is the premise of *Princess Toyotomi*, Makime Manabu's 2009 best-selling novel and the 2011 film adaptation. In the *Da Vinci Code*-style mystery, three federal investigators, dispatched from Tokyo to investigate a discrepancy in city accounts, unravel the counter-history of 'Osaka Nation.'*

*The notion of a rebellious Osaka has surfaced repeatedly as the city has been subordinated within and impoverished by Tokyo-centric state systems. Fantasies of rebelling and restaging Meiji are understandable in a prefecture with Japan's second-highest unemployment rate, ranked as the nation's 'unhappiest.' *Princess Toyotomi* seems to queer those fantasies. The secret of Osaka Nation is passed from father to son, its sovereignty defended exclusively by men; but Hideyoshi's heir is a tomboy 'princess,' and her best friend is the cross-dressing son of Osaka's prime minister. This paper considers how *Princess**