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Doctoral Dissertations, 2011-2026 East Asian Studies

2011

BODY AFFECTS IN THE STOREHOUSE: PARRYING MODERNITY UNO KOJI STYLE

Chung, Young-ah

Princeton, NJ : Princeton University

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BODY AFFECTS IN THE STOREHOUSE: PARRYING MODERNITY UNO KŌJI STYLE

Young-ah Chung

A DISSERTATION

PRESENTED TO THE FACULTY

OF PRINCETON UNIVERSITY

IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE

OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

RECOMMENDED FOR ACCEPTANCE

BY THE DEPARTMENT OF

EAST ASIAN STUDIES

Advisor: Atsuko Ueda

November 2011

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Abstract

This dissertation addresses intricate intersections among the affective body, global modernity, and literary history in Japanese literature in the early twentieth century, that is, the imperial eras of late Meiji (1868-1912) and Taishō (1912-1926). Uno Kōji (1891-1961) and his best-known novella *Kura no naka* (1919) afford the gravitation that draws together such disparate topics as hysteria, melancholia, ownership and debt, collecting, and biography into mutually generative constellations. As Uno's ambivalent position within canonical literary history forms a fertile relation with the stylistic experimentalism of the text, the pair presents felicitous events across the epistemological boundary between life and writing, and bodily and literary style. Geared towards properly expanding the horizon of inquiry, this study emphatically pursues the reverberations between Uno and *Kura no naka* and such varied contemporaries as Akutagawa Ryūnosuke, Walter Benjamin, Charlie Chaplin, Natsume Sōseki, and Virginia Woolf; and thereby illuminates the ineluctably global milieu that was modernity in the early twentieth century. The discussion closely engages with theoretical writings, drawing most extensively on psychoanalytic approaches in order to account for some of the most intractable questions that have tested the disciplinary limits of modern Japanese literature. Chapter 1 explores hysteria as a fresh conceptual passage for feminist criticism, a provocation to the current preoccupation with ideological investigation which uniformly effaces the *body* as a differential event. Chapter 2 is a metonymic experiment deriving theoretical prompts from the larger discussion on hysteria in order to vitalize the increasingly expiring notion of *shishōsetsu* in light of postcolonial melancholia. While Chapter 3 magnifies an intimate scene of the two visual subjects transpiring on the precipice of hysteria, Chapter 4 traces the kinetic body within particular narrative-spatial coordinates. Both chapters impel towards the question of the relation to the other, and the world, by way of the narrative. Finally, Chapter 5 attempts to reimagine *bio-graphy*—

differentiated from biography—as a form of literary history new precisely for its being a *writing* of the *body*. Overall, the human and objectal figures arising from the study are a call of love attuned by several related mimetic modalities: distance to the intimate other, remembering the mother, and becoming the (m)other.

Acknowledgments

There are many who have entered, and left, the horizon of my life during the long course of writing towards this thing that is now neatly contained between covers. Their traces are precisely what gave rise to this thing yet cannot be named so easily with a title or even titles. They simply remain in guises and disguises inside it and beyond. Some may recognize the aftermath of a heated discussion in class or a leisurely chat over coffee, transmogrified in all kinds of figuration, some subtly generative, others rigidly insistent. Others may smile at the idiosyncrasies that they so well know of me, which sometimes render prodigious support to most unlikely arguments and other times stall in naïveté. Among all those whom I remember, and have forgotten, I dedicate these pages to my teachers because they have provided the scaffoldings by which I have built and now have the sobering pleasure of being confronted by this thing that bears my name.

I thank my advisor Atsuko Ueda, who has been a model of professionalism in both scholarship and guidance. Generously accepting yet sternly alert to my predilections, she has managed a tricky balance of respect for the intellectual freedom I needed and pedagogical direction that I have only begun to fathom and appreciate. I truly believe that she challenged me in ways that will continue to matter greatly for my future endeavors. It has been an utter pleasure to encounter the brilliant mind that is Richard Okada. Some of my most inspired and—despite myself—inspiring moments occurred in his seminars. His intellectual courage and rigor is something I wish for best students of the world.

I am honored to have advisory encouragement and friendship of Doris Bargen, who was the first to read the first complete chapter of this dissertation. Her modesty is rivaled only by her gracefulness in all matters. My interest in hysteria no doubt germinated in her undergraduate class on *The Tale of Genji* at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst. My most recent graduate seminar was with Steven Chung, whose gentleness and thoughtfulness have taught me a great deal in the way of a teacher

as well as a writer. I am extremely grateful for his undeserved kindness to serve on the dissertation committee and especially appreciative of his easygoing attitude that has helped me relax at the most hectic times. Rey Chow stands for a landmark in my intellectual growth. By pure serendipity I returned from Japan to find her visiting at Princeton and was able to participate in her graduate seminar on mimesis. To risk a cliché, I found my "voice" in fall 2008. Whatever I write will always refer to that momentous event.

I had the honor of being awarded the Fulbright-Hays fellowship in 2007-8, which allowed me to work under the guidance of Nakayama Akihiko at Gakushūin University. It was a difficult time for me personally in many ways, and consequentially I regret that I could not make the most of the wonderful resources made available to me. Nevertheless, the heated debates in his graduate seminar and my marvel at his intellect have most certainly left imprints on the making of this dissertation. Speaking of my year in Tokyo, by some wondrous work of destiny, the two people with whom I shared the pleasure of evenings out under the Yamanote stars found their ways to my dissertation committee. I have no proper words of gratitude to Rich Calichman and Richi Sakakibara for their extreme kindness in rendering time and effort to the completion of this project. Their respective expertise in studies of modern Japan is luxury to add to the history of this dissertation. In these pages of remembering debts, or my good fortune, I cannot forget Yoshikai Naoto at Dōshisha Women's College, who first welcomed me to Kyoto as a fledgling Master's student in classical literature and has been a most steadfast cheerleader for me ever since. I can only hope that this dissertation may draw me an inch closer to showing how much his support has meant to me.

Now at some distance from the dissertation before me: I thank Master Park for teaching me the wisdom of the healthy body. And, I give my friendship, admiration, and love to Louise, my teacher outside the school—in the *life-world*.

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Overture

I do not know
if it is to a change
in representation
that we should entrust
the future.
-Jacques Derrida, "Choreographies"

The ethics of a linguistic discourse
may be gauged
in proportion to
the poetry
that it presupposes.
-Julia Kristeva, "The Ethics of Linguistics"

So why not hang up the academic hat of critical self-seriousness
–and enjoy?
-Brian Massumi, *Parables for the Virtual*

1.

Now there is an apparent consensus that a notable critical shift occurred in modern Japanese literary studies at the turn of the 1980s. With the forceful intervention of structuralist and poststructuralist theories, the earlier heliocentric orientation around the author as the ultimate locus of textual, literary, and cultural value gave way to doubt in varied areas of research regarding the assumption of the unified subject, giving rise to fresh topics and paradigms of interpretation. This trend was clearly manifest in studies of the historical era at issue in the present study, which spans from the late nineteenth to early twentieth centuries, and in studies of Japanese literature is often referred to by the imperial era names Meiji (1868-1912) and Taishō (1912-1926). Already from the 1970s, scholars such as Maeda Ai, Noguchi Takehiko, and Kamei Hideo were applying

distinctly innovative methodologies, and by the 1980s a new generation of critics like Karatani Kōjin, Asada Akira, and Komori Yōichi made this shift a *fait accompli*: modern Japanese literary studies had made a decisive turn away from narcissistic positivism toward a theoretical worldliness.[1] Thus commenced a series of rigorous investigations in the form of narratological analysis of the literary text, structural pursuit of linguistic changes and discursive formations, and poststructuralist scrutiny of all things presumed to be sovereign or self-evident. This epochal shift in Japanese scholarship in turn energized modern Japanese literary criticism in North America to produce similarly rebellious and theoretically motivated studies, beginning in earnest in the 1990s.[2] Thus far the route of pedagogical traffic seems to be more or less one-way eastward across the Pacific, a state of affairs that raises questions. An imbalance in linguistic proficiency is an insufficient reason for this disparity since the discipline in Japan has been actively receptive to foreign academic discourse in other areas, notably European theory.

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[1] Maeda, *Kindai dokusha no seiritsu* (Yūseidō, 1973); for English translations of a number of Maeda's celebrated essays, see *Text and the City: Essays on Japanese Modernity*, ed. James Fujii (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004). Noguchi, *Shōsetsu no Nihongo* (Chūō kōronsha, 1980). Kamei, *Kansei no henkaku* (Kōdansha, 1983), originally serialized in *Gunzō* (1978-82); for English translation, see *Transformations of Sensibility: The Phenomenology of Meiji Literature*, trans. Michael Bourdaghs (Ann Arbor: Center for Japanese Studies, the University of Michigan, 2002). Karatani, *Nihon kindai bungaku no kigen* (Kōdansha, 1980); for English translation, see *Origins of Modern Japanese Literature*, ed. Brett de Bary (Durham: Duke University Press, 1993). Asada, *Kōzō to chikara* (Keisō shobō, 1983). Komori, *Kōzō to shite no katari* (Shin'yōsha, 1988); *Buntai to shite no monogatari* (Chikuma shobō, 1988). It goes without saying that there have been many more scholars and critics actively participating in the broad discipline of modern Japanese literary studies. The names and titles given here are some of the most visibly and self-consciously theoretical undertakings in the discipline, and as such also better represented in the discourse in North America.

[2] Several studies have questioned the canonical genre of *shishōsetsu*: Irmela Hijiya-Kirschnereit's *Rituals of Self-Revelation:* Shishōsetsu *as a Literary Genre and Socio-Cultural Phenomenon* (Cambridge, Mass.: The Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard University, 1996), first published in German in 1981; Edward Fowler, *The Rhetoric of Confession:* Shishōsetsu *in Early Twentieth-Century Japanese Fiction* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988); Tomi Suzuki, *Narrating the Self: Fictions of Japanese Modernity* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996). James Fujii's *Complicit Fictions: the Subject in Modern Japanese Prose Narrative* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993) questions the notion of the subject drawing upon Mikhail Bakhtin's work. Dennis Washburn's *The Dilemma of the Modern in Japanese Fiction* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995) attempts to displace the notion of modernity, an intractable problem in the discipline, from the West/Japan binary.

Since the 1990s, modern Japanese literary criticism in both Japan and the U.S. has expanded the reach of theoretical approaches at once to broader claims and more minute details. On the one hand, for all the exuberant variety of theoretical interests, in the past two decades scholarship as a whole in this field has evolved around the single problem of the "nation-state" (*kokumin kokka*)—and, concomitantly, nationalism—as the organizing interpretive framework as well as sociocultural structure underlying literary and cultural discourses in the early twentieth century. On the other hand, methodology has tended towards what may be called the materialistic and ideological, as it seeks to account for the conditions of discursive production, e.g., media and technology, and reveal forces of power implicit in the subtlest cultural sites, often entwined in multiple registers such as nation and gender. In short, the era of "cultural studies" began.[3] Subsequently, the dominant critical discursive paradigm became one of *exposé*.

With two exemplary volumes published under the subtitle of "Cultural Studies of the Meiji Thirties" by some of the leading scholars in the discipline, the range of topics of research diversified to address everything from newspaper and magazine columns to scandalous incidents in society to metaphors of urban development.[4] In so doing, these

[3] For the context of the emergence of "cultural studies" in Japan, see Takahashi Osamu's "Atogaki" in Komori Yōichi, et al. eds. *Media, hyōshō, ideorogī: Meiji 30-nendai no bunka kenkyū* (Ozawa shoten, 1997). Miriam Silverberg's advocacy for a "new cultural history" exemplifies socio-cultural historical interests amalgamated with "nation" or "Japan" as a fundamental equation: "Japanese mass culture of the prewar era participated in but differed from cultural currents in the West because of the specific relationship of the state to culture in the Japanese case." See "Constructing New Cultural History of Prewar Japan" in Masao Miyoshi and H. D. Harootunian, eds. *Japan in the World* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1998), 116.

[4] The two volumes are Komori, et al. eds. *Media, hyōshō, ideorogī*; and Kaneko Akio, et al. eds. *Disukūru no teikoku: Meiji 30-nendai no bunka kenkyū* (Shin'yōsha, 2000). A paradigmatic study in the cultural materialist mode is Kōno Kensuke's *Shomotsu no kindai: media no bungakushi* (Chikuma shobō, 1992), which has become obligatory in modern Japanese literature courses in colleges in Japan, capturing as it does the convergence of the material conditions—"the book" (*shomotsu*)—and ideological hypostatization—"the modern" (*kindai*)—imbricated in "literary history" (*bungakushi*) itself. Kōno followed with another book, paying more manifest attention to the immediately discursive sites of literary production, i.e., inside journals and magazines: *Tōki to shite no bungaku: katsuji, kenshō, media*

collections investigated the meeting points of material conditions and sociocultural discourses, which formed a mutually enabling relation. Postcolonial and feminist perspectives joined the critical landscape and, accordingly, various epistemological categories were questioned and their genealogies traced within particular historical contexts of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century Japan.[5] Intense attention to language is yet another aspect of the general concern with the ideology of the material. Several volumes have been published since the 1990s, pursuing the trajectory of the construction of a Japanese "national language" (*kokugo*).[6] Closely related to questions of language is the genesis of "literature" and hence concerted attention to literary history.[7] While Suzuki Sadami's much-cited book meticulously traces the far from linear process by which the "notion" of "modern Japanese literature" became congealed, Atsuko Ueda's more recent study examines "politics" as a particular site of contention in the construction of the canonical parameters of "literature" in modern Japan.[8]

In view of these multifaceted topics of interests closely attending to the larger historical and cultural landscape, it is understandable that sociological findings and

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(Shin'yōsha, 2003). Edward Thomas Mack's recent book attempts a "historical reconstruction of the sociology of modern Japanese literature" through an examination of the Akutagawa Prize (1935-present) and Kaizōha's *Gendai Nihon bungaku zenshū* (1926-31). See *Manufacturing Modern Japanese Literature: Publishing, Prizes, and the Ascription of Literary Value* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010).

[5] Sakai, *Translation and Subjectivity: on "Japan" and Cultural Nationalism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997). Komori Yōichi also has been active in this genre of criticism. See his *Posutokoroniaru=Postcolonial* (Iwanami, 2001). A detailed discussion on feminist criticism will follow in Chapter 1 of this study.

[6] Yi Yŏn-suk, *"Kokugo" to iu shishō: kindai Nihon no gengo ninshiki* (Iwanami shoten, 1996); for English translation, see Yeounsuk Lee, *The Ideology of Kokugo: Nationalizing Language in Modern Japan*, trans. Maki Hirano Hubbard (Honolulu: University or Hawai'i Press, 2010). Osa Shizue, *Kindai Nihon no kokugo nashonarizumu* (Yoshikawa kōbunkan, 1998).

[7] It bears noting that national literary history remains a powerful paradigm, though in diverse contexts, in many parts of the world. See Brook Thomas, "National Literary Histories: Imagined Communities or Imagined Societies?" *Modern Language Quarterly* 64, no. 2 (June 2003).

[8] Suzuki, *Nihon no "bungaku" gainen* (Sakuhinsha, 1998); Ueda, *Concealment of Politics, Politics of Concealment: the Production of "Literature" in Meiji Japan* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007). In largely the same lineage of "constructionist" theory of literature and literary canon, see Haruo Shirane and Tomi Suzuki, eds. *Inventing the Classics: Modernity, National Identity, and Japanese Literature* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000).

methodologies had a leading role in the direction of development in modern Japanese literary studies from the 1990s onward. Hence studies on subjects ranging from school textbooks as a channel of gender normativization, to popular narrative singing as a vehicle of nationalistic inculcation, to department store P.R. magazines fashioning feminized consumerism, and further on to cultural discourse on health and hygiene, have all become an integral part of literary studies.[9] The perfect concurrence of the sociological facility with statistical data, the materialist concern for the media (including language), and an awareness of the more ominous attendants of modernity in the name of the nation and nation-state lurking underneath the ills of capitalism and colonialism have rendered literature "(socio)historical" with a militant injunction. "Literature" has come to contain sites of such political or ideological operations as "gender" and "nation-state" interrogated with evidential "historicity."

Yoshimi Shun'ya—a renowned sociologist whose work has greatly impacted modern Japanese literary studies—apprehends this situation in the following manner: "[In] Japan Cultural Studies is wrongly considered to be critical theories concerning the nation state"; "[As] another movement in the development of Cultural Studies in Japan in the 1990s, there were those who took the position of introducing Cultural Studies as a theoretical weapon of 'resistance' for the 'oppressed.'"[10] In this context, and especially in the wake of the self-conscious critical severance from such earlier approaches as the essentialist binarism of "Japan versus the West" and "modernization theory," the mandate

[9] Muta Kazue, *Senryaku to shite no kazoku: kindai Nihon no kokumin kokka keisei to josei* (Shin'yōsha, 1996); Hyōdō Hiromi, *"Koe" no kokumin kokka: Nihon* (Nihon hōsō shuppan kyōkai, 2000); Jinno Yuki, *Shumi no tanjō: hyakkaten ga tsukutta teisuto* (Keisō shobō, 1994); Kawamura Kunimitsu, *Genshi suru kindai kūkan: meishin, byōki, zashikirō, aruiwa rekishi no kioku* (Seikyūsha, 1990).
[10] "The Condition of Cultural Studies in Japan," in *Cultural Studies and Japan*, ed. Steffi Richter and Annette Schad-Seifert (Leipzig: Leipziger Universitätsverlag, 2001), 45; 46.

to "historicize" ironically came to take on tenors of insularity. The scholarly valorization of the minutiae of material and ideological conditions engendered as an understandable consequence preoccupation with the domestic cultural landscape. Though not "Third World literature," Fredrick Jameson's oft-cited interpretive category, modern Japanese literary criticism has certainly operated on the basis of questions framed in terms of the nation-state, and diversified by way of different forms of ideology. If not "authorial intervention, no longer tolerable in realistic narrative, [yet] still perfectly suitable to the allegorical fable as a form," modern Japanese literary criticism has installed "ideology" as the invisible yet the most palpable origin of all sociocultural events—especially the adverse and undesired.[11] In other words, ideology—with the nation-state as the supra concept—has become the basis of the new practice of allegorical reading.

The specific interest of the present study in historicization as a major modality of recent directions in modern Japanese literature is—perhaps not so obviously—a *literary* one. Out of the brief overview offered above, several symptoms and consequences of the critical discourse emerge for further thought. First, while the theoretical articulations arising in the 1980s displayed brief yet intense interests in language *per se* and the related problems of narrative and text, what followed from the 1990s was a gravitation *en masse* toward the master sign of the nation and its attendant signifiers. Precursors of this trend were visible as early as in the 1970s, when many of Maeda Ai's works already "read more like social history, cultural criticism" as James Fujii has noted.[12] One alternative possibility was traced out in the early criticism by Komori Yōichi, which unmistakably privileged the narrative language and textual structure. This was an approach that became

[11] Fredrick Jameson, "Third World Literature in the Era of Multinational Capitalism," *Social Text* 15 (Autumn 1986): 83.
[12] Maeda, *Text and the City*, 2.

rapidly rare from the 1990s, even within Komori's own corpus of writings. Secondly, in the latter period, the disciplinary boundary between literary and sociological studies, and the ontological differentiation between the literary and the historical, has blurred. It has become increasingly difficult to sense any particularity of literary studies or singularity of the literary discourse. It is possible as Takahashi Osamu does to consider this turn toward what is often called "culture" as a suspicious reaction to what seemed like a reduction of the "text"—a new theoretical category introduced around 1980—to the familiar notion of the *sakuhin* ("the work"), an unexpected development of the analytical sophistication in the lineage of narratology or structuralism.[13] Yet, the evasion of the text as a linguistic event seems connected to larger issues.

The question of the applicability of the term "cultural studies" to *bunka kenkyū* as a particular scholarly practice in Japan has been raised, and is worth considering.[14] Yet the global reverberations of scholarly trends are not to be discounted insofar as they display certain critical discursive patterns across presumed cultural boundaries. As early as 1986, J. Hillis Miller noted a similar state of affairs in the U.S.:

> As everybody knows, literary study in the past few years has undergone a sudden, almost universal turn away from the theory in the sense of an orientation toward language as such and has made a corresponding turn toward history, culture, society, politics, institutions, class and gender conditions, the social context, the material base in the sense of institutionalization, conditions of production, technology, distribution, and consumption of "cultural products," among other products. This trend is so obvious everywhere as hardly to need description. How many symposia, conferences, scholarly convention sessions, courses, books and new

[13] "Atogaki," 336.
[14] Kōno Kensuke has argued for the particularity of *bunka kenkyū* ("cultural studies"), as a local scholarly practice that had developed in no direct relation to the global critical trend of Cultural Studies. See "Bungaku kenkyū/bunka kenkyū to kyōiku no mesodorojī," in *Disukūru no teikoku*, ed. Kaneko, et al., 367-69.

> journals recently have had the word *history*, *politics*, *society* or *culture* in their titles?[15]

A significant difference—and perhaps a small irony—in the context of current modern Japanese literary studies is that the critical tendency towards "culture" and "history" *is* what theory stands for. There is no reason to object this "New Historicist" turn as untheoretical.[16] What demands attention are rather its consequences—for literature.

Indeed the particular predilection of the post-1990s literary studies is a penchant for history, for which "cultural studies" seems an egalitarian and theoretical guise. Diversely distributed as they are, scholarly investigations refer back to history as the master code of interpretation; alternatively, the diversity of topics itself is an unmistakable reference to history, demonstrating an often positivistic reliance on the accumulation of facts and information. It may be ventured then, scandalously perhaps, that for all the remarkable advances in the critical enterprise in recent decades, modern Japanese literary criticism has remained essentially unaltered since the earlier postwar era. That is to say, *sakkaron* and *sakuhinron* are different names for really the same centering on history: one concerned with biography—personal history—and the other with the position of the oeuvre within the national canon—that is, history—of modern literature. It merits repeating that a great number of studies in recent decades have been organized as

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[15] "Presidential Address 1986: The Triumph of Theory, the Resistance to Reading, and the Question of the Material Base," in *Theory Now and Then* (London: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1991), 313. Miller's italics.

[16] Naoki Sakai advances an apparently contradictory claim regarding recent events in Japan studies, noting receptivity to cultural studies and aversion to theory being displayed simultaneously: "In the Japanese studies field that, generally speaking, could neither appropriate nor refute new theoretical frameworks—sometimes characterized as critical theory, poststructuralism, or postmodernism—until recently, the hostility to theory has been so intense that, it seems, some have not hesitated to appeal to various means of institutional violence to insulate their territories from the infection of theories." See Harry Harootunian and Naoki Sakai, "Dialogue: Japan Studies and Cultural Studies," *positions: east asia cultures critique* 7, no. 2 (1999): 594. In a separate discussion, Sakai states, "My ideal image of Cultural Studies somewhat implies that we should be able to introduce a certain kind of political and theoretical investigation in the production of knowledge itself." Sakai, "Cultural Studies and National Academia" in *Cultural Studies and Japan*, ed. Richter and Schad-Seifert, 24.

literary historical inquiries, with "nation," "Japan" or "Japanese," and "nationalism" forming discipline-wide refrains.[17] Considered this way, the new and the old criticisms, with the 1980s as the watershed in between, are more similar than they may seem at a first glance. This is not to understate the significant differences between the two, especially the interpretive sophistication of more recent scholarship with its rigorous investigative practice across textual, disciplinary, and national boundaries. Rather, it is hoped that apprehending this epistemological continuity may allow new insights for the disciplinary future.

What had become a kind of polite silence pervading the discipline was recently broken by Hosea Hirata in an observation bordering on exasperation:

> In the case of modern Japanese literature, we "new" Japanologists, equipped with "theory" for the first time, gallantly attacked the established, aestheticized, pristine image of "Japanese literature" and its corollary "Japan," "Modern Japanese literature," we learned, was linked to Japan's imperial nation building and inescapably "complicit" with a history ridden with war crimes and guilt. We even discovered that "interiority"—the primary index of modern (Japanese) literature—was related to the negation of the Other and thus to the xenophobic logic of war. Yes, we have gained much *critical* ground.[18]

But, Hirata adds, "diabolical laughter erupts from way beneath the ground, breeding madness," which is the "call of 'literature.'" Thus, the furor over history and culture has effaced literature, even as it was claimed to shed light on it. It is entirely appropriate that Hirata notes the ambivalence marking Foucault's oeuvre in relation to literary studies. It is so because the French philosopher and historian whose theoretical career is not

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[17] For the ongoing scholarly interest in the nation, see Michael Bourdaghs's *The Dawn That Never Comes: Shimazaki Tōson and Japanese Nationalism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003); Christopher Hill, *National History of the World of Nations: Capital, State, and the Rhetoric of History in Japan, France, and the United States* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008); Iida Yumiko, *Rethinking Identity in Modern Japan: Nationalism as Aesthetics* (New York: Routledge, 2002).

[18] *Discourses of Seduction: History, Evil, Desire, and Modern Japanese Literature* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Asia Center, 2005), 3.

indifferent to literature has become a brand name in the "historical turn" in modern Japanese literary studies since the 1980s, a dried-up code phrase devoid of poetry and, certainly, *madness*—"historical construction":

> [Foucault's] immense influence on contemporary literary studies could, after all, be considered the primary cause of the demise of literature. His eager disciples—social constructionists, new historicists—bravely flaunt various ethical strategies of reading and writing, uncovering every political subterfuge buried deep in canonical works as well as in our readings. Yet I cannot help wondering who among them has read Nietzsche's *Birth of Tragedy* as genuinely as Foucault did. Who else has given such serious thought to Nietzsche's burning anger at Euripides for destroying Greek tragedy by rendering it intelligible, or more precisely, *morally* intelligible? Isn't this what most of us are doing—reducing the force of "tragedy" (or "life" or "literature") by moralizing?[19]

It may be added here that for all the frequent invocations of Foucault in cultural studies of modern Japanese literature, it is rare to encounter any reference to the final brief yet densely charged section on literature in *The Order of Things* (Les Mots et les choses, 1966). In turn teetering towards and swerving off from a certain deathly euphoria, Foucault's language brings a structural inconsistency to the structuralist practice *par excellence* that the book has been to that point:

> [A] literature dedicated to language gives prominence…to the fundamental forms of finitude. From within language experienced and traversed as language, in the play of its possibilities extended to their furthest point, what emerges is that man has 'come to an end', and that, by reaching the summit of all possible speech, he arrives not at the very heart of himself but at the brink of that which limits him; in that region where death prowls, where thought is extinguished, where the promise of the origin interminably recedes.[20]

It is nothing short of an autosuggestion of the imminent requiem for the Foucaultian discourse itself. History encounters literature as its limit. The literature that writes, or is written by, "the being of language" would efface history, even historiography at its most

[19] Ibid. Hirata's italics.
[20] *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* (New York: Vintage Books, 1994), 383.

virtuous, "like a face drawn in sand at the edge of the sea."[21] The kinship between the historiography marked by structuralist rigidity as in the bulk of *The Order of Things* and the historical prophecy cited above—the alterity within, drawing its force from a poetic surfeit—is precisely a concept of history that ought to exceed any "historical" confidence or "historicist" poise. It even gestures somewhat beyond the privileging of discontinuities to continuities or the event to *telos*, to harbor a certain *affective* surrender to what Foucault calls "finitude," the enabling limit, the fate of Man.

The historical turn in modern Japanese literary criticism may not be reducible to a "moral will," but it certainly has led to a misreading, persistent and therefore perhaps *ideological*, of Foucault's theory of history.[22] And, if this misreading repeats under the sign of "nation," there is a reason to suspect a discursive impulse, moral or otherwise, that may close the "cultural" doors to the world, from which Japan as any modern *place* on the globe has become thoroughly inextricable. How could such a move be historical, in any sense of the word available to current critical discourse? Against this context, it is suggestive that even the vanguard of the most self-consciously unorthodox, anti-establishment, critical corps seems none the less interpellated by the lure of the nation. Azuma Hiroki and Kitada Akihiro's ambitious biquarterly journal titled *Shisō chizu* (Cartography of Thought) launched with an issue titled "Nihon" (Japan) and featuring a lengthy roundtable discussion in addition to full-length articles on the subject.[23] It may also be noted that "J," representing "Japan" modalized by particular cultural codage, tails Azuma and his circle. Even with the subtle shadings of "Japan" by way of the popular

[21] Ibid., 387.
[22] Hirata writes, "[Our] own academic discourses are so thoroughly saturated with our 'moral will' that the current academic scene looks like a tournament in which each member competes to produce the most morally effective discourse in the field." *Discourses of Seduction*, 18.
[23] *Shisō chizu* 1, "Tokushū: Nihon" (Nihon hōsō kyōkai, 2008).

and globalized cultural intercourse, it is in the final analysis the "nation" that remains the ultimate reference point.[24]

The discursive frameworks that have come and gone since the Meiji era itself—"literature and society" (in the 1890s), "literature and life" (in the 1910s), "literature and politics" (in the postwar era), and now "literature and cultural history"—appear as so many historical variations on the same obliterating operation on the "being" of literature. Could this mean that the effort to mark off "literature" as its own space is meaningless in the first place? Or, might it point to a certain critical regime that recurs and as such needs a different address?

It ought to be emphasized here that the argument put forward thus far does not presume to imply that literature has never been "properly" studied. The present discussion arises precisely from the insights offered or at least harbored by preceding discourses. For, as Kristeva speaks of the feminist present in 1979, all radical shifts always already arise from the future perfect inscription of betrayals: "The fact that this might quickly become another form of spiritualism turning its back on social problems, or else a form of repression ready to support all status quos, should not hide the radicalness of the process."[25] The present study also arises thusly. The contribution hoped to be made in these pages—in that brief radical hiatus of spiritualism—will have to come by way of illuminating what has been shadowed, invigorating what has been enfeebled, and, most importantly, inviting a measure of forgiveness toward imaginary leaps and disciplinary truancy, so to speak.

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[24] For a brief introduction to Azuma's work, see Azuma Hiroki, *Otaku: Japan's Database Animals*, trans. Jonathan E. Abel and Shion Kono (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001), preface to the English edition; translator's introduction.

[25] "Women's Time," trans. Alice Jardin, *Signs* 7, no. 1 (Autumn 1981): 34.

2.

One name that has remained rather inconspicuous in the genealogy of critical discourse attempted above is Karatani Kōjin, the critic at the very forefront of the epochal shift of the 1980s, both chronologically and in terms of impact. With the central thesis of his much celebrated book, *Origins of Modern Japanese Literature* (1980), pivoting on the novel concepts of "landscape" and "interiority," Karatani offered modern Japanese literary criticism a language with which to embark on a wholly new era. The "constructed" history—historicity—of epistemological notions such as the author, oeuvre, gender, and even literature itself as highlighted in Karatani's criticism, objectifying as it does the most revered tenets of earlier critical discourse, enabled an unmistakable severance from the critical past. The underlying equation of this project is language itself. Karatani's ingenious reading of *genbun itchi* (the "unification" of spoken and written language in modern Japan) *vis-à-vis* the broader notion of vernacularization in the epistemic field demystified the key set of terms long considered definitive of modernity, including the "individual" or "self." Clearly in conversation with the work of Michel Foucault and Jacques Derrida, it may not be entirely hyperbolic to claim that Karatani's criticism served as a central conduit of many of the most cogent concepts and frameworks of the so-called "Western theory" for modern Japanese literary criticism.

Despite the way in which several of Karatani's theses have formed a common denominator of the subsequent literary studies consciously striving towards theoretical sophistication, making him perhaps *the* paradigmatic figure of the turn towards theory within modern Japanese literary studies, Karatani has occupied a rather ambivalent place in the discipline. His work is often generically separated as *bungei hyōron/hihyō* (literary

or humanistic criticism) in distinction from *bungaku kenkyū* (literary studies). Without a doubt, there are institutional conditions for the formation of the distinctive genre of criticism and indeed writing: the print media, publishing industry, the academy, and their mutual collaboration.[26] However, since such material history does not "explain" so much as render *bungei hyōron/hihyō* as a kind of inevitability, it seems more profitable to consider the ways in which it forms a mutually delimiting relation with *bungaku kenkyū*. Indeed, such a consideration constitutes an unavoidable task in the current critical era, pursuing as it does not only individual "theories" but the very possibility of theory. Significant as this matter is, these are not the pages for a sustained engagement with it.

Instead, the issue of specific interest to the present discussion is twofold: First, to demarcate Karatani's criticism as *bungei hyōron/hihyō* betrays the kind of intervention it effected *vis-à-vis* the discipline of *bungaku kenkyū*, that is, *properly* disconcerting. It may even be advanced, given the discursive impact of the *genre* on the *discipline*, that the inclusive-exclusive (il)logic of their mutual relation harbors an uneasiness over the very shift towards theory, perhaps a nostalgic hesitation or more salubrious suspicion within the theoretical leap. Certainly, the generic discourse dates back as far as the 1890s with Takayama Chogyū, perhaps the first quintessential figure in modern Japanese literary criticism, whose Nietzsche-inspired essays became a source of great fascination among the reading youth.[27] Yet, with the aforementioned watershed in critical language, the alterity of the *bungei hyōron/hihyō* seems in need of scrutiny more than ever. At any rate, Karatani at once stands thoroughly definitive of modern Japanese literary studies on its recent path and lingers ambivalently on the boundary of the discipline—perhaps the most

[26] For a brief yet illuminating account of the history of *bungei hyōron*, see Koyano Atsushi, *Han=bungei hyōron: bundan o tooku hanarete* (Shin'yōsha, 2003), joshō.
[27] Ibid., 15.

tactical and truthful position for the critic. Secondly, however, despite this position of alterity, Karatani's *bungei hyōron/hihyō* collaborates with *bungaku kenkyū* to give rise to some significant features marking "literature" in modern Japanese literary criticism as a general intellectual enterprise, a topic addressed more fully below.

As suggested in the previous section, the historical consciousness in literary studies has arisen as a tendency to bypass the question of what constitutes literature—the properties, movements, or enactments that make literature the singular discursive mode that it is. Critics have noted the precarious life of literature in the midst of historicist concerns with society and culture. Shoshana Felman takes the passage of madness:

> One hears altogether too often nowadays that literature is a thing of the past…. In a pinch, one can still speak of "texts" and "writing"—but not of "literature." … Yet, a book like Foucault's [*History of Madness*] reminds that throughout our cultural history, the madness that has been socially, politically, and philosophically repressed has nonetheless made itself heard, has survived as a speaking *subject* only in and through literary texts.[28]

More cogently, Felman asks, "Might not present literature's repression serve to counterbalance the contemporary project of liberating madness? Might not the present *non*-recognition of literature be the inevitable *counterpart* to the *recognition* of madness—and the fear it provokes?"[29] Almost three decades subsequent to Felman's provocation, Karatani announced another version of "the end of literature." In a 2005 book self-reflexively titled, *The End of Modern Literature: the Present of Karatani Kōjin*, Japan's foremost critic reflects on the historical superfluity of literature as an epistemological and ontological form. Referring back to the memorable publication of

[28] *Writing and Madness (Literature/Philosophy/Psychoanalysis)* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003), 15; the original French edition was published in 1978; the first English version in 1985 by Cornell University Press. Felman's italics.
[29] Ibid., 16. Felman's italics.

Origins of Modern Japanese Literature, Karatani states, "Then [in the late 1970s], I had to say that 'modern literature' was not self-evident and natural but a historical institution; but today 'modern literature' is simply historical, that is, in the sense that it is *a thing of the past* (*kako no mono*). And I myself [have] descended from the scene of literature."[30] The grounds for such a proclamation are the obsolescence of the value or function of literature—or, more precisely, the novel—at several levels. First, it no longer carries political force. Second, the nation-state is firmly instituted globally and therefore there is no need for the kind of collective imagination engendered by literature as there was in its inception in the nineteenth century. Third, film—and later television and multimedia—has taken over as the new realist apparatus. Finally, or perhaps as the broader condition behind these transformations, the development of global capitalism with an attendant shift in social psychology from the "inner-directed" intrinsic to literature to the "other-directed" constitutive of (global) consumerism and popular culture.[31] The final prophecy firmly situates Karatani in the current discourse of "modern Japanese literary studies" with its emphatic stress on the nation: "Even though modern literature came to an end, the movement of capitalism and the nation-state (*kokka*) that moves us does not end. That will evidently continue even at the cost of the destruction of the human environment. It is necessary that we resist it. However, on that account, I no longer expect anything from literature."[32]

Characteristically of Karatani's prose, the argument proceeds at once with clarity and complexity, casting light on global and structural as well as local and phenomenal

[30] *Kindai bungaku no owari: Karatani Kōjin no genzai* (Insukuriputo, 2005), 272. Italics added.
[31] Ibid., part I, chapter 3. Karatani borrows the concepts of social psychology from David Riesman's *The Lonely Crowd* (1950).
[32] Ibid., 80.

dimensions of the end of modern literature. Yet there remains a sense of loss or dislocation within this erudition on literature. Perhaps "literary erudition" harboring a certain contradiction within it already bears out the composition of the ill-articulated "sense." Or, perhaps it returns to the madness that Felman speaks of, that ontological double of literature, which, taking turns in absence, abjection, and invisibility with literature, assuages fear. But fear of what? More concretely, what absents itself in Karatani's theory of (the end of) literature? What is that *thing* shadowed and enfeebled in modern Japanese literary criticism in its various articulations—in the humanistic history of *sakkaron* and *sakuhinron*, the structural and cultural history of recent scholarly discourse, and now the economic history premised by Karatani's prophecy? Paul de Man's postulation of literary history offers a rather different passage to this besieged "literature":

> "[What] we usually call literary history has little or nothing to do with literature and what we call literary interpretation—provided only it is good interpretation—is in fact literary history. If we extend this notion beyond literature, it merely confirms that the bases for historical knowledge are not empirical facts but written texts, even if these texts masquerade in the guise of wars or evolutions."[33]

The three key terms in de Man's celebrated essay are "literary," "history," and "modernity." The adjectival form of the first term is more than contextual or grammatical—it modifies the apparently opposing concepts of history and modernity. To de Man, it seems, literature is a perpetually adjectival affair: "an activity that necessarily contains, within its own specificity, [a] contradiction"—a striving to "outrun time, to achieve a swiftness that would transcend the latent opposition between action and

[33] "Literary History and Literary Modernity," *Daedalus* 99, no. 2 (Spring 1970): 403.

form."[34] This idea demands a few words in explanation. In a rhetorical move that may justly be called ahistorical, de Man first defines via Nietzsche modernity and history as constituting an ontological pair, which "seem condemned to being linked together in a self-destroying union that threatens the survival of both."[35] Inseparable, it may be advanced, modernity and history become essentially two structural parts of and as such designate the movement of, one Time. Neither can any longer be conjured alone. Modernity is then discovered to be coeval with literature: "literature has always been essentially modern," while "[literature is] inconceivable without passion for modernity."[36] Further, as Time itself is a continuum fissured from within, literature also is anything but a coherent product. For it "also seems to oppose from the inside a subtle resistance to this passion" for modernity. And this "resistance" is none other than the force of history. A proper syllogism would follow with the statement: Therefore, literature is Time. Literature is the supra structure that plays with the movement of history and modernity, the temporal ontology *par excellence*. "Literary history and literary modernity" are "literature" that arises from history and modernity, two modes of Time.

Among various questions which this essay invites, one may be asked in intimate relation to the discussion thus far: How does the literature as conceived in this manner respond to that which according to Karatani is coming to (if it not has already come to) an end? Are they one and the same literature? If not, what is this fissure between them? Answering these questions to complete satisfaction would be impossible in these pages. However, at least one claim can be made: If Karatani's literature can end, that is first and

[34] Ibid., 397.
[35] Ibid., 391.
[36] Ibid., 392; 394.

foremost because it is a historical product—a noun. On the other hand, de Man's is a movement, temporality, structure in motion—perpetually adjectival and therefore seemingly ahistorical, yet inscribing Time itself. They are differing concepts of history, no less. It may be impossible and, more, unnecessary to lead these differing views into a contest, proving one better than the other. The interest of the present study lies elsewhere.

Is it possible to (re)imagine this *thing* that is also *not a thing* called literature, and the properties that constitute it, provisional as they may and ought to be—properties that are not inherent and demonstrable but motional and suggestive? In other words, the task is to seek out ways to capture the literary—to capture not in the sense of arresting it, as that would be impossible, but in a manner like taking photography of it. Snapshots of the literary will always bear the marks of its impossibility, death inhabiting life—*punctum*—and as such will not and cannot be organized as a linear narrative, and even less as History.[37] They can only be juxtaposed to rise, gesture to one another, and choreograph their own rituals, dances, and madnesses. The objective of the present study is precisely to trace these ephemeral moments of the *literary*, issuing from the particular condition for experience that is modernity.

With Foucault, and Felman, and their invitation towards that place where madness and writing arise together, it may be asked: "And yet, how is madness to be *touched*?" For it can only be touched. In other words, madness, and therefore literature, cannot arise

[37] In a lyrical reading of Roland Barthes's *Camera Lucida*, Eduardo Cadava and Paola Cotés-Rocca first cite Barthes's line, "that accident which pricks me (but also bruises me, is poignant to me)" to supplement, "the *punctum* points directly toward that affective field opened by images—a field that always evokes enjoyment as *both pleasurable and wounding*." Italics added. "Notes on Love and Photography," *October* 116 (Spring 2006): 12. For Barthes's text, see *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography*, trans. Richard Howard (New York: Hill and Wang, 1981), 27.

without the body. The body that *affects*—affected, given to affectations, and giving rise to all regions of experience, even those that may seem to lie beyond the province of affect.

3.

It may be possible to read Karatani's announcement of the end of modern literature as a gesture towards another literature, or some other form of writing. At the same time, insofar as it affords no room for this body, madness, and writing, any creative reiteration of literature seems foreclosed. In other words, it is not only with the historical product of the modern novel as that thing which is referred to as literature in the modern epoch that this study is concerned. Also of interest here is the ontology that reverberates with what Julia Kristeva proposes as the "aesthetic creation" that "[sets] forth a device whose prosodic economy, interaction of characters, and implicit symbolism constitute a very faithful semiological representation of the subject's battle with symbolic collapse."[38] Part of this "collapse" may be read as that excess which ideology cannot finally collect, or the "literary history" of the first order in de Man's essay cannot finally record.

In a refreshing attempt to capture "the body in movement," Brian Massumi first spells out the trajectory of the body in recent critical discourse:

> Earlier phenomenological investigations into the sensing body were largely left behind because they were difficult to reconcile with the new understandings of the structuring capacities of culture and their inseparability both from the exercise of power and the glimmers of counterpower incumbent in mediate living. It was all about a subject without subjectivism: a subject "constructed" by external mechanisms. "The Subject."[39]

[38] *Black Sun: Depression and Melancholia*, trans. Leon S. Roudiez (New York: Columbia University Press, 1989), 24.
[39] *Parables for the Virtual: Movement, Affect, Sensation* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2002), 2.

Thus, the body has been allowed back only inasmuch as it is "mediated," "discursive," or "signifying" and as such does not "sense." Thus, "the body came to be defined by its pinning to the grid [that is] an oppositional framework of culturally constructed significations." In other words, the body had turned into an "embodiment *of* ideology."[40] The most scandalous and apparently counterintuitive of Massumi's original propositions concerns the very binary of abstract and concrete: "Far from regaining a concreteness, to think the body in movement thus means accepting the paradox that there is an incorporeal dimension *of the body*. Of it, but not it. Real, Material, but incorporeal."[41] Massumi defines "abstract" as "never present in position, only ever passing," the body's relation to "to its own *indeterminacy*," and thus ties it to the sensing body's movement, the redundant yet forever escaping the structuring function of language. As such, it seems entirely possible to read the real in the abstract as akin to the definitions of literature, modernity, and history as given by de Man above, insofar as both theoretical instances in the final analysis strive to address temporality itself—temporality as movement. Massumi's concept of the body as "the virtual" bears out this correspondence: "the continual doubling of the actual body"; "that realm of the virtual as having a different temporal structure, in which past and future brush shoulders with no mediating present"; "the virtual as cresting in a liminal realm of emergence."[42]

Considered this way, that a reimagining of literature in the historical juncture of modernity—the structural concept doubled by the historical specificity of the past two centuries—should depart from, or return to, the question of the body has a value and rationale far beyond the already current interest in "examination" of the "materiality" of

[40] Ibid., 3. Massumi's italics.
[41] Ibid., 5. Massumi's italics.
[42] Ibid., 31.

"the body." Besides the ontological entwinement of literature and the psychosomatic crisis of madness, this problem of accounting for temporality in literary studies cannot but direct critical attention to the body, ineluctably mundane, pervasive, and always eventful all at once.[43] At the same time, the present study is less ambitious than the scale of Massumi's vision.[44] The method here is not so much a longitudinal pursuit of the body in diverse signifying instances and cultural situations to give philosophical and scientific articulations of its movement whereby the virtual gives rise to concrete expressions. Rather, what is attempted in the following discussions is to freeze further those moments when the body makes the most motional gestures, which have been bypassed so quickly in pursuit of movement towards the "grid"—"over-rapid historicization"—of modern Japanese literary criticism.[45] In other words, the interest here lies not so much in that conversion from the virtual to the actual but in how the actual itself harbors so much of the virtuality of the body in its temporality that is *writing*.

In articulating the expropriation of the body in modern medicine and history, Michel de Certeau gestures towards precisely this inflated concept of writing, "[The] two heterologies [that is, discourses on the other] are built upon a division between the body of knowledge that utters a discourse and the mute body that nourishes it."[46] Alternatively, some of the quintessential theoretical instances drawn upon in modern Japanese literary studies for their supposed pedagogy in the way of ideology often harbor the body as their final support—spectral as it may and can only be. Louis Althusser's famous dictum of

[43] For a fresh insight into the particular "affect" of modernity modalized by "publicness" or various encounters with public life, see Justus Nieland, *Feeling Modern: the Eccentricities of Public Life* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2008).
[44] For an illuminating collection of essays on the subject, see Melissa Gregg and Gregory J. Seigworth, eds. *The Affect Theory Reader* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010).
[45] The latter phrase taken from Slavoj Žižek, *The Sublime Object of Ideology* (London; New York: Verso, 1989), 50.
[46] *The Writing of History*, trans. Tom Conley (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), 3.

interpellation arises, it ought to be recalled, precisely from that fabled "one-hundred-and-eighty-degree physical conversion"—a turn of the *body*, provoked by a *voice* that hails, "Hey, you there!"[47] Similarly, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's celebrated essay "Can the Subaltern Speak?" cites the corporeal event of a suicide as the final point of possibility *vis-à-vis* the beleaguered history of a sociocultural practice: "Bhuvaneswari Bhaduri's suicide [by hanging] is an unemphatic, ad hoc, subaltern rewriting of the social text of *sati*-suicide as much as the hegemonic account of the blazing, fighting, and familial Durga."[48] The "virtual" nature of the inscriptive act—that it is a kind of protrusion of the body into the field of signification—highlights what Massumi calls "the autonomy of affect." Thus, Spivak's search of an alternative discourse to the Foucaultian and Deleuzean Subject of desire finds the possibility of a "theory of ideology" in the very body of a subaltern caught in that supreme instance of conversion from the virtual to the actual—the death properly capturing the ontology of this conversion itself. Simultaneously, the body as the last resort of theory illuminates the inevitability with which the critic's discourse exceeds its own bounds.

In approaching the body for its temporality that arises like writing, that is, like a language but *more*, it may be said with Massumi, the standard methodologies of cultural studies appear as not fully adequate, for reasons which have been amply suggested already from more than one context. Such an inquiry into literature may profit from employing the language of psychoanalysis.[49] Certainly, diverse areas of recent cultural

[47] "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses," in *Lenin and Philosophy, and Other Essays*, trans. Ben Brewster (London: New Left Books, 1971), 174.
[48] "Can the Subaltern Speak?" in. *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, ed. Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1988), 308.
[49] For recent studies in Japanese literature that self-consciously deploy psychoanalytical language, see Nina Cornyetz and Keith Vincent, eds. *Perversion and Modern Japan: Psychoanalysis, Literature, Culture* (New York: Routledge, 2010); Margherita Long, *This Perversion Called Love: Reading Tanizaki, Feminist*

studies have drawn upon psychoanalytical findings. Yet, the ideological bases of these studies often run *past* the movement of the body towards its consequences, whether narratives of victimhood or exposé of conspiracy.[50] The body's movement, however, always presumes a certain register of *relation* that structurally escapes such "gridding"; as such the approaches pointed to by Freud and Lacan, and the subsequent contributions by later theorists, seem far from exhausted. Alternatively, Karatani takes irreconcilable views when he responds to Lacan's exoticist theoretical leap which had posited that the Japanese neither need psychoanalysis nor are analyzable.[51] Lacan's psychoanalytical explanation for what appears an astoundingly essentialist postulation concerns the particular composition of the Japanese language: the *kun-yomi* and *on-yomi*—two ways of reading Chinese characters. Lacan argues that "[the] subject is born and exists in a state of being pinched between these two ways of reading and pronouncing," a condition that "frustrates the process of repression, or the aphanisis of the subject in relation to language."[52] And, according to Lacan, this subjective positionality *vis-à-vis* language is also visible in orthography. On the one hand, Karatani dismisses Lacan's theory of the Japanese subject as a "joke" (*jōdan*). On the other hand, he readily accepts Lacan's fundamental premise: that the Japanese present a difficulty to psychoanalysis and the core of the difficulty lies in the simultaneous use of sound and meaning in linguistic

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Theory, and Freud (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009). For one of the earliest interest in psychoanalytical criticism, see Suga Hidemi, *"Teikoku" no bungaku—sensō to "taigyaku" no aida* (Ibunsha, 2001).

[50] For a rather different understanding of the "resistance to psychoanalysis" in the context of Japan and Japan studies, see Nina Cornyetz and J. Keith Vincent's Introduction to their edited volume, *Perversion and Modern Japan*.

[51] Karatani Kōjin, *Nihon seishin bunseki* (Bungei shunjūsha, 2002), 75-76; see the whole of Chapter 2 for a detailed discussion. For Lacan's texts, see *Le Séminaire de Jacques Lacan, Livre X, L'angoisse*, 1962-63, ed. J. A. Miller (Paris: Éditions du Seuil); "Lituraterre"; "Avis au lecteur japonais"; "Postface au *Séminaire XI*" all included in *Autres Écrits* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil).

[52] Kazushige Shingu offers a lucid summary and analysis of Lacan's articulations in "Freud, Lacan and Japan," in *Perversion and Modern Japan: Psychoanalysis, Literature, Culture*, ed. Nina Cornyetz and Keith Vincent (New York: Routledge, 2010), 264.

expression.[53] On what specific point he disagrees with Lacan remains uncertain; perhaps it is the radical pronouncement that the Japanese are "unanalyzable."

A sustained engagement with either Lacan or Karatani's appropriation of Lacan must be postponed for another discussion. More pressing here is a twofold complication of Karatani's elaboration. Having taken a position disputing and accepting simultaneously Lacan's postulation, Karatani turns to explicate the "historical" (*rekishiteki*) context of the Japanese writing—*écriture* (*ekurichūru*) as he terms it—and, further, of the historical geopolitics that fated the Japanese to evade "castration" by any foreign cultural or political power.[54] Of particular concern first of all is that the writing that Karatani emphatically pursues through historical events and discourses is not that *other* writing evoked by de Man, Foucault or Felman, insofar as Time for Karatani is History rather than temporality. What matters to Karatani is that Japan, by certain circumstantial differences from her neighboring countries, managed to adopt Chinese—the script and culture—without being "castrated." Secondly, several critics including Karatani have objected in a range of media to Lacan's postulation, but chiefly to respond that the Japanese *are* in fact analyzable.[55] Yet, what they seem to be blind to is the very *affective* experience from which Lacan's theory arises. Lacan reportedly "felt a shiver of unease during his visit to Japan, from which he recovered completely only upon returning

[53] Karatani, *Nihon seishin bunseki*, 76.
[54] Apparently, there was a moment of self-reflexive recognition of a degree of cultural essentialism between these two explicatory modes. See *Nihon seishin bunseki*, 81.
[55] Shingu readily interprets Lacan's thesis as "pessimism" and attempts to show that the Japanese too are vulnerable to the anxiety at the "approach of the *objet a*" in "Freud, Lacan and Japan," 268. Similarly, Ogasawara Shin'ya argues that "in the Japanese language too a signifying determination operates on the subject" in his article, "L'instance de la lettre dans l'inconscient japonais," accessed July 15, 2011, http://www.lacanian.net/Ornicar%20online/Archive%20OD/ornicar/articles/ogw0068.htm. An English translation by Jack W. Stone is also available: "The Instance of the Letter in the Japanese Unconscious," accessed July 10, 2011, http://web.missouri.edu/~stonej/JapanUnc.pdf.

to France."[56] If it is the "fragility that the structure of self-referentiality implants in human thought," an "interference from the other (and the Other) [that] is unavoidable," that by which the subject undergoes the terrifyingly disorientating experience of "[appearing] as the *objet a*," a rediscovery of ourselves "from the viewpoint of this Other," does not Lacan's "unease" precisely point towards such a brush with the *objet a*, an encounter from which only (this) interpretation could shield him?[57] Yet, the interpretive work had to betray the professional analyst by bearing out his own psychic vulnerability, that is, by *O/othering* (back) the Japanese as a way of mitigating the trauma. This is the *body speaking*, the *remains* of the linguistic structure of the psyche. Lacan fled from it, or properly cured it, an event that later critics and psychoanalysts failed to perceive.

The "affective body," the fulcrum of the present study, is purposely redundant. While the body cannot but be affective and affect arises *as* the body, reference to the affective body is intended to illuminate its ontology in a particular relation to the "discursive body," which cultural studies have often scrutinized. In the context of modern Japanese literary criticism in particular, drawing the body towards literature offers the added felicity of opening the discourse toward beyond the boundaries of the national or cultural bindings. This is not so much to suggest any universality of the "body" as exploring a different conceptual passage that remains unclaimed by nationalized or culturalized critical languages. When the affective body and literature together pass through modernity, the global reality of the analytical triad demands acknowledgment. The *unanalyzable* fact of the body ironically renders visible registers of the modern experience that often escape the most comprehensible analyses.

[56] Shingu, "Freud, Lacan and Japan," 266.
[57] Shingu deploys the cited phrases to analyze a patient of his, as a proof that the Japanese are analyzable. Ibid., 268.

4.

The "early twentieth century" straddles two imperial eras, Meiji and Taishō, each according to the general scholarly consensus bearing distinct characteristics in various arenas of life. At the same time, in literary history many observers have noted that a drastic shift occurred in the wake of the Russo-Japanese War (1904-5). The beginning of modern Japanese literature in its currently recognized form is in fact often dated to this point in time, with the publication of Tayama Katai's *Futon* (The Quilt, 1907).[58] With this paradigmatic shift in, or perhaps the very beginning of, modern Japanese literature in the exceedingly private arena of sexuality and confession, and the subsequent exacerbation of the privatizing predilection in the broader cultural discourse, the Taishō era has denoted a set of contradictions. On the one hand, it was then that modern Japanese literature came of age with its own set of conventions. On the other, the writing of those years is riddled with limitations that subsequent developments were unable to shed. Yamamoto Kenkichi seems to grasp this not entirely wholesome condition of the narcissistic haven, albeit unwittingly:

> [The Taishō era] was a kind of golden age of literature, and, for modern Japanese literature, the happiest period. … [The writers] had no need to temper themselves as intellectuals (*shisōka*) living the historical era like those of the Meiji era, nor did they need to trouble themselves with acrobatic skills with which to live in the midst of the media like those of the Shōwa era.[59]

Thus, in the gap between a Meiji scarred by resentment toward the new political system and a Shōwa harried by the overgrown mass media, the Taishō literary scene allowed

[58] Though without the political overtones of Nakamura Mitsuo's *Fūzoku shōsetsu ron* (Kawade shobō, 1950) and subsequent critical discussion in the postwar era, this view remains unchanged. Karatani locates the larger epistemic shift earlier in the 1890s: Mori Ōgai's "Maihime" (1890) and Kunikida Doppo's "Wasureenu hitobito" and "Musashino" (both 1898) are named as such instances. See *Origins of Modern Japanese Literature*, 22-25; 49-51; 65-69.

[59] Kawasaki Chōtarō, et al., eds., *Uno Kōji kaisō* (Chūō kōronsha, 1963), 232-33.

writers to "give fresh meaning and purpose to the way of life within the small society of theirs," into which they now instilled their diverse individuality. It was, Yamamoto concludes, the "competition of individualities within the particular narrow society in which the golden age of Taishō literature was born."

Similarly, in the social and political realms, recent scholarly findings have suggested, despite the vaunted "democracy" and "cosmopolitanism," the Taishō era was anything but politically aware or open to difference.[60] Thus, while the Meiji era had received Christianity and the Shōwa would be presented with Marxism as the Other's discourse to address in those respective milieus, in terms of "Otherness" the Taishō era was a void , noisy though it was with slogans clamoring meaninglessly for "diversity" (*tayō*).[61] It is in this sense that "Taishō" and "literary" gain their primary semantic equivalence.

A recent study by Alan Tansman is a scathing indictment of the era in its thesis that "Japanese fascism was fueled by a literary sensibility."[62] If as Tansman contents, "Akutagawa's modernism displays the origins of a distinctly Japanese fascist aesthetic" by way of a "movement back to the native tradition" that is, in fact, "an act of modernist creativity built on a cosmopolitan literary sensibility," such a development seems unthinkable apart from the cultural, epistemic, and affective conditions recognizable in the conflictual yet mutually generative ideologies, or impulses, of *shishōsetsu* and cosmopolitanism that characterized the Taishō period.[63] More on *shishōsetsu* will follow

[60] H. D. Harootunian, for example, notes a mutually enabling relation between the bourgeois abandonment of politics and the appearance of cosmopolitanism in Taishō cultural discourse. See "Introduction: A Sense of an Ending and the Problem of Taishō," in *Japan in Crisis: Essays on Taishō Democracy*, ed. Bernard S. Silverman and Harootunian (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1974), 22-23.
[61] Karatani Kōjin, ed. *Kindai Nihon no hihyō III Meiji·Taishō hen* (Kōdansha, 1998), 271.
[62] *The Aesthetics of Japanese Fascism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009), 1.
[63] Ibid., 41.

soon. At the same time, there is another level of cosmopolitanism that illuminates the underside of the immediately visible labels. In Tansman's definition, fascism is a reaction precisely to modernity, a "reactionary modernist response to the threats of social and political crises following the First World War," and as such Japanese fascism shared the same conditions that gave birth to European fascism.[64] In the same vein, to borrow Harry Harootunian's words, Japan's modernity was "an inflection of a larger global process that constituted what might be called co-existing or co-eval modernity, inasmuch as it shared the same historical temporality of modernity."[65] Between, and overlapping, these conflictual registers of *cosmopolitanity*—the empty ideology of cosmopolitanism and the more complex account of a global synchronicity—are precisely the sites in which literature, the body, and modernity may be addressed as and in one motion.

To view the Taishō era in this way as the absence of the other (*tasha*) or difference (*sai*) leaves one nagging question: If it had been indeed the effacement of difference that gave the historical era its particular energy—even in the form of innervation—, should that not be precisely the problem to consider further rather than dismiss?[66] Moreover, neither version of cosmopolitanity as approached by the aforementioned critics can, alone, address the way in which it is precisely that fissure that gives rise to the given phenomenon. It is a metacritical issue. The present study takes the concept of mimesis as that which at once enables and sutures the fissure in scenes that

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[64] Ibid., 3.
[65] *Overcome by Modernity: History, Culture, and Community in Interwar Japan* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), xvi. Sari Kawana's study of detective fiction is premised on a similar understanding of modernity marked by "angst and anxiety, the roots of which remained obscured in the shadows of everyday life." *Murder Most Modern: Detective Fiction and Japanese Culture* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008), 8.
[66] A disconcertingly dismissive tone pervades the roundtable discussion (*zadankai*) held by Asada Akira, Karatani Kōjin, Noguchi Hideo, Hasumi Shigehiko, and Miura Masashi, recorded in Karatani, ed. *Kindai Nihon no hihyō III*, 178-271.

apparently play themselves at a mythical distance from the cultural space to which the "cosmos" refers.

Characterizing Taishō discourse as one of "parenthesizing (*kakko ni ireru*) everything" whereby "analysis=description" is avoided and therefore difference becomes effaced, Hasumi Shigehiko notes that "the true Taishō literature, put in real parentheses," began around that of Uno Kōji (1891-1961), and "the 'spirit of Taishō' (*Taishōsei*) that linked to 'Shōwa'" came out of the "narrative style (*watai*)" of his *Kura no naka*."[67] The fact that Hasumi's own language yields to a series of nonanalytical and nondescriptive impressions owes much to the discursive practice of the roundtable discussion (*zadankai*), which itself demands a critical scrutiny. The mimetic lure of the abstract language enacted in this critical instance aside, Hasumi thereby introduces the text that serves as a template for the present study: Uno's debut novella *Kura no naka* (In the Storehouse, 1919). Characteristically of the Marxist inspired theorist, Karatani responds that this narrative style may correspond to the "Osaka bourgeois capital." In fact, Karatani notes, the Taishō era itself is distinguished by "a certain kind of bourgeois atmosphere," different than the Meiji-era state capitalism.[68] Asada Akira adds that it was with Uno as well as Mushanokōji Saneatsu that *genbun itchi*—the modern "vernacular" language—began to be used "unscrupulously" (*rokotsuteki ni*).[69]

Although these leading critics invoke Uno's novella as if it were a narrative, economic, and linguistic benchmark of Taishō literature, contemporary reactions at the time of its publication are suggestive of a quite different picture. Leaving detailed discussions to the later chapters of this study, it is necessary here to note that such a

[67] Karatani, ed. *Kindai Nihon no hihyō III*, 202-3.
[68] Ibid., 197.
[69] Ibid., 206.

branding is intimately related to the notion of *shishōsetsu*—the "I-novel," as it is often translated—the quintessential novelistic genre in modern Japan. While conventionally deemed a genre, *shishōsetsu* denotes more the cultural conventions of reading and writing than the formal properties of the texts themselves. Tomi Suzuki defines it as "an autobiographical narrative in which the author is thought to recount faithfully the details of his or her personal life in a thin guise of fiction."[70] This "thought" is the key to the operation of *shishōsetsu*. Furthermore, as Suzuki properly emphasizes, *shishōsetsu* signifies the broader critical discourse that both evolved around the texts so labeled *shishōsetsu* and by labeling texts *shishōsetsu*: "the I-novel meta-narrative" concerned with "not only the nature of literature but also views of Japanese selfhood, society, and tradition."[71] Significantly, the term may be taken further to designate the mode of discourse in modern Japanese literature in its entirety, which, in its concern with "Japan," has displayed certain narcissistic predilections as definitive, delimiting, features. Thus, *shishōsetsu* in the following discussions refers to roughly three different semantic registers: the novelistic genre; the critical narrative concerning the novel and its attendant notions; and, finally, the broad discursive regime impelling towards the *same*. At the same time, the last register forms the general precondition for the other two to arise at all. And, in this sense, *shishōsetsu* is ultimately a mode of discourse, the epistemic and affective "virtual," a topic discussed in greater depth in Chapter 2 of this study. Of particular interest at this juncture is the mutual relevance of *shishōsetsu* on the one hand and Uno and *Kura no naka* on the other, which yields a certain theoretical felicity.

[70] *Narrating the Self*, 1.
[71] Ibid., 2.

The present study approaches Uno the authorial figure and *Kura no naka* as two events in modern Japanese literary history. Today Uno is invariably discussed as a *shishōsetsu* writer, yet his literary historical position, and the trajectory thereof, has been anything but apparent. As a paradigmatic textual event that earned him a lasting attribution as a "consummate and irreverent stylist," his debut work displays a keen awareness of the material and performative dimensions of writing, unabashedly indulging as it does in exhibitionist linguistic and narrative devices.[72] As Elaine Gerbert notes,

> At a time when many readers assumed that a narrative featuring a first-person speaker represented a verifiable, experiential reality drawn from the personal life of that speaker, who was coterminous with the author, Uno's narrative undermined the notion that language is something at the disposal of the writer to be shaped through intellect and will."[73]

Kura no naka was thus considered an assault on the contemporary literary sensibility, leading to its author's "relative isolation within the *bundan*"—the closely knit literary establishment consisting of multiple smaller coteries—at least in the beginning of his career. Yet this rebel underwent a radical transformation to play the biblical prodigal son, whose story must end with a "return." And, originary to this event of new meaning is none other than the abyss of madness. Uno developed symptoms of psychosis in 1927. After intensive medical treatments, he was declared cured and by 1931 he was actively writing again. In 1933 he published a comeback novel, *Kareki no aru fūkei* (Landscape of Dead Trees), which received warm critical acceptance. Once welcomed into the literary historical canon of *shishōsetsu*, with the propitious force of this biographical incident,

[72] For an informed commentary on the subject and indeed the most exhaustive study of Uno and his works in English, see Elaine Gerbert, "Uno Kōji (1891-1961)" (Ph.D. diss., Yale University, 1990), particularly the introduction and Chapter 1. An updated version containing these sections is found in Uno Kōji, *Love of Mountains: Two Stories by Uno Kōji*, trans. Elaine Gerbert (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1997), introduction. The cited phrase is taken from the latter, 1.
[73] Gerbert in Uno, *Love of Mountains*, 15.

Uno's *oeuvre* became a monstrous *thing* to *narrativize* into a coherent history. Thus, the ambivalent positions of both Uno the author and *Kura no naka*—the quintessence and indeed the very *corpus* of Uno's literary practice *vis-à-vis* literary and literary critical discourses that have evolved *around and as shishōsetsu* from the early twentieth century—together yield several junctures of thought that make possible an address to the problems of writing, the body, and affect towards the most intractable of signs, i.e., literature, modernity, and history.

Already the aforementioned critical designation of *Kura no naka* as a typically Taishō literary work invites skepticism. In fact, the scholarly treatment of this particular text has afforded ample food for thought on the *culture* of criticism in modern Japanese literature. Leaving the details to later discussions, suffice it to say that the present study proceeds not only to account for the critical subject matters listed above, but also to serve as a pressuring act *vis-à-vis* a critical discourse that has ossified into certain arbitrary blindness. The latter concerns not only the ideological and materialistic approaches that perpetuate a certain discursive violence but, with greater urgency, the more fundamental epistemological equations that exclude the terms that matter in the end to any intellectual endeavor: being and ontology, which have returned in some of the most inspiring theoretical articulations as a question of *relation* rather than self or identity—ethics. In this sense, *Kura no naka* is doubly felicitous. It exhibits a narrative interest in emblematic problems of modernity including capitalistic ownership, urban anonymity, and discourse of sexuality and psychology, but also opens to variously tested critical accesses thereof, i.e., psychoanalysis, the performative gender, and ethics.

This study proceeds as a series of pairings of *two* texts. *Kura no naka* is always the one that invites such pairing, and, only to that extent, the "main" text. The others of the pairings are literary, theoretical, cinematic, modern, and classical texts in various theoretical instances. The relation of the pairs is one of metonymy rather than similarity or exemplarity. And, the metonyms are linguistic, imagistic, bodily, affective, and fantasmic.

5.

"Gone is any sense of possible tragedy, of passion. Gone is any language of joy, delight, passion, sex, violence. The language is that of a boardroom." So the humanist psychologist R. D. Laing lamented of contemporary writing on the individual and the family a half-century ago.[74] Addressing writing and the affective body—especially when it is by way of *Kura no naka*—cannot begin in the "boardroom." *Kura no naka* features a hero-*cum*-narrator named Yamaji who is a novelist well-known enough to make his name jump out when a female novel aficionado consults the pawnshop account book. Reflecting the generally impoverished circumstances of literary careers in his period, Yamaji ekes out a living literally hand to mouth by writing, and hence his patronage of the pawnshop. At the same time, his frequent resort to pawning has a more inordinate reason: his love of kimonos, both new ones to put on and old ones to keep. The story unfolds as a series of Yamaji's past love affairs, which he cannot but reminisce over as he has obtained—by an affective force that only a "trusted" patron could muster—a few days in the pawnshop storehouse, where he airs out numberless kimonos that he has

[74] *The Politics of Experience* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1967), 63. Resonating with the sense of purpose of the present study, Laing asserts, 'We require a history of phenomena, not simply more phenomena of history," 143.

collected and then pawned over the decades. Enclosed in the quiet, dim, musty haven of the storehouse, away from the visual and auditory assaults of the world outside, Yamaji yields to dreams—of senses, things, and love, all of very particular kinds. The narrative proceeds from an ostensibly performative set-up which recalls *rakugo*, the traditional art of comic storytelling, to emphatically end with an exclamation, "Where is everybody? … Isn't there one single person left—still listening?", as if awaking to the reality of the anonymity and dispassion in and of the crowd, the audience, the *others* in the modern times.

In a mimetic deliberation upon Yamaji's narrative predilection, the following discussion often *dwells* on rather than *processes* textual gestures. A number of conceptual keys open up the novella toward textual others for relations that are in turn exhilarating and poignant. What Derrida once referred to as "that thing, that, more and more, one avoids discussing as if one knew what it is and as if its riddle were solved" comes to designate a number of things—notions and phenomena—in the present study that have long been brushed aside as having been *already* dealt with yet remain as "that thing."[75]

The following chapters are organized broadly around four concepts: hysteria, narrative, ownership, *bio-graphy*. These are not so much explicatory props as kernels pulling together the disparate arguments as well as precipitants generating continual metonymy among various textual events. At the same time, they all impel towards the "affective body." All of the four as well as other *supplementary* concepts are read *en route* to the regions of experience that ineluctably conjure the body—of the subject and the object, the *thing*. Chapters 1 through 3 examine the potential of hysteria—affective

[75] "Consciousness" is the word that immediately precedes this phrase. See "How to Avoid Speaking: Denials," in *Languages of the Unsayable: the Play of Negativity in Literature and Literary Theory*, ed. Sanford Budick and Wolfgang Iser (New York: Columbia University Press, 1989), 17.

crisis *par excellence*—as a provocation to feminist criticism in modern Japanese literature, not so much as a new interpretive term as for the inherently *narrative* nature of the *patho-logy*.[76] Narrative here presumes a relational structure, the address to and of the other, which has become increasingly wanting in a feminist practice often ridden with constrained, ideologically defined agendas. Chapter 2 is a brief extension from hysteria whereby *shishōsetsu* returns as a symptom of (post)colonial melancholia, and thereby opens to a discourse of injury, trauma, at a calculated distance from a critical discourse by turns indicting, lamenting, or resigning to it. Chapter 4 is a descent into the bodily space where ownership transforms into a quaint practice of *collection*. Yamaji presages the Benjaminian collector—indeed Benjamin himself as a collector—by way of a rescripting of ownership, the modern capitalistic notion *par excellence*, into a perpetual *debting* that yields to a fantasmic possession by pawning. The convoluted passage of the subjective experience of *things* accrues "interest"—of memories and love—precisely by way of the affective body. Finally, Chapter 5 attempts to release perhaps the most vilified form of critical discourse, biography *qua sakkaron* and *sakuhinron*, into a different "history" that is the writing *of* the body: *bio-graphy*. Considering Uno's madness in 1927 and subsequent literary historical valorization as suggestive of a certain literary historical regime, the discussion gestures towards ways to read Uno's body into a history that inevitably mutually *en/in-corporates* Yamaji the narrative figure.

[76] In an affective redress, Roland Barthes imagines "patho-logy" as a new kind of psychology, i.e., an "inventory of shimmers, of nuances, of states, of changes," and traces it in the "philography" of the lineage from Nietzsche to Blanchot to read "Will to Power" as "the passion for difference," that is, "affectivity, sensibility, sentiment." *The Neutral: Lecture Course at the Collège de France (1977-78)*, trans. Rosalind E. Krauss and Denis Hollier (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), 77.

Chapter 1

Hysteria for Feminist Criticism

Without a doubt,
it was an expression far closer to truth
than the truths that ordinary human beings exclaim
in all their truthfulness,
which were either actually or perceivably not false,
for example, love or democracy
—so he thought.
-Uno Kōji, *From the High Mountain* (1920)

1.

Approaching hysteria as a malady (at best an inadequate shorthand for all its complex etiological and symptomatological ambiguity) and cultural sign (spawning and spawned by popular imagination surrounding the unarticulable crisis of the body-mind dyad), and the literary representation thereof, ought to begin by considering the state of affairs in critical discourse on sexuality and gender. Immediately apparent is the persistent association of hysteria with the female sex in medical, cultural, and literary discourses often traced back to the "wandering womb" theory in ancient Greek medicine.[1] Of a greater relevance to the present study is the fact that hysteria as a nascent—and not yet fully fledged—subject of critical inquiry in modern Japanese literature appeared against

[1] For a revisionist discussion on the now canonical notion of hysteria, etymologically denoting the uterus, as originating "since the time of Hippocrates," see Helen King, "Once Upon a Text: Hysteria from Hippocrates" in *Hysteria beyond Freud*, ed. Sander L. Gilman, et al. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 3-11.

the backdrop of literary criticism as formulated in the past several decades, strongly inflected by feminist concerns.

Pursuing the subject matter of hysteria thus not only highlights particular sociocultural appropriations of sexuality and gender in a given cultural milieu. More significantly, it throws light on the very critical procedure by which such a (re)turn to hysteria has become possible. In other words, the effort to account for it as a historical phenomenon, insofar as it takes a specific form, bears out the particular critical discursive conditions. Further, pressuring hysteria and the literary text toward their very affinity will perhaps yield a certain space of thought that modern Japanese literary criticism has yet to imagine. What is called for then is an attempt at some provisional diagnosis of the feminist discourse in modern Japanese literature as it concerns the specific question of hysteria.

In a 1992 article enticingly titled, "Flight to Woman and Flight from Woman: the Image of Man in Modern Japanese Literature," Japan's eminent feminist critic Mizuta Noriko lead off a view that has since dominated modern Japanese literary criticism, particularly concerning the nexus of genesis, gender, and genre that shaped the cultural form.

> In Japan's modern literature, there is an overwhelming number of novels [featuring] heroes preoccupied with women (*onna ni kodawaru*). Stories of men who suffer on account of woman—tormented by love, distressed by the relationship with his wife, drowned in passion, in search of the woman of his dreams—constitute the world of '*shishōsetsu*,' the representative genre of modern Japanese literature. … The literature—the novel—of modern Japan formed itself by laying down the basis of its purest aspect in the realm that is "private (*shi*)" rather than "public (*kō*),"

> in particular, the treatment of "interiority (*naimen*)." … The site (*ba*) of the "private" for man is woman.[2]

Emotively compelling and discursively emblematic, this series of declarations contains several questions that have yet to be addressed with due seriousness. Pivoting on a tidy demarcation of man and woman, betraying a certain penchant for essentialism, Mizuta's largely recuperative mode of feminism has been put to critique even while emulated.[3] The reason for the present attention lies in the suspicion that rather than becoming passé, feminism as formulated by Mizuta remains an undercurrent if not the principal methodology in modern Japanese literary studies. At least two factors underlie this state of affairs. Changes in critical terminology have given the misleading impression that the past limitations have been overcome. That is, a shift on the level of representation has masqueraded as a transformative matter in thought. In this sense, the criticism of Mizuta's position as propping up essentialism and facile resolutions conceals certain naivety even as is unsurprising. The more persistent yet less visible reason lies in the critical refusal to step into the messy questions of the very rhetorical dynamic from which such terminology draws its semantics. What is in order is to spell out a set of interrogations to which Mizuta's and other similarly schematic views render themselves, thereby throwing light on the very epistemological problematics underlying the mostly thematic debates, so that the alleged essentialism be given a proper funeral rite.

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[2] Noriko Mizuta, "Onna e no tōsō to onna kara no tōsō—kindai Nihon bungaku no danseizō," *Nihon bungaku* 41 (1992): 1.

[3] See Chida Hiroyuki's antithesis to the general feminist discourse revolving around the sex (*sei*) of the author in "'Sakusha no sei' to iu seido—*Nobuko* to feminizumu hihyō e no shiten," *Tokyo gakugei daigaku kiyō, dai 2 bumon, jinbun kagaku* 45 (February 1994). Michael Bourdaghs's discussion of *shishōsetsu* and autobiography, for example, reverberates with Mizuta's proposition of autobiography as the feminine genre: "Sakusha no seibetsu to jendā hihyō" in *Nijisseiki no josei hyōgen: jendā bunka no gaibu e* (Gakugei shorin, 2003), 89-91 and *Monogatari to hanmonogatari no fūkei: bungaku to josei no sōzōryoku* (Tabata shoten: 1993); *The Dawn That Never Comes*, 114-53. Iida Yūko lists Mizuta's work as belonging in the lineage of scholarship that focuses on "woman's perspective" (*onna no shiten*). See *Karera no monogatari: Nihon kindai bungaku to jendā* (Nagoya: Nagoya daigaku shuppankai, 1998), 16-17.

Behind Mizuta's trenchant criticism of male authors' appropriation of "woman" is an unannounced strategy whereby the metaphoricity of woman is captured precisely against the empiricity of man. The title of her article is enticing insofar as it displays an informed interest that brings together "man"—a subject mostly ignored within the discipline—with the representational status of that very category borne out in the "image." Yet, the enticement fails to extend beyond merely that. Mizuta further notes,

> Within the social structure of modern Japan, in which literature itself was regarded as a useless enterprise gone astray from the center of social activity, it is no wonder that *shishōsetsu*, which placed the basis of literary expression in the space of the "private," became the mainstream genre of literature, and men who preoccupy themselves with woman became heroes.

The insufficiently articulated insertion of *shishōsetsu* is a surreptitious clue to the mechanism of Mizuta's feminist method: the slide from the male author in a particular set of socio-historical situations to the male fictional hero in a particular representational genre—and back. Put differently, the literary representation of "woman" is delineated by Mizuta to enable a condemnation of man the biographical author. Discussing the heroine of Hayashi Fumiko's *Floating Clouds* (Ukigumo, 1949-50), Mizuta concludes, "Not only not seeking her own salvation in 'man' but not seeking an internal salvation itself, however, Yukiko is not as self-satisfied as men like Arishima Takeo, Akutagawa Ryūnosuke or Dazai Osamu, who took women as travelling companions to their suicide, that is, the destruction of their own internal realm."[4] What seems to be a moral inequivalence between the fictional woman and the biographical authors is established in the lopsided plane that is none other than the *shishōsetsu* that Mizuta considers a quintessential male province. The problem arising here is not one of logical consistency, i.e., is it fair to compare fictional characters with real life figures? After all, it is not

[4] Mizuta, "Onna e no tōsō," 9.

apparent that Mizuta maintains the distinction between Hayashi the author and her heroine either. Nor is the intention here to deny that the author *harbors* certain ethical bearings towards the production of representation. Rather, the chief problem with Mizuta's construction concerns what remains unarticulated in this urgency for recovery of the woman by resorting to the most accessible, and therefore least examined, terms of engagement.

As a truly representative example, the term "interiority," put forward by Mizuta as predictably ensuing in the wake of *shishōsetsu*, blanches the subjective drama, the very stuff awaiting feminist appropriation, to a barren antagonism of man and woman. What this rhetorical run to the finale effaces is the third term that is indispensible to the constitution of the binary itself: namely, the "West" as the O/other—in or of the very modern Japanese subject. The question of how the omission of the third term is debilitating to feminism demands and opens onto several discussions rarely imagined in modern Japanese literary criticism, some of which have given rise to the present study. The "West" remains unaltered from its early twentieth-century usage in Japanese cultural discourse to its present circulation in modern Japanese literary criticism insofar as it resolutely marks alterity. This is far from rendering it ahistorical. It is to acknowledge the life of a rare sign whose referentiality forms an indexical relation to the limit of representation. As such, the "West" signifies not only the originary lack, abyss, but *debt* without which the critical act cannot arise.

In Mizuta's argument, when the West makes a fortuitous appearance it has already completed its ideological function of subtending her critical enterprise: "[Men who wished] to save their interiority, which had been made uncertain by the Western self

(*seiōteki jiga*), through the discourse of 'woman' blithely fantasized, and to restore their impoverished life force through woman's sexuality [were] shameless and self-indulgent beings."[5] Extinguished from the critical purview is the constitutive matrix pivoting on the coeval temporality of the "Western self," (metaphorical) "'woman,'" (biographical) "man." and indeed "interiority." In large part precisely for the absence of a particularly inflected West from the critical purview, Mizuta is unable to address, if not simply uninterested in, a series of basic questions that arise from her own argument: "The discourse of the modern 'man,' through man's longing for self-transcendence, turns into the metaphor of 'woman' and thereby constitutes the core [of modern Japanese literature]."[6] Beyond the thematic repetition, is there a structure to this affective pose supposedly giving shape to these heroes—and, by naturalized extension, the authors? Where do the "man" of the literary text and the man of the author either converge or diverge? In other words, what interpretive criteria are operative in calling forth—loudly yet furtively—these moments of their mutual recognition?

These and related questions will recur throughout this study. Meanwhile, the most immediate point of interest in Mizuta's argument concerns the relationship between the many lacunae that give it a protestant form and their convergence on one figure, ubiquitously invoked yet utterly elusive but for its engulfing malevolence and cowardice: man. As will be further elaborated below, the consequences of this vengeful exile of man obtain even amid sophisticated attempts to articulate sexuality and gender as paramount problems of modernity and the modern subject. Recent feminist scholarly discourse has geared up efforts to disengage from the essentialist insistence exemplified by Mizuta's

[5] Ibid., 11.
[6] Ibid., 7.

writings. Many studies have examined modernity and its attendant epistemological categories through Foucault-inspired "historicist" and "constructionist" interpretive schemes to address the genesis of sexual difference in discourses ranging from medicine to theatre.[7] Within this scholarly milieu characterized by a general receptivity towards what has been perceived as Foucaultian historiography, a particular discursive scheme has taken hold of the feminist scholarship. This scheme abandons the critical inheritance marked by the conspicuous distinction between man and woman—always traced back to the biological—by way of "discourse," a notion seemingly remote and secure from the specters of the body. At the same time, any apprehension regarding the detraction of materiality from Foucaultian historiography has been pacified by the discursive militancy around a host of terms concerning cultural *production*—a Marxian sign assuredly yet beguilingly retaining a certain intimation of materiality. Hence the rise of interest in language, media, and market. This compromise between "discourse" abstracted from biology on the one hand and materiality *represented* by various levels of mediating apparatuses on the other has foreclosed any radical rearticulation of the problem of sexual and gender difference. A central premise of the present study is that the feminist discourse in modern Japanese literary criticism remains self-defeating precisely because it has yet to become suspicious of the apparently salubrious shift from the biological body to discourse of materiality: that is, the body as the fissure that marks the critical (post)modernization.

[7] See Ayako Kano, *Acting Like a Woman in Modern Japan: Theater, Gender, and Nationalism* (New York: Palgrave, 2001) for theatre; Odaira Maiko, *Onna ga onna o enjiru: bungaku, yokubō, shōhi* (Shin'yōsha, 2008) for the capitalist mode of consumption; Naitō Chizuko, *Teikoku to ansatsu: jendā kara miru kindai Nihon no Media hensei* (Shin'yōsha, 2005) for mass media; and Muta Kazue, *Senryaku to shite no kazoku: kindai Nihon no kokumin kokka keisei to josei* (Shin'yōsha, 1996) for the modern family.

Furthermore, perhaps because of their manifest interest in the nation-state as a supra structure that ideologically modalized various discursive sites, in many of these studies, inquiries into sexual and gender difference become narratives about the ways in which woman and femininity were appropriated for and confined within ideological agendas. Thus, their indisputable contribution to existing scholarship is nevertheless organized around certain absences. Once again, man has been driven out to form the outer limit demarcating and containing the discursive property of feminism. This absence is not solely the product of the more militant lineages of feminism. It is also enabled by, or, perhaps symptomatic of, the "discursive" turn in feminist scholarship. In other words, the apparent (post)modernization of criticism has chosen the procedure of dispossession—dispossession of the body, an ineluctable term *of* the other.

2.

Since Judith Butler's *Gender Trouble* (1990) made its indelible mark on critical discourse on the gendered subject, "gender as performance" has enduringly entered common academic parlance in humanistic disciplines in Japan, with literature foremost among them.[8] What is remarkable is the very uniformly selective appropriation of the Butlerian concept towards serving a particular normative critical operation within the latter discipline. Modern Japanese literary criticism has given rise to at least two lineages of mis/appropriation of Butler's theory.

Egusa Mitsuko's reflection on the "aporia of sex and gender" exemplifies one of them. Her anticipation of new directions of feminist criticism takes the form of a critique of what she calls "gender monism (*jendā ichigen ron*)" supposedly found in such

[8] *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 1990).

poststructuralist feminist critics as Butler. Egusa faults the latter for "a tendency for excessive abstraction, which in and of itself resembles an approximation of power" and in its wake proposes to account for the reality, concreteness, and individuality of woman as a bodily entity (*shintaiteki sonzai*).[9] Thus Butler's concept of the performative is reduced to "gender" divested of the inexorably bodily register, yielding—or, rather, returning—to the dichotomy of sex and gender, which is precisely what Butler had managed to displace. This blatant reduction is in fact rather modest in its consequences, insofar as it displays no manifest aspirations for structural incorporation of the particular theorem, i.e., performative gender. The critical impulse underlying Egusa's argument is one of binary exclusion, that is, to maintain the line between sex and gender, and from there discuss how they engage with each other. It is a rather benign form of defense against the messy business of the body.

The more insidious *institution* of (mis)reading is found in the way in which performative gender is joined to other socio-cultural constructionist interpretive frameworks—so insidious that even Egusa seems to have missed it when she hastily concludes, not without some relief, that the Japanese feminist discourse has not taken the path of exploring the Butlerian "rejection" of "sex" (*sekkusu*) as "hypostatization" (*jittairon*).[10] As such, this second lineage demands further elaboration.

Aimed at generating multifaceted interpretations of (con)figurations of gender firmly situated within historical contexts, this second line of scholarship has paid keen attention to conceptual as well as material conditions of cultural production. These conceptual conditions include genres as apparatuses of epistemological normativization

[9] Nakayama Kazuko and Egusa Mitsuko, eds., *Sōryoku tōron: jendā de yomu* Aru onna (Kanrin shobō, 1997), 20.
[10] Nakayama and Egusa, eds., *Sōryoku tōron*, 17.

and the mass media as both forms and channels of their transmission. Iida Yūko's *Their Story: Modern Japanese Literature and Gender* (1998) stands in the vanguard of this feminist-historicist-constructionist discourse, with its meticulously analytical pursuit of the trajectory of the literary-historical figuration of woman.[11] Iida locates moments in the development of modern Japanese literature during the first decades of the twentieth century in which the "masculine" and the "feminine" were surreptitiously yet persistently produced and appropriated for ideological ends. She thereby illustrates both the diachronic transformation of gender categories and synchronic events that bear out the possibility of political as well as historical reading. Iida's reading of the invention of the "domestic novel" (*katei shōsetsu*) and the production of the female readership through that genre, for example, presents a model for perceiving the ideological operations behind apparently benign developments in literary history.

Iida offers her study as a revisionist intervention *vis-à-vis* what may be called different articulations of essentialist or dichotomist feminist discourse.[12] Certainly several different approaches have appeared in recent feminist criticism. First, the most conventionally biological appeal to man versus woman launched its critical career by way of differential treatment of literary works: criticism (*hihan*) of male authors' works and critique (*hihyō*) of female authors.. Mizuta is a leading example of this lineage. Second, a more recent and more self-consciously theoretically approach took an overtly critical position *vis-à-vis* the biologism premising the Mizuta-style biographism, and instead turned towards *écriture* as the object of criticism, thereby seeking to engage the sex/gender of the text rather than that of the author. Finally, analyses of masculinity have

[11] Iida, *Karera no monogatari*.
[12] For details, ibid., 13-16.

expanded the purview of feminism, and broader gender studies, from the more conventional focus on feminine perspectives dominant in the scholarship hitherto. Thus, these last two approaches have opened up new discursive modalities whereby male critics can participate in feminist discourse with more legitimacy.[13] On the other hand, even while consciously distancing themselves from the seemingly outmoded biologism, Iida argues, these latter approaches nevertheless maintain the dichotomy of man and woman as the basic scaffolding of criticism, variously rendered as *logos* versus non-*logos*, unified identify versus multi-layered identity, and ideology versus novelistic *écriture*. Grounded as they are in textual and cultural rather than biological conditions, Iida argues, they remain binary terms.

Against this context of the unquestioned "framework" (*wakugumi*), Iida's theoretical alternative arrives via Joan Scott's definition of gender as "knowledge (*chi*) that confers meaning on physical difference (*nikutaiteki sa*)."[14] Aiming to analyze the system of signification based on sexual difference and pursue the historicity of the sexual and gender binary of man and woman, and thereby disarticulate the persistent return to essentialized categories, Iida declares the terms of critical operation at the outset: her study pivots on the distinction of discourse (*gensetsu*) and reality (*jittai*) in order to highlight the ways in which the former through simple dichotomies often conceals the complexities of the latter.[15] In other words, in the name of questioning the binaries prevailing in the horizontal discursive space, Iida introduces a vertical bifurcation, faintly reminiscent of the Marxian distinction of base and superstructure. The implicit logic is as

[13] Chida Hiroyuki's and Suga Hidemi's work is given as examples.
[14] Iida, *Karera no monogatari*, 11. Scott's own language specifies "knowledge about sexual difference." See Joan Scott, *Gender and the Politics of History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), 2. It should be noted that Egusa positions Butler's theory as a more radical version of Scott's.
[15] Iida, *Karera no monogatari*, 19.

follows: the ontology of "reality" in all its messiness will be recovered by being carefully posited on the side while her critique goes after a "discourse" that brandishes imaginary binaries.

This methodological dictate, naïvely demarcating the boundaries around the interpretive object, ultimately betrays a critical relinquishment of what is precisely in need of reading: the relation—or, rather, the intractable contiguity—between what Iida respectively terms "discourse" and "reality." In the end, Iida's strategic segregation of these terms amounts to an apology for an inability to address anything other than "discourse" that falsely represents the lived "reality." That her combativeness *vis-à-vis* the binaries supposedly fabricated by "discourse" should overlook another binary of her own making ought to betray a certain irony. It is in this manner that Butler's theory of the performative becomes reduced to a mere notion of historicity, and Foucault's theory of the relation of power and desire comes to tidily designate the "politicality" (*seijisei*) of knowledge.[16]

Most significantly, Iida's theoretical premise typifies a broader problematics pervading feminist and general subjectivist discourse in modern Japanese literature. That is to say, the essentialist orientations that Iida objectifies in an overcoming gesture remain just as dominant. Most revealingly, they have thrived by virtue of a new set of rhetorical contraptions strategically concealing their essentialist origins: the "discursive" turn in modern Japanese literary criticism. In place of the presumed certainty of the biological body of earlier discourse, recent studies have turned towards history rhetorically dispersed among historicity, discursive apparatuses, ideological operations, and the like, thereby effectively exposing the process whereby the categories of sexual and gender

[16] Ibid., 1 and 7.

difference have come into effect. Bringing together the discipline's keen interest in popular media, modern theatre, the nation-state, and capitalism with such byproducts as consumerism, and thereby producing more complex articulations of femininity yielding literary, sociological, and historical findings, these studies have made valuable contributions.[17] However, their interest in the historical process in which woman *became constituted* surreptitiously slides into an assumption of the *finality* of its status. In other words, the temporality of this vaunted historicity fails to obtain once the discussion departs from the momentous origin, suggesting that the origin, however historical, is fixed. Ayako Kano's schematic contrast of the premodern past and the modern present bears out its rhetorical structure: "[In the] modern definition of woman, *gender is perceived as subordinate to sex*, the former derived from the latter and grounded on it. Before the modern period, feminine gender was thought to be achieved by subordinating the female sex, by training and cultivating the body to match the ideal of femininity."[18]

To recapitulate the discussion thus far, Egusa's apprehensiveness about "discourse" as the critical shorthand—insofar as she perceives it to displace woman's

[17] Most recent feminist interests converged on the emergence of the "new woman" (*atarashii onna*), the epitome of the discursive contention over sexuality and gender in the early twentieth-century capitalist society, and the manifestation and galvanizing force of this figure, the Bluestocking Society (Seitōsha, 1911-16). See Iida Yūko, ed. Seitō *to iu ba: bungaku, jendā, "atarashii onna"* (Shin'washa, 2002); Barbara Satō, *The New Japanese Woman: Modernity, Media, and Women in Interwar Japan* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003); Jan Bardsley, *The Bluestockings of Japan: New Woman Essays and Fiction from Seitō, 1911-16* (Ann Arbor: Center for Japanese Studies, University of Michigan, 2007); Dina Lowy, *The Japanese "New Woman": Images of Gender and Modernity* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2007). Despite the laudable work of presenting valuable data and multifaceted inquiries into the discursive status of the figure, these studies uniformly presume the imprisoned status of the sexed body of woman and/or the gendered identity of woman as fundamental epistemological conditions. Hence the mission statement: "Constructing a social and cultural narrative that situates the questioning of agency, power, and politics within the context of everyday life took on special meaning to those working to revise the project of *women's history*"; "The 'reality' of the "the bobbed-haired, short-skirted modern girl (*modān gāru*); the self-motivated housewife (*shufu*); and the rational, extroverted professional working woman (*shokugyō fujin*)" is said to have "offered Japanese *women* new *identities* in the 1920s." Satō, *The New Japanese Woman*, 6-7. Italics added.

[18] Kano. *Acting Like a Woman in Modern Japan* 28. Kano's italics.

bodily existence—takes the form of return to a biologism. She poses a rather perplexing question: "Is gender really flexible (*jūnan*), or restrictive (*kōsokuteki*)?" and follows with a compromise for the beleaguered relation between sex and gender: Insofar as the four biological principles of sex (*seibutsugakuteki sei gensoku*)—that is, men's monopoly on insemination, and women's on menstruation, pregnancy, and lactation—sex is "connected" (*tsunagatte iru*) to the construction of gender.[19]

This view seems oppositional *vis-à-vis* Iida's valorization of "discourse" precisely for its critical possibility beyond essentialism, biological or otherwise. Yet, Egusa's wish to bring back "sex" as "reality" (*jittai*)—indeed "real" "body" (*jitsu-tai*)—against the perceived Butlerian absolutism of "gender" as "discourse" deploys exactly the same binary interpretive paradigm as Iida's ambitious venture towards the politics of literature. At the same time, the difference is also significant. Egusa assumes that the "reality" of the sexed body is critically accessible while Iida assumes otherwise. The problem, in other words, is the status of this "body." The earlier generation's reluctance to let go of the body is refreshing yet fails to yield any critical profit. Insofar as it remains delimited by the anatomical markers given as irrefutable reality, this body is little more than the inert counterpart of the "discourse." What is called for is a new imagination of the body itself.

It is within the same critical paradigm that Kano on the one hand insightfully locates the theatrical moment when woman came into existence by way of the double performative of the actress, that is, through anatomical objectivity and the simultaneous mandate to "act" and on the other hand leaves unexamined the consequence of such an impossible conjunction. In other words, this slippage between the biological and the

[19] Nakayama and Egusa, eds., *Sōryoku tōron*, 13.

ideological is precisely the unaddressed gap, simply given as the dichotomy of sex versus gender, in Egusa's and Iida's mutually generative criticism. At the same time, the possibility of a reading beyond the conventional alignment of the scientific anatomization of the body and the ideological appropriation thereof lies in that critical blind spot.

Odaira Maiko's *Woman Performs Woman* intervenes at this juncture, pursuing the messy trajectory of the production of the feminine subject through the proximity among such diverse cultural codes as performance (in the theater), consumerism, and homoerotic literary sororities. With a flash of insight, Odaira notes the coterminous relation between the constitution of "woman" as the counterpart of man on the one hand and the completion of the antagonism of heterosexuality/homosexuality on the other.[20] Yet, Odaira's discussion impels towards a dead end, little different than the indignant lamentation prevailing in the general feminist discourse variously named as socio-cultural-constructionist, historicist, discursive, Foucaultian or Butlerian. Once the ideological operation of "discourse" has been exposed, there is no further step to hope for. What concerns Odaira ultimately is the structural violence that makes it impossible for the feminine subject to construct itself outside the masculine regime of heterosexuality: "The acknowledgment (*shōnin*) of the 'subjectivization of woman' (*josei shutaika*) discloses the system of gender production itself by way of demonstrating the fact that gender is only 'what is performed,' and at the same time only occurs as its frustration, that is, the reproduction that perpetuates gender as 'nature.'"[21] Thus, for all its suggestive readings, Odaira's book aligns itself with the dominant stream of scholarship pursuing ideological ends that culminate in the sexual inequivalence.

[20] *Onna ga onna o enjiru*, 105.
[21] Ibid., 95.

Considered in this manner, the body, at least in modern Japanese literature, does not *only* refer to the phenomenological surface that renders itself to various ideological appropriations, which many of the aforementioned studies do address, often with superb acuity. As seen above, even this body as highlighted in modern Japanese literary criticism seems to fall short of the originary rigor that seeks precisely "the *de*constituting possibility in the very process of repetition, the power that undoes the very effects by which 'sex' is stabilized, the possibility to put the consolidation of the norms of 'sex' into a potentially productive crisis."[22] In other words, the body that "exceeds and compels that signifying chain, that reiteration of difference" is hardly visible in the feminist scholarship in modern Japanese literature.[23] The unvarying passivity of the body is what stands as the critical limit. It is precisely at this point that the body takes on another level of significance, an opening toward a different critical language. The dominance of the historicist criticism has taken shape precisely through a particular language that endorses objectivity, shunning ambiguity and ambivalence at all cost. That is to say that the status of the body is evoked only insofar as it affords an oppositional position *vis-à-vis* the masculinist, statist, and capitalist *ideologies*. The body's alterity to the ideological formation has yet to be thought through. In this sense, the body by definition has not arrived insofar as it calls for a different language, untethered from the epistemology subtending the current feminist discourse in modern Japanese literature.

To articulate the problem differently, what is missing in these variously meticulous critical ventures are the ways in which the categorical fixing of woman and femininity through scientific, cultural, as well as literary discourses fails to *culminate* in

[22] Judith Butler, *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of "Sex"* (New York: Routledge, 1993), 10.
[23] Ibid., 90.

the identification of the female body and femininity and instead produces desire ensuing from that very incommensurability. Odaira addresses some aspects of this incongruous desire, tracing the trajectory of consumerism in relation to woman's subject formation in the early twentieth century. The insufficiency of that pursuit seems methodologically delimited rather than owing to the lack of insight. That is to say, for Odaira the body remains strictly on the representational level. Between the binarism of reality/sex and discourse/gender as a dominant explanatory equation and the ideological orientation of feminist criticism, affective or psychoanalytical insights cannot be accommodated. Alternatively, the particular organization of feminist critical discourse in modern Japanese literature, which precludes the theoretical possibility of reading affectively and psychoanalytically, is in great measure due to its affinity with the larger cultural studies with the overarching concern with nation-state. Or, as Margherita Long states, "[The] discipline of Japanese Studies…tends to treat problems of gender as if they were ancillary to problems of nation rather than foundational."[24] In fact, this critical disposition against psychoanalysis demands a broader consideration touching upon the entire discursive paradigm within which it arises, an inquiry that lies beyond the scope of the present study.[25] Suffice it to say that this discursive condition is consequential for its critical inadequacy in accounting for instances of desire that misfire *vis-à-vis* ideology or even the symbolic order. Thus, after these variously intelligent revelations of sex and gender inequivalences, the question remains: Then, what happened? Or, what is to be expected now? Missing in the general feminist discourse is a gesture towards a futurity, which ought to be paramount in the feminist problematics. Such a gesture does not search

[24] *This Perversion Called Love*, 43.
[25] For Japanese culture's "resistance to psychoanalysis," see Nina Cornyetz and J. Keith Vincent's introduction to their edited volume, *Perversion and Modern Japan*.

for a "solution" for the problems articulated by the feminist critics but mobilizes a theoretical rigor that would carry the prized thesis of historicity all the way, to suggest the effects of the origin that can arrive only as other origins, or, more fundamentally, the volatility, the temperamental temporality of history itself.

3.

The critique of identitarianism—if essentialism or binarism is ultimately an impulse for identity—is certainly not a call for abandoning differential categories. It would be futile and perhaps even unnecessary to do away with "man" and "woman." The question is one of the felicity of critical *citations* of such categories, which could operate either to ossify or disarticulate their discursive baggage. In view of this inheritance, for the following discussion to make any honest contribution to the existing discourse on sexuality and gender, it is necessary to qualify the operative status of the familiar binaries, such as man and woman, male and female, and masculine and feminine. Much of the critical confusion surrounding sexuality and gender, particularly the kind that leads to skepticism about essentialism implicit in the use of such binaries, seems to issue from—or, be rectifiable through an understanding of—their ineluctably *temporal* circulation. Luce Irigaray's polemic presents an illustrative example. Her work has been castigated for its apparent investment in an essentialist language not only pivoting on the bifurcation of man/masculinity and woman/femininity but, more provocatively, pushing the metaphoricity of the female body to articulable extremes.[26] Referring to the image of the "two lips" central to Irigaray's idea of woman's "self-affection" disposed towards a

[26] For insightful reading on this subject, see Diana Fuss, "Essentially Speaking: Luce Irigaray's Language of Essence," *Hypathia* 3, no. 3 "French Feminist Philosophy" (Winter 1989); Margaret Whitford, "Body Symbolic," *Hypathia* 6, no. 3 "Feminism and the Body" (Autumn 1991).

feminine syntax, Monique Plaza lashes out, "All that 'is' woman comes to her in the last instances from her anatomical sex, which touches itself all the time. Poor woman."[27] In fact, it is between the supremely self-conscious mimetic enactment of the masculine discourse—to the point of "the deepest acceptance of patriarchal subjection"[28]—and the imaginary that becomes feminine only insofar as it cannot stand for *representation* within the "phallocratic" language that Irigaray's critical force arises.[29] In other words, it is precisely by way of the *risk* implicit in pushing these binaries to their limit that Irigaray's radical intervention takes form. At the same time, integral to this strategy is what may be called the implicit time of hope. The scathingly combative binaries have a place in feminist criticism insofar as they already gesture towards an *after*. Or, more properly, Irigaray's imagination of a truly eventful difference—in syntax, discourse, or the Symbolic—is not so much temporal as topological, that is, inserted, or, brought back, right into the present mode of signification and being. The point is not to endorse Irigaray's critical operation *per se*, but, rather, to create some room for these binaries, which obviously have not *lived off* their time. The scholarly struggle against apparent anachronisms—by way of so many disguised forms of historicism and egalitarianism as well as moralism—has proven to be only a wish, untimely, ineffectual, and, finally, dishonest.

The problem of temporality has already been shown pertinent to and extensively analyzed in postcolonial discourse, not for the familiar developmental narrative with crushingly empirical concerns—the "first in Europe, then elsewhere" structure, to borrow

[27] Toril Moi, *Sexual/Textual Politics: Feminist Literary Theory* (London; New York: Methuen, 1985), 147.
[28] Ibid., 137.
[29] See Irigaray, *This Sex Which is Not One*, trans. Catherine Porter (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985), 80.

Dipesh Chakrabarty's definition of historicism—but for its epistemological potential.[30] For example, Partha Chatterjee's impassioned differential theorization of the "problematic" and "thematic" gestures precisely at this temporality inextricable from the critical task even while configuring it as a conundrum concerning the analytical subject's position *vis-à-vis* (post)colonial event—the Oriental versus the European, or the postcolonial nationalist versus the post-Enlightenment rationalist:

> Our present concern is to make a suitable distinction by which we can separate, for analytical purposes, that part of a social ideology, consciously formulated and expressed in terms of a formal theoretical discourse, which *asserts* the existence, and often the practical realizability, of certain historical possibilities from the part which seeks to *justify* those claims by an appeal to both epistemic and moral principles.[31]

The analytical rigor is punctuated—or, rather, motivated—by furtive recognition of the empirical impossibility borne out in their relation: "[The] problematic in nationalist thought is exactly the reverse of that of Orientalism. … At the level of the thematic, on the other hand, nationalist thought accepts and adopts the same essentialist conception based on the distinction between 'the East' and 'the West'…."[32] If poignancy and poeticity are the only salvageable effects of Chatterjee's appeal for such a distinction, which finally structurally suggests a certain epistemological defeatism, it could still be given another life to live—that is, if the positivist demand to *solve* this aporia is gently supplemented by generous allowance for that very conundrum to carry through with the gesture.

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[30] Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 7. It is important to distinguish this historicism from the historicist or constructionist approaches in the post-Foucaultian critical era discussed above in the context of modern Japanese literary criticism. At the very least, the latter is founded precisely upon the critique of the former.

[31] Partha Chatterjee, *Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World: A Derivative Discourse* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), 38.

[32] Ibid. To a large extent, Chakrabarty's *Provincializing Europe* shares the same conundrum of what may be called an incommensurability of epistemology and praxis.

The present discussion approaches the persistent binaries as *historical* designations, that is, recognizes the temporal abyss that continually opens up between the *conjuring* and the *enouncing* of these terms. Put differently, if it is impossible to unfetter these terms from their discursive inheritance, it may still be possible to turn *with* them towards a different history:

> The historiographer makes study of the real appear in two quite different positions within the scientific process: the real insofar as it is the *known* (what the historian studies, understands, or "brings to life" from a past society), and the real insofar as it is entangled within the scientific operations (the present society, to which the historians' problematics, their procedures, modes of comprehension, and finally a practice of meaning are referable). … Historical science takes hold precisely in their relation to one another, and its proper objective is developing this relation into a discourse.[33]

Insofar as all writing is historical by virtue of its temporality and, as de Certeau might add, history is possible only as a form of writing, the above observation is entirely pertinent to the present discussion—all the more so because, first, critical work on sexuality and gender invariably impels towards the past as the site of origins, redemption, and recuperation; and second, the persistent debates concerning essentialism, and its mirror image, intellectualism, call precisely for an intervention that grasps this double temporality inscribing feminist criticism. The task as posed by de Certeau of developing the very relation of the two registers of "real" into a discourse may have been prefigured, for the time being, in Walter Benjamin's conjuration of the historical materialist: "The Messiah comes not only as the redeemer, he comes as the subduer of Antichrist. Only that historian will have the gift of fanning the spark of hope in the past who is firmly

[33] De Certeau, *The Writing of History*, 35. De Certeau's italics.

convinced that *even the dead* will not be safe from the enemy if he wins."[34] This esoteric precept may be read in two directions. On the one hand, the differently modalized forms of feminist language, abandoned for various political reasons, may be dead, but nevertheless remain available for continuing appropriation. On the other hand, no matter how deep, their burials cannot keep the critic *safe* from the vagaries of the dead. As such, the discourse of sexuality and gender will forever remain under a haunting threat, unless it *redeems* the dead, becomes friendly with them.

Thus, man and woman, male and female, and masculinity and femininity will make a return here, inevitably, yet not as identitarian titles or subjective properties but as inherited means with which subjects *strive to* arrive at certainty, perhaps identity. To recognize this psychic and affective as well as ideological impulse is the minimum necessity in this critical adventure. What ought to accompany that recognition is a movement towards that which refuses to be absorbed into—or, rather, is impervious to—such an impulse. Julia Kristeva has articulated this double motility when she proposes a third attitude of feminism, in which, "the very dichotomy man/woman as an opposition between two rival entities may be understood as belonging to *metaphysics*."[35] For "[what] can 'identity,' even 'sexual identity,' mean in a new theoretical and scientific space where the very notion of identity is challenged?" Jacques Derrida echoes Kristeva's view when he states, "I would like to believe in the masses, this indeterminable number of blended voices, this mobile of non-identified sexual marks whose choreography can carry, divide, multiply the body of each 'individual' *whether he be classified as 'man' or as*

[34] Walter Benjamin, "Theses on the Philosophy of History," in *Illuminations: Essays and Reflections*, ed. Hanna Arendt, trans. Harry Zohn (New York: Schocken Books, 1968), 255. Benjamin's italics.
[35] "Women's Time," 33. Kristeva's italics.

'woman' according to the criteria of usage."[36] These propositions are, as in any writing, a provocation to the reader. By retaining tension between the impulses to jump to the mission of recovering woman on the one hand and launching a criticism of the empiricism inscribing this rigid politics on the other, the critic can instead make room for the instability of the terms as well as the claims therein.

The premise of the present discussion is that this double movement and the precarious tension therein that together constitute critical practice can be articulated and thereby tended by way of hysteria. Hysteria refers here not only to a notable object of literary representation in early twentieth-century Japanese literature but, more importantly, to a poignant metaphor for a certain incommensurability that gives rise to subjective experience and theoretical gestures, which modern Japanese literary discourse has yet to explore. In other words, an inquiry into hysteria through literary representation cannot but afford critical passages to multiple problems: literature as a singular mode of discourse, the subject arising as a relation to the other, and the critical endeavor that ever wavers between thetic aims and affective residues.

The only salvation available is an untiring arc towards the unarticulable. As the messy contest of different registers of sexuality and gender is reduced to immediately objectifiable ideologies with woman as the paradigmatic victim, the body becomes an idea, divested of its unruly ontology. Rueful, accusatory, and contestatory in turn, the current feminist scholarship seems either self-satisfied or simply lost as to what comes *after* the exposure of the constructed nature of gender categories. A deliberately scandalous assessment may even locate a certain retrograde movement between earlier

[36] "Choreographies: Interview, Jacques Derrida and Christie V. McDonald," *Diacritics* 12, no. 2 (Summer 1982): 76. Italics added.

scholarly concerns as found in Mizuta's work and the recent critical paradigm, insofar as the material/bodily has been rendered either unspeakable or emptied to become a mere scarecrow. The supposed leap out of old-fashioned essentialism has been enabled only at the expense of the body, abandoned without due theorization. The consequence is less than glorious: another return to essentialism congregated around "discourse" authenticated by "history," stripped of the messy business of the body. The task at hand is to account for the two absences: of the body and of man. Together, through their long concealed relation, these absences have imprisoned the feminist futurity in a claustrophobic clamoring for justice, punctuated by nostalgia for an egalitarian past.

A generous allowance for the historicist and constructionist feminist view would still lead to motions as follows: If man/masculinity and woman/femininity are indeed categories that emerged with the onset of modernity, as many feminist critics have argued, critical profitability ought to be sought precisely in the contiguity of these binary terms insofar as they concern the common region of sexuality and gender.[37] If these binaries are indeed relational notions, as most feminist critics would concede, then the ensuing injuries ought to be approached as transactional rather than unilateral. For violence has origins and implications that lie beyond, even as enabling, the socio-politico-cultural institutions and mores that scholars have often cited as the final agents of discrimination, and, as such, doles out injuries to *all* parties involved.[38] In this regard Wendy Brown

[37] Michel Foucault's *The History of Sexuality, Vol. 1 An Introduction* (New York: Random House, 1973) presents a classic thesis on the construction of sexuality. In a more localized yet widely applicable formulation, Mary Poovey observes, "The conceptualization of difference as a binary organization of sex had as an increasingly persuasive basis during [the 1840s-1850s] a new scientific representation of the body. … [Late] eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century medical men began to represent the differences between male and female bodies and functions as a series of binary oppositions." *Uneven Developments: The Ideological Work of Gender in Mid-Victorian England* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), 6.
[38] The communal aspect of violence is instructively discussed in René Girard, *Violence and the Sacred*, Patrick Gregory (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1977) and Sigmund Freud, *Totem and Taboo:*

provides an instructive insight, drawing upon Nietzsche's account of "the politics of *ressentiment*" in order to reflect on "contemporary forms of political life."[39] "North Atlantic feminism" is one of the institutions that Brown indicts when she remarks, "Developing a righteous critique of power from the perspective of the injured, it delimits a specific site of blame for suffering by constituting sovereign subjects and events as responsible for the 'injury' of social subordination." In part echoing the discussion above, Brown further singles out "feminist anxieties about postmodernity in its disruption and deauthorization of our moral ground—our subject that harbors truths, and our truth that opposes power."[40] It is this collective resort to the language of *ressentiment* that must be halted and rethought. Once again, the expulsion of man only disables any feminist futurity.

Finally, there remains the question of modernity as a particular epoch. What emerges as the minimal theoretical common denominator among the differently inflected feminist positions is the ineluctable relation between the construction of ideological institutions in modern Japan and the subjection of the body during that process. The fact that the spread of medical and otherwise scientific discourse focused on the biological body is often referenced as an epochal transformation of modernity illustrates the bodily modality of modernity itself. Critics in the genre of "affect study" have highlighted precisely this modernity, that is, a particular mode of managing the senses and comporting the body. It is no wonder that modern Japanese literary criticism has yet to profit from this line of theory; the affective experience gains visibility precisely on the

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Some Points of Agreement Between the Mental Lives of Savages and Neurotics, trans. James Strachey (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1950).

[39] *States of Injury: Power and Freedom in Late Modernity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), 26-27. See chapter 2 of the book for Brown's extended arguments.

[40] Ibid., 47.

site that escapes the ideological language.[41] Therefore, even if the current feminist indictment of man and masculinist institutions in modern Japanese literary criticism obtains, affect ought to be located even within the most unjust instance of appropriation of sexual and gender difference, for both supposed perpetrators and victims.

4.

Hysteria may seem like a counterintuitive place at which to lower the critical moorings, considering its discriminatory association with woman as physiological individual or femininity as the attendant affective property. However, the blatantly sexist cultural perception of hysteria need not only be a pitfall. In fact, as the succeeding sections shall make clear, that very semantic baggage, when pursued with an allowance for affective ambiguity as well as analytical acumen, yields interpretive openings rarely imagined in the critical enterprise in search of ideological explanations. Uno Kōji's novella *Kura no naka*, it should be noted, features hysteria as a key narrative theme. For all its manifest frivolity, Uno's text presents an entirely ontological meditation that traverses the province of the body, the psyche, and, finally, ethics; and it does so by way of a suspenseful tension *vis-à-vis* hysteria—at once a narrative object of representation and the condition enabling the very act of narrating. Tracing the textual configuration of hysteria, the following discussion will locate the converging points—or, more properly, always already mutual genesis—of the ideological dimensions of sexuality and gender on the one hand and the questions regarding the affective/psychic modality of modernity as manifested in sexuality and gender on the other.

[41] For refreshing methods of deploying affect in social science research, see essays in Patricia Ticineto Clough, ed., *The Affective Turn: Theorizing the Social* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007); for the specific issue of the body/matter *vis-à-vis* the social field, see the editor's introduction.

The first three chapters of this study presents three scenes of hysteria. The remains of Chapter 1 situates hysteria as a phenomenon both circulating in modern medico-cultural discourse and employed in scholarly as well as literary representation. Locating the semantic lacunae that shape these discursive transactions renders hysteria as a critical possibility yet to serve modern Japanese literary studies. Chapter 2 "A Detour: The Melancholy of *Shishōsetsu* addresses the affective location of *shishōsetsu* as a socio-cultural formation beyond the quintessential novelistic genre of modern Japanese literature *vis-à-vis* a coloniality inscribing modern civilization at large, by appropriating the conceptual fertility of hysteria. The narcissism manifest in the productive and consumptive predilection of the *bundan*, the closely-knit literary establishment forming a mutually generative condition *vis-à-vis shishōsetsu*, will have another life, not as an index of "Japanese" aesthetic or cultural predisposition, but as so many gestures of survival, of the injuries of modernity. Chapter 3 "Choreography Twosome" attempts an intimate reading of Uno's novella, with two critical concepts as organizing structures—mimesis and debt—to arrive at their mutuality as the very possibility of a differential subject, whether suffering from hysteria or not. The latter will have ramifications for sexuality and gender, literature, and ethics, even while arising from them.

5.

> "She was hysterical. She was…." I was about to say that she was uncontrollably hysterical and had been sent home for that reason, but the words got stuck in my throat. I suddenly remembered that the woman I was talking to had been divorced and sent home because she was hysterical. This time I used the silk crepe kimono hanging from the line to hide my face as I said, stammering, "She was really very hysterical." Had I hurt her feelings as I feared? She didn't say anything at all. And I got all the more flustered, and took off on a clumsy defense of hysteria. "Of

> course, you could call a man such as I am a male hysteric. Moreover, I always felt that in today's world whoever is not hysterical is either insensitive or plain stupid. What I was going to say is that the woman was not as hysterical as she was absolutely crazy."[42]

Uno's textualization of hysteria in *Kura no naka* finds itself within the larger, indeed global, cultural discourse fascinated with and disconcerted by this psychosomatic crisis. As early as 1878, the radical plurality of its symptomatology led a French physician to proclaim, "[The] definition of hysteria has never been given and never will be. The symptoms are not constant enough, nor sufficiently similar in form or equal in duration and intensity that one type, even descriptive, could compromise them all."[43] Over a century later, a French psychoanalyst stated as if in reply, "[There] doesn't seem to be anything that medicine has not said about hysteria: it is multiple, it is one, it is nothing; it is an entity, a malfunction, an illusion; it is true and deceptive, organic and perhaps mental; it exists, it does not exist."[44] Thus, if there were a single ontological truth of hysteria, it would be its constant evasion of *fixing*, etiological, symptomatological, and more.[45] It is no little irony that at one point "sexual fix" was proposed as a cure of hysteria, rather like putting out fire with fire, through "Marriage, the Family, and productive Work."[46]

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[42] Uno, *Love of Mountains*, 77. All translations of *Kura no naka* in this study follow Gerbert's with occasional modifications. Hereafter page numbers are given within the text. For Japanese, *Hirotsu Kazuo Uno Kōji Kasai Zenzō shū*, Gendai Nihon bungaku zenshū, vol. 32 (Chikuma shobō, 1955) as well as *Uno Kōji zenshū*, vol. 1 (Chūō kōron sha, 1968), which show slight variations.

[43] Charles Lasègue cited in Elaine Showalter, *Hystories: Hysterical Epidemics and Modern Culture* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), 14.

[44] Gérard Wajeman, "The Hysteric's Discourse," in *Jacques Lacan: Critical Evaluations in Cultural Theory Vol. I*, ed. Slavoj Žižek (London; New York: Routledge, 2003), 77.

[45] For a meticulous overview of the discursive history of hysteria, see Mark S. Micale, *Approaching Hysteria: Disease and Its Interpretations* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995); for definitional conundrum, 108-116.

[46] Charles Bernheimer referring to a therapy prescribed by Philippe Pinel in the introduction to *In Dora's Case: Freud-Hysteria-Feminism*, ed. Bernheimer and Claire Kahane (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985), 5. "Sexual fix" is a reference to Stephen Heath's study on hysteria, *The Sexual Fix* (New York: Schocken Books, 1982).

The two professionals' shared exasperation, however, should not obfuscate what did take place in the intervening century: namely, a radical reformulation of the problem of definition, with an eye toward accommodation of the confusion, at least in the humanistic disciplines. In a belated gesture to catch up with the wayward phenomenology of hysteria, its conceptual elasticity has been maximized. Thus some scholars have arrived at a designation of hysteria as "a state of mind" which "describes thinkers of all types, not just patients, who concern themselves with the intersections of bodies and texts, and with medical conditions and discursive practices," thus reaching far beyond the province of medicine.[47] A radically desomatizing version grasps hysteria "not as a disease" but rather "an alternative physical, verbal, and gestural language, an iconic social communication."[48]

Perhaps even more troubling than the amorphous boundaries has been the scandalous promiscuity with which hysteria enacts this constant transference. In other words, the structural kernel that precipitates the symptomatological overgrowth is itself radical heterogeneity. Approaching hysteria by way of such performative designations as "an illness stylistics" and "symptom choice," Roy Porter notes, "Picking up hysteria was aided by the fact that nineteenth-century public life put on view an abundance of physical peculiarities: gait disorders, paralyses, limps, and other comparable handicaps."[49] Mark S. Micale echoes Porter: "It is that disease whose essence lies in imitating other diseases."[50]

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[47] G. S. Rousseau and Roy Porter, "The Destinies of Hysteria," in *Hysteria beyond Freud* (Berkeley; Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1993), ix.
[48] Micale's citation of Thomas Szasz, *Approaching Hysteria*, 182.
[49] Roy Porter, "The Body and the Mind, the Doctor and the Patient," in *Hysteria beyond Freud* (Berkeley; Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1993), 229. Similarly, Edward Shorter discusses culture as "possessing a 'symptom repertoire,' a range of physical symptoms available to the unconscious mind for the physical expression of psychological conflict." See "Paralysis: the Rise and Fall of a 'Hysterical' Symptom," *Journal of Social History* 19 (Summer 1986): 549.
[50] Micale, *Approaching Hysteria*, 111

Elaine Showalter completes this line of reading by invoking a single most primordial modality of human behavior, which, as such, is riddled with enigmatic power and horror: "Hysteria is a *mimetic* disorder; it *mimics* culturally permissible expressions of distress."[51] The conceptual significance of mimesis will be revisited below when the space exists to expand its potentialities more fully.

Thus doubly—territorially and structurally—uncontainable hysteria has been a disconcerting other to Reason in the lineage of the Enlightenment that authenticated the objective sciences, medicine foremost. As Porter notes, "the certainty about the knowledge of all" was counterpointed by "the concomitant sense that medicine still had an arduous road to hoe before it would be a rigorous science like mathematics, physics, or astronomy."[52] In other words, this branch of science seeking to domesticate hysteria into a scientific object was itself struggling to overcome its own vestiges of Unreason. In early twentieth century Japan, any doubts about medical knowledge gained clearer contours against a larger cultural discourse seemingly withdrawing towards the premodern phenomenology of the world. The contemporary discourse on *seishin* vividly captured this epistemological chaos. *Seishin* not only resists translation, malleable as it is into anything on the spectrum of phenomenological vocabulary including mind, psychology, and spirit. Most importantly for the present discussion, lending itself as a site of contention between parareligious (spiritual) and scientific (psychological as well as psychiatric) practices, *seishin* in its very significatory overdetermination illustrates the discursive milieu in which hysteria emerged as a scandalous sign.

[51] Elaine Showalter, *Hystories,* 15. Italics added.
[52] G. S. Rousseau and Roy Porter, "The Destinies of Hysteria," xiv.

Particularly revelatory is the appearance of *Hentai shinri* (Abnormal Psychology, 1917-26), a journal devoted to issues pertaining to matters of *seishin*, published by the Japan Association for Psychological Medicine (Nihon Seishin Igakkai).[53] The medical authority implied by these titles is misleading.[54] Excluding Morita Masatake (1874-1938), the only member with medical training, the overall membership was a motley collective of personages with backgrounds in literature, education, and religion, as well as psychology. Emblematically, the founder, Nakamura Kokyō (1881-1952), was a graduate of the Faculty of Literature at Tokyo University, a disciple of none other than Natsume Sōseki (1867-1916).[55] At any rate, Kokyō's impetus to found the Association and its journal bears out the still fledging status of medicine vulnerable to ambiguous charges, and, even more, *seishin* as a term in regards to which it may be negotiated. In the inaugural issue of *Hentai shinri*, Kokyō articulated his position as follows:

> There is an intimate relation between mind (*seishin*) and body that is inalienable. Today's medicine, under the influence of the material (*busshitsu*) civilization, disregards it, tending to research solely physiological treatments while forgetting mental (*seishinteki*) ones. … I have realized that, with today's material (*busshitsuteki*) medicine only, it is impossible to treat human illnesses, especially mental diseases….[56]

The notable swing from the body/material to the mind/mental/psychological in Kokyō's agenda reverberates with the nascent discourse in Europe on psychology and soon

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[53] *Seishin igaku* is a term consciously chosen to contrast with *busshitsu igaku* (material or physiological medicine) on the one hand and *seishin byōgaku* (study of mental diseases) within the contemporary context, elaborated below. *Seishin igaku* is therefore better rendered as "psychological medicine" rather than the common translation "psychiatry." For detailed information on *Hentai shinri*, see "Shiryō shōkai: Nakamura Kokyō to *Hentai shinri*," *Gobun* 100 (March 1998); Mitsuishi Ayumi, "Kenkyū tenbō: *Hentai shinri* kenkyū kara miete kuru mono," *Shōwa bungaku kenkyū* 59 (September 2009).

[54] Mistuishi characterizes the journal as "not 'genuine' academism but targeting a general audience through readers' contributions and prize contests." See "Kenkyū tenbō," 100.

[55] Although the details are unknown, it seems that Kokyō went on to receive medical training at Tokyo University, after *Hentai shinri* was discontinued. Also, at the age of 60, he enrolled in the Nagoya University Medical School and the next year obtained an M.D. See Sone, "Shiryō shōkai,"109; Mitsuishi, "Kenkyū tenbō," 100. For the relationship between Kokyō and Sōseki, see Senuma Shigeki, *Sōseki monka no bunjin tachi*, Nihon bundan shi, vol. 20 (Kōdansha, 1978), 244-60.

[56] Sone, "Shiryō shōkai," 110.

psychoanalysis, with the iconic fame achieved by Jean-Martin Charcot through his clinical work at the Salpêtrière and the prodigious appearance of Freud in *fin-de-siècle* Vienna.[57]

Yet, same as the visual and narrative turn in the European psychological scene, *Hentai shinri*'s criticism of materially oriented medicine by no means signaled an anti-scientific position. To the contrary, the journal emphasized its "scientific" mission even to the point of perverse obsession, as in the journal's persistence in bringing parareligious practices to the court of science, and even justice, and branding them as "heresy" (*jakyō*) or "superstition" (*meishin*).[58] At the same time, as Hyōdō Akiko astutely points out, Kokyō and his associates' resort to the language of hypnosis was firmly situated within the larger Taishō era cultural milieu, which witnessed a boom in spiritual remedies through folk as well as religious channels.[59] The psychiatric method of hypnosis, scandalously publicized through Charcot's use in treatment of patients of hysteria, underwent a fascinating contention in Japan as various parties claimed it as their own.[60] A Christian pastor named Takahashi Usaburo deployed the concept of subconscious (*senzai ishiki*) to define God—one large Subconscious, source of the smaller individual

[57] Micale, *Approaching Hysteria*, 24-28.
[58] One of the most publicized cases involved the New Religious sect, Ōmotokyō, whose spiritual practice known as *shinkon kishin hō*—roughly translatable as "the method to pacify the spirit and return to the godly"—drove the journal to publish two special issues devoted to the perceived problem. When the sect's executive was arrested for *lèse-majesté* and violation of press law in 1921, their criminal behaviors were discussed in the language of the unconscious. For an insightful account, see Hyōdō Akiko, "Taishōki no 'seishin' gainen: Ōmotokyō to *Hentai shinri* no sōkoku o tōshite," *Shūkyō kenkyū* 79, no. 1 (June 2005). Kokyō even published a book titled *Ōmotokyō no kaibō: gakuriteki gensei hihan* (Nihon seishin igakkai, 1920).
[59] Hyōdō lists other examples, including Okada Style Sitting (*seizahō*), Tanaka Morihei's Taireidō, and what is called the energy concentration method (*kiaijutsu*), "Taishōki no 'seishin' gainen," 109. For first-person accounts of Kokyō's own practice of hypnosis, see Tsunokawa Masaki, "Nakamura Kokyō 'Nijū jinkaku no onna' ni tsuite," *Bunmei* 83 (Sept. 2000), which introduces excerpts from Kokyō's *Hisuterī no ryōhō*, Seishin eisei kōwa, vol. 2 (Fujin no tomo sha, 1932).
[60] For Charcot, see Micale, *Approaching Hysteria*, 88-97; Ilza Veith, *Hysteria: The History of a Disease* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965), esp. chapter X.

subconsciouses—and thereby recuperated "spirit" by way of the psychological language of the subconscious.[61] It was precisely in order to conceal this shared epistemological origin between "psyche" and "spirit"—differing articulations of *seishin*—that Kokyō and his associates launched acts of particular intolerance, which to knowing observers merely displayed "hatred for their very similarity [to oneself]" (*kinshin zōaku*).[62] Thus, the ambitious career of this journal under the banner of science ironically betrayed the unresolved tensions in several dichotomous relations: physiological versus psychological medicine; parareligious versus scientific uses of hypnosis; and most importantly, what is versus what is not science. In the end, the torch of scientific objectification was lit only to cast the shadows of the unobjectifiable.

What seems to constitute the backdrop for this ill-articulated fear of mimetic multiplication—not only across the science-spiritualism binary but also within the spiritualist movements themselves as mutually generative breeding grounds—is the swarming mass as uncanny other to Reason, a familiar image amid the formation of industrial society with its attendant political agitation and emancipation. The rise of the nation-state ought not to be forgotten as the institutional frame that precipitated and molded these changes. The discursive trajectory from Ernest Renan's "What is a Nation?" (1882) to Gustave Le Bon's in *The Crowd* (1895) is revealing. That is, there seems to have accumulated a certain surplus value between the disarmingly uncomplicated notion of nation as a collective shaped by common investment and the disconcertingly ominous

[61] Hyōdō, "Taishōki no 'seishin' gainen," 102.
[62] Ibid., 97; 116. A brief but cogent example can be found in the very first issue of the journal: Morooka Tamotsu counts religion and literature as the breeding grounds of hysterics and warns against the harm that hysterics could bring on the nation (*kokka*) and society, "Hisuterī to meishin," *Hentai shinri* 1, no. 1 (October 1917): 63. Sone makes a similar point when he notes, Asano Kazusaburō, the "brain of Ōmotokyō" and Kokyō were two sides of the same sheet of paper and therefore it is supremely ironic that they developed such antagonism. "Shiryō shōkai," 115.

apprehension of the masses—the two modern forms of collectivity *par excellence*, which the objective discourse that both writers profess for their respective observations could no longer contain.[63]

It was precisely against this surplus value that hysteria made its appearance. In fact, *Abnormal Psychology* devoted much space to discussions of hysteria, precisely to sever it from its currency "as the open sesame to impenetrable riddles of existence" such as "religious ecstasy" and "sexual deviation," and particularize it as a scientifically explicable pathology.[64] By the time the Japanese psychologist Morita Masatake undertook to correct popular misconceptions about hysteria in August 1919—four months after Uno published *Kura no naka* in *Bunshō sekai* (The World of Literature)—the disorder had already been widely adopted into lay parlance.[65] For the particular interests of this study in hysteria as an enabling site on which literature, sexuality and gender, and critical possibility may all converge, in spirit of psychoanalysis, a symptomatic reading is in order, to bring to light a clue or two to the operation of scholarly discourse on hysteria within modern Japanese literary studies. Before that, a detour follows—a pilot project of reading hysteria.

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[63] Renan's essay can be found in *Becoming National: A Reader*, ed. Geoff Eley and Ronald Grigor Suny (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 41-55; Le Bon, *The Crowd: A Study of Popular Mind* (New York: Macmillan, 1896). Mitsuishi Ayumi notes "the contemporary desire to put into language 'abnormal' (*abunōmaru*) phenomena like perversion, abnormality, and deviation" in the context of the Taishō-era Japan. See "Kenkyū tenbō," 100.

[64] This is Porter's description concerning hysteria in the nineteenth-century Europe and lists "that mystery of mysteries, woman" among the riddles. "Woman" seems an ill fit in this list insofar as, epistemologically speaking, it belongs to a different order; it renders the other riddles visible in particular ways. How woman comes into the field of view will be addressed below. Porter, "The Body and the Mind," 227. Morita Masatake, "Hisuterī no hanashi" is a case in point. Initially given as a lecture to the Abnormal Psychology Study Group, "Hisuterī no hanashi" was subsequently published in two parts: *Hentai shinri* 6, no. 2 (August 1920) and 6, no. 3 (September 1920). The first issue of *Hentai shinri* carries a short review of hysteria as a scientifically explicable symptom, a hypnotic state, distinct from superstitious phenomena. See Morooka Tamotsu, "Hisuterī to meishin," *Hentai shinri* 1, no. 1 (October 1917): 62.

[65] Morita, "Hysterī no hanashi."

6.

Mizuta has argued that modern Japanese literature constituted itself against the backdrop of the modern discursive production of woman as a "problem," that is, the "sexual other."[66] Perhaps it is possible to particularize further: It is in the form of a genealogy of woman that modern Japanese literature has evolved, and hysteria presents a kind of continuum—pathology—among those variously modulated figures. Alternatively, for the woman to remain a problem organizing the epistemological field, she must always be rendered as a limit—pathogen—regardless of the particular forms she takes in different representational contexts.

A number of early novels in modern Japanese literature feature hysterical heroines, enough to constitute a perceivable phenomenon. Famously, Natsume Sōseki made an "uncharacteristic" attempt at a portrayal of the hysterical woman in an uncharacteristically autobiographical novel, *Michikusa* (Grass on the Wayside, 1915).[67] Arishima Takeo's *Aru onna* (A Certain Woman, 1919) presents perhaps the most infamous figure of hysterical woman in modern Japanese literature.[68] Since most of the hitherto scholarly interest in the literary representation of hysteria has been devoted to these two works, it is desirable to bring into the discussion other titles.[69]

Mori Ōgai's "Maihime" (Dancing Girl, 1890), through the eponymous exotic figure of a German girl, Elis, demonstrates an ingenious textual performance of a

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[66] "Sakusha no seibetsu to jendā hihyō," 81.
[67] *Grass on the Wayside*, trans. Edwin McClellan (Chicago; London: University of Chicago Press, 1974). Egusa Mitsuko comments that a character like Osumi would be unimaginable in Sōseki's elegant (*hin no ii*) and composed (*torisumashita*) site of expression (*hyōgen no ba*) if not for her kinship with the phenomena surrounding the Seitō group. See "*Michikusa* no hisuterī," *Kokugo to kokubungaku* 71, no. 12 (November, 1994): 3.
[68] *A Certain Woman*, trans. Kenneth Strong (University of Tokyo, 1978).
[69] Yamamoto provides a good list of narratives in, "Hisuterī no jidai: *Aru onna* josetsu," *Gakushūin daigaku kenkyū nenpō* 36 (1989)."

fabulous juxtaposition of gender, language, and subjectivity.[70] Most notably, Ōgai deploys a classical narrative language in configuring a most modern problem, i.e., the nationalized subject.[71] The supremely feminine affliction of pregnancy forms a metonymic contiguity with anxious psychological meanderings in the figure of Elis. These yield to a brutal yet cogent representation in her letter, supposedly written in German yet textually inscribed in the classical Japanese "feminine hand" in a web of reverse exoticism and indeed inscriptive hysteria, with an absolute narrative nonchalance. The narrator introduces the letter saying, "It seemed to be written in great distress. She began the letter (*fumi*) with the letter (*ji*) 'No' (*ina*)" (文をば否といふ字にて起こしたり).[72] The awkward translation of the latter sentence needs some explanation. The brief statement harbors a complex drama, not only of Elis's supposed distress but also the narrator-hero Toyotarō's own psychic mirroring, so to speak. The incongruity of "No" as a "letter" rather than a word in the English language may be tolerated, not for the effort to retain the original morphology in which "No" is indeed a letter or, rather, an ideogram, but for the felicitous interlays towards which the sentence in Japanese and English compel. In fact, it is precisely by way of an interlingual engagement that the textual performance is delivered to a brilliant effect.[73] The letter, the sent object, is written out in

[70] "The Dancing Girl," trans. Richard Bowering, *Monumenta Nipponica* 30, no. 2 (Summer 1975). See Indra Levy's comments on the "*wa-kan-yō setchū*" (Japanese-Chinese-Western mix) of the language in *Sirens of the Western Shore: The Westernesque Femme Fatale, Translation, and Vernacular Style in Modern Japanese Literature* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006), 47.
[71] For the formation of the national subject, see Christopher Hill, "Mori Ōgai's Resentful Narrator and the National Subject in the 'Dancing Girl,'" *positions: east asia cultures critic* 10, no. 2 (Fall 2002).
[72] Translated from the Japanese text, "Maihime," in *Ōgai zenshū*, vol. 1 (Iwanami shoten, 1971), 441. For a more colloquial version, see Bowering's translation, "The Dancing Girl," 162.
[73] Levy particularizes the term "interlingual" to the linguistic and cultural situation of Japanese literature in the early twentieth century. Levy inserts a brief yet suggestive remark concerning the productive difference of Elis, the Western siren, *vis-à-vis* the Japanese "Westernesque siren": "[The] Western siren turns out to be infinitely more malleable, more knowable, indeed more *transparent*, than her hybrid cousin," 47. Yoshiko in "Futon" is a quintessential figure of the latter.

the Chinese ideogram '文,' whose reading is given as *fumi* above but could very well be simply *bun* and whose more fundamental semantic property refers to *writing*, either for the act or the product and hence a letter. This letter, writing, or writing that is arises only as a letter *to*, begins with negation: "No!" The encounter with the other, that is writing, must be enounced as certain violence, rejection, denial.

The threshold to hysteria—not an emotional or psychological "expression" but a psychic structure marked by ambiguity, the desire *against* the other—already lies immediately ahead. Yet a discussion of it at this point would be far too premature. Suffice it to point out two textual markings gesturing towards hysteria. Intriguingly, the narrative has referred to the "letter" as either *sho* 書 or *fumi* ふみ, the former a Sinified and therefore more formal and masculine inscription and the latter a native Japanese and (therefore) feminine counterpart, at least according to conventional use in the classical textual realm.[74] It is at the juncture of, the entry into, Elis's letter that the nicely oscillating pendulum between the masculine and feminine stalls to *give in to* the symbol riddled with enigma, namely, '文,' barely marked for either gender, or, rather, exceeding all such markings in a certain plenitude over to *writing*. The unobtrusive switch at this crucial moment surreptitiously suggests an inscriptive-affective shift anticipated by what follows—Elis's letter—giving rise to an instance of future writing past *par excellence*.

The other marking is finally a word. Elise *gives rise to, triggers, causes*, that is, *okosu* 起こす, the letter. This word, grammatically transitive and semantically enterprising, uneasily yet habitually attaches itself to hysteria, as in the phrase, "*hisuterī o*

[74] For the intricacies involving gendered scripts in classical literature, see Lynne K. Miyake, "*The Tosa Diary*: In the Interstices of Gender and Criticism," in *The Woman's Hand: Gender and Theory in Japanese Women's Writing*, ed. Paul Gordon Schalow and Janet A. Walker (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996), 41-52.

okosu."[75] The syntactic mirroring of "giving rise to writing" and "giving rise to hysteria" arrests and thereby propitiously heralds the present study. Questions may linger: Could hysteria be *summoned* just like that? Is it a transitive other? Whose other? The question of transitivity will be addressed in other words and motions in a later section. Yet, at the same time, do these questions not presume that *writing* could be summoned as a transitive other? Once again, whose other? Could it be that in that very perceived gap between hysteria and writing certain new gestures germinate towards the other, and different transitive relations thereto?

The protagonist Toyotarō, for his part, is inserted into an interplay between different poles of male identity: first, his family in Japan is marked by the absence of the father and the over-presence of the mother; second, his encounter with Elis coincides with the death of her father and the cruelty of her mother; third, Toyotarō's unborn child will have to grow up, like himself, fatherless, and perhaps in care of a mentally derailed mother—would it be farfetched to foresee a severe case of castration anxiety for the child? Finally, the nation re-apprehends the subject-son through the Law, the language of the Father-Homeland. In this highly gendered narrative topography and topology, Toyotarō's constitution as the nationalized male subject passes through Elis's hysteria, which by the end verges on psychosis. At the same time, the psychosomatic crisis precisely manifests a heterosexual desire fissured by the *disavowal* of the mother—a mother that incidentally yet crucially Elis herself is becoming. In other words, Elis's desire for Toyotarō inscribes itself as her submission to the Father's language insofar as

[75] A quintessential figure who threatens to "start (*okosu*) hysteria" is found in Uno's *Ku no sekai* in *Uno Kōji zenshū* vol. 1 (Chūō kōron sha, 1968).

she "masquerades" as a good pupil of Toyotarō's tutelage.[76] On the other hand, the ambiguity of motherhood must be either subsumed by heterosexual love—Elis's plea to Toyotarō never to abandon her—or exiled outside the symbolic realm—the barely sensible hysterical letter and finally madness. Most significantly, Elis's *somatic* reconciliation with motherhood—the inevitability of labor and birth—takes the form of *mutism*, a quintessential symptom of hysteria, signaling a certain incommensurability of the (maternal) body and the (paternal) language.[77] Hysteria manifests in "Maihime" as this dizzying interlingual manipulation and intercathectic displacement to which Elis is subjected and Toyotarō beholden.

Tayama Katai's "Futon" (The Quilt, 1907) features a famed literary pupil, Yoshiko.[78] Her entry into the male realm of literature, epitomized by the protagonist Tokio's tutelage, coincides with, and indeed represents, her awakening to "love" (*ai*). Rhetorically inspired by the Christian rhetoric of purity, the reified ideal quickly turns out to conceal carnal motivations; the irreversibly ironic turn of affairs being that her lover abandons his study of Christianity to pursue love and literature. Dotting the background of Yoshiko's enthusiasm for literature and consequent "dissipation" in love are her "occasional hysteria-like (*shaku no yōna*) convulsions due to nervous debility (*shinkei suijaku*)."[79] Her room furnished with a bookcase, feminized by a *resemblance* to the "Western-style bookcase in Tokio's room" and "a mirror, a lipstick tray, a jar of face powder, and a large bottle of potassium bromide, which…was for her nervous headaches"

[76] Luce Irigaray defines "masquerade" as "what women do in order to recuperate some element of desire, to participate in man's desire, but at the price of renouncing their own" in *This Sex Which Is Not One*, trans. Catherine Porter (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985), 133.
[77] Irigaray makes precisely this point; see *This Sex Which Is Not One*, 136-37.
[78] *The Quilt and Other Stories*, trans. Kenneth G. Henshall (Tokyo: University of Tokyo Press, 1981).
[79] "The Quilt," 43. Italics added. For Japanese, see "Futon" in *Tayama Katai*, Meiji no bungaku, vol. 23 (Chikuma shobō, 2001), 36.

arranged on top of it. Retreating further into the background is Tokio's pregnant wife. She can deal with her husband's aberrant behavior, apparently precipitated by Yoshiko's presence in the family home, only by feigning ignorance or parading an awkwardly parental moral alliance with him against Yoshiko. As the narrative describes, "His docile wife didn't go so far as complaining, nor did she show any sign of doing so, but nevertheless her mood gradually worsened. Amid the endless laughter spread an endless unease."[80] The dichotomy drawn between the two female figures points precisely to an insurmountable psychic ambiguity generated by motherhood—either the potential or aftermath thereof—fissuring the Oedipal heterosexual regime; in other words, the impossibility of speaking the Father's language and simultaneously becoming, or loving, (a) mother, to anticipate the discussion in Chapter 3. Following Yoshiko's "nerves [in] a highly strung state" (*shinkei kabin*) and resort to "vast quantities of potassium bromide," the narrative comments, "Constant *desires* (*yokubō*) and reproductive *forces* (*seishoku no chikara*) never hesitated to take possession of a woman," suggesting this mutually alienating and at the same time aggravating interplay of heterosexual regime and bodily excess.[81]

Other narratives driven by women displaying similarly hysterical conditions arose temporally closer to *Kura no naka*. Another of Ōgai's fictions, "Hannichi" (Half a Day, 1909), features a protagonist's wife who hysterically reacts to her mother-in-law's sharp voice scolding the maid in the kitchen.[82] Although the narrative progresses to cement a direct link between her hysteria and antipathy towards her mother-in-law, the first scene

[80] Ibid., 42-43.
[81] Ibid., 47; "Futon," 40. Italics added.
[82] "Half a Day," in *Youth and Other Stories*, ed. J. Thomas Rimer (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1994). For a brief discussion of hysteria in "Hannichi," see Izuhara Takatoshi, "Hisuterī—Mori Ōgai *Hannichi*," *Kokubungaku: Kaishaku to kyōzai no kenkyū* 46, no. 3 supplement (February 2001).

is already replete with signifying forces, suggesting a psychic drama irreducible to a tidily defined relationship:

> They had spread three quilts side by side in the six-mat room and were sleeping with their seven-year-old daughter between them. The charcoal buried under ash in the brazier early that night had died down; a dim lamp shone faintly beside the man's pillow. A small case with a watch, a note-book, and other things inside had been placed by it, and a Western paperback lay open facedown. Perhaps he had fallen asleep without finishing it. It was 7:00 A.M, January 30. … He recalled that this was the day commemorating Emperor Komei—he would have to join the others at the Palace Sanctuary by 9:30. He looked at his watch. If he went in his own rickshaw from here in Nishikatamachi to the Imperial Palace, he would not have to leave the house until 8:30. So, he thought, if he rose at a leisurely pace, there would still be time to wash and have breakfast. … Just then a sharp voice could be heard from the kitchen. "Do you mean to tell me the water hasn't boiled yet!" His wife immediately extended a slender white hand and pushed away the quilts. She had a habit of sleeping with her head under the covers. When she was a girl she heard of a thief who had broken into a house somewhere and been led to attack a woman by a glimpse of her beautiful face; from then on she slept with her face hidden. Yes, she had a beautifully proportioned face. The hair piled above her head, hair longer than herself when untied, was half undone; the pins and combs had fallen onto the edge of her black lacquer headrest, which was topped with a red cushion. Opening the large, dark eyes that seemed to occupy half of her pale face, she said, "Oh, that terrible *voice*. She's always waking Tama with that *voice*." She spoke in a loud, high-pitched *voice* that could be clearly heard in the kitchen.[83]

If an Oedipal little boy could be located in this scene, the Father is placed outside, in His own palace; what deluges this home and the male subject at the narrative center is women: mother, wife, daughter, and maid. If the protagonist Professor Takayama gathers his identificatory reinforcement from a watch, Western book, and Imperial duties, the two principal women are thrust to the dramatic fore via their voices—that conduit between

[83] "Half a Day," 72. Italics added. Rimer's admirably colloquial translation has been modified to reflect the repetition of "voice" notable in the original passage. See "Hannichi," in *Ōgai zenshū*, vol. 4 (Iwanami shoten, 1972), 46.

the body and language.[84] While the hero regulates his life, indeed his body, according to the dictate of the time presently measured by the machinery of a watch, it is the past trauma of hearsay—a narrative?—that impelled the wife to the striking constancy, or, indeed repetition, which incidentally concerns that liminal duration of sleep. The hero's seemingly reasonable suspicion that "something's wrong with [her] mentally" is answered, narratively, by the failure of language: "*Thinking* in an orderly fashion was beyond her, for he would assault her with logic; as she half-deliriously (*hanbun muchū de*) argued back and forth with him, she was always cornered like a chess piece about to be captured."[85] It is precisely the rift between thinking and bodily reactions, or schedule and narrative, that renders the woman visible as hysteric, while normalizing the man.

A pursuit of these variously suggestive representations of hysteria lies beyond the scope of the present study. If there is any coinciding factor among these fictional works other than their obvious status within the canonical literary history, it may be the prominence of the mother as a trigger for the configuration of hysteria. This phenomenon will be explored in detail soon; for now, suffice it to say that the visibility of the abject constituent of the Oedipal triad has direct and indirect psychic consequences for the child—the latter figurated into an infantile male subject in *Kura no naka*. At any rate, Uno's narrative is locatable within the genealogy of modern Japanese literary representation of hysteria insofar as it feminizes the psychosomatic symptoms *within and vis-à-vis* the heterosexual regime.

[84] For voice and hysteria, see Kahane's preface to *Passions of the Voice: Hysteria, Narrative, and the Figure of the Speaking Woman, 1850-1915* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995).
[85] "Half a Day," 82. Italics added.

Despite, or perhaps for the reason of, such ubiquity in literary representation, hysteria has yet to generate sustained scholarly interest.[86] As mentioned above, Sōseki's *Michikusa* and Arishima Takeo's *Aru onna* have received some attention as more or less the sole points of attention regarding the subject, far from the renewed fascination with hysteria seen in the Euro-American critical scenes.[87] Moreover, the modicum of scholarship on hysteria in modern Japanese literature—rarely of book length—is uniformly motivated to analyze characters at the representational level from which to draw inferences about the historical background from which the texts emerged, namely a sociocultural context characterized by sexual discrimination.[88] Thus, the discussion revolves around the ways in which such "reality" either victimizes and/or is disputed by women in narrative situations, and the psychological drama thereof, precluding any meditation on the epistemological conditions for the emergence of hysteria either as a popular cultural sign or literary representational subject, and even less as psychoanalytical index for the subject in motion, relation, in the body. The interest of the present study lies precisely in the way in which hysteria showcases the moments in which communication becomes disarticulated into gestures and voices riddled with psychic cathexes. Before entering fully into this discussion, it will be instructive to examine an article which exemplifies in plain terms the interpretive paradigm that not only dominates the scholarly discussions on hysteria but subtends the general discourse on sexuality and gender in modern Japanese literature.

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[86] Yamamoto mentions the dearth of scholarship on the subject in "Hisuterī no jidai," 94.
[87] Elaine Showalter, *Hystories*, 7; Janet Beizer, *Ventriloquized Bodies: Narratives of Hysteria in Nineteenth-Century France* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994), 2.
[88] For *Michikusa*, see Egusa, "*Michikusa* no hisuterī"; Ishihara Chiaki, "*Michikusa* ni okeru Kenzō no taita kankei no kōzō," *Nihon kindai bungaku* 29 (October 1982); Nakajima Kunihiko, "*Michikusa* no ninshiki," *Kokubungaku kenkyū* 50 (1976). For *Aru onna*, see Yamamoto, "Hisuterī no jidai"; Nakayama and Egusa, eds. *Sōryoku tōron*.

7.

In "Neurasthenia for Man, Hysteria for Woman," a title that with its concoction of seduction and prescription could very well hail from Taishō journalism, Ishihara Chiaki traces the emergence of neurasthenia (*shinkei suijaku*) and hysteria (*hisuterī*) in early twentieth-century Japan. The discussion begins with a reference to Susan Sontag's *Illness as Metaphor* in order to define the eponymous maladies as the two illnesses (*yamai*) most laden with semiotic values (*kigōronteki kachi*). In a cultural milieu characterized by a "plain discrimination of man and woman," Ishihara notes, neurasthenia and hysteria developed into pervasive cultural signs differentiated on the basis of sex (*sei*) from the mid-Meiji through Taishō eras.[89] The discussion proceeds in two steps. First, referring to a citation from a popular journalistic source from 1900, *Tsūzoku eisei komon* (Popular Guide to Hygeine), Ishihara concludes that cultural perception and descriptive language regarding these illnesses were still unstable at this point, yet it is possible to discern that the causes for "male" neurasthenia and "female" hysteria were perceived respectively as "sexual" (*sei teki*)" and "genital" or "sexual organic" (*seikteki*).[90] It is hard to know what exactly Ishihara means by employing this ambiguous differentiation as his strategic terminology. At best, the organic reference seems to be given as evidence of discriminatory surplus—the messy stuff of physiology that attaches itself to woman, while "sexual" marks out an abstract distance between the physiological body and man's experience by way of it.

[89] Ishihara Chiaki, "Otoko wa shinkei suijaku, onna wa hisuterī," in *Hyakunen mae no watashi tachi: zassho kara miru otoko to onna* (Kōdansha, 2007), 99. The volume is comprised of a series of articles originally published in the journal *Hon* from Oct. 2005 to December 2006.
[90] Ibid., 102.

At any rate, a close examination of the citation provided by Ishihara yields a rather different picture. Particularly striking is how both neurasthenia and hysteria are defined primarily in relation to biological origins. First, heredity is cited as a possible cause for both hysteria and neurasthenia. Second, they are traceable to specific organic or physiological dysfunctions or perceived abnormalities: aftereffects of serious illnesses, masturbation, or immoderate sexual intercourse for neurasthenia; diseases in the uterus, genitalia, or ovaries, irregular menstrual cycle, or the aftermath of miscarriage for hysteria. Third, sexual references are noticeable in both cases as evident in the above list of causes; additionally, the emphatic definition of hysteria as occurring in married women surreptitiously yet amply suggests sexual activity as contributing factor to pathological conditions. Perhaps Ishihara's contrast of "sexual" and "genital" is a hasty reaction to the perceptible ubiquity of man's sexual *acts* as opposed to woman's reproductive *functions* in the cited passages. However, the discrepancy fails to warrant Ishihara's reading of sexual discrimination and, if anything, seems to reflect the comparative surfeit of reproductive organs, and certainly not sexual inactivity, in woman. Put in terms of the given schema, woman is just as "sexual" as man, and man as "organic" as woman. In other words, through the bifurcation of sexual man and genital woman in the cited passage, Ishihara imposes on neurasthenia and hysteria a semantics of sexual discrimination that is at best ambivalent.

Moreover, perhaps the most damaging testimony against Ishihara's schematization of neurasthenia and hysteria is plainly visible in the very source he cites: they are respectively listed under the headings "diseases of the brain" and "women's diseases." Ironically, Ishihara cites these separate categories as further corroborating

contemporary discriminatory views of the respective afflictions; in other words, he assumes that they are or should be equivalent—if not the same—and the equivalence connotes sexual equality. What is absent in the citation is sufficient symmetry posited between the two symptomatologies to enable Ishihara's contrast of neurasthenia and hysteria. Certainly, there are insights to be gained in their critical juxtaposition; the feminization of hysteria, which Ishihara emphasizes, is indisputable.[91] At the same time, neurasthenia was far from restricted to male patients.[92] Most worrisome about Ishihara's schematization, however, is not this sort of factual oversight. Rather, it concerns the temporality of Ishihara's argument, progressive and identificatory, instituting a relation of categorical equivalence in order to arrive at what he categorized *in advance* and *in toto* as discrimination.

Integral to this sleight of hand, significantly, is a simplistic representation of the feminist problematic. What silently validates the totalizing gesture of turning the ambivalent markings of the sexual body into the *already* bifurcated categories of male and female pathology is precisely a recuperative urge *vis-à-vis* the Meiji women purportedly discriminated against by the modern epistemological paradigm. Ishihara's interpretive paradigm not only curtails disconcertingly the discursive field, open as it is to multiple and amorphous engagements with sexuality and gender. If woman is discriminated against on the ground of her physiological, organic, and sexual ontology,

[91] See Morita, "Hisuterī no hanashi"; Morooka Tamotsu, "Hisuterī to meishin," *Hentai shinri* 1, no. 1 (October 1917); an emphatic negation of the gendered status of hysteria suggests a relative stability of popular imagination in Tamao, "Hisuterī no gogi," *Araragi* 6, no. 2 Tokubetsugō (February 1913).
[92] Yoshiko's neurasthenia in "Futon" is a noteworthy example. Kawamura Kunimitsu cites an article from 1890 referencing numerous cases of neurasthenia among students, both male and female. See *Genshi suru kindai kūkan: meishin, byōki, zashikirō, aruiwa rekishi no kioku* (Seikyūsha, 1990), 120. Outside Japan, the famous hysteric Alice James was diagnosed with neurasthenia and melancholia in addition to hysteria. See Judith L. Sensibar, "The Politics of Hysteria in 'The Bostonians,'" *South Central Review* 8, no. 2 (Summer 1991): 68, n. 5. See also Micale, *Approaching Hysteria*, 109.

Ishihara's argument seems to suggest, the way to liberate her is to bring her up to the plane of the social. The status of the body thus discriminated against is banished from the critical plane. In other words, Ishihara's feminist sympathy forecloses the very critical possibility of feminism. The failure is of epistemological proportions, as already suggested in the earlier discussion on feminism in modern Japanese literature in this study. If anything, a more fecund suggestion is found elsewhere in the cited passage, in the designation of hysterical symptoms as "often false" (*ōku wa itsuwari*). Ishihara provocatively rephrases the latter as "performance" (*engi*), if only to leave the idea unaddressed further. The triangulation of woman, the body, and performance constitutes a potent discursive mechanism that produced hysteria in increasing visibility after 1900, and by extension presents both a task and possibility in the general theorization of sexuality and gender.

Next Ishihara considers an article attached to a 1915 advertisement for the soap and drug company Mitsuwa in the *Fujo shinbun* (Women's Newspaper). By this point in history, Ishihara argues, sexual difference had unmistakably become the grounds for pathological differentiation. The cited passage features an array of terms which had newly emerged since 1900: for neurasthenia, "social progress" (*shakai shinpo*)" and sexually transmitted diseases, colorfully phrased as "diseases of the pleasure quarters" (*karyūbyō*); for hysteria, "unsound living and education" (*futekitō naru seikatsu ya kyōiku*), "mental excitement" (*seishin kōfun*), "face powder containing lead" (*yūen oshiroi*), "frequent pregnancy and childbirth," and "masturbation."[93] Regrettably, most of this tantalizing vocabulary fails to enter Ishihara's reading, where exclusive attention is paid to "social progress" as the final discursive brushstroke completing the bifurcation of

[93] Ishihara, "Otoko wa shinkei suijaku, onna wa hisuterī," 103.

neurasthenia and hysteria along the line dividing man and woman. The former is a disease of the "struggle for survival" (*seizon kyōsō no yamai*) posited by the social Darwinist paradigm, and the latter ultimately an "illness of sexuality" (*sekushuaritī no yamai*). Once again, it is impossible to know how Ishihara would differentiate this "sexuality (*sekushuaritī*)" from "sexual (*seiteki*)," which, it should be recalled, he previously accorded neurasthenia in the context of 1900. From the overall argument of Ishihara's article, it may be possible to surmise that the "sexual difference" (*seisa*) between the two illnesses is now marked as the difference of social versus sexual, and that thereby the female pathology had become the sole carrier of the sexual, or as he now terms it, "sexuality." In explicating the "social" as the connotative value for the male pathology of neurasthenia, for Ishihara the "sexual" seems inexorably physiological. It must be disposed of. Thus, Ishihara's diagram progresses from "genital" or "sexual organic" to the "sexuality" accorded woman, while in the process creating a discursive space for man uncontaminated by specters of the body. Is this not the same dichotomy of sex versus gender, or reality versus discourse, which emerged as the underlying structure of the feminist discourse discussed above?

Linear and schematic, Ishihara's interpretation is suspect. The indiscriminate usage of "genital" (*seikiteki*), "sexual" (*seiteki*), "sexual difference" (*seisa*), and "sexuality" (*sekushuaritī*) noisily muffles the many crucial terms that had newly appeared in the intervening years, which hold significant yet subtle clues to the contemporary discursive landscape: consumerism, theatre, education, spiritualism, and degeneration. For example, it is entirely possible to consider the pleasure quarters, recalling as they do the dissipation of the mind as well as, if not more than, the body in supposed male

victims of neurasthenia, as corresponding to the "unsound living and education" that could lead to hysteria, insofar as both causes implicitly displace bodily sites with socio-cultural values, signaling a broad discursive impulse toward discarding the body. The recommendation against literature and theater as *provocateurs and symptoms* of hysteria testifies to just this recasting of the body in the language of cultural products, divesting the pathology of material aspects amply present in the earlier discourse. The fact that the population susceptible to hysteria shifted from married women—those who are presumably sexually active—in the Meiji era to unmarried women in puberty (*shunki hatsudki sunawachi toshigoro no fujin*) in the Taishō era is also a subtle suggestion of this discursive change.[94] In other words, sex had become an idea.

In the end, the shift that occurred during the first decade of the twentieth century can be characterized as one from physiologically attributed origins to a socio-cultural semantics that encompassed both man and woman even while maintaining differentiation /discrimination. Further, what was actively expunged is precisely the body. One may note in Ishihara's scholarship a mimetic identification with the object of its inquiry; hence the parallel progress towards a discursive sanitization of the body. At any rate, this shift occurred in lockstep with the production of value in *seishin* in the psychological discourse found in *Hentai shinri*. In other words, the displacement of nervous (*shinkei*) or physiological (*butsuri*) fields of medicine under the auspices of Kure Shūzō (1865-1932), a founding father of Japanese psychiatry, by mental (*seishin*) or psychological (*shinri*) ones advocated by Nakamura Kokyō gains its semantic contours within the larger cultural propensity to shed the body.

[94] Ibid., 104.

A paradigmatic instance of this scholarly representation of the body is found in Kawamura Kunimitsu's studies, which provide a brief yet propitious recapitulation of the discussion thus far. On the one hand, Kawamura's *The Hallucinating Modern Space* clearly perceives the "abstraction," "homogenization," and "psychologization" (*seshinka*) in the general epistemological reorganization of modern times, a point already elucidated in relation to the discourse on *seishin* in the preceding section.[95] On the other hand, Kawamura persistently engages a perceived "gendered" discourse on pathology, echoing Ishihara's arguments in a substantial essay titled "Woman's Illness, Man's Illness." Kawamura argues that in Japan in the first half of the twentieth century, mental pathology (*seishinbyō*) was bifurcated along the line of sexual difference: sexual organic disorders, that is, disorders of physiological origin for woman on the one hand and those of mental origin for man on the other.[96] More than the veracity of these readings, what ought to claim critical curiosity is the way in which these binary terms remain unengaged with each other. What becomes concealed in this damaging oversight is the abstract status of the "body" called up in the discriminatory language concerning woman, which thereby forecloses inquiry into general abstraction as the fundamental condition of the modern epistemology. Woman in her body, in this sense, serves as an evasive strategy *vis-à-vis* the apparatuses of the production of knowledge, not for its inherently discriminatory status but for the very relinquishment that such evocation invariably anticipates.[97] In

[95] *Genshi suru kindai kūkan*, 121.
[96] "Onna no yamai, otoko no yamai: jendā to sekushuariti o meguru 'Fūkō no hensō,'" *Gendai shisō* 21, no. 7 (July 1993): 98.
[97] For example, Poovey notes on the one hand the scientific attention to the body in the mid-nineteenth-century and on the other hand the gradual transformation of the "sexualized image of woman as willful flesh" into "the domestic ideal" the eighteenth century. She relates this construction of the female virtue to the process whereby the domestic sphere was "abstracted" from "the so-called public sphere of competition, self-interest, and economic aggression." These ideological problems may be considered as localized

other words, when discursive tethers are posited between woman and physiology—significantly, through the language of an anti-discriminatory rhetoric that implicitly condemns the masculine logic underlying it—the body is relegated unquestioned, if unwittingly, as a marker of victimization and therefore something to overcome, erase, and sublimate, as if making woman just as "mental" or "social" as man would dissolve the perceived sexual inequivalence.

It is more than nostalgia with which the following observation ought to be noted:

> Moreover—and the point cannot be emphasized strongly enough—hysteria, throughout the greater part of its history, has been interpreted by medical observers as a wholly *somatic* derangement. Currently, we view the disorder as an intensely psychological condition; but until the turn of the last century it was understood as a physical infirmity with a specific projected pathophysiological mechanism: a wandering womb, ascending uterine vapors, irritable ovaries, digestive or menstrual turmoil, a spinal or cerebral lesion, and so forth.[98]

The fact that hysteria was undoubtedly an imported term and therefore that these specific distinctions are not necessarily identifiable in the pre-Meiji Japanese medico-cultural discourse does not invalidate the critical lesson implicit in the above observation regarding the European history of hysteria. Nor does the apparent sexism of the physiological interpretation of the malady lessen the significance of the paradigmatic shift.

What is undoubtedly available for consideration are, first, the surge of interest in hysteria in general cultural discourse of early twentieth-century Japan, and, second, the fact that this hysteria, on whichever side of the Europe/Japan boundary, displays markings of sexuality and gender which are predominantly misogynous. Certainly,

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manifestations of the epistemic notion of "abstraction" put forward in the present discussion. *Uneven Developments*, 10.

[98] Micale, *Approaching Hysteria*, 111.

scholarly undertakings do have the task of situating these markings for what they suggest *vis-à-vis* "reality," an objective many studies have pursued to arrive at discrimination against women as a rather redundant conclusion. More than that, however, what ought to be considered are the larger networks of signification and valorization implicit therein. In modern Japanese literary criticism, there is much work still to be done on this account. Most significantly, hysteria as a potent sign is yet to be pursued for the very psychosomatic phenomenology whose implications extend beyond the purview of scholarly interest in its form up to the present. In other words, the currently dominant critical language agitating for ideological revelation is inadequate to grasp the intersection of the body, the psyche, sexuality and gender, and modernity that gives rise to hysteria. Thus, the above warning against any hasty essentialization of hysteria as purely psychological is applicable here at two levels. First, the shift from the physiological to the psychological—whether in the form of medical or cultural discourse—deserves critical scrutiny, insofar as it signals a certain structural mutuality of *abstraction of the body* and the *modern* return of hysteria. Second, Ishihara's unwarranted bifurcation of neurasthenia and hysteria stems precisely from overlooking the epistemic rift that marks *both*, which operates as a process of exiling the body. Moreover, it is precisely the misplaced feminist sympathy that conceals this rift. What then stands paramount in future critical enterprises is precisely the pursuit of the body, and thenceforth rearticulations of the feminist problematics.

8.

The conventional wisdom charges that the modern scientific discourse produced sexual difference based on visible physiology.[99] Could this mean that the body had gained a certain ontological valence only in the modern times? If so, does it mean that the epistemological basis shifted from the body to the mind within the span of a few decades? Foucault offered an insight that has yet to expire: the discursivization is always already a process of repression.[100] The discovery of the body is, in the same movement, the concealment of the body. Only by the benefit of this "inversion"—to borrow the phrasing of Karatani Kōjin—is the recovery of the body even thinkable. Nevertheless, the physiological understanding of hysteria in the earliest days of the 1900s as exemplified above, if by virtue of the confusion brought on by the epistemological sea change, displays possibilities of grasping the body in its messy ontology, if only to be soon extinguished. If hysteria that "[from] Egyptian antiquity until the 17th century" had been "conceptualized virtually without contestation as a female disease, a uterine disorder" suddenly became a riddle straddling body and mind, imaginary and symbolic, and even woman and man, is this not a moment of productive chaos?[101] The current scholarly discourse only testifies to the dire fate of the body yet to return once again—and the absolute need thereof—for another future humanistic discourse, feminism foremost.

In sum, the temporal coincidence of the shift from a physiological paradigm to a psychological one and the discursive mobilization around hysteria together may hold clues not only to the intensification of sexual discrimination but also possibilities for

[99] For example, Kano states, "It is at this point in history that the *discourse of biological sexual difference* between men and women became predominant in Japan, and this served to create the category of 'women.'" See *Acting Like a Woman in Modern Japan*, 29. Kano's italics.
[100] The lesson of the "repressive hypothesis" is precisely this irony. See *The History of Sexuality*.
[101] Beizer, *Ventriloquized Bodies*, 3.

imagining anew sexuality and gender, drawing less upon empirical instances of inequivalence and more on the mutuality between the epistemological changes and historical events, with consequences for the critical language itself. Ishihara concludes the discussion as follows:

> Nervous breakdown was an illness with sociality. To repeat, it is *because* nervous breakdown was an illness of man (*otoko no yamai datta kara*). … As for hysteria, the fact that it turned from a post-marriage illness into a pre-marriage one is probably significant. That's because [this shift] goes in the same direction as the establishment of the myth of female virginity (*josei no shojosei shin'wa*).[102]

The "because" amounts to an abyss rather than causality—that is, if causal relation is ever possible—highlighting the circular logic that supports Ishihara's retroactive reading. What arises from this interpretive scheme is a cultural space that is so static that sexual discrimination—not *difference*—not only dominates all modes of signification but also knows only one way to do it—crudely, with no cunning. A vast underestimation of discourse.

The foregoing discussion centered on Ishihara's article may seem an unjustly punctilious assessment of what amounts to a brief sketch. However, the combined effect of the name of a renowned scholar, a declarative title, and the ruthlessly schematic message renders the article an unusually illustrative suspect. Note the syntax: "Neurasthenia for Man, Hysteria for Woman" (*Otoko wa shinkei suijaku, onna wa hisuterī*) proceeds with the symmetrical copula "*wa*" neatly concealing the problematic predicates, and the comma the complex relation glossed by the posited symmetry. As noted above, Kawamura's article parallels this—"Woman's Illness, Man's Illness"—testifying to a normative scholarly language. Moreover, given the nascent critical

[102] Ishihara, "Otoko wa shinkei suijaku, onna wa hisuterī," 105. Italics added.

possibility of hysteria—as literary representation, cultural discourse, and the manifestation of the limits of signification itself as will be explored in the following discussion—it is advisable to debar any facile expropriation, especially when that comes disguised as feminist sympathy. Reading hysteria in Sōseki's *Michikusa*, Ishihara concludes that living in an era when man and woman were not equal, Osumi the hysterical wife had no other means than this "bodily expression" (*shintai hyōgen*) to demand of her husband: "I would like you to love me."[103] Indeed, hers is a bodily language, and the question is one of love. However, it takes two to enter this theatre of the body, language, and love—two subjects abject in their own different yet coinciding ways. Rather than bringing woman up to the "social," what seems urgent is to draw upon man by way of the body. Such is precisely the concern of the rest of this study.

Necessarily, Ishihara's article is situated within the genealogy of scholarship addressing hysteria and neurasthenia in modern Japanese literature over the past few decades. Figures and topics may be diverse, yet the interpretive paradigm remains within the delimited field of mutually reflective relations between the text and reality on the one hand and between pathology and resistance on the other. Christopher Hill's recent discussion of neurasthenia follows the conventional reading when it situates Natsume Sōseki's *Kōjin* (The Wayfarer, 1914) and Tōson's *Haru* (Spring, 1908) as "revealing examples of the possibilities and limits of neurasthenia as a vehicle for cultural critique."[104] Yamamoto Yoshiaki's study of Arishima Takeo's *Aru onna* similarly valorizes the Taishō-era literary representation of hysteria for ideological profit: the

[103] Ibid., 110. It is precisely Izuhara's reading of Ōgai's "Hannichi": the wife's hysteria originates from her wish to "seek an expression of love" from "the bystander-like (*bōkanshateki na*) husband." See "Hisuterī—Mori Ōgai 'Hannichi,'" 187.
[104] "Exhausted by Their Battles with the World: Neurasthenia and Civilization Critique in Early Twentieth-Century Japan," in *Perversion and Modern Japan*, 247.

possibility of exposing "the systematic discourse that strives to close off women's struggle and resistance."[105]

In their rush towards verifiable ideological meanings, these studies fail to take note of the abstraction of the body that not only inscribes both neurasthenia and hysteria but also precipitates other phenomena in the larger cultural discourse. For example, what is known as personalism (*jinkaku shugi*), which emerged as an evaluative code in the Japanese literary milieu of the early twentieth century, is precisely an appeal to the abstract property of the author's character rather than the material product of the novel. Scholarly discussions on personalism have often turned to the historical processes through which it became established as normative paradigm of literary and broader cultural discourse.[106] A productive alternative may be found in scholarship addressing the general discursive field concerned with by *seishin* as discussed above, which would recast the Shirakaba group, for example, not only as a literary movement motivated by youthful rejection of the preceding Naturalist tenets on literature or the authentic moment of the *shishōsetsu* aesthetics, including personalism, but situated within the "spiritualist" impulses modalizing the early twentieth-century Japanese cultural discourse.[107]

The foregoing discussion has been an attempt to undo some of the chronic imprisonment of hysteria within the haphazard notions of sexuality and gender and feminism, and instead position it against a larger shift in the cultural discourse in the early twentieth century, which transformed, or rather newly produced, these terms out of

[105] "Hisuterī no jidai," 101. In another place Yamamoto ventures a somewhat different thesis: "Hysteria bears out the fundamental principle of modern society that converts everything into money." See "Shintai gihō to katari: Uno Kōji "Ku no sekai" o chūshin ni," *Kokubungaku kaishaku to kanshō* 56, no. 4 (April, 1991): 108.
[106] For personalism and the broader context behind it, see Yamamoto Yoshiaki, *Bungakusha wa tsukurareru* (Tokyo: Hitsuji shobō, 2000), esp. 90-109.
[107] Sone, "Shiryō shōkai," 115.

a predilection for abstraction of the body. Put differently, the production of sexual discrimination took place as part of the discursive process whereby sexuality was abstracted out of the body. "Where to ?" is a relatively easy question, which many preceding studies have already answered exhaustively in their pursuit of such modern ideological institutions as the nation/state and literature, which actively appropriated woman as a metaphor as well as political subject. Thornier questions concern the body that *remains*. Regardless of the contemporary and retrospective taming *qua* interpretation, hysteria—precisely the body that remains—erupts as a psychosomatic affliction, abject in anachronism, embarrassing and odious in its scandalous exposure, and therefore terrifying. Thus, the case of Ishihara's theorization of neurasthenia and hysteria, and the others in the same discursive lineage, present at least two important considerations to carry through the rest of this study: the abstraction of the body as a historical problem, and the scholarly failure to note it as a critical problem.

The critical interest here is then the *limit of signification* that the body bears out, long concealed behind the more readily problematized foreground of sexuality and gender, with its synecdochic representation in none other than "woman" that has preoccupied feminist critics. It is in this general problem of signification interrogated by hysteria that, for example, Mizuta's declaration—"Japanese literary text has been feminine from the very beginning"—may be reformulated.[108] Instead of the essentially biological reference to the predominantly female authors of Heian prose literature, this "feminine" could be perhaps redirected towards the hysterical symptoms prevalent, for example, in *Genji monogatari* (The Tale of Genji, ca. 1010), in the name of spirit

[108] "Sakusha no seibetsu to jendā hihyō," 81.

possession (*mono no ke*).[109] Could the androgynous Kashiwagi be conjured together with the numerous heroines *given in to* spirit possession under some productive rubric of hysteria? Could it be that the figures immersed in writing—Ukifune, foremost—are in fact articulating something of hysteria? Indeed, "from the beginning," hysteria seems to gesture towards a certain ontological condition of the literary text, particularizing as it does the "literary" on the very plane of the possibility to narrate.

[109] For a penetrating investigation of the subject, see Doris Bargen, *A Woman's Weapon: Spirit Possession in The Tale of Genji* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii, 1997).

Chapter 2

A Detour: The Melancholy of *Shishōsetsu*

if there is no writing
other than the amorous,
there is no imagination
that is not,
overtly or secretly,
melancholy
-Julia Kristeva, *Black Sun*

Survival is a matter
of avowing the trace
of loss that inaugurates
one's own emergence.
-Judith Butler, *The Psychic Life of Power*

1.

Uno Kōji's novella *Kura no naka* affords a particularly fertile discursive passage to the textualization of hysteria. At an immediately visible level, Uno's text features hysterical women as fecund narrative origins. Narrative fecundity arising from hysterical women concerns not only the fictional novelist Yamaji, narrator of *Kura no naka*, but also Uno the author who penned it.[1] Both authorial figures reap ample novelistic gains by turning supposedly "real" figures into characters. The question here is not one of the ontological status of "real" *vis-à-vis* "fictional" but the implied transaction—the economy of the

[1] For example, *Ku no sekai* is widely known to be based on Uno's relationship with a woman named Izawa Kimiko. For an informal portrayal of the circumstances, see Tada Michitarō, "Kaigyaku no Uno Kōji—tenten shishōsetsu ron (2)," *Gunzō* 55, no. 11 (November 2000).

novel, or, more precisely, *shōsetsu*. The details of what may be justly called this relation of *debt* that inscribes the production of *shōsetsu* will be further elucidated in the next section. The discussion must first turn to another register of the textualization of hysteria, which, configuring broader conditions of literary production in Japan in the early twentieth century, modalizes the very narrative possibility of *Kura no naka*.

The proposition to read *Kura no naka* as a hysterical text responds to at least two conventional characterizations of Uno's debut novella.[2] The first of these characterizations concerns Uno's famed narrative style, most iconically deployed in *Kura no naka*, distinguished by absurd humor, an incongruent narrator, and disorderly narrative progress:

> And so I made up my mind—I was going to the pawnshop. I don't mean that I was going to the pawnshop to redeem something I had pawned. I don't have that kind of money. And I didn't want to go there to pawn something. I don't have anything to pawn anymore—not even a kimono. In fact, the kimono I'm wearing is already in hock. What do I mean? … As for my decision to go to the pawnshop…. Please forgive my rambling…. Sort it out—any way you please, only hear me out. (39)

The sudden interjection of "And so" (*Soshite*) in the very beginning of the narrative signals eruption rather than progress as the temporality of the novel. The syntactic repetition of the first few sentences displays a conscious play with the sound and rhythm of language. Further, the story is told in a consciously performative disguise, conjuring up the atmosphere of the traditional theater of comic monologue (*rakugo*). Affectively, the narrative is regressive, punctuated by repetitive attention to its own inadequacy, betraying a certain melancholy underneath the absurd humor. Elaine Gerbert, a pioneer in

[2] For contemporary examples of such views, see Masuda Chikako, *Uno Kōji bungaku no shoshiteki kenkyū*, Kindai bungaku kenkyū sōkan, vol. 18 (Osaka: Izumi shoin, 2000), 92-97. For later evaluations, see Sekiguchi Yasuyoshi, "Kaisetsu," in *Shishōsetsu*, ed. Nihon bungaku kenkyū shiryō kankōkai (Yūseidō, 1983); Yanagisawa Takako, "Kaisetsu," in *Uno Kōji to Makino Shin'ichi*, Nihon bungaku kenkyū shiryō shinshū, vol. 25 (Yūseidō, 1988).

Uno studies in North America, characterizes Uno's style with eloquence befitting the subject:

> Uno's narrator was extraordinary for his time. Yamaji had no control over what he was saying. Language in his mouth had a force that propelled him hither and yon. Words triggered trains of thought, utterances prompted further utterances, until he himself no longer knew what he was saying. Again and again, realizing that he has allowed himself to be swept away by the sound of his own voice, he pulls up short and struggles to regain control of the story and moves it back onto the 'main track.'[3]

Scholars have treated this stylistic flair with the concept of play or *asobi* yet these terms seem simply inadequate to capture this textual ontology ripe with certain provocations. Cradled in nostalgia for the "late Edo period (1600-1868), which saw the flourishing of *gesaku* within a 'culture of play,'" the evocation of *asobi* as an interpretive term only domesticates precisely what demands radical critical imagination—that is, unless it sheds the largely descriptive function and yields a certain theorem. Similarly, the seemingly benign word "humor" (*yūmoa*) in fact uneasily reverberates with several figures of dissolution, even destruction. Claire Kahane's theorization of the hysterical voice in Victorian narratives as marked by a "tonal instability," laughter that arises from Julia Kristeva's "semiotic," or Hélèn Cixous's beautiful and laughing Medusa, conjured as the figure of the *écriture féminine*, all suggest rupture, crisis, that gives rise to writing, subject, or the writing subject.[4] This is a province irreducible to *description*.

It is revealing to note that many contemporaries expressed unease over this text, shuttling back and forth between a belittling acknowledgement of humor and unambiguous disapproval of frivolity, the confounding of which at times led to displays

[3] Gerbert, "Uno Kōji," 32.
[4] The phrase is borrowed from Roland Barthes in Kahane, *Passions of the Voice*, viii; John Lechte, "Art, Love, and Melancholy in the Work of Julia Kristeva," in *Abjection, Melancholia, and Love: The Work of Julia Kristeva*, ed. John Fletcher and Andrew Benjamin (New York: Routledge, 1990), 27; Hélèn Cixous, "The Laugh of the Medusa," *Signs* 1, no. 4 (Summer 1976): 885.

of exasperation: "I found it unpleasant" (*fukai*).[5] What produces and in turn follows this humor is a disjointed narrative, at once energized by a narcissistic death drive that erupts only to stall, and scarred by symbolic injunctions that render such stalling moments intelligible. In other words, this narrative arises by way of "an unresolvable tension between [two] contradictory discursive tendencies: the mode of hallucinatory inflation and the mode of critical deflation."[6] Moreover, the laugh also issues from another narrative other, that is, the reader, mirrored in the anonymous yet clearly dismissive audience at Yamaji's own scene of storytelling. It is the sound of their own derisive laughs and the "unpleasant" bodily sensations provoked by the absurdity of the narrative act that drives them *mad* and out of the theatre at the end of the novella: "Where is everybody? … Isn't there one single person left—still listening?" (80) Thus subtending the unlikely narrative, and the equally unlikely text, is precisely the tension that cuts across all involved parts and parties. What, if not this unarticulable affective provocation, is hysteria?

Another register of the hysterical ontology of *Kura no naka* is properly literary-historical. Only with some strain does modern Japanese literary history find a place for Uno the author and his oeuvre in its narrative, heliocentrically organized around *shishōsetsu*. It is a perceived problem concerning Uno's early works, unified under the iconic *Kura no naka*, which feature aspects impossible to assimilate under the *shishōsetsu* heading. Uno's stylistic investment in humor and frivolity on the one hand, and autobiographical modality on the other, helped further riddle with paradox his authorial

[5] Masuda, *Uno Kōji bungaku no shoshiteki kenkyū*, 95.
[6] Shoshana Felman thus characterizes the structure of Gérard de Nerval's *Aurélia*, a narrative featuring striking resemblances with *Kura no naka*, such as the structural convergence of woman and memory. *Writing and Madness*, 67.

image, already enigmatic enough to warrant such monikers as monster (*monsutā*), chameleon (*kamereon*), and *nue* (鵺)—a fabulous creature with the head of a monkey, the body of a raccoon-dog, and the legs of a tiger.[7] In short, Uno presents a taxonomic problem for *shishōsetsu*. That is to say, the problem of Uno's literary-historical position is in fact the problem of literary history itself as a narrative regime with a particular perpetuating mechanism. A reference volume titled *Shishōsetsu* includes Uno as one of four representative writers in the genre and yet admits certain uneasiness over such a characterization: "Uno [is a writer] whom one cannot judge by the category of *shishōsetsu*."[8]

The author Uno, in other words, is inserted into modern Japanese literature *qua shishōsetsu* as an aberration. By the same movement, the singularity of his early works is absorbed into the larger fabric of literary history that can only account for the *oeuvre*, that is, the totality under the sign of the author who by definition becomes intelligible only from the perspective of *shishōsetsu* literary history. The question regarding the felicity of Uno for this taxonomy, and the overcoming of this logical mishap, is further discussed in Chapter 5. There the biographical event of madness and literary historical appropriation thereof is located as the founding condition and production of such felicity. For now, suffice it to say that the impossibility of *fixing* Uno the author and *Kura no naka*, and its provocation, productively conjure the ontology of hysteria.

Necessarily, there remains for scrutiny the status of this normalcy presumed for the normative, normal, normativizing, that is, non-hysterical, text, against which the hysterical ontology of *Kura no naka* becomes intelligible. It has long been a scholarly

[7] Funaki Shigenobu, "Bundan shinjin ron: Uno Kōji ron," in *Shishōsetsu*, ed. Nihon bungaku kenkyū shiryō kankōkai (Yūseidō, 1983), 108.
[8] Sekiguchi, "Kaisetsu," 299.

convention in modern Japanese literature to measure the significance of a literary text against *shishōsetsu*—not only the genre but the larger literary and cultural system of value—even as the latter has always eluded any satisfactory definition. *Kura no naka* provides a quintessential instance of such a measurement.[9] The underlying structure of this critical operation is one of dynamism between *shishōsetsu* and non-*shishōsetsu*, dialectically opposed with *shishōsetsu* always further reified into the higher term. Beyond the perceived contrasts at the level of representation—serious versus humorous, life versus play—among individual texts, the paramount question remains as to what constitutes *shishōsetsu* as such an overarching sign, that is, the structural mechanism of self-perpetuation. A preliminary answer has already been suggested in the aforementioned literary historical narrative, which found room for Uno in spite of his prodigal excess. That is to say a particular mode of history, perhaps "biography." The peculiar feature of *shishōsetsu* is borne out in the surreptitious slide: the question of genre—"Is it or is it not *shishōsetsu*?"—unfailingly returns to a biographical one: "Is he or is he not a *shishōsetsu-ka*?" Uno is situated in the very gap between this pair of *inquisitions*, articulating the instability inscribed by the very proximate distance of literary history and the literary text. Considered in this manner, once again, *shishōsetsu* is not a mere juncture *within* literary historical chronology, but suggests something much more fundamental. Insofar as it has masqueraded as the super/supra genre by way of a particular mode of history, thus encompassing two quintessential notions of modern epistemology—literature and history—*shishōsetsu* confers visibility on the very modality

[9] The majority of studies on *Kura no naka* and Uno repeat this operation. See Gerbert, "Uno Kōji," 35; Tani Akira, "Uno Kōji no hihyōsei: Taishō jidai chūki no gensetsu jōkyō to 'Kura no naka,'" *Kokubungaku kō* 169 (March 2001): 22. Izume Ayako, "*Yume miru heya*: kasō sareta kokuhaku," *Gakushūin daigaku jinbun kagaku ronshū* IX (2000): 44.

as well as epistemology of modernity as encountered in one particular cultural milieu, i.e., early twentieth-century Japan.

One need not agree with such culturally essentialist definitions of *shishōsetsu* as "typically Japanese" "form of thought," "fatal Japanese reality," "cultural necessity," or "method with very close ties to the psychological tendencies of the Japanese people" in order to accept the critical reality in which "the problem of *shishōsetsu* extends over many areas of modern literary studies and is always the starting point and the conclusion of research and therefore it is impossible to explain the characteristics of modern Japanese literature without solving this cardinal problem."[10] The coeval temporality of modern Japanese literature and the *shishōsetsu* aesthetics have been amply pointed out.[11] Further, when Karatani Kōjin traces the genealogy of *shishōsetsu* to the founding "Trinity of confession, sexuality, and truth," what awaits there is more than the birth of modern Japanese literature itself and that which reaches over to the very founding of the epistemological "landscape" itself.[12] It is within this fundamental understanding of *shishōsetsu* that Karatani further extends the notion of *shishōsetsu* to approach the scope—though not the essentialist psychologism—of Irmela Hijiya-Kirschnerei's definitions above, and notes the structural continuity between *shishōsetsu* and the so-called democracy and cosmopolitanism of the Taishō era.[13] The entire first decades of the twentieth century come under the sign of *shishōsetsu*, which now needs to be read symptomatically.

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[10] Hijiya-Kirschnereit, *Rituals of Self-Revelation*, 7.
[11] See Suzuki, *Narrating the Self*, chapter 1.
[12] Cross reference Karatani Kōjin's "Shishōsetsu no keifugaku," *Kokubungaku: kaishaku to kyōzai no kenkyū* 23, no. 16 (December 1978): 116-21 and *Origins of Modern Japanese Literature*, chapter 1.
[13] Karatani Kōjin, ed. *Kindai Nihon no hihyō III Meiji-Taishō hen* (Kōdansha, 1998), 187-90.

2.

In order to pursue the question of *shishōsetsu* further, it may be profitable to trace *shishōsetsu* from the particular discursive milieu conjured thus far, that is, in relation to the emergence of hysteria as an identifiable phenomenon. As discussed in the preceding chapter, (the discourse on) hysteria is a symptom of a larger discursive vacillation between science and religion, and the material and spiritual, as well as the immediate site of body and mind. Between sexuality noisily repressed—in literature foremost—on the one hand and the scientific body scandalously exposed on the other, hysteria served as a suitably ambiguous site on which conflictual desires particular to this discursive operation could secure a certain satisfaction. In other words, hysteria in its very ambiguity functions as complementarity for the body that was increasingly expropriated. Yet, even while the visualizing noise, so to speak, deafened affective movements into frozen tableaus—as so many figures of womanhood from Charcot to Uno—the hysterical body remains as that which is still to be accounted for.

Significantly, cultural discourse on *seishin*, the aegis of this simultaneously repressive and seductive discursive regime, was in lockstep with the shift in both literary production and reception whereby the author was increasingly privileged as the locus of textual meaning, a concept that would later be encompassed under the umbrella of *shishōsetsu*. That is to venture that both the discourse on *seishin* and the literary ideology consummating in the author evolved by virtue of a discursive mechanism dependent on the structural mutuality of egalitarianism and elitism. The discourse on *seishin* is egalitarian at two levels. On the one hand, through the use of the popular print media, technical terminology increasingly seeped into lay cultural parlance. The popularization

of "hysteria" was one instance of this phenomenon. On the other hand, the vernacularization of knowledge had the effect of effacing particularized criteria, medical and otherwise scientific, and collapsing various social as well as personal "problems" into one large pool of personality disorders. Hyōdō Akiko notes that psychiatry, which originally treated pathology and disorders thought to be traceable to the functioning of the brain, was now going beyond its own boundaries to describe "character (*seikaku*)" or "personality (*jinkaku*)," a shift enabled precisely by the contest with the newly emerging psychology.[14] It was in this context that Nakamura Kokyō's interest encompassed not only the abnormal psychology of the individual but phenomena of collective (*shūdanteki*) abnormal psychology ranging through "superstition, rumors, panic, religion, and education." Through and beyond the journal *Hentai shinri*, Kokyō sought to interpret and treat these conditions by gathering specialists from psychology, psychics (*shinreigaku*), philosophy, literature, medicine, biology, education, sociology, religious studies, folk studies, and more, who would cooperate in order to reach beyond their respective specialties.[15] It was a truly eclectic project whose method lay precisely in blurring epistemological boundaries, a different kind of egalitarianism—perhaps fascist. That is, even without any overt invocation of "Japan," the impulse toward a certain transcendence implicit in Kokyō's agenda reverberates with what Alan Tansman has called the "fascist aesthetics."[16]

[14] Hyōdō, "Taishōki no 'seishin' gainen," 106. Hill notes a similar point: "Freudian psychoanalysis, which came to dominate psychology, notably offered a purely psychogenic conception of mental distress." See "Exhausted by Their Battles with the World," 246.
[15] Sone, "*Kara* kara *Hentai shinri* e," 89.
[16] Tansman states, "The Japanese inflection of fascism was the fruit of 'literary thinking,'" *The Aesthetics of Japanese Fascism,* 14.

Intriguing is the fact that a journal like *Hentai shinri* professed to *describe* those people who supposedly carried identifiable markers of abnormality—a supremely literary enterprise. In fact, the founding of the journal is inscribed with literary aspirations, and the ensuing development of the journal continued a distinctively literary modality of discourse. Moreover, the central form of this literary representation was none other than *shishōsetsu*. As a student of literature under Natsume Sōseki's tutelage, Kokyō made his debut in the literary scene with a novel titled *Kara* (The Shell, 1912).[17] The historical convergence of Kokyō, at the forefront of the popular discourse of psychology, and Sōseki, Japan's foremost modern author, is more than a fascinating coincidence. In his prospectus for the Japan Association for Psychological Medicine, Kokyō sketched the unconventional career trajectory that led him to the event as follows:

> It is not that I specialized in medicine. I did study at Kyoto Medical School when I was young. However, with the unexpected death of my father, I lost the financial means to continue my study. I wandered to Tokyo where I endeavored in my studies for ten years. Not one day of those years was I able to attain stability of my spirits (*seishin no antei*), which soon led to a severe case of neurasthenia….[18]

The autobiographical vein of this public announcement was carried further. Kokyō recounted his brother's mental illnesses which came to an end only in death, with obvious consequences for Kokyō and his mother. He then added, "I have already presented to the world part of the circumstances during this time by composing it into a novel called *Kara* on the pages of *Tokyo Asahi shinbun* and so I will not recount the details here."[19]

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[17] Senuma, *Sōseki monka no bunjin tachi*, 244-60; Sone, "Shiryō shōkai," 108.
[18] Sone, "*Kara* kara *Hentai shinri* e," 87.
[19] Ibid., 88. A quintessential moment bearing out this popular literary appeal is found in the advertisement for Kokyō's book, *Hentai shinri no kenkyū* on the pages of *Hentai shinri*, promising "new scientific knowledge" delivered by way of the "excitement" of novel-reading. See the back cover of *Hentai shinri* 6, no. 2 (August 1920).

Thus, Kokyō's "confessional" launch towards the "scientific" venture into psychology garners its authenticity precisely from the *shishōsetsu* discursive paradigm.[20] It is often noted that Sōseki turned a corner towards the autobiographical with his 1915 *Michikusa*, roughly the time when general literary discourse markedly consolidated towards biographical codes of appreciation and evaluation of literature, which constituted the backdrop of the appearance of Kokyō's journal *Hentai shinri* in 1917.[21] Less noted is the fact that Sōseki's narratives from the 1910s display ample gestures towards what may be called "the mythical," amply suggestive against the discursive milieu in which psychology and spiritualism contended in their mutual appeal to *seishin*. For example, *Higansugi made* (Until the Spring Equinox and Beyond, 1912) almost seems to script Kokyō's momentous decision to shift from literature to psychology. To the protagonist Keitarō, vacillating before an enigmatic task given by a person who could potentially find him employment, the idea occurs that "he ought to seize his future by appealing to a fortune-teller."[22] As if in apology, the narrator intimately shadowing the hero provides a context for this apparently irrational urge: "The education he had received was not that unscientific to make him fully believe in such things as incantations, prayers, charms against evil, exorcisms, or mediums, but he had retained from his boyhood years not a little interest in all these mysteries." Thus, the narrative traces back through long-past events and figures—Keitarō's father and grandfather—to justify a return to the imminent slip into that other realm: "At last he caught sight of the kind of house he was looking for.

[20] For a discussion on the convention of confession informing both literary narratives and the ostensibly scientific discourse as exemplified by *Hentai shinri*, see Seo Chang-won, "Tanizaki Jun'ichirō no *Watashi* to zasshi *Hentai shinri*," *Kokubungaku kenkyū* 151 (March 2007): 105.
[21] For the "paradigm shift" from around 1914, see Yamamoto, *Bungakusha wa tsukurareru*, chapter 1.
[22] Natsume Sōseki, *To the Spring Equinox and Beyond*, trans. Kingo Ochiai and Sanford Goldstein (Rutland, Vt.: C. E. Tuttle Co., 1985), 76.

He saw a thick oblong board of hardwood on which was written in two lines 'Divination in Personal Matters,' and under these characters were engraved in white the words 'Fortune-telling with Bunsen Coins."[23] Sōseki's narrative investment in the mythical repeats itself in *Kōjin* (The Wayfarer, 1914). There the protagonist Ichirō's existential skepticism or "spiritual struggles," mirrored in his scientific interest in "telepathy and spiritualism," gives rise to a diagnosis of neurasthenia. Ichirō is a compelling textual moment in which proofs of scientific progress and symptoms of spiritualist longing become indistinguishable as they afflict the subject under the same sign of modernity.[24] Ichirō's despair—"To die, to go mad, or to enter religion—these are the only three courses left open for me"—and his brother Jirō's rather nonchalant resignation—"There's no getting around the fact that in Japanese society today—and maybe in the West too—it's reached the point that only people good at being shallow [*uwasuberi no jōzu mono*] can live"—may not so much designate a contrast between the two brothers as the contiguity of their affliction.[25]

Kokyō, on the other hand, opens an idiosyncratic route from literature to science via mysticism. After having the manuscript of his novel rejected twice—by the *Osaka* and *Tokyō Asahi shinbun*—in 1916, Kokyō visited a fortuneteller, "after thirty-minutes' of contemplation," and emerged crystal clear: "I decided to stop the subscription to *Asahi shinbun*."[26] Subsequently, Kokyō occupied himself with organizing the Japan Association for Psychological Medicine.

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[23] Ibid., 81.
[24] Hill, "Exhausted by Their Battles with the World," 249.
[25] Natsume Sōseki, *The Wayfarer*, trans. Beongcheon Yu (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1967), 296; Hill, "Exhausted by Their Battles with the World," 250.
[26] Sone, "*Kara* kara *Hentai shinri* e," 92.

To return to the contiguity of discourses in literature and on *seishin*, the point to note is that literature was extended into heterogeneous disciplines, with rhetorical devices and narrative apparatuses that blurred disciplinary boundaries. Freud's self-professed conundrum echoes by some measure this epistemological situation:

> [It] still strikes me as strange that the case histories I write should read like short stories and that, as one might say, they lack the serious stamp of science. … The fact is that local diagnosis and electric reaction lead nowhere in the study of hysteria, where a detailed description of mental processes such as we are now accustomed to find in the works of imaginative writers enables me, with the use of a few psychological formulas, to obtain at least some kind of insight into the course of that affection.[27]

Yet, *shishōsetsu* as a particular mode of discourse signals something beyond the collusion of two disciplines. To borrow language from critical discussions among some of the most celebrated critics of the past few decades, literature (*bungaku*) was precisely the discursive regime that effaced *difference*. Tracing back the "abstraction" modalizing the Taishō critical discourse to the 1900s debates on so-called Naturalism (*shizenshugi*), Hasumi Shigehiko notes,

> First, [the debate is] abstract in the sense that it is impossible to learn in concrete terms from their writings what these works are like—the works by Tōson, Doppo, and Shūsei, which occasioned the very debate on "Naturalism." To [Shimamura Hōgetsu and Ikuta Chōkō] who chose to discuss "Naturalism" as a sign circulating with sudden frequency, the works as texts are not present but only [their] images "represented" (*daikō*) by that sign waver on their visual horizon. … [The] difference among individual works dissolves. Next, by virtue of relying on the "universality" (*fuhensei*) of literary theory, the difference between Japan and the West dissolves. Furthermore, the difference between Shimamura Hōgetsu's and Ikuta Chōkō's respective writings dissolves as they take this procedure (*tetsuzuki*) for granted.[28]

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[27] "Studies on Hysteria" (1893-1895), in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, vol. II, trans. and ed. James Strachey (London: Hogarth Press, 1959), 160-61.

[28] See Hasumi's essay "'Taishōteki' gensetsu to hihyō,'" in *Kindai Nihon no hihyō III: Meiji·Taishō hen*, ed. Karatani Kōjin, (Kōdansha, 1998), 149. Hasumi uses the term *daikō* to designate two definitions of

"Substitutionality" (*daikōsei*) and "universality" (*fuhensei*) as discursive structures of "abstraction" (*chūshōsei*) underlying literary criticism of the final years of the Meiji era find visibly ubiquitous articulations in what Hasumi calls "slogans" (*hyōgo*) in the Taishō era. Treating the imperial era name as an adjective denoting a Zeitgeist—"*Taishōteki*"—Hasumi and the other critics participating in the discussion zoom in on the quintessence of the Taishō discursive field: "the extreme deficiency of the sensibility to recognize difference," "the extinction of difference," or "the absence of the other (*tasha*)."[29] Abstraction—first, of the body, as discussed earlier in relation to the discourse of *seishin* and, second, of reality *qua* economy, politics, and indeed the existence of the other—points to precisely the status of literature: At stake here is not so much the encounter *between* literature and other epistemological categories *qua* disciplines as the discursive condition by way of the "literary" *underlying* different forms of intellectual discourse.

This literature as the epistemological ground of early twentieth-century discursive practice is precisely *shishōsetsu*: the "Taishō-esque" (*Taishōteki*) literary phenomenon *par excellence*, as epitome of the Taishō Zeitgeist on the one hand and the reification of "literature" (*bungaku*) on the other. To conclude from these reiterations on Taishō *bungaku*, *shishōsetsu* designates none other than the "self-consciousness" (*jiishiki*) that *fabulously* arises from the erasure of the other (*tasha*).[30] This critical consensus on the absence of alterity demands further consideration.

Karatani makes an enlightening point on the increasing "purification" (*junka*) of *shishōsetsu* during the Taishō era: "[The] reason is not only the so-called return to the

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"substitution," the political and the significatory. In turn, the limit of the former and the product of the latter is simultaneously "representation (*hyōshō*)," 154.

[29] Karatani, ed. *Kindai Nihon no hihyō I Shōwa hen (jō)* (Kōdansha, 1997), 157; 159; 188.

[30] Karatani parenthetically inserts "self-consciousness (*jiishiki*)" as a qualification of "literature (*bungaku*)." See Karatani Kōjin, ed. *Kindai Nihon no hihyō I*, 149.

Japanese soil (*dojō*) away from the norms of Western literature but also because there was the notion that any particular detail about an individual, if taken to extremes (*tettei sureba*), is also universal. This is a modern thing (*kindaiteki na mono*)."[31] Left unaddressed in this otherwise insightful reading is precisely the way in which the two discursive gestures distributed between the diametric poles of Japan and the West underlying *shishōsetsu* are structurally inseparable. Perhaps Karatani would claim that in the end they coincide in their very impulse to efface difference. What if the powerful incentive—which ought to be psychic as well as cultural—against difference bears out an inordinate amount of cathexis toward difference, as it structurally must?

What is significant about Kokyō's supremely literary venture of psychological research is the fact that the aforementioned democratization of access to (pseudo-) scientific vocabulary through the popular print media was managed by a select group of men. The latter's privileged status ought to be differentiated from what is conventionally conjured as intellectual expertise insofar the particularity of this collective lay not so much in specialized knowledge—as the group's eclectic composition should bear out—but the literary apparatus, that is, self-reflexivity, which *by the very force of its collectivity* authenticated the idiosyncratic amalgam of knowledge and thereby perpetuated itself. In other words, Kokyō's Japan Association of Psychological Research and its journal *Hentai shinri* were collectives through which disciplinarily nonspecific information, or, more properly, lay cultural criticism, became privileged by virtue of collectivity.

The discursive practice borne out in Kokyō's collective is precisely what Kawabata Yasunari noted in regards to what is known as "roundtable" or *zadankai*

[31] Karatani, ed. *Kindai Nihon no hihyō I*, 190.

format of discussion, which has dominated modern Japanese literary and broader critical discourse. Kawabata states: "In a collective review, a kind of 'serve the great' mentality occurs *by the nature of the gathering itself,* which tends to attract general attention and trust."[32] The *zadankai* as noted earlier forms an intimately interlocking relationship with *shishōsetsu* insofar as they mutually rely on a fraternal network of material and human resources for their production. Furthermore, the institutional framework enabling them is none other than the literary establishment or *bundan*: "simply, literary circle(s)" but, more specifically, the "close alliance of writers, critics, and interested readers who had an emotional or intellectual stake in the equation between art and private life" in the early twentieth-century Japan.[33]

Mary Poovey's theoretical formulation of the "border case" in accounting for, among other things, the "literary man"—as she in a separate context yet suggestively transcribes the Japanese term *bungakusha*—calls attention to the "antithetical factors" that gave rise to the cultural figure: on the one hand, technological developments facilitated increases in supply and demand in the publishing market, and consequently "positioned the literary man and literary labor at the heart of the mushrooming capitalist economy"; and on the other hand,

> [Because] of received (and recently elaborated) associations between writing and the expression of wisdom or even "genius," the literary man seemed immune to market relations; telling universal truths, he was—or should have been—superior to fluctuations in taste or price. The literary man—and the representation of writing, in particular—therefore became

[32] *Shinchō* (August 1923), italics added; quoted in Nayoung Aimee Kwon, "Translated Encounters and Empire: Colonial Korea and the Literature of Exile" (Ph.D. diss., University of California at Los Angeles, 2007), 152.
[33] Fowler, *The Rhetoric of Confession,* xxvi. Fowler specifically associates the term with the Taishō era, but to do so would be arbitrary considering the kind of collectives burgeoning from the very beginning of modern Japanese literature in the late nineteenth century.

> the site at which *the alienation endemic to all kinds of labor* under capitalism simultaneously surfaced and was erased.[34]

Yamamoto Yoshiaki, for one, would disagree with this portrayal, insofar as "literature" as "an economic activity," encroaching upon the author's private life, does present a documentable history.[35] Yet, even without a comparable circulation of "genius," the discursive operation triangulated by *shishōsetsu*, *zadankai*, and *bundan* does have the effect of erasing material unevenness.[36] Certainly not by their individual intentions but by sheer force of discourse—the latter of significantly partaking of psychic dimensions—the early twentieth-century authors were given to a certain ethical ineffectuality.

To recapitulate the preceding discussion, the psychological and literary discourses in early twentieth-century Japan are intelligible on the continuum of several conditions of production: the impulse for abstraction (of the body in the psychological discourse and of "reality" marked by economy and politics in the literary), fraternal collectivity, and the popular print media. To put the latter two conditions in another way, the egalitarian—national—cultural horizontality and the elite fraternal—pedagogical—verticality constitute a mutually reinforcing relation. This is none other than the inclusive-exclusive structure of the modern discursive regime, which bears out the imperialist historical moment. Michael Bourdaghs demonstrates the way national imagination was dependent on this apparently contradictory yet entirely mutual discursive operation, "a double economy of assimilation and exclusion," by way of the hygienic notions of quarantine and vaccine in the early twentieth century.[37] It goes without saying that the "foreign"

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[34] Poovey, *Uneven Developments*, 13.
[35] See *Bungakusha wa tsukurareru*, chapter 8. Iida offers a related discussion on the author as occupation in *Karera no monogatari*, chapter 2.
[36] Ibid., 89.
[37] *The Dawn That Never Comes*, 121.

inscribing the *burakumin* in Shimazaki Tōson's *Hakai* (The Broken Commandment, 1906) is replicated in other peripheral figures in the Japanese nation. Bourdaghs notes parallels among the discourse of integration in domestic arenas involving such peripheral populations as the *burakumin* and woman as the supreme metaphor in modern Japanese literature, and the discourse of colonial expansion exemplified in the Korean annexation, suggesting the radical pervasiveness of this discursive regime.[38] And, of course, there is the northern frontier of Hokkaidō which stood for the ethnic, geographical, and historical other in political, cultural, and literary enterprises.[39]

As if in a *necessary* afterthought, Bourdaghs notes, "Hygiene is clearly an aspect of modernity in Meiji Japan, but I have tried to demonstrate that it was not a matter of simple belated imitation of Western models: the rise of hygiene in Japan was simultaneous with *(and often prior to)* its rise in the West."[40] It is intriguing that in the question of which of these different genres of discourse first began to deploy the inclusive-exclusive strategy, variously modalized for different ideological ends, would so elude critical interest. The underlying assumption of Bourdaghs's afterthought is that comparative, or competitive, chronology is meaningful only in an overtly "inter-national" plurality and never "within" the presumably contained national boundary. The point here is not to advocate such a framework but to illustrate the critical bindings around these terms. Bourdaghs's apprehension about "classical modernization theory" fails to expire—perhaps even redoubles—in the scheme he provides. Put differently, "the West" as a

[38] Bourdaghs notes the shift in Japan's colonial policy from considering its colonies as external properties to stressing their integration into Japan itself. *The Dawn That Never Comes*, 71.
[39] See Michel Mason, "Manly Narratives: Writing Hokkaido into the Political and Cultural Landscape of Imperial Japan" (Ph.D. diss., University of California at Irvine, 2005); Young-ah Chung, "Narrating Hokkaidō: Kunikida Doppo and a New Vision of Literature," *Proceedings of the Association for Japanese Literary Studies* 9 (2008).
[40] Bourdaghs, *The Dawn That Never Comes*, 76. Italics added.

relational term ought to be released for a different line of thinking—other than this comparative equation—so that the inheritance so dreaded can be "overcome."

On this theme of apprehension and dread, Hasumi Shigehiko offers an observation worth noting for the discussion to follow: "Authors and critics [in the Taishō era] often use the phrase 'reality as it is,' which refers to a certain attitude different than 'objective,' perhaps *from a certain kind of instinctive fear*, and this fear widely shared [by authors and critics] gave the 'subject' of the Taishō era its particular tone of color."[41] Hasumi goes on to ask, "What is the reason behind such a scrupulous evasion of being 'objective'?" The speculative answers that follow seem even more abstruse than the attempted psychological reading preceding the question, in large part because they are simply thrown out to stand alone as unsupported postulates: The "subject" feared not only being "objective" but also, or, even more, being "subjective," and, from a terror of encounters with difference, sought to eliminate "subject" itself.[42] What seems like a version of the Freudian death drive is suspended mid-thought.

Could there be a way to read this "fear" *vis-à-vis* the male "longing for self-transcendence" that Mizuta speaks of?[43] Furthermore, in view of the discursive regime of inclusive exclusion which operates around—or, by way of producing—signs of alterity, it seems impossible to situate *shishōsetsu*, "Taishō" "literature" or *Taishōteki bungaku*, or, simply, literature and criticism without addressing the specters of the "foreign." As suggested earlier, the latter term ought to bring together the West and the body in one move in order to render any critical profit.

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[41] Karatani ed. *Kindai Nihon no hihyō III*, 163.
[42] Italics added.
[43] "Onna e no tōsō," 7.

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Considered this way, coloniality may well be an appropriate term to designate the discursive structure that at once includes and excludes, and thereby produces, a relation of power. This term also serves to highlight the import of a discussion that has yet to be engaged in this study. Intriguingly, variously productive and informative discussions on different forms of colonial relations in modern Japanese literature seem to share an operational lack. In other words, even while positing the male subject disposed to interiority and fraternity as chief villain insofar as it peripherizes other subjects, critical attention has left intact the constitutive *relation* between this male, masculinist, colonizing subject, the hero and the author within the *shishōsetsu* discursive regime, and *the other* coloniality that encompasses domestic articulations, namely the West. Missing here is the founding coloniality as that which en*gender*s the colonization "within" the so-called "domestic" literary scene. The status of this domesticity requires further scrutiny at a later time. At any rate, this uncanny absence becomes no less obvious in studies that specifically address the question of the subject, subject formation, subjectivity, and so on. The premise of James Fujii's pioneering study *Complicit Fictions: the Subject in the Modern Japanese Prose Narrative* concerns the possibility of an alternative to the transcendental subject posited by the Western realist tradition, an antithesis to the "[universalization] of Western experience."[44] Informed by the Bakhtinian notion of "texts as socially engaged participants in a contestatory social field," Fujii finds "ideological contests" in the late Meiji period taking place in the particular subjective relation to the state:

[44] *Complicit Fictions*, 16.

> The failed promises of political participation helped determine the shape of Japanese narrative expression in subsequent years.... [The] displacements of subject position by state authority and power on the one hand and by the protean strategies of narrativized confrontation with the state on the other hand—each affecting the other in sometimes unpredictable and often unintended ways.[45]

Thus Fujii's recuperative approach to the "Japanese" literary or writing subject is an amalgam of ideological interests in the modern state and critical alternatives to modernization theory.

The subject is approached by way of a productive synthesis of translation theory, postcolonial studies, and poststructuralism in Naoki Sakai's *Translation and Subjectivity*. In an at once deconstructive, postcolonial, and translational move, Sakai draws out two heterogeneous registers of the English term "subject." These he renders using the Japanese terms *shukan* and *shutai*, which he glosses respectively as "the epistemic subject" and "the practical subject or the agent of practice."[46] In relation to his immediate concern with "cultural nationalism," Sakai spells out their differentiation as follows:

> [One] comes across cultural difference as an unobjectifiable "feeling" of anxiety or of the uncanny that cannot be contained within the economy of spatialized time governed by the pleasure principle. For this reason, it must be articulated in enunciation and be repressed so as to be perceived as determined cultural difference, as an identifiable difference between entities.[47]

This bifurcation of the "epistemic" and "practical" reverberates with Iida Yūko's more modest contrast of "discourse" versus "reality" discussed earlier. Perhaps both authors intend these differential terms as heuristic devices and therefore either presume their mutual inextricability or at least anticipate their ultimate merger. If so, they fail to articulate their intentions. More significantly, insofar as neither offers a suggestion as to

[45] Ibid., 18.
[46] *Translation and Subjectivity*, 119.
[47] Ibid, 121.

how these opposing registers of *experience* can be rerouted for the ethics toward which they both seem to gesture, albeit more in lament than hope, the subject becomes suspended in a kind of epistemological limbo: one is either epistemic or practical. Apart from Sakai's frivolous invocation of "epistemic"—a term whose metacritical edge seems misspent here—as a dialectical term, it is impossible to sustain the arbitrary quarantine of the affective outside "signification" as Sakai puts forward: "[Cultural difference] is encountered rather as 'feeling' or *jō*, that which moves something like the Lacanian *réel*, which cannot be arrested in the *li*, in the synchronicity of signification." [48] That the Lacanian Real is irreducible to "feeling"—that the term undoes Sakai's own theoretical structure—is yet another, separate issue.

Unlike Fujii's study, however, Sakai's does enter the province of coloniality as a factor constitutive of the subject. Reading Watsuji Tetsurō's writings including *Fūdo* (Climate and Culture, 1928-1934) as a subjective map *vis-à-vis* Japan's complex position between the West and Asia, Sakai draws out textual moments illuminating the tactics of appropriation of different statuses of otherness:

> The acknowledgement of the mimetic relationships with the Anglo-Saxons, whose relation with the "aboriginal" was undoubtedly antagonistic, would present another acknowledgement of the antagonistic relation the Japanese must have had with the Chinese and other minorities within the empire. Yet Watsuji never reached this awareness, and…the mimetic relationship with the Anglo-Saxons and the West in general would be guided by a different economy in which the *shutai* is completely repressed, an economy that is regulated and sustained by a format called "the national character."[49]

What this "awareness"—redolent as it is of the "transcendental subject of the Western realist tradition" to borrow Fujii's phrase cited above—may designate is puzzling,

[48] Ibid.
[49] Ibid., 134.

especially because it is followed by supremely psychoanalytical terminology: "Precisely because Watsuji adamantly *disavowed* this mimetic relationship, he was all the more vulnerable to its adverse effects." Sakai continues to suggest, "What we can see…is a *displacement* of a certain colonial *guilt* about the imperialism of his own country that finds its outlet in the description of the brutality of Anglo-American imperialism."[50] Thus, Sakai comes very close to entering a potentially productive reading beyond that of the (un)ethical subject unified by sober consciousness or "awareness." However, he goes on to consolidate this psychic tension into a judgment of Watsuji's critical failure: "What is achieved in his use of the term *shutai* is, in fact, a displacement of the practical relation by the epistemic one. [In] the final analysis, Watsuji's *shutai* is reducible to *shukan* and that *shutai* is a mere corollary of subjectivity."[51] Sakai's use of "displacement" allows no trace of the mutual discoloration or the ambiguous zone that renders impossible any pinpointing of the precise moment of meeting and parting of the substitutes. Therefore, Sakai's theory of *shutai* as suggestive of "the impossibility of the full saturation of any identity and, particularly, the identity of the agent of action, as well as an undecidability that underwrites the possibility of social and ethical action" disintegrates as Watsuji emerges as a villain who fell onto the wrong side of the binary equation of *shutai* and *shukan*.[52]

Nevertheless, the proposed task—that is, addressing the absence in criticism of the constitutive *relation* between the masculine literary subject and coloniality *vis-à-vis* the West in modern Japan—would benefit from further pursuing the theoretical inroads

[50] Italics added.
[51] Sakai, *Translation and Subjectivity*, 145.
[52] Ibid. In the same vein, Sakai notes, "the West is a historically specific mode of subjectivity that can be best characterized as *shukan*." 146.

into coloniality opened by Sakai: "[Watsuji] constantly solicits his readers to enjoy this 'dream of power,' and tries to establish the identity and camaraderie of 'us' on the basis of this secretly shared *homosocial enjoyment*."[53] It is not difficult to read this emergent national community as sharing the same psychic as well as historical conditions as *shishōsetsu*. If anything, the latter presents a more reified manifestation and thus one more conducive to theoretical reading. As such, Sakai's reading is a more sophisticated reworking of the causality ascribed to "the inward turn by the *shishōsetsu* writers" that "reveals the limits put on the exercise of the individual."[54] The issue at hand is Japan's colonial position *vis-à-vis* the Western other and its ramifications locatable in *shishōsetsu* as a particular discursive regime, that is, to emphasize once again, beyond the immediate definition of the novelistic genre.

As early as 1978, Karatani Kōjin offered a pioneering—and, to this date, rare—inquiry into *shishōsetsu* in explicitly theoretical relation to the West.[55] Reading Christianity as the originary sign of not only the West but indeed universality, Karatani located a genealogical shift in the modality of the world religion as manifested in the latter half of the Meiji era. Whereas Uchimura Kanzō (1861-1930)and his contemporaries sharing the common heritage of the loyalist samurai class appropriated Christianity as a wherewithal to objectify and transcend the Japanese state, the later reiteration, epitomized by Shiga Naoya (1883-1971), pathologized the private individual by inscribing it with the "Trinity" of confession, sexuality, and Truth, that is, the Christian thematics. It is with the latter that modern Japanese literature came into being, giving rise to the fantasy of the resistant, repressed, and resentful subject. Thus, Karatani

[53] Ibid., 147. Italics added.
[54] Fujii, *Complicit Fictions*, 17.
[55] See "Shishōsetsu no keifugaku."

concludes, "Modern Japanese literature was born not from Christianity *per se* but from its negation. … The tenacious power of *shishōsetsu* originates from not what is Japanese (*Nihonteki na mono*) but the West and its modernity."[56]

In his most celebrated work, *Origins of Modern Japanese Literature*, Karatani further elaborates on the now indispensible interpretive term, interiority, as well as offering landscape, self, and subject as different articulations of the modality of modern Japanese literature *qua shishōsetsu* whereby he reiterates the notion of the West and its modernity as *the* originary Other that precipitated it.[57] Regrettably, this groundbreaking thesis has been invoked through ubiquitous citational tributes rather than rigorous critical engagement. In the process, its complexity has been severely reduced in the same way as the several European theories discussed in the previous chapter in relation to feminist criticism. In the broader critical discourse, Karatani's argument has become simplified down to the idea that interiority is a modern construct. Acknowledging the tremendous contribution of Karatani's work on modern Japanese literary discourse and also the debt which this study owes it, the following discussion takes as its point of departure certain absences traceable therein—perhaps the most productive gesture of tribute imaginable. These absences are familiar in the wake of the preceding discussion on gender and subjectivity: the constitutive *relation* between this male, masculinist, colonizing subject, the hero and the author within the *shishōsetsu* discursive regime, and *the other* coloniality that encompasses the domestic articulations, namely, the West. The ensuing discussion will attempt to modalize the status of this subject arising in relation to the originary Other through the theoretical passage of hysteria, which would rejoin the problem of gender and

[56] Ibid., 121.
[57] See *Origins of Modern Japanese Literature*

coloniality—which it has never been possible to treat separately—into a productive engagement.

The absence of "gender" in Karatani's *Origins of Modern Japanese Literature* has been noted by Ayako Kano: "Within Karatani's theory, the new inner self, or interiority (*naimen*), is ungendered, but/and/therefore assumed to be male. … By not discussing female writers or female fictional characters, Karatani avoids the question of how language and writing might construct subjectivity differently for women."[58] This critique is legitimate yet insufficient insofar as the term "gender" as Kano employs it refers exclusively to woman and femininity. Yet, Kano's concern is more an exception than the rule in the feminist response to the general theorization of the modern subject. Much of the feminist discussion in modern Japanese literature has more or less assumed the modern subject as an edifice against which to stage feminist inquiries. More alarmingly, feminist discourse has more often than not strategized on this critical blindness—the slippery slide from the subject to the male subject—in order to institute the discursive denegation of the male dominance, which coincides precisely with the dismissal of the modern subject itself. Hence Mizuta Noriko's surreptitious insertion: "*men*…who hope to save their *interiority*, which had been made uncertain (*futashika ni natta*) by the *Western self* (*seiōteki jiga*), through female sexuality."[59] Similarly, Chida Hiroyuki's configuration of the phallus as "logocentrism" or "the symbol of the transcendent power that excludes polysemy, ambiguity, and chaos and endows the human beings with homogeneous identity" glosses over the relation between the phallus and the penis.

[58] "Toward a Critique of Transhistorical Femininity," in *Gendering Modern Japanese History*, ed. Barbara Molony and Kathleen Uno (Cambridge: Harvard University Asia Center, Harvard University Press, 2005), 525.
[59] "Onna e no tōsō to onna kara no tōsō," 11. Italics added.

Expanded further, one finds the feminist protestation unwittingly returning as an impulse to recover a pre/anti-modern subjecthood.[60]

Considered in this way, the problem to address is the relation between man or the status of "male" and coloniality as they together provide the founding modality of the modern Japanese literary subject, the hero that is the author. When the scholarly valorization crystalizes around woman as (domestic) colonial victim in modern Japanese literary history and representation on the one hand, and the colonial status of the modern subject, assumed to be the male author, on the other, the value of "male" is simultaneously posited in and subtracted from the critical equation. Significantly, the surprising absence of any theoretical articulation of *shishōsetsu vis-à-vis* coloniality, with the exception of Karatani's early work, reveals the feminist discourse in modern Japanese literature as founded upon the presumption of the modern subject as the male hero/author. In other words, by refusing to address the *masculinized*—neither masculine nor masculinist—subject for its originary *injuries*, feminist criticism forecloses any gesture towards the economy of the *two* and thereby crucially impeding its own agenda of dissolving the dynamic of power and violence. When one sex is *fixed*, all others cannot but lose mobility.

In an article on Sōseki's *Kokoro*, Ishihara Chiaki sheds light on the concept of the West that inscribes the particular ego ideal of such university-educated male demographics as the characters Sensei and Watashi and thereby hints, if cursorily, at the

[60] Tomiko Yoda's study of Heian narrative texts for their modern national instrumentalization and as a suggestive alternative to contemporary subjectivist, modernist, and feminist agendas and methods offers a thoughtful engagement with the given texts. Yet, on account of its premising of "the modern subject [as] a binary structure between self and others," Yoda's work does not take up the task proposed by the present study. See *Gender and National Literature: Heian Texts in the Constructions of Japanese Modernity* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004), 226.

psychic landscape of the male literary subject. Ishihara goes so far as to state, "[Considering] that higher education was available only to men, this is a problem that falls in the problematic territory of the male (*dansei to iu mondai ryōiki*)."[61] Yet, Ishihara's discussion stops short of inquiring into the complex relation between "masculinity," higher education, and the "West" leading to complications beyond the binaries. Instead, Ishihara's insightful reading of Sensei's sociocultural alienation as a form of inter-class mobility—or, more precisely, demotion—is encapsulated in the following conclusion: "Sensei is not conscious of [the loss of *habitus*]. That is because he registered the class-based cultural difference in the form of a transition from elegant (*karameita*) taste to seductive (*namamekashii*) taste, that is, from male taste to female taste. The sexual difference of taste concealed the class difference of taste."[62] At any rate, if "Watashi could call Sensei "Sensei" because [the latter] is a university graduate accompanied by a Westerner," there opens up a discursive site on which to discuss the fraternal operation condensed in the term *sensei* modalized by both gender and the West. Once again, it is the *colonial* gender that seems to be the gaping hole.

The preceding discussions have raised a series of discursive problematics: first, a language of sexuality and gender that preserves their psychic complexity irreducible to the binary equation of woman/femininity versus man/masculinity, second, a coloniality manifesting itself across the phenomenal boundaries demarcating domestic and international, and, finally, a view of the West that provides the supremely modern event of the Other. These discussions impel towards the following question: Is there a reading that can include all of them in one theoretical sweep? A number of titles in other cultural

[61] "Kōtō kyōiku no naka no otoko tachi: *Kokoro* ron," *Nihon bungaku* 41, no.11 (November 1992): 33.
[62] Ibid., 38.

contexts of global modernity address precisely the sutural points dividing sexuality and gender, coloniality, and the West to render them properly into one large fabric. The following observation by Belinda Edmondson is illustrative:

> The terms of writing "Western Indian" novels for the male writers of the pre- and post-independence English-speaking Caribbean are founded on the interpellated meanings of manhood and cultural authority…. [What] is now recognized as West Indian oppositional discourse to Britain is still marked by a utilization of a specifically English version of what constitutes intellectual production. … If *authorship* is marked as a specifically masculine, specifically *gentlemanly*, enterprise, and national narratives are fundamental to national formation, then in order to engage in an insurgent Caribbean nationalism the female writer must re-vision what constitutes literary authority by rewriting the paradigm of the gentleman author.[63]

Implicit in Edmondson's thesis is the provocation that said re-vision ought to begin with attention to the particular modality of said masculine authorship.

Comparable perspectives can be found in the context of China. Xueping Zhong articulates precisely the task proposed in the present discussion when she identifies "an issue that the study of Chinese modernity has yet to explore, i.e., the relationship among modernity, men, and issues of masculinity."[64] Although a precise equivalent to the "acute male interest in the question of men found in post-Cultural Revolution literature" is absent in early twentieth-century Japan and perhaps even thereafter, the dynamic of sexuality and gender, coloniality, and the West as mutually modalizing discourses in the formation of a particular mode of cultural subjectivity, i.e., "Chinese male marginality," offers a critical template rarely found in modern Japanese literature.

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[63] *Making Men: Gender, Literary Authority, and Women's Writing in Caribbean Narrative* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1999), 5-6. Edmondson's italics.

[64] *Masculinity Besieged?: Issues of Modernity and Male Subjectivity in Chinese Literature of the Late Twentieth Century* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2000), 2.

If the May Fourth Movement and the Cultural Revolution constituted epochal events in modern Chinese literature, inscribing as they do the modern subject therein, it is *shishōsetsu* that offers modern Japanese literature an event through which to bring together the tripartite problem of sexuality and gender, coloniality, and the West. More properly, it is the fraternal operation that enables a host of mutually generative institutions, i.e., the *bundan*, *shishōsetsu*, and *zadankai*. Edward Fowler spells out their relation as follows:

> This phenomenon [of the *shishōsetsu*] was due in no small measure to the rise of the *bundan*. … [There] is no doubt that [the *bundan*] played a crucial role in legitimizing critical focus on the writer's life as much as on his writings. In such a climate, the writer freely assumed readers' familiarity with—and curiosity about—the details of his personal life, and publishers actively solicited stories that exploited this curiosity.[65]

And, further,

> The major literary magazines, moreover, served as clearing houses of information and gossip about writers. They also served as forums: published interviews with writers and roundtable discussions between writers and critics provided an inexhaustible supply of literary grist. Writers, therefore, sharing not merely the pages of the same magazines but also frequently participating in the same roundtable discussions, were in contact with one another and held few secrets.[66]

Irmela Hijiya-Kirschnereit's characterization of *zadankai* sheds more light on the general discursive landscape. Following comments on the "*shishōsetsu*-like" criticism practiced by some of the most renowned literary critics of the twentieth century, such as Kobayashi Hideo and Hirano Ken, Hijiya-Kirschnereit adds,

> The most glaring examples of this kind of reception are to be found in the records of discussions (*zadankai*)… which is made up in large part of nothing more than an exchange of anecdotes. However, the tea-party setting is deceptive. The subject is a comparison between literary and actual reality which can then be used to measure the quality of a work.

[65] *The Rhetoric of Confession*, 128.
[66] Ibid., 133.

> However, the literary jurors seem totally oblivious to two factors: first, that their judgments are largely colored by their pride at having inside knowledge of the *bundan*, and, second, that their criticism depends on the extent of their knowledge of the relevant author's biography.[67]

Shuttling back and forth between cultural essentialism and critical aspiration for new interpretations, discussion of *shishōsetsu* has more or less become naturalized as part of the disciplinary parlance, no longer demanding explanation. Given the exhaustive details made available, especially by Hijiya-Kirschnereit's monumental study, it is hard to imagine updating the preceding discussion in any noticeable measure. Yet, there remains a certain sense of insufficiency, that *shishōsetsu* unsettlingly hovers over all critical endeavors, that despite a keen sense of the particular significance of the cultural formation, no feasible critical aperture has been offered. The ill-articulated cathexis towards *shishōsetsu* as an index of a certain ideological structure "quilting" Japanese culture remains unsatisfied, indeed repressed, by the recent critical trends fearful of any specter of ahistoricism or essentialism. Thus, it has become harder to bring up *shishōsetsu* and its attendant terms as objects of discussion without inviting questions of anachronism. In recent years, several titles have appeared displaying plainly strategic displacements of the terms.[68] Yet, it is evident that they take as their organizing logic a teleology toward the "self" as the pivot of literary value. If no further explanation by way of description, chronology, or renaming can yield new insights, perhaps this is a moment for an entirely radical interpretive paradigm. Hence the thesis: *Shishōsetsu* is hysterical.

The affinity between *shishōsetsu* and hysteria goes far beyond the problem of formal and definitional morphology, which betrays a significant form of reverberation.

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[67] *Rituals of Self-Revelation*, 97.
[68] Hibi Yoshitaka, *"Jiko hyōshō" no bungakushi: jibun o kaku shōsetsu no tanjō* (Kanrin shobō, 2002); Ōhigashi Kazushige, *Bungaku no tanjō: Tōson kara Sōseki e* (Kōdansha, 2006).

On a more readily visible level, hysteria offers a singularly potent supplement to any reading of *shishōsetsu* because the production of gender constitutive of modern Japanese literature has relied on the visibility of the hysterical woman both inside and outside the literary text. Egusa Mitsuko suggests a certain "kinship" between Sōseki's textual representation of the hysterical Osumi of *Michikusa* and the production of the hysterical woman in such journalistic sites as the quintessential early feminist literary venue *Seitō* (The Bluestockings).[69] As the latter already signals, the enigmatically enticing status of hysteria appeared already modalized by its foreign origin, most notably marked by its very appellation, *hisuterī*. In the context of Euro-American literary texts, critics have made persuasive claims regarding the temporal coincidence of the emergence of the hysteric in the medical, literary, and cultural discourses and the political upheavals marked by the increasing visibility of the speaking woman through events found in places like France and England.[70] However, the figure of the speaking woman appears to have been less prominent in Japan in the early 20th century. The two figurative types to whom many recent studies have called attention, as the first articulations of modern woman, or more specifically the "New Woman" (*atarashii onna*), the Seitō woman and the actress, are often captured in disabled articulation rather than frenzied speech. For example, Iwano Kiyoko's representation of hysteria in her autobiographical short story "Karekusa" (Withered Grass), which captures the pathology literally in a moment of mirror reflection, receives an interpretive recognition from her husband Hōmei, an authoritarian reiteration that domesticates the initial articulation.[71] Even when the body with its irreducible

[69] "*Michikusa* no hisuterī," *Kokugo to kokubungaku* 71, no. 12 (December 1994): 3.
[70] Elaine Showalter, *Sexual Anarchy: Gender and Culture at the* Fin de Siècle (New York: Viking, 1990), 38-41.
[71] Egusa, "*Michikusa* no hisuterī," 1. "Karekusa" is found in *Seitō* 2, no. 2 (February 1912).

tension takes the stage, it is rarely endowed with the kind of volatility notable in the European discursive milieu.[72] Thus, Odaira Maiko highlights the way in which the modern Japanese consumer-woman turns towards sororal communities which knowingly submit themselves to the normativity prescribed by male adjudicators.[73] Similarly, Kano succinctly points out the aporia born of the emergence of the actress in the era: "While it gave rise to feminist discourse, in which theater was involved as a vehicle, it also led to a rigidly essentialist definition of gender to which theater also contributed."[74] In other words, the New Woman as devouring, laughing, castrating "Medusa" does not carry the same metaphoric force here. Instead, it is the *inarticulate man* that shapes the cultural discourse, never venturing far from Bunzō, the hero of Futabatei Shimei's *Ukigumo* (Floating Clouds, 1887-89).

The present discussion is not intended to overhaul the scholarly evaluation of *shishōsetsu* or *bundan*, or the *shishōsetsu bundan*. Rather there is a specific interest to be pursued through this return: namely, the psychic status of this collective. What follows is an attempt to read the *shishōsetsu bundan*, the fundamental modality of modern Japanese literature, as displaying a hysterical psychic structure. Underlying the discussion is a synchronous return to the literary text itself as that which always already harbors hysteria, preceding and exceeding any representational design. To locate the moments when the two align with each other is the task of the present study as a whole. This is not to suggest

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[72] In the canon of modern Japanese literature it would be difficult to find a place for something like Victor Hugo's narrativization of the June Days in 1848: "The June uprising, right from the start, presented strange lineaments. It displayed suddenly, to a horrified society, monstrous and unknown forms. … At that a moment a woman appeared on the crest of the barricade, a young woman, beautiful, dishevelled, terrifying. This woman, who was a public whore, pulled her dress up to the waist and cried to the guardsmen, in that dreadful brothel language…. "Cowards! Fire, if you dare, at the belly of a woman!" For the quote and a brilliant reading thereof, see Neil Hertz, "Medusa's Head: Male Hysteria under Political Pressure," *Representations* 4 (Autumn 1983): 29.

[73] *Onna ga onna o enjiru*, 52-55.

[74] *Acting Like a Woman in Modern Japan*, 8.

a causal relation between psychological characteristics shared by the *shishōsetsu* writing *bundan* members and the literary representation of hysteria, although even this has received little attention.[75] The problem is more complex and resists any reductive summary. Suffice it to say that hysteria holds both metaphorical and very "real" clues to the discursive, psychic, and cultural milieu of early twentieth-century Japan captured in the literary text through not only representation but, much more significantly, the very conditions of its ontology.

4.

Hysteria (or other similarly neurotic psychic structures) posited here as an interpretive passage for *shishōsetsu* designates the problem of affect, that is, a certain set of *predilections,* as a symptom. *Shishōsetsu* in its novelistic convention and discursive operation displays several affective features. First, it is introverted, defined by "separation and withdrawal from society."[76] Self-referentiality is the *modus operandi* of the collective. Second, it is repetitive. Repetition circulates not only between the novel and "life" as conventionally noted but among the authors who recycle the same materials and mutually testify to or against thinly disguised "fictional" accounts. Further, within individual authors' oeuvre the same events and figures may recur, new works often retaining intimate referential relations to old ones. Third, *shishōsetsu* is essentially melancholic. Or, the "introverted" and "repetitive" features already signal a certain melancholy, a point which will be further elaborated below. Ishihara Chiaki combines

[75] Ishii Naoshi's study offers a rare albeit brief discussion on the subject: "Seishin byōri no seikimatsu 'hisuterī' kō—*Bovarī fujni* kara *Aru onna* made," *Kokubungaku: kaishaku to kyōzai no kenkyū* 40, no. 11 (September 1995).
[76] Fowler, *The Rhetoric of Confession,* xxiv.

these features into a unified symptomatology when he characterizes Natsume Sōseki's heroes as "living in a narrow world and for that reason their sense of inadequacy (*iwakan*) does not open up to the social level but is instead confined to the level of the body."[77] Significantly, Ishihara hints at somatic dimensions of the affect here, diagnosing them simply as "neurasthenic" as if this appellation clarified all the complexity borne in this relation between the environment, the body, and affect. Yet, the point is important: any encounter with the external world is structurally foreclosed by this particular literary and cultural affect.

If indeed melancholy is a viable term with which to account for the general affective condition of *shishōsetsu*, the question arises, "What does the *bundan* mourn—or, fail to mourn properly—to trigger melancholia?" And, how does gender form a mutually modalizing relation with this affective collective? In order to pick up from where Karatani left off his discussion—having read the West as the originary constitutive Other of modern Japanese literature—it may be profitable to once again turn to China studies. In reading "Chinese male gender anxiety over masculinity as a preoccupation with the lack of a male power position" or "a male marginality complex," Xueping Zhong locates its origin in "the modern individual's departure from a pursuit of cultivation of the self to grappling with a desire to *search* for the self," which is crucially conditioned by "the desire to be recognized (by the West)."[78] Aside from the numerous parallels to modern Japanese literature, the immediate relevance of this analysis to the present discussion lies in the status of the West, which inscribes the very male-female inequivalence at which Zhong's ultimate interest arrives. In other words, it would be impossible to adequately

[77] "Otoko wa shinkei suijaku, onna wa hisuterī," 35.
[78] *Masculinity Besieged?*, 11; 24; 28. Zhong's italics.

treat the "gender" problem between "the sexes" without scrutinizing this Other that intrudes with epistemological, and indeed ontological, alterity to render these terms visible in particular modalities.

Freud's thesis on melancholia provides a fertile theoretical ground on which to consider the "desire to be recognized by the West" in relation to the *shishōsetsu* affect and discursive apparatus of modern Japanese literature. Recent decades have seen a number of influential works on melancholia, variously tracing its semantic history, plumbing its philosophical parameters, and attempting theoretical conceptual redress of it.[79] Most recently, the Freudian thesis on melancholia has been productively reiterated by way of postcolonial, gender, and otherwise political problematics that seek to address *loss* as a/the constitutive condition of human experience in these various modalities of relation on the one hand and a possible theoretical and affective passage toward different hopes and futures.[80] Premising upon—if only in the end to ineffectuate—the Freudian distinction of mourning and melancholia, many of these studies pursue the political as well as psychic mechanism whereby certain regions of experience become "disavowed," "ungrievable," and therefore not properly "mourned," leading to pathological melancholia.

[79] The books consulted for this study include Juliana Schiesari, *The Gendering of Melancholia: Feminism, Psychoanalysis, and the Symbolics of Loss in Renaissance Literature* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992); Giorgio Agamben, *Stanzas: Word and Phantasm in Western Culture*, Theory and History of Literature, vol. 69 (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993); Max Pensky, *Melancholic Dialectics: Walter Benjamin and the Play of Mourning* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1993); and John Fletcher and Andrew Benjamin, eds., *Abjection, Melancholia and Love: The Work of Julia Kristeva* (New York: Routledge, 1990).

[80] For a wide spectrum of approaches to "loss" as "what is apprehended by discourses and practices of mourning, melancholia, nostalgia, sadness, trauma, and depression," see David L. Eng and David Kazanjian, eds., *Loss: The Politics of Mourning* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003).

The sequence of distinction and ineffectuation traces Freud's own theoretical trajectory from "Mourning and Melancholia" (1917) to "The Ego and the Id" (1923).[81] In "Mourning and Melancholia" the two are contrasted, one as a normal process of grieving that would eventually be reined in by the "reality principle," and the other as a pathologically prolonged dejection and withdrawal: "In some people the same influences [of the loss of a loved person or the loss of some abstraction which has taken the place of one] produce melancholia instead of mourning and we consequently suspect them of a pathological disposition."[82] In "The Edo and the Id", melancholia emerges as a fundamental psychic operation indispensible to the very formation of the ego, thereby annulling any facile notion of "normal":

> We succeeded in explaining the painful disorder of melancholia by supposing that [in those suffering from it] an object which was lost has been set up again inside the ego—that is, that an object-cathexis has been replaced by an identification. At that time, however, we did not appreciate the full significance of this process and did not know how common and typical it is. Since then we have come to understand that this kind of substitution has a great share in determining the form taken by the ego and that it makes an essential contribution towards building up what is called its 'character.'[83]

Transposing the apparently affective event of mourning to the structural mechanism of identification, the new thesis opened up to exciting interpretive possibilities, and as such has received variously modalized reiterations over the past decades. This process is testified by a number of psychoanalytical terms that have entered the common parlance in humanistic critical discourse: originary lack, misrecognition, disavowal, abjection, and so on.

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[81] "Mourning and Melancholia," in *The Standard Edition of Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, vol. XIV, trans. and ed. James Strachey, (London: Hogarth, 1959), 245.
[82] Ibid., 243.
[83] "The Ego and the Id" in *The Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, vol. XXIII, trans. and ed. James Strachey. (London: Hogarth, 1961), 28.

In fact, even in "Mourning and Melancholia," the pivotal distinction is rather elusive, or, as critics have noted, unsupportable. More precisely, however, it may be ventured here, the ambiguous relation between the two conditions is neither one of proximity to the point of indistinguishability nor one of hierarchy whereby one overtakes the other as the more fundamental condition. Rather, they are simply inequivalent, so that it is fallacious to discuss them on the same plane. To do so would be to treat them as varieties of affect in the most simplistic and least psychoanalytic sense due them. In other words, the perceived affective deterioration, pathologization, from mourning to melancholia is neither a matter of aggravation—that is, the same ingredients and structure with more velocity—but, rather, the introduction of new elements, *supplementarity* at its most obvious precipitating moment of difference. Over the course of the discussion, melancholia increasingly asserts itself as an operation entirely different than mourning. By the end the two conditions seem incomparable because their difference is structural and constitutive rather than procedural. First, "melancholia is in some way related to an object-loss which is withdrawn from consciousness, in contradistinction to mourning, in which there is nothing about the loss that is unconscious." Second, "the melancholic displays something else besides which is lacking in mourning—an extraordinary diminution in his self-regard," which Freud then rephrases as "a loss in regard to his ego."[84] To reformulate these statements, the mourning person operates on the plane of the ego and the melancholic regresses to a psychic state in which the ego itself undergoes a (originary) crisis (of precipitation); or, mourning is *for* a lost object and melancholia is puzzled by the very directionality implicit in the *for*. In other words, loss itself belongs to two entirely different registers in the respective conditions. It may be ventured that

[84] Ibid., 245; 247.

mourning is an affective procedure in its most recognizable sense and melancholia a psychostructural mechanism, opaque by definition. Freud seems to articulate their relation best when he concludes, "Melancholia therefore, *borrows some of its features from mourning*."[85] By this point then the equation of mourning and melancholia to, respectively, the normal and the pathological reaction to loss has already disintegrated. Melancholia is its own animal, so to speak.

Then what is it that drives Freud's insistence on the difference in equivalence of mourning and melancholia? In other words, what does this ambiguity address? Given the wide acceptance of his later reformulation of melancholia, this inquiry may seem like an unnecessary anachronism. And it is entirely possible that Freud's observation of mourning and melancholia began as an interest in affective expressions and only in the theorizing process did he catch on to structural and topographical questions and hence the haphazard distinction. Yet, it seems not entirely futile to pursue the difference initially posited between the two symptomatologies, not to show the (in)efficacy of the distinction, but to question the details of this confusion in the first place and, further, what may have been effaced in the subsequent critical consensus to declare melancholia as that fundamental structure that enables and subsumes mourning.

Two considerations are specifically pertinent to the present discussion. The first concerns recent critical appropriations of the Freudian theses from 1917 and 1923. The feminist and postcolonial turns towards melancholia from the *places* of marginality, for example, gain their theoretical visibility by way of *speaking over* this unevenness within Freud's initial thesis. Yet, the differential objects of loss posited between mourning and melancholia seem to hold a theoretical possibility, particularly in regard to the marginal

[85] Ibid., 250. Italics added.

subjectivities in the domain of feminist and postcolonial problematics. The objective is not so much to reach a different conclusion than those already widely circulating as to introduce a slightly different route.[86] Secondly, pursuing that differential will yield certain interpretive advantages for further readings of *shishōsetsu*.

Undoing his thesis on melancholia as a pathological expression, prolongation, or aggravation of mourning, Freud surreptitiously yet crucially inserts:

> In one set of cases it is evident that *melancholia too may be* the reaction to *the loss of a loved object*. Where the exciting causes are different one can recognize that there is *a loss of a more ideal kind*. The object has not perhaps actually died, but has been lost *as an object of love* (e.g. in the case of a betrothed girl who has been jilted). In yet other cases…one cannot see clearly what it is that has been lost, and…the patient cannot *consciously perceive* what he has lost either."[87]

This passage presents at least two implications that demand attention. Freud gestures towards three different modalities of loss, and two of the lost object, that may be involved in cases of melancholia. These differentials can be marked in one series of relational theses: An indisputable loss *of* the object by death or some such drastic event, a loss not by death but *as* an object of love, and loss that cannot be identified. The modalities of loss on the one hand and objects on the other are necessarily inextricable from one another. In other words, a loss of indisputable certainty can only occur when the object is identifiable—hence the confident possessive preposition *of* in the first modality. The uncertainty of the second modality of loss is inexorably connected to the uncertainty of the status of the object itself: It is *as* something, an ontological as well as significatory

[86] Eng and Kazanjian state, "[Melancholia] is the precondition for both the ego and the work of mourning. It is precisely the ego's melancholic attachments to loss that might be said to produce not only psychic life and subjectivity but also the domain of remains. … Might we say that the work of mourning remains becomes possible through melancholia's continued engagement with the various and ongoing forms of loss…?" *Loss*, 4-5.
[87] Ibid., 245. Italics added.

delay by simile, substitution, that is, metaphor and metonymy. The last modality is off the terrain of the conscious subject.

Needless to say, these indefensibly arbitrary divisions are ventured here for their heuristic value. That is to say, they may illuminate certain predilections of, and lacunae in, the current critical discourse on mourning and melancholia, a grasp of which will situate the problem of *shishōsetsu* in the broader theoretical landscape. The current discourse on mourning and melancholia seems concerned mainly with the first and last modalities. With postcolonial and gender studies as mutually integrated discursive spaces holding particular interests in the given psychic conditions for good reason, and between more overtly political agendas and more subtly psychoanalytical points of departure, the psychic loss has productively oscillated between two modalities. One is the first and least complicated form of (affective response to) loss, which, immediately visible and verifiable, elicits unambiguously profound grief. The other is the last modality, difficult even to name and more challenging still to trace its cause. David Eng, for example, attempts to read "minoritarian group identities"—that is, "women, homosexuals, people of color, and postcolonials"—as "defined through a collective group memory of historical loss and continued suffering" by way of melancholia, that is, "massive depression" with indubitable political significance.[88] Tracing the sites of coercion "to relinquish and yet to identify with socially disparaged objects on their psychic paths to subjectivity," Eng seeks to offer a historical as well as political reading of melancholia. On the other end of the spectrum is Julia Kristeva's unabating engagement with the mother as a paramount figure, feature, and indeed *event* in the psychic history of the subject, an engagement which has shown melancholia as both fundamental and gesturing towards a different

[88] "Melancholia in the Late Twentieth Century," *Signs* 25, no. 4 (Summer 2000): 1276; 1278.

address (to the Oedipal triad) that may heal.[89] Alternatively, Judith Butler's notion of "melancholy gender" traverses the distance between the psychic past and the historical present to articulate the first and the last modalities of loss in one theoretical move. Considering femininity and masculinity as constituted by way of "prohibitions which *demand the loss* of certain sexual attachments, and demand as well that those losses are *not* be avowed, and *not* be grieved," Butler is keen on offering an explicative template of the psychic life for political futurity.[90] Once again, it goes without saying that the second modality seeps into these various discussions. Yet, it seems to merit a more rigorous specification in the terms given by Freud.

Before advancing further with these three modalities, it is necessary to devote space to Butler's insightful grab at another register of (non)difference intimated between mourning and melancholia in Freud's 1917 paper. She correctly calls attention to how mourning is described as a "reaction to the loss of a loved person, or to the loss of some abstraction that has taken the place of one, such as one's country, liberty, an ideal, and so on," which virtually blurs the modicum of distinction pried open by the second register mentioned above.[91] In other words, the object of mourning could also be an ideal. Thus, Butler concludes that "it makes no sense to claim that melancholia is distinguished as a loss of 'a more ideal kind.'" Then she goes on to read (between) the lines to spot a seemingly more psychoanalytically institutable difference: "Whereas in melancholia the ideal is occluded and one does not know what one has lost 'in' the person lost, in

[89] *Black Sun* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1989); *Tales of Love* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1987). This is not to dismiss Kristeva's ultimate interest and mission in the therapeutic practice as a way of coping with the traumas of contemporary society but to highlight the different focuses among the divergent theoretical undertakings.
[90] *The Psychic Life of Power: Theories in Subjection* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997), 135. Butler's italics.
[91] Ibid., 172.

mourning one risks not knowing whom one has lost 'in' losing the ideal." Nevertheless, the conclusion remains unaltered: "mourning is subsumed in melancholia."

Once again, the subtle shift of prepositions from *of* to *as* noted in the second modality may be the index to the differentiation that Freud seems keen on grasping yet keeps slipping away as an ambiguity. If the melancholic does not know what (ideal) he has lost in the person, could it be that this ideal is of a different order than the ideal that the mourning person "knows"? Could it be that the ideal that the subject mourns is as such an "object" whereas the ideal that the melancholic cannot even name is non-object but that which *orders* objects, that is, the order in the Foucaultian sense? In other words, could it be that the melancholic suffers from an epistemic loss rather than an object loss—to be mandated to figure out how to perceive the life-world anew? And, is this not a colonial crisis *par excellence*, more shattering and numbing than the loss of the "native" customs and culture palpably nameable and (un)mournable? Melancholy configured in this manner certainly leaves ample room for object losses of the first modality, mourning and grief for which do become subjected to forfeiture depending on circumstance. It also cannot but arise from the loss of the third modality insofar as the latter is precisely constitutive of the ego itself. Yet, without acknowledging the epistemic register of the (colonial) loss, perhaps mourning and melancholia is left insufficiently addressed, especially if modern violence is one of an epistemic order. Considered this way, it makes sense that the melancholic would not and cannot *know* what it is that he has lost. Moreover, it is possible to imagine another melancholic scenario which seems to have failed to occur to either Freud or Butler: the subject thinks he knows what he has lost and even identifies the object, but he in fact suffers from another loss that remains unknown

to him. The particular even of *shishōsetsu* opens the possibility of thinking precisely this. An additional complication, however, first requires further elucidation: the status of loss.

Tentatively accepting the three-modality model given above, it may be advanced that the term "ideal" already suggests that this is a kind of loss that has passed the originary loss arising from infantile identification with the mother (and the father). In other words, it has palpable history. Butler argues, "[It] follows that this *prefiguration of the topographical distinction* between ego and super-ego is itself dependent upon melancholia" and further "Although the ego is *said to be* the point of departure for a libido that is subsequently withdrawn into the ego, it now *appears* that only upon such a withdrawal can the ego emerge as an object for consciousness, something that might be represented at all…."[92] As Butler maintains metadiscurive distance by way of her italicized notations, it is difficult to know whether Butler is strictly speaking of the psychoanalytical language or the psychic topography itself. If it is the latter, then, according to this scheme, an "ideal" can only arise by way of, and therefore simultaneously with, melancholia. Yet, this model alone cannot address post-infantile occurrences of melancholia, with their palpable history, within the given "sociality," to use Butler's own language. In fact, Butler's emphatic returns to "social content and structure" as founding conditions for melancholia itself curiously lack any historical account for this "ideal." While she seems to accede to Freud's suggestion that "ideals are social in character," Butler stops short of offering any meditation on the ways which the social intervenes in the production of ideals, which would then sediment upon one other, one melancholic procedure after another. Butler's theory "traverses" between what seems like the psychic module modeled upon the infantile experience and the socio-political

[92] Ibid., 177. Italics added.

present, without explicating what kind of and how melancholic surpluses become accumulated and even mutually cancel and modify.

With no immediate solution to these uncertainties, it seems necessary to posit ideals as firmly presuming the ego in the present perfect, with the super-ego already functioning even as it is in peril of constant modification. As such, the lost object "of a more ideal kind" is difficult to account for strictly within the kind of psychostructural reading offered by Kristeva, and now Butler also. This excess may be called "historical" rather than "originary"—traceable to the infantile psychic life—insofar as it *presumes* the ego. As such, this modality of loss anticipates a certain affinity with the kind of object loss that Eng is keen to theorize, insofar as the latter emerges with names and dates. Put differently, the second modality of loss—"loss of a more ideal kind" that is, "loss [of an object] as an object of love"—and object is truly a middle ground between the first and the last, posing most troubling ambiguity to any immediately political concern.

Although Eng does not specify in concrete terms what these objects may be, it is possible to surmise that they represent a beloved part of the groups' self-identities before the forfeiture, the coercion "to relinquish and yet to identify" with them. At a brief glance, these objects may seem to reverberate with the mother in the individual psychic life, recalling the conflictual impulses to remain in maternal plenitude on the one hand and abject the mother, that is, the procedure of identification itself already internally bifurcated in the infantile psychic life. Yet in the final analysis, the mother and the minoritarian object do not share the same temporality. In the postcolonial paradigm, as a readily visible example, the lost object has a history *prior to* the natural affinity between the postcolonial subject and the lost object that Eng seems to assume. For the colonized

subject, the coercion "to relinquish and yet to identify with" the object is necessarily preceded by another coercion, that is, to identify with the object *for the first time*.[93] This is precisely the kind of epistemic and epistemological conundrum addressed by postcolonial critics from Frantz Fanon to Partha Chatterjee.[94] In other words, how does the subject (*know* to) claim the object as his own in the first place in order to relinquish it? This is an epistemic issue with more than epistemological problems.

In fact, the bulk of Freud's discussion revolves around the second modality of loss insofar as it is preoccupied with differentiating the two conditions. Once incorporated by the melancholic subject by way of identification, the lost object lodges itself in a profoundly ambiguous position. Discussing the melancholic's self-reproaches, a symptom "lacking in mourning" and therefore specific to melancholia, Freud arrives at the following point about "critical agency," a concept which in "The Ego and the Id" would be further explored to give rise to the concept of "super-ego":

> If one listens patiently to a melancholic's many and various self-accusations, one cannot in the end avoid the impression that often the most violent of them are hardly at all applicable to the patient himself, but that with insignificant modifications they do fit someone else, someone whom the patient loves, has loved or should love. … [Self-reproaches] are reproaches against a loved object which have been shifted away from it on to the patient's own ego.[95]

Freud is emphatic about the independence from the rest of the ego of the "critical agency" that voices these reproaches. The status of this agency is of great interest insofar as it clearly stands to judge the lost object to now constitute part of the ego, yet it arises from

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[93] For an enlightening discussion in this vein, see Rey Chow, *The Protestant Ethnic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), chapter 3.
[94] *The Wretched of the Earth*, trans. Constance Farrington (New York: Grove Press, 1966); *Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World: A Derivative Discourse* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993).
[95] "Mourning and Melancholia," 248.

the very process of identification, or, rather, *incorporation* of the object. The complex relation between the melancholic subject and the lost object plays out in the ambiguous behavior or (precipitated by) the compartmentalization of the ego: "the conflict between the ego and the loved person [transformed] into a cleavage between the critical activity of the ego and *the ego as altered by identification*."[96] By the latter phrase Freud seems to mean specifically the way in which the lost object is lodged in the ego and there is judged by critical agency. However, it seems equally necessary that the critical agency itself harbors the lost object to exert such a force—or, at least, that is a lesson learned from *Totem and Taboo* (1912-13). Thereby, the melancholic subject partakes of (incorporates) the object and so becomes endowed with its power, hence to judge.[97] In other words, the lost object now incorporated gives rise to the split ego and provides psychic stuff to both parts. This psychic procedure is of course familiar from the earliest days of the subjective life: "[It is] possible to suppose that character of the ego is a precipitate of abandoned object-cathexes and that it contains the *history* of those object-choices."[98]

This drama of the split ego is nowhere to be found in Eng's discussion; and for that reason melancholia settles as an affective problem rather than opening to the psychic operation with overdetermined signification. Put differently, melancholia as Eng theorizes it is no different than mourning: "[Melancholia] too may be the reaction to the loss of a loved object," the closest point at which mourning and melancholia converge in Freud.[99] The discrepancy in terms of the status of the lost object between Eng and Freud—that the former does not take into account the significance of "ideal" in the

[96] Ibid., 249.
[97] Freud makes a brief reference without naming the title, ibid., 249-50.
[98] "The Ego and the Id," 29. Italics added.
[99] Ibid., 245. Italics added.

latter's thesis—also gives rise to the complexity (or lack thereof) of the melancholic's affect. As suggested in the ambiguous self-reproaches, for Freud the melancholic is not simply sad but torn between mutually incommensurable impulses and emotions. On the contrary, Eng's minoritarian subject is more or less one-dimensional: stricken with grief, and doubly so for the mandate to disavow it. Butler, on the other hand, is concerned with the circuit of loss/repudiation and incorporation/identification, a process whereby the subject submits to the super-ego's injunction (against homosexuality). Butler perceptively emphasizes the crucial passage in "Mourning and Melancholia" concerning the melancholic's self-reproaches as suggesting the constitutive restiveness of the ego, which bears out a certain resistance against the violence exercised by the super-ego, yet comes short of investigating the conflictual scene itself.[100] Drawing on melancholia as the constitutive process of the ego, Butler is specifically concerned with the social-psychic consequence of the loss that precipitates it. Yet it is in precisely this restive energy, or—as Freud calls it elsewhere—"voices," interest lies for the present discussion.[101] Lifting the totalizing affective blanket, it may be possible to profit from some of the contestatory symptoms of melancholia as suggested by Freud's 1917 paper.

What becomes clear from Eng's and Butler's treatment of melancholia is the status of *loss*: "prohibition or forfeiture," that is, dispossession.[102] To define the subject's attachment to the object as transforming "from love to hate as it moves from the object to the ego," that is, through melancholia, deflates the affective potentiality of the attachment

[100] *The Psychic Life of Power*, 140-41.
[101] "On Narcissism: An Introduction" (1914), in *The Standard Edition of Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, vol. XIV, trans. and ed. James Strachey (London: Hogarth, 1959), 96.
[102] Butler, *The Psychic Life of Power*, 196.

itself, and thereby the breadth of the psychic motivation.[103] It may be recalled that Freud leaves room for the feeling of hate antedating the onset of melancholia: "In melancholia, the occasions which *give rise to* the illness extend for the most part beyond the clear case of a loss by death, and include all those situations of being slighted, neglected or disappointed, which can import *opposed feelings of love and hate* into the relationship or reinforce an *already existing ambivalence*."[104] The full spectrum of the lost object is given here, which ought to give rise to as colorful a spectrum of affective experience under the sign of melancholy as are theorized in Freud's writing. In other words, even *before* the loss, the content of the (lost) object "of a more ideal kind" emerges in two incommensurable forces: desirable and injurious.

There is another way to approach the matter. If the "critical agency," ego-ideal or super-ego is indeed a viable explicatory term for the melancholic's self-reproaches, which arise from the very *incorporative* identification with the lost object, it seems odd that these critics make no reference to the murderous culmination in *Totem and Taboo*. The latter suggests a different passage to melancholia, not passive but proactive, inverse dispossession, so to speak, and as such inflates the affective and political as well as psychic terrain of melancholia. Specifically, melancholia is suggestive *vis-à-vis* the postcolonial subject insofar as it signals potentially schizophrenic swings in the object identification and subsequent loss. That is to say, in contrast to Eng's assumption that the minoritarian subject's lost object is one of beloved status seemingly arising from a natural bond, much like the child's attachment to the mother, it seems possible to imagine a scenario in which the subject identifies in a less than jubilant circumstance akin to the

[103] Ibid., 168.
[104] "Mourning and Melancholia," 251. Italics added.

heterosexual interpellation that Butler examines and, further, relinquishes/loses the object *voluntarily*. The latter word ought not to be taken to mean a conscious act; rather, it designates a certain declarative force *vis-à-vis* the ego ideal and super-ego.[105]

That the melancholic subject must address the lost object from "a mental constellation of revolt" suggests this equivocal status of the object "of a more ideal kind" within the ego.[106] This reading connects to Freud's other articulations of the ego's perpetually onerous struggle *vis-à-vis* the super-ego, in the figure of the father, the societal ego-ideals, and so on:

> A considerable amount of aggressiveness must be developed in the child against the authority which prevents him from having his first, but none the less his most important, satisfactions, whatever the kind of instinctual deprivation that is demanded of him may be; but he is obliged to renounce the satisfaction of this revengeful aggressiveness. He finds his way out of this economically difficult situation with the help of familiar mechanism. By means of identification he takes the unattackable authority into himself.[107]

Homi Bhabha follows up with the observation, "This inversion of meaning and address in the melancholic discourse—when it 'incorporates' the loss or lack in its own body, displaying its own weeping wounds—is also an act of 'disincorporating' the authority of the Master."[108] Bhabha's warning against taking at face value the melancholic discourse "for its apparent victimage and passivity" seems even more relevant to the *shishōsetsu* melancholy than the Algerian melancholic colonial subject featured in his ever furtive performativity.

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[105] The ego-ideal and the super ego are used here mostly interchangeably for the discussion does not call for their strict differentiation, although some scholars have theorized and abided by such a distinction. See J. Laplanche and J.-B. Pontalis, *The Language of Psycho-Analysis*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (New York: W. W. Norton & Co. 1974), 144-45.
[106] "Mourning and Melancholia," 248.
[107] *Civilization and Its Discontents* (1930), trans. and ed. James Strachey (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1961), 91.
[108] "Postcolonial Authority and Postmodern Guilt," in *Cultural Studies*, ed. Lawrence Grossberg et al. (New York: Routledge, 1992), 65.

If the object has been so riddled with cathexis—unpleasure—to be incorporated into the ego, rather than given up in mourning, and, further, subjected to the harassment of, even while giving rise to, the "critical agency," there is no reason automatically to posit the lost object or ideal as "beloved" and loss itself as passive. If, as Butler argues, the state can "[cultivate] melancholia among its citizenry precisely as a way of dissimulating and displacing its own ideal authority," there is no reason why for the subject, even more, "group identities" cannot do so.[109] In other words, the object could have been an unfulfillable and therefore unbearable ideal; and the loss could have been caused by the subject's relinquishment thereof. Structurally, these variables change nothing about the melancholic symptomatology. The loss has occurred and the cathexis has been gathered inward, and all the rest—except the pivotal failure to mourn—is due not to prohibition but inability, arising from an ambiguity that may be explicated by way of the differential prepositions *of* and *as*.

With the colonial subject, this relinquishment—indeed, *killing*—of the object is doubly melancholic. On the level—or the third modality noted above—already amply theorized is the psychostructural conundrum that comes with loss that is always already melancholic: "The melancholic…[attempts] to resolve the loss through psychic substitutions and [compounds] the loss as he goes. …the object is not only lost, but that loss itself is lost, withdrawn and preserved in the suspended time of psychic life."[110] At another level is the misrecognition of the loss that straddles the porous boundary between the conscious and the unconscious. The subject's relinquishment of an object or ego ideal because of its onerous strain on psychic resources confounds the melancholic

[109] Butler, *The Psychic Life of Power*, 191.
[110] Ibid., 182-83.

consequence because the procedure contains a component that is not representable. In other words, if the colonizing other may be revolted against, relinquished, killed, and thereby incorporated into the melancholic psyche, there remains the epistemic—which bleeds into the ontological—horizon itself that has already "contracted" the Other.[111] The object may be addressed but not this landscape. If the "revolt against the colonizing other" responds to the loss arising from "a loss of commensurability between itself and the ideal by which it is judged" through the voluble "plaint," the "epistemic contraction" finds no such linguistic channels by which to gain (auditory) visibility. It can only lurk as certain affective pattern, rendering a droning cadence to the melancholic drama.

How does all this matter to *shishōsetsu*? As far as the postcolonial subject is concerned, it is entirely possible that the melancholic surrenders not only the beloved—naturalized, national, native—object now abjected by colonial violence, but also the colonizing Other itself to an ungrievable loss. It is important not to reduce the first term to the uncomplicated status as per Eng's affective reading. The double historicity of this loss was noted above—coercion to identity the first time, to be coerced a second time to abject and identify. To posit these differential objects in no way contradicts Freud's theses. The historical conditions behind the two events of disavowal may be radically different, but the psychic structures ought to be identical. In the end, it is the impersonal cathexes that give rise to either pleasure or unpleasure and render coherence to the vagaries of the psyche and, as such, the historical variations with their different victims and villains make no difference to structural operations therein. Questions remain as to the colonizing Other, the ego-ideal *par excellence* in the age of global coloniality. How does it fit in the psychic paradigm of melancholia? What does the (post)colonial subject

[111] This amply metaphorical term is borrowed from Butler, ibid., 187.

(fail to) mourn *vis-à-vis* this object? Does this failure have any relation to what has been referred to as an epistemic loss?

Concerning minoritarian subjectivities, Eng asks, "Can the melancholic's psychic ambivalence toward the lost object—an ambivalence turned against the ego as self-reproaches that undermine and destabilize the ego's coherence—be thought of as a direct effect of social conflict between the melancholic's desire to preserve a lost object that the dominant society refuses to support or to recognize?"[112] This reading *per se* gives up little to quibbling, yet leaves unaddressed the ambivalent logic of the said "refusal." After all, has it not been learned, from the celebrated essay by Althusser and its radical Lacanian revision by Žižek, that this "refusal" as well as "mourning" cannot be taken at face value, that they are produced by a circuit that remains opaque at best?[113] Furthermore, Eng's discussion fails to offer anything particular about the group identities to which it holds fast. Problematically, whatever particularity to be gathered for the minoritarian subjects arises at the expense of "Freud's little boy" who "has tremendous support …to cede the father as an object of desire for…identification with him."[114] Eng further argues, "[If] a system of gender regulation and compulsory heterosexuality emerge through the logics of melancholia, not all gendered subjects, I must emphasize, are finally melancholic ones, as the normative heterosexual male on whom Freud's gendered production focus remains *largely untroubled* by this condition."[115] It would be futile to answer this contention with the same words to which Eng is responding here—i.e., that melancholia is the fundamental psychic structure constitutive of the ego—yet it may be honest to ask: Is

[112] "Melancholia in the Late Twentieth Century," 1278.
[113] "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses," in *Lenin and Philosophy and other Essays* (London: New Left Books, 1971), 121-176; see Žižek, *The Sublime Object of Ideology* .
[114] "Melancholia in the Late Twentieth Century," 1278.
[115] Ibid., 1277. Italics added.

Freud's little boy not overrated in the minoritarian identificatory politics as well as theoretics? Are the psychic injuries of the little boy not smoothed over by the very emphatic resort to the particularity of minoritarian subjectivities? To borrow Butler's language, "For a gay or lesbian identity position to sustain its appearance as coherent, heterosexuality must remain in that rejected and repudiated place. Paradoxically, its heterosexual *remains* must be *sustained* precisely through insisting on the seamless coherence of a specifically gay identity."[116]

Significantly, the little boy in Eng's scheme recalls the male, masculine, and masculinist author in modern Japanese literature as made into an invincible subject by feminist criticism. Thus, it is not only due to affective withdrawal that *shishōsetsu* and melancholia bear on each other. More importantly, it is the subject living a bodily and psychic life riddled with ambivalent desires and drives particular to the historical moment that is in need of a proper address. With this end and without any undue ambition, it may not be a futile exercise to accept the tentative thesis that *shishōsetsu* is melancholic, and to interrogate the status of the lost object. A quintessential figure of "Freud's little boy" who according to a considerable body of feminist and postcolonial writings should be "largely untroubled by [melancholic] condition," the modern Japanese *shishōsetsu* author is entirely possible to read as a modern melancholic *par excellence*.

Contrary to Eng's notion of "historical loss" as violent dispossession, which allows no mourning and therefore sediments as "continued suffering," what psychically conditions melancholic *shishōsetsu* is the *aftermath* of enthusiastic identification with the colonial Other. The initial phase of seemingly uncomplicated identification—"a preliminary stage of object-choice" marked by "oral or cannibalistic" incorporation—

[116] *The Psychic Life of Power*, 149. Butler's italics.

may well be noted in the ravenous translation of foreign literature in the first decades of Japan's modern encounter with the West.[117] Then comes the loss. The conjunctive here is not so much progressive as eruptive. The temporality of melancholia as a psychic mechanism is not serial, even less linear, but epochal and implosive. That is to say, the introduction of the object on the subjective horizon has always already begun as melancholic splittings. This is precisely the crux of Butler's argument discussed above. To advance this point further in terms of modern Japan's encounter with the West as the powerful ego ideal, structurally, Japan's modern discourse could not have been anything other than *shishōsetsu* from the very beginning. That is to say, confronted by the Other of such palpably contradictory mandates—at once both demanding that there *be* "Japan" and threatening its very existence, that is, posing as an ego ideal in all ambivalence—the (post)colonial subject resorted to disavowing that Other. Thus follow countering gestures—of survival. What occurred in the literary exertion of "Japaneseness" by way of the *shishōsetsu* discourse is not only an essentialist turn. Put differently, if anything, essentialism bears out the melancholic relinquishment of the Other *as an object of love*, i.e., ideal, as much as the preoccupation with Japan. This may particularize "the loss of a more ideal kind." The psychic operation of disavowing and disowning in this particular type of loss—by relinquishment—cannot arise except as melancholic withdrawal, incorporation and preservation, of the object within the ego. Thereby begins the prolonged contention within the ego, between the super-ego which has partaken of the power of the disavowed object and the rest of the ego, which is precisely what Freud calls the "death drive." The resentment against the Other has turned into a self-reflexive hatred, which is a hatred for the Other and the self *as that Other*. The figurative excess of the

[117] Freud, "Mourning and Melancholia," 249.

preposition *as* has come full circle: the distance between the loss of an object in all its objectness or objectivity and the loss of an object *as* an object of love has all along been the very topography of the ego, the rift within the ego itself. Neither subject—the Western or Japanese—is spared this constitutive ambiguity.

These mutually incommensurable desires—to become and to kill the Other—are traceable in the pendulum swing between Japan and the West as the poles of reference from the very beginning of modern Japanese literature into the 1920s and beyond. The so-called "debates on *shishōsetsu*" (*shishōsetsu ronsō*) in 1924-25 are only the most visible event in modern Japanese literary discursive history that directly reference *shishōsetsu* and its ontological imbrication with the West; in fact, it was then that the term *shishōsetsu* settled as a generic category. Numerous other debates stretching back to the 1890s and extending all the way beyond the postwar era, for all the specificities they contain of their given historical moments, display a remarkably persistent preoccupation with the problem of the West as ego ideal.[118]

To complicate the matter, this loss by relinquishment—arising from the lag between the ego and the ego ideal—had recourse to hypostatizing another object on the verge of loss even before a proper birth: "Japanese literature" or, more precisely, *Nihon bungaku*. The latter, significantly, had become constituted precisely by way of the encounter with the West. This ontological ambivalence gestures towards a loss of another order. If early Meiji intellectuals' *ressentiment* against the Meiji government had taken phenomenological refuge in the Western religion, or rather language, of Christianity, the later generations, with whom modern Japanese literature took on ontological visibility, resented this very history—hence their revolt against figures like Uchimura Kanzō who

[118] Hijiya-Kirschnereit offers an exhaustive account in *Rituals of Self-Revelation*, esp. chapters 2, 7, and 11.

represented the earlier paradigm of Christianity.[119] It is easy to relate the absolute psychic necessity to live with, while unable to dissolve, this *ressentiment* on the one hand and the appeal to purportedly inviolable elements of Japanese (literary) identity.

Margherita Long offers a rare psychoanalytical reading that indirectly yet palpably touches on the problem of *shishōsetsu*. Examining the "undertone of suffering" in Tanizaki Jun'ichirō's so-called "culturalist" writings from the 1930s, Long argues that the author "[rewrote] the 'essentialism' of Japanese culturalism as a palliative response to the nation's crisis rather than as any pure or prior identity." This national crisis is precisely a psychic event insofar as it is a reaction to the "Western superego" with "a severe authority that has been internalized as the prerequisite to Japan's emergence as one of the world's civilized nations."[120] "Palliative" may be an appropriate term also for *shishōsetsu*, and melancholia as its psychic mechanism and affective mode for, after all, Tanizaki's milieu is that of the *shishōsetsu*, organized, energized, and injured by the perennial problem of the Other unified under the sign of the West. To repeat, the ambiguous impulsion toward a "Japanese" novel now given the proper name *shishōsetsu* is finally a desire to at once become like and kill the Western Other as ego ideal. In this sense, Long's proposal of the term "masochism" is acceptable only insofar as it is properly allowed to harbor murderous impulses toward both the ego and the Other therein—or, the ego *as* the Other. Furthermore, melancholy is the psychic mechanism that could address both precisely by way of its structural ambiguity and affective plasticity.

[119] See Karatani, "Shishōsetsu no keifugaku."
[120] *This Perversion Called Love*, 19.

What complicates the picture, especially for the Taishō era, is the necessity of the mongrel form of Japanese essentialism arising *as* cosmopolitanism, or vice versa. By definition and also in a way strategically impossible to verbalize, the essence of Japanese (literary) identity in the wake of such vociferous imbibition of the Other's language could be given only as "slogans" (*hyōgo*) with maximum metaphoricity.[121] This particular brand of metaphoric infinity is also in part what Alan Tansman refers to as the "fascist aesthetics," for which he identifies Akutagawa Ryūnosuke as a supreme example.[122] "Akutagawa" the author is of course an emblematic discursive instance in relation to *shishōsetsu* melancholy. A diachronic view of his writing may spot an unmistakable slide from a critical view of the emerging *shishōsetsu* genre to an overindulgence therein toward the end of his life.[123] Still more intriguing is the way in which Akutagawa's notable poses of cosmopolitanism offer the very site on which *shishōsetsu* features are hypostatized—or, *vice versa*. Scattered throughout many of his *shishōsetsu* texts are unbridled references to European titles and figures, reduced to fodder for the hero's increasingly narcissistic absorption.[124] Indeed, the presence of the West is proportionate to melancholic introversion.[125] It is in this schizophrenic discursive milieu that the debates on *shishōsetsu* feature such inexplicable terms as "state of mind" (*shinkyō*),

[121] Hasumi's word in Karatani, ed. *Kindai Nihon no hihyō III*, 157.
[122] Tansman identifies Akutagawa's 1927 essay "Bungeiteki na, amari ni mo bungeiteki na" specifically as an example of this aesthetics. *The Aesthetics of Japanese Fascism*, 40.
[123] For example, see "Taishō kyūnen no bungeikai" (1920), *Akutagawa Ryūnosuke zenshū*, vol. 7 (Iwanami shoten, 1996), 106-7. "Haguruma" and "Aru aho no isshō," both from 1927, are unmistakably autobiographical. Translations titled "Cogwheels" and "The Life of a Fool" can be found in Charles de Wolf, trans., *Mandarins: Stories by Akutagawa Ryūnosuke* (New York: Archipelago Books, 2007); Seiji M. Lippit, ed., *The Essential Akutagawa* (New York: Marsilio, 1999).
[124] "Cogwheels" serves as a representative example.
[125] For a discussion on cosmopolitanism in the Taishō era, see Lippit, *Topographies of Japanese Modernism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), 12-14.

"spiritual condition" (*shinteki kyōchi*), "way of life" (*ikikata*), and so on, burdened with the impossible task of particularizing *bungaku*—"Japanese" literature.[126]

For the very reason of this semantic vacuum, the particulars were in and of themselves universals. To recall Karatani's insight, it is "the notion that whatever particular detail about an individual, if taken to extremes (*tettei sureba*), is also universal," which is a "modern thing" (*kindaiteki na mono*).[127] This, Karatani's and others' characterization of the Taishō discourse as the "absence of the Other" is only half true. The Other is absent, but only insofar as it fully has saturated the epistemic conditions and thereby become invisible. In other words, the melancholic subject, now melded with the Other into a death-driven compulsion for repetition, the pendulum swing, cannot distinguish not only the Other, but himself. The absence of the Other is simultaneously the obfuscation of the (post)colonial epistemic subject. This is the epistemic loss, melancholy *par excellence* in the age of global coloniality. And it is *bungaku* that signifies the psychic fatigue in this age of the absolute all-pervasive Other.

If Kristeva is correct in claiming that "if depression is not fortunate enough to rely on a certain eroticization of suffering it cannot act as a defense against the death drive," a question arises for further consideration: what is the object of this necessary eroticization for the *shishōsetsu* collective?[128] There is of course the cathexization of "Japan" but, as noted above, this is a term that takes up the most obviously ambiguous place *vis-à-vis* the Western Other. More effective for the given psychic task seems *woman*, more specifically, Japanese woman, that collects not only this dire need for eroticization but

[126] For key passages from the debates to this effect, see Hijiya-Kirschnereit, *Rituals of Self-Revelation*, 150-57; Fowler, *The Rhetoric of Confession*, 44-51. For Japanese articulations of this discourse, see Hirano Ken, et al., eds., *Gendai Nihon bungaku ronsōshi*, vol. 1 (Miraisha, 1956), 93-138.
[127] Karatani, ed. *Kindai Nihon no hihyō I*, 190.
[128] *Black Sun*, 19.

also the unbearable self-reproaches. The "Westernesque femme fatale" that Indra Levy chronicles by way of a meticulous analysis, it may be said, bears out precisely this psychic support expropriated by—or, *given* to—the melancholic subject:

> [Modern Japanese] writers were enthralled by the sights and sounds of women from their own country who appeared to take on the exotic airs of the West and by the exotic textuality of the modern Western literatures that inspired their own acts of writing. This study argues that the culturally hybrid archetype of the Westernesque femme fatale and the sirenlike call of modern Western vernacular writing were the privileged objects of an exoticism that underwrote the creation of Japanese literary modernity itself. [129]

This transference to woman is the beginning of "recovery" for the Japanese author. Recalling Akutagawa once again, it may not be purely biographical coincidence that an extreme form of cosmopolitanism on the one hand and psychic delusion and suicide on the other consummated in the single figure of Akutagawa. At the same time, suggestively, Akutagawa is a rare author in the early twentieth-century Japanese literary scene who showed little interest in woman as such a site of *support*.

In regards to the persistent preoccupation with the West, modern Japanese literature did display a significant shift once the *shishōsetsu* genre was hypostatized enough to be valorized, or vice versa, and devalorized *vis-à-vis* the Other. With the pendulum of essentialism widening its swings, the Japanese novel was now articulated by way of the West, which was chastised for its insufficiencies: Thus, Balzac's *Human Comedy* appeared artificial and untrustworthy (*shin'yō ga okenai*); and "Tolstoy's *War and Peace*, Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment*, or Flaubert's *Madame Bovary* may be

[129] *Sirens of the Western Shore*, 2.

outstanding, but ultimately they are nothing more than excellent light fiction because they are nothing more than stories (*yomimono*)."[130]

This line of criticism of the West uncannily coincides with what Freud considered a sign of a conclusion to the pathology:

> Just as mourning impels the ego to give up the object by declaring the object to be dead and offering the ego the inducement of continuing to live, so does each single struggle of ambivalence loosen the fixation of the libido to the object by disparaging it, denigrating it and even as it were killing it. It is possible for the process in the *Ucs*. To come to an end, either after the fury has spent itself or after the object has been abandoned as valueless. … The ego may enjoy in this the satisfaction of knowing itself as the better of the two, as superior to the object.[131]

It may be worth noting that Freud specifies the melancholic's self-reproaches as occurring "on moral grounds."[132] The "conclusion" then arrives as a moral victory over the object "of a more ideal kind"; the Japanese novel declared its *moral* superiority to the Western counterpart, with sincerity, directness, that is, true "realism."

This generic maturation and the moral pomposity undergirding Japanese literature *qua shishōsetsu* may have relieved some of the visible symptoms of colonial melancholia. Yet, the melancholic constitution of the Japanese literary ego remained hardly healed. Hence the revenant of *shishōsetsu* in the 1930s and the postwar era with such highly articulate critics as Kobayashi Hideo, Nakamura Mitsuo, and Hirano Ken, and even the literary sybarite Tanizaki.[133] Furthermore, this apparent recovery disconcertingly settles still deeper in the very dichotomy with which the entire psychic history began.

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[130] Hijiya-Kirschnereit, *Rituals of Self-Revelation,* 153. Translation modified.
[131] Freud, "Mourning and Melancholia," 257.
[132] Ibid., 248.
[133] For subsequent debates on *shishōsetsu* and related matters, see Fowler, *The Rhetoric of Confession*, 51-70.

Loss then not only designates violent dispossession by some compulsory structure—Oedipal heterosexuality or Western coloniality—but also tells a particular story, one of love, that is, idealization, and its "end," of the injuries sustained in the process and the mechanism of coping with them. This reading by way of injuries rather than violence offers a different passage to *shishōsetsu* and its melancholic symptoms—so often reduced to antisocial and apolitical impotence. It strives to address the ineluctable gap that is also surplus in the relation between the subject and the Other against the particular historical and symptomatic site, i.e., colonial modernity. Similarly, the *disavowal* of the West constitutive of melancholic *shishōsetsu* gestures towards a potentially different passage of the psychoanalytical term, i.e., melancholy. In other words, melancholia is symptomatic of not only identification with the location of power—object *as* an ideal—but also the fatigue from that very identification. It is a procedure by which the subject arising from the identification disavows that very history. And the inevitable anxieties underlying this procedure can only be relieved by further introversion. At the same time, given the particular story of *shishōsetsu* and its epistemic origin, the melancholic may not necessarily *lose* anything: it is not so much the *absence* of an object as the insurmountable *presence* of the Other that plagues him.

5.

Thus reconsidered, the *shishōsetsu* affect sheds further light on the hysterical text, which is now ready to open to another reading. A remark by Freud points to a productive point of departure: "[The] reactions expressed in [the melancholics'] behavior still proceed from a mental constellation of *revolt*, which has been, by a certain process, passed over

into the crushed state of melancholia."[134] What the subject in revolt approximates is none other than the hysteric. Freud makes an intriguing comparison between the two:

> Identifications with the object are by no means rare in the transference neuroses either; indeed, they are a well-known mechanism of symptom-formation, especially in hysteria. The difference, however, between narcissistic and hysterical identification may be seen in this: that, whereas in the former the object-cathexis is *abandoned*, in the latter it persists and manifests its influence."[135]

It should be noted that Freud arrives at this passage by drawing upon the proximity between melancholia and narcissism; his interest in the narcissistic identification is found *vis-à-vis* his definition of melancholia as "regression from object-cathexis to the still narcissistic oral phase of the libido." By contrast, Butler calls attention to each as the other's reverse image:

> Narcissism continues to control love, even when that narcissism appears to give way to object love: it is still myself that I find there at the site of the object, my absence. In melancholia this formulation is reversed: in the place of loss that the other comes to represent, I find myself to be that loss, impoverished, wanting. In narcissistic love, the other contracts my abundance. In melancholia, I contract the other's absence.[136]

One of the things that the preceding discussion on *shishōsetsu* attempted to undo is precisely this apparent contrast between narcissism and melancholia. That is to say, not only is the narcissistic self-reflexivity of *shishōsetsu* discourse a symptom of colonial melancholia, but more importantly narcissism is impossible when epistemic and ontological conditions have "contracted" the Other to the point of saturation, which ironically renders it invisible. The *shishōsetsu* milieu is a psychic event in which narcissism and melancholia have fully coincided. Considered in this way, Freud's choice of the word "abandonment" further inflates the affective and motivational spectrum of

[134] "Mourning and Melancholia," 248. Italics added.
[135] Ibid., 250. Italics added.
[136] *The Psychic Life of Power*, 187.

loss beyond the dispossessive hypothesis. In other words, the loss could ensue precisely from the subject's abandonment. It is this loss that *shishōsetsu* has shown to be doubly ambiguated: the abandonment *of* the object in the phenomenal field and the (re)saturation *by* the object in the epistemic horizon.

Indulging in Freud's cautious lead toward a certain convergence between narcissism and melancholia, it becomes possible to highlight certain features of hysteria. What is interesting in this connection is precisely the suggestion of the differing status of the Other in melancholia and hysteria respectively. The latter thrives precisely by way of inscribing the Other *as* Other. It is the hypercathexed reiteration of alterity that gives the hysteric its eerie visibility. If the mechanism of the *shishōsetsu* subject coincides precisely with the melancholic's incorporation of the Other to the point of unrecognizability, it may be argued, the literary text acts out hysteria and thereby *excorporates* the Other into the sensual field.

Having considered the melancholic permeation of the Other as an all-encompassing condition that annuls the alterity itself, there remains the question as to how to exit this condition and reintroduce alterity, an absolute necessity if history is to continue. Slavoj Žižek seems to offer an answer:

> [The] symbolic space acts like a yardstick against which I can measure myself. This is why the big Other can be personified or reified in a single agent…. While talking, I am never merely a "small other" (individual) interacting with other "small others": the big Other must always be there. … In spite of all its grounding power, the big Other is fragile, insubstantial, properly *virtual*, in the sense that its status is that of a subjective presupposition. It exists only insofar as subjects *act as if it exists*."[137]

What has been referred to as the "epistemic horizon" may be substituted for what Žižek calls the "big Other" insofar they both constitute the landscape against which

[137] *How to Read Lacan* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 2006), 9-10. Žižek's italics.

intersubjective events take place—the psychic drama of melancholia or "speech activity." In particular, Žižek is concerned with what he calls the "declarative dimension of symbolic interaction" whereby "every utterance not only transmits some content, but, simultaneously, renders how the subject relates to this content." What he means is the mechanism by which "subject transformation" occurs, that is, the subject enters into a relation with the big Other. These declarative moments are then what Žižek offers as the possibility of *not acting as if*.

More intriguingly, Žižek reads Lacan's account of "the genesis of the big Other" as follows:

> For Lacan, language is a gift as dangerous to humanity as the horse was to the Trojans: it offers itself to our use free of charge, but once we accept it, it *colonizes* us. The symbolic order emerges from a gift, an offering, that marks its content as neutral in order to pose as a gift: when a gift is offered, what matters is not its content but the link between giver and receiver established when the receiver accepts the gift.[138]

Immediate it may be not, yet the gift indeed carries a coercive force. Žižek's language here clearly resonates with Marcel Mauss's theory of the gift as generative of sociality.[139] The paradigm of the gift no doubt fails to convey the immediately coercive aspects of the particular historical event of modern colonialism. Once again, the gift marks the entry point into the relation, the "link" with the Other, and thereby suggests the historicity of this coloniality. Once received, the gift cannot be returned and the link be severed. Historicity sediments as melancholia has already shown. What Žižek seems to suggest is that the historicity of the gift may shed light on the *virtuality* of the Other and thereby the subject can now *act* to de-hypostatize the Other. As Žižek has shown in *The Sublime*

[138] Ibid., 11-12. Italics added.
[139] See Mauss, *The Gift: Forms and Functions of Exchange in Archaic Societies*, trans. Ian Cunnison (London: Cohen & West, 1954).

Object of Ideology, of course, this "act (as if)" is complexly modalized by fantasies and desires, a point that cannot be further elaborated here.

The metaphor of the gift is also suggestive in the way in which it presumes a certain distance between the giver and the receiver. In other words, following Žižek, it may be said that permeation by the Other in modern Japanese literature is precisely a closing of the distance—distance that is an absolute necessity for *visibility* to arise. Hence the disappearance of the Other, toward which no distance remains to travel. And, without the Other, the subject loses coordination, becomes lost himself. Could this be what Hasumi means when he so enigmatically interjects, "I think the distinctive attribute (*tokushitsu*) of *shishōsetsu* lies in the expiation of I (*watashi no shōmetsu*)"?[140] The problem now comes down to recovering/producing *distance*. Where then is hysteria?

Following from the premise that "the structure of a neurosis is essentially a question," Lacan approaches the "hysteric's question" as follows: "Becoming a woman and wondering what a woman is are two essentially different things. I would go even further—it's because one doesn't become one that one wonders and, up to a point, to wonder is the contrary of becoming one."[141] This "becoming," it seems, corresponds to Žižek's "acting as if"; and the hysteric's question bears out her failure to act as if. It ought to be remembered that the questioning does not designate a conscious procedure but rather an affront to the subject who "does not know why he is occupying this place in the symbolic network."[142] At any rate, this rift or gap in the subject is precisely what Žižek further examines by way of the Lacanian formula "*Che vuoi*?"—"What do you

[140] Karatani, ed. *Kindai Nihon no hihyō III*, 215.
[141] Jacques Lacan, *The Psychoses, 1955-56*, Book III, *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan Book* (New York; London: W. W. Norton, 1993), 178.
[142] *The Sublime Object of Ideology*, 113.

want?"—as that which "defines the position of the hysterical subject."[143] Lacan defines it as "the Other's question [*la question de l'Autre*]—that comes back to the subject from the place from which he expects an oracular reply," and is furthermore "the question that best leads the subject to the path of his own desire."[144] Crucially, this Other's question of the subject turns into the subject's own question: "What does he want from me?" Ōgai's hysteric enunciates this shift by rearranging the signs, "Say something (*nan to ka osshai yo*)!"[145] In other words, it is a network of unknown, unknowable desires that the subject and the o/Other spawn precisely by way of the question. The question matters not for the content—just as for the gift—but the fact of its being asked.

Yet, it may be possible to elaborate/dilate/betray Žižek's reading further. If the hysterical enunciation were to be translated as the *question* "What do you want?," the "you" predicates the sexualized and gendered o/Other in the same movement that renders the subject herself as sexualized and gendered, that is, binaries are thrown up as the basis of the intelligibility—of the o/Other and the subject at the same time. The other register of this enunciation is a *demand* that is not found *in* the question but modalizes it as a *force vis-à-vis* the "link" that holds the subject to the o/Other. However, the somatic excess of the symptom, and, more importantly, that the o/Other's answer finally fails to satisfy the hysteric—hence the repetition—leaves room for a reshuffling of the "link" between the subject and the symbolic Other, if not to reject the latter since it is structurally impossible, then to adjust the *act-as-if*. By now it is obvious that the "link" is not at all an egalitarian kind but an absorptive kind. Its force is psychic and affective, its form phantasmatic; and neither is ideological in the vulgar sense. Furthermore, it

[143] Ibid., 111.
[144] *Écrits: A Selection*, trans. Bruce Fink (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 2002), 300.
[145] See "Half a Day," 85; *Ōgai zenshū*, vol. 4, 479.

unsettles the entire equation on which the question can even be posed. *The demand traverses the question*.

This interpretation departs from Žižek, since he finds the symptom's addressee in "the virtual big Other."[146] Gérard Wajeman echoes Žižek when he defines the hysterical discourse as a "riddle, or enigma…which compels the one to whom it is addressed to respond in the form of an assertion." [147] Wajeman shrewdly points out that the "hysteric's enunciation is injunctive: 'Tell me!; 'Tell me who I am?" and as such surrenders to the Other that responds: "The one who acknowledges this injunction, or mandate to speak, is given the power to satisfy the Demand." Yet once again, hysteria stalls in this moment of questioning, and *that power is finally not given to the addressee but pulverized in the very enunciation*. The symptom of hysteria lies precisely in this simultaneous inscription *and* non-arrival of the o/Other: "Hysteria is a riddle, and remains a riddle. Nothing truer can be stated of a riddle than: 'It is a riddle.'"[148]

"*Che vuoi*?" as that which "opens the gap of what is 'in the subject more than the subject,' of the *object in subject* which resists interpellation" then is not a question, and certainly not one *to* the Other.[149] To return to *poiesis* of prepositions, the intersubjective *to* cannot *be*. And, this impossibility is precisely where the performative can be shaken up, so to speak. Or, to put in Žižek's terms, the subject can act-as-if *differently*, so that the "link" can be dislodged, if only—as necessarily—to settle into another link by way of another gift. To respond to Wajeman once again, it is not an *answer* that the hysteric

[146] *How to Read Lacan*, 11.
[147] Wajeman, "The Hysteric's Discourse," 83.
[148] Ibid., 86.
[149] *The Sublime Object of Ideology*, 113.

demands after all; her ontology is the *demand* itself, the *act* of question. This cannot but confound the o/Other.

Ed Pluth offers an intriguing conceptual passage by which to bringing together melancholia and hysteria—the status of identification:

> In the mirror stage, the child met with an image more perfect than itself. This perfection motivated an anticipatory identification with the image, an identification Lacan always described as alienating because the child was also not that image. The *Che Vuoi*? stage begins, by contrast, with an absence or failure of identification, a non-identification…. What happens next is a construction of and orientation with respect to the signified of the Other's desire.[150]

Insofar as the mirror image is the archetype of the object "of a more ideal kind" and the incommensurability of the image and the child the psychic predilection for melancholia, Pluth's differential reading pivoted on identification suggests a certain radicality that hysteria harbors. In other words, instead of passing through the "*Che Vuoi*? stage" to orient itself "in respect to" the big Other, the hysteric stalls there, hesitating in regards to the position demanded of her. In other words, hysteria not only fails to identify but thereby also refuses to close the "distance" or "gap" between self and Other. Pluth's reading of neurosis seems to allow this reading as well: "Jouissance is an impasse in the fabric of meaning, but in neurosis it is at least put into a relation with that fabric. … In neurosis, there is…a project to build a bridge across the gulf, an attempt to invent a relation between the two:…the subject as a junction and disjunction of language and this pure jouissance…."[151] As such, hysteria arises as a compulsive inscription of the o/Other *at a distance*—the only condition under which the o/Other can *be*, that is, without absorbing the subject and thereby disappearing.

[150] Ed Pluth, "Lacan's Subversion of the Subject," *Continental Philosophy Review* 39 (2006): 305.
[151] Ibid., 306.

One final thought lingers. Perhaps Freud may be charged with a kind of relinquishment of history in his theoretical shift from 1917 to 1923, that is, for abandoning the differential modalities of loss and the object that could address, among other things, the modern violence *par excellence*, colonialism. It goes without saying that such an abandonment would, could only, be a psychic event. If this is said, may it be conjectured that the trauma of modernity, which exploded as "death-drive" during the intervening years, was more than what he could manage without resorting to obfuscation, even if that would mean a fresh flood of guilt? Whether that is at all a viable deduction and how, if at all, the guilt unfurled, as it always does, are questions beyond the scope of the present discussion. Yet, it suggests certain theoretical as well as affective remains to look back on when the discussion makes its way—inevitably—to modernity.

6.

Arising from the colonial encounter, the particular mode of discourse, affective predilections, and epistemic horizon under the sign of *shishōsetsu* finds reverberations in other cultural scenes as already suggested in the examples from Caribbean and Chinese literature. Rey Chow offers a particularly cogent interrogation of the fraternal collective from the perspective of "national culture." Reading Chen Kaige's film *The King of Children*, Chow zooms in on the "world of male play," in which men narcissistically produce an ego-ideal "generated in [the] interplay between pedagogy and fantasy, between 'culture' and 'nature.'" [152] Crucially, the mechanism of this collective "[pivots] on the figure of the child" and thereby excludes the sexual other: "without woman and

[152] *Primitive Passions: Visuality, Sexuality, Ethnography, and Contemporary Chinese Cinema* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), 139.

without the physical body!" It is a rather different paradigm than what has been noted in *shishōsetsu,* for which the destination of transference is precisely woman. Yet, the need to figuratively displace, indeed give off, the narcissistic energy remains the same, if the subject is to continue to live:

> What makes it necessary for our mental life to pass beyond the limits of narcissism and attach the libido to objects? This necessity arises when the cathexis of the ego with libido exceeds a certain amount; a strong egoism is a protection against falling ill but in the last resort we must begin to love in order not to fall ill and we are bound to fall ill if we are unable to love. Our mental apparatus being first and foremost a device for mastering excitations; it is a matter of indifference whether this internal process of working-over (excitations) is carried out upon real or imaginary objects. The difference does not appear until later—if the turning of the libido on to unreal objects (introversion) has led to its being dammed up.[153]

Chow's questions—"Is this closed circuit, which I term male narcissism, at bottom a way to resist the reproduction of national culture altogether? If so, why? Why do the male subjectivities in Chen's film seek to connect with the child…while bypassing woman?"—arrive at an answer that touches upon some of the key terms discussed in the previous section:

> The displacement of narcissistic emotion onto…children is symptomatic of a dissatisfaction with the failure of culture at large and an attempt to nonetheless continue to bear its burden conscientiously, by *disembodying* the reality of culture's reproduction and displacing that reality onto the purely institutional or fantastic level.[154]

Chow's view on "male narcissism" is instructive for any future (feminist) endeavor to account for the *shishōsetsu bundan* in (inevitable) relation to the subject with sexual and gender implications. Irreducible to "misogyny *tout court*" and "symptomatic of a more profound disturbance," the male narcissistic collective is a historical, psychic, and affective event arising not only from violence (of exclusion and expropriation) but

[153] Freud, "On Narcissism," 86.
[154] *Primitive Passions,* 131; 138-139. Chow's italics.

injuries (sustained through the trauma of modernity—i.e., nation, coloniality, and sexual and gender normativity).

Particularly intriguing is the curious inversion of the gender traits that inscribes the narcissistic fraternal collective: feminized man and masculinized woman. Echoing Zhong's "strong" Chinese women and Edmondson's "[hardworking], loud, aggressive" Caribbean women, who constitute the counterparts of the men characterized respectively as "lazy, docile, and ambitious to be scholars" and "weak," Chow traces the woman figure uneasily punctuating the fraternal Arcadia: "[She] strikes one as always bursting onto the scene of male play, bringing with her some kind of disorder"; "What we see in the film is that she has turned into a comic spectacle whose palpable physical dimensions exceed the closed circuit of male pedagogy and fantasy."[155] For all their sexist appropriation, these new formations of gender, radically different from any simple reversal of "gender roles," gesture towards certain possibilities of releasing such binary terms as masculine and feminine into a theoretical play. Chow sets an example by salvaging an "ironic" hope from "women's reproductive role even at the risk of 'biologism'" insofar as it "[interrupts] the tendency toward…*mentalism* in Chinese culture."[156] If the modern Chinese woman so strategically identified with the body suggests "a healthy narcissism that comprises an assertiveness, spontaneity, and fearlessness," the Japanese woman riddled with hysteria as found in *Kura no naka* presents some other gender. Perhaps with even more unsettling effect on the entire equation of sexuality and gender, the hero Yamaji's narcissism, equally self-reflexive yet much differently inflected than the Chinese male subjects, in absolute proximity *qua*

[155] Zhong, *Masculinity Besieged?*, 6; Edmondson, *Making Men*, 8; *Primitive Passions*, 132; 134.
[156] *Primitive Passions*, 140.

distance to the hysterical woman, may well convey the male "mentalism" to yet another theoretical plane.

Chapter 3 will futher explore this deliberation on varied shades of sexuality and gender by way of *Kura no naka*, a text looming with varied invitations towards sexuality and gender, literature, and modernity. If the melancholic suffers from non-differentiation from the Other, a symptom of the distance collapsed, it may be said that, for all accusations of "imitation," for the melancholic *shishōsetsu* subject mimesis is impossible, as that is an operation that insists on distance. The hysteric constantly pushes that distance open, with a *modus operandi* that is precisely *mimesis*. *Kura no naka* would be a different text without its melancholic lingering over the question of mimesis.

Chapter 3

Choreography Twosome

To all actresses who have played actresses,
to all women who act,
to men who act and become women,
to all the people who want to be mothers.
To my mother.
-Pedro Almodóvar, *All about My Mother*

1.

Pioneering studies of hysteria as a literary topos appeared by way of scholarly interests in the broad subject of psychosomatic malady and oppressed women of the "Victorian" era—a designation that, as Claire Kahane has argued, may be more productively deployed to refer to "the prevailing rule of bourgeois social properties in the second half of the nineteenth century rather than the literal geotemporal boundaries of Queen Victoria's reign."[1] Beginning with Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Guber's now canonical *The Madwoman in the Attic*, there have appeared many titles in the past several decades that concentrate attention on female narrative figures riddled with historically specific values, such as the spinster, governess, feminist aspirant, and post-partum depressive.[2]

[1] Claire Kahane, *Passions of the Voice*, ix.
[2] *The Madwoman in the Attic: the Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979); Evelyne Ender, *Sexing the Mind: Nineteenth-Century Fictions of Hysteria* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995); Janet Beizer, *Ventriloquized Bodies: Narratives of Hysteria in Nineteenth-Century France* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994). For a general introduction to hysteria, see Elaine Showalter, *The Female Malady: Women, Madness, and English Literature, 1830-1980* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1985). Extensively discussed textual examples representing a wide

Unsurprisingly, these studies have drawn upon the mutually illuminating relation between the heroines and their authors, whether or not an autobiographical design may be postulated in particular instances.

Such a reading strategy, immensely productive as it is, seems to have at some point, rather unwittingly, reversed the interpretive procedure. That is to say that, rather than throwing sociocultural and biographical contexts and textual configurations of afflicted women into a mutually illuminating relation, critics began to mobilize hysteria as a set of figural and conceptual parameters that could account for even those texts that fell short of featuring psychosomatic symptoms. Thus, "hysteria" disappears to yield to "a discourse made in the image of all that was feared, desired, and repudiated by nineteenth-century rational men," that is, a "move from a consideration of hysteria as diagnosis of a female malady to a reconsideration of the female malady as a broader-based cultural symptom."[3] Similarly, what defines the hysteric's condition is "a form of dissociation," that is, "she exists as the outward bodily inscription of an inner state, which neither the outer voice of the narrative (the omniscient narrator) nor its inner voice (the protagonist's stream of consciousness) can retrieve."[4] This critical shift or endorsement of definitional plasticity parallels that of the nineteenth-century contemporary perspective on hysteria from female physiology towards a kind of metaphor for various modes of (re)production: arts, feminism, or sexuality. Gustave Flaubert's dramatically charged confession—"Madame Bovary, c'est moi"—is only the most excitingly reiterated moment in such appropriations of hysteria. Thus, the psychotic hallucination in C. P.

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spectrum of psychosomatic afflictions include Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* (1847), Florence Nightingale's *Cassandra* (1852), Alice James's *Diary* (1889-1891), and Charlotte Perkins Gilman's "The Yellow Wallpaper" (1892).

[3] Beizer, *Ventriloquized Bodies*, 3.

[4] Ender, *Sexing the Mind*, 4.

Gilman's "The Yellow Wallpaper" (1892) is discussed on the same plane as Rachilde's ravenous transvestite in *Monsieur Vénus* (1884) and the emotional consequences—"imaginative fears"—of romantic and moral missteps in George Eliot's *Daniel Deronda* (1876): under the umbrella of hysteria.

The question remains as to what constitutes the particularity of the hysterical text, insofar as the modern literary text is, these studies seem to suggest, by definition psychological—a point, one may add, that is as revelatory of the epistemological conditions of current humanistic (critical) discourse as the formal and thematic property of the modern literary text. To evaluate this critical release of the dramatic term from a psychosomatic affliction into a general affective and psychological notion is not an interest of the present discussion. More relevant is the scholarly consensus that finds hysteria distinguished by theoretical and ontological elasticity or, more fittingly, quicksilver temperament in terms of conceptual directionality: "Hysteria, ostensibly a point of gender demarcation, turns out to be the turning point at which the dichotomous categories constitutive of the diagnosis (feminine/masculine, body/mind, fragmentation/cohesion) can no longer hold."[5] A methodological culmination arrived at by way of so-called literary modernism, which is "self-consciously thematized as a trope as well as formalized as a poetics that could more adequately represent the dislocations of the modern subject," rendering hysteria no longer "a psychopathology subject to cure but a sign of the time."[6] Meanwhile, Nathaniel Wing inserts hysteria into the context of "early modernism," whose representative texts "locate problematic aspects of the cultural

[5] Beizer, *Ventriloquized Bodies*, 11.
[6] Kahane, *Passions of the Voice*, xv. Nathaniel Wing, *Between Genders: Narrating Difference in early French Modernism* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2004), 23.

constructedness of gender."[7] Thus, with "hysterical anxiety as the very condition of the modern subject" giving rise to the modernist textual configuration, the problem of woman turns into one of femininity, or sexuality and gender as the general yet most crucial matter of the subject.[8]

To read Uno Kōji's *Kura no naka* in Claire Kahane's terms as a "discourse in crisis" insofar as it is marked by "excessive splittings and displacements of the subject of the story, frequent paralyses of plot, phonemic rather than semantic continuities, and seemingly gratuitous and often bizarre disruptions of narrative sequence" inevitably recalls the formal conventions of so-called modernist literature.[9] The outlandish beginning of the story with the conjunctive "And so" (*soshite*) foretells the disjunctive volubility that produces a particular narrative form. Its superbly self-conscious textuality bears out the opaque mutuality between hysteria as representational typography by way of hysterical figures and hysteria as a narrative stylistics and ontology. Beyond these technical—modernist—triggers, however, the narrative foregrounding of *pre-history*, always already conjunctive therefore disjunctive, signals a certain affinity with psychoanalysis.

Yet, Uno's text has rarely—if ever—been discussed in relation to modernism. If anything, it has been read as harboring certain anti-modern aesthetics, harkening back to the Edo-era verbal theatrics.[10] Such a reading, however, falsely presumes an

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[7] *Between Genders*, 23.
[8] Kahane, *Passions of the Voice*, 127.
[9] Ibid., xiv. Compare with Gerbert's comments on *Kura no naka*: "Yamaji [the narrator] had no control over what he was saying. Language in his mouth had a force that propelled him hither and yon. Words triggered trains of thought, utterances prompted further utterances, until he himself no longer knew what he was saying. Again and again, realizing that he has allowed himself to be swept away by the sound of his own voice, he pulls up short and struggles to regain control of the story and moves it back onto the 'main track.'" In "Uno Kōji," 32.
[10] Gerbert in Uno, *Love of Mountains*, 14.

incompatibility between the premodern and modernist aesthetics. Rather than an interpretive conundrum, these seemingly contradictory qualities found in *Kura no naka* bear out the structural tension from which modernity itself arises. In modern Japanese literary criticism, "modernism" as an identifiable literary consciousness with a distinctive set of formal features has only recently gained attention and, significantly, is discussed there with no apparent connection to the psychosomatic malady of hysteria as introduced above. Seiji Lippit's *Topographies of Japanese Modernism* and William Gardner's *Advertising Tower: Japanese Modernism and Modernity in the 1920s* draw upon modernist innovations by way of "disintegration" (in the former) or "construction" (in the latter), methodological notions marking the politically as well as aesthetically self-conscious engagement with the rapidly transforming modern landscape.

Unsurprisingly, both studies valorize Japanese modernism for strictly stylistic merit. For example, Hayashi Fumiko, a female author that both Lippit and Gardner present as a representative modernist figure appears as an extremely conscious stylist: "Hayashi keeps a keen eye on the role of modern media and incipient forms of mass culture in the subject formation of her protagonist. ... Hayashi performs the destabilization of the cultural consumer/producer duality through a highly fluid and eclectic novelistic style."[11] The subject or subjectivity is addressed insofar as it corresponds to immediately identifiable external forms: "an acute awareness of the constructedness of the self" or "interiority" that became insupportable as "[the] fragmentation of the cosmopolitan conception of modernity finds its expression…in the dismantling of literary form, as well as through the delineation of fragmented cultural

[11] Gardner, *Advertising Tower: Japanese Modernism and Modernity in the 1920s* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Asia Center, 2006), 118.

topographies."[12] In other words, it is a model that makes no allowance for the mutual excess of the subject and the literary or cultural form.

Given this critical attention to style, it is surprising that neither Lippit nor Gardner mentions Uno as an exemplar of modern stylistics. *Yume miru heya* (A Room in Which I Dream, 1922), for example, is a feat of narrative style intimately tuned to the urgency of the urban landscape and technological innovations. Instead, Lippit situates this particular text within the aforementioned Taishō "cosmopolitan conception of modernity," whose collapse precisely inaugurated the modernist consciousness.[13] The supposed radicalness of the break between Taishō "cosmopolitanism" and Shōwa modernism beckons further questioning, although a sustained inquiry into them lies beyond the present study. Suffice it to initiate a modest provocation. Lippit points to Akutagawa's late writings as examples of "the destruction of the novel," which presumes subjective implications, i.e. "interiority" laid bare in its constructed form.[14] Yet, it is entirely possible to read them as textual sites in which the subjective internalization reaches saturation, not to give way to productive fragmentation but to its *end*. In other words, "fragmentation" seems a term either overburdened or inadequately formulated to address the problem of the subject. If "fragmentation" refers, as it should, beyond immediately visible grammatical traits to the complex yet at best opaque operations of psychic, affective, and bodily as well as conscious registers of the subjective experience, Uno's *Yume miru heya* as well as *Kura no naka* are supremely modernist.

In this context, it may be noted that both Gardner and Lippit mark out the particularity of Japanese modernism against *shishōsetsu*. As Lippit writes

[12] Gardner, *Advertising Tower*, 84; Lippit, *Topographies of Japanese Modernism*, 17.
[13] Lippit, *Topographies of Japanese Modernism*, 15.
[14] Ibid., chapter 1.

paradigmatically of both Yokomitsu and Akutagawa, "the concept of writing is seen as an irreducible materiality that cannot be recuperated into any theory of unmediated expression or communication."[15] Thus, as he understands it, "the modernist literary landscape [rejects] the representation of interiority" characteristic of "confessional fiction in the late Meiji and early Taishō periods."[16] It is worth noting that Uno is cited as defining the *shishōsetsu* genre "by a certain directness of expression, an attempt to reduce the intervention of language and to create instead a vehicle for unmediated communication between author and reader."[17] No further account follows to counter the implicit suggestion that Uno practiced or advocated such a notion of literature.

Much of the questioning is a response to the inherent arbitrariness of a label like "modernism." As such, counter claims—i.e., to the effect that Uno was "modernist"—would be not only inaccurate but irrelevant and futile. Nevertheless, the disconnect between Japanese modernist aesthetics and psychosomatic figuration as well as between the Japanese modernist concern with form and language and Uno's narrative stylistics within critical discourse is precisely what the following discussion will finally disrupt—not so much as a goal but, hopefully, as an effect. The immediate interest here lies in the configuration of hysteria. *Kura no naka* will prove a felicitous textual site from which to launch toward another reading of sexuality and gender, and toward an intervention in the (feminist) critical discourse in modern Japanese literature.

[15] Lippit, *Topographies of Japanese Modernism*, 30.
[16] Ibid., 32.
[17] Ibid., 30.

2.

Hysterical heroines, it has been argued in the preceding chapters, render certain continuity and coherence to modern Japanese literature from its inception in the late nineteenth century, which undoubtedly constituted conditions for the appearance of a text like *Kura no naka* in 1919. At the same time, *Kura no naka* offers an entirely theoretical engagement with hysteria far different than the many textual precedents—and more to follow, including Uno's own *Ku no sekai* which features one of the most infamous hysterics in the modern Japanese literary imagination—which are more or less solely interested the configuration of characters delimited by heterosexual dynamics. In *Kura no naka* the hysteric arises significantly nuanced, and diffused in sexual and gender traits. The presumed markers of femininity are thrust into narrative folds, not to be consolidated into a coherent picture of woman but to be allowed redress. There are two sides to this dis-identification. First, many of the women characters perform gender transvestism in their relation to the protagonist Yamaji, acting out self-consciously masculine roles. Second, the male protagonist Yamaji's dis-sexual gestures are spelled out as hermaphroditic pauses, that is, dislodging and releasing the significatory nodes subtending the Oedipal fiction into an infinite series of bodily stylistics. Structurally, within this sphere masculinity cannot but also be loosened. Nonetheless, a certain difference persists between the women's and Yamaji's respective dis-identifying performances.

This difference receives its most dramatic articulation in an outcome that fails to fulfill the formulaic expectation. That is to say that the male subject's gestures of dis-identification, far from seducing the female subjects—the supposed victims of the

normative heterosexuality under the Oedipal regime, who would therefore presumably favor such destabilizing acts—only provoke in them a rage, uninhibited in its bare structural ambiguity, hysteria. In treading the ever so proximate distance between the potent field of (women's) desire only affirmed by negation and the site of (Yamaji's) constant redoubling of identificatory categories, *Kura no naka* highlights the psychic, cultural, and literary (mis)recognition of differential gender in early twentieth-century Japan, and the possibility of hysteria as a semiotic conduit thereof, or, indeed, of all things subjective.

Significantly, in *Kura no naka*, hysteria forms an ineluctable relation to what may be provisionally called the "narrative debt." On the surface, hysteria interrupts the very circuit of Yamaji the novelist's narrative production, which traces his romantic liaisons with a variety of women, those liaisons' seemingly inexorable termination, and their affective surplus in the form of memories, objects, and dreams. And it does so by way of a moral injunction against the narrative subjection of women. Structurally, however, hysteria precipitates narratives, as its very ontology consists in a distinctively narrative operation: "*Che vuoi*?" perpetually provokes discourse. Voicing the conflictual desires of subjection *to* narrative and subjection *of* narrative, that is, reading and writing, the women who eagerly pursue the author (*bungakusha*) in the very same movement threaten him for the same reason: he narrates. This last word will require further qualification, as the women display a keen sense of discrimination *vis-à-vis* speaking and writing as differential acts.

3.

If the modernist foray into hysterical narratives offers no immediately profitable interpretive passage for modern Japanese literature, it is possible, and necessary, to inquire into the "modernity" that inscribes them both in different yet mutually generative ways. That is to say that hysteria erupts in an intimate mimicry/mockery of sexuality and gender, yet always historically modalized. If this is indeed the case, it is impossible to discuss its return in modern times outside its relation to another supremely haunting sign of modernity: commodity. Takemura Tamio, for example, locates the origin of the "salaried man's society (*sararīman shakai*)" as the core of the mass consumption and mass culture in the Taishō era.[18] Situated in the midst of the ripening Taishō consumerism, *Kura no naka* bears out that cultural space in which capitalistic commodification increasingly conditioned the burgeoning middle class and its modern life style.

In a classic Marxist reading of *Kura no naka*, Takahashi Seori zooms in precisely on the way in which Yamaji the modern subject's phenomenal reality takes effect through a capitalistic organization of relations. Pointing out Yamaji's obsession with material objects to the point of social isolation, Takahashi identifies "reification (*busshōka*), by which the connection between one person and another is transformed into that between one object and other," as the organizing principle that gives coherence to Yamaji's world. In this relation, he argues, "'reality/original'='true commodity/authentic'

[18] See *Taishō bunka teikoku no yūtopia: sekaishi no tenkanki to taishū shōhi shakai no keisei* (Sangensha, 2004), 93.

becomes eliminated, lost, and standardized, and thereby kitsch='sham' (*magaimono*) is mass produced."[19]

A crucial point missing in Takahashi's discussion, however, is the way in which the kind of relation and the kind of objects giving rise to Yamaji's world displace, subtly yet profoundly, the reified capitalist realm. Indeed, his obsession is with pawning as much as with the objects themselves, and his relation to the objects lies beyond the pale of the capitalist notion of property or consumption. Chapter 4 will discuss these points in more detail. The focus here is the way in which *Kura no naka* engages with the singular ontology of commodity, and its spectral status in particular—something unanticipated in previous discussions.

According to Marx, fetishism is a "mystical" and "mysterious" operation that turns the products of labor into commodities, whose social qualities are "at the same time perceptible and imperceptible by the senses."[20] The circulation of the fetishistic substitution apotheosized in the form of money depends on this spectral ontology that inhabits the space between the sensory realm, material reality, and the "fantastic" "mist-enveloped regions of the religious world."[21] Reading in the *spirit* of Derrida's resurrection of Marx or his "injunction" by way of the Shakespearean night of the ghost may perhaps take note of the blinding light of day, which permits only the real and the sane.[22] Is it possible to read Yamaji's entry into the storehouse as a crossing-over into such a night?

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[19] Takahashi Seori, "Oni (mania) no bungaku: hen'ai sareru 'konseki,'" *Waseda bungaku* (dai hachiji) 111 (August, 1985): 88.
[20] *The Marx-Engels Reader*, ed. Robert C. Tucker (New York: Norton, 1978), 320.
[21] Ibid., 321.
[22] Jacques Derrida, *Specters of Marx: The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning, & the New International*, trans. Peggy Kamuf (New York: Routledge, 1994), chapter 1 "injunctions of marx."

That is, spectral may they be, capitalist commodities are brought out into the daylight. The glare of their circulatory (il)logic is blinding in its omnipresence, adding another register to the already amply signified/signifying narrative of madness. This passage, whose speaker on beholding the madness of "Law" is himself imperiled by madness, may be read as capturing the melancholic destiny of living with capitalism:

> The worst thing was the sudden, shocking cruelty of the day; I could not look, but I could not help looking. To see was terrifying, and to stop seeing tore me apart from my forehead to my throat. … In the end, I grew convinced that I was face to face with the madness of the day. That was the truth: the light was going mad, the brightness had lost all reason; it assailed me irrationally, without control, without purpose.[23]

A scene in *Kura no naka* presents a striking image of spectrality—a haunting tableau of the afterlife of various objects—but, crucially, in the dim (*usugurai*) interior of a storehouse: "Violins were dangling from the ceiling *as if* they were brooms, and wall clocks were lined up *like* masks hanging on a museum wall. Pianos and organs were left there *as if* to be forgotten, and pots and pans were scattered all over *as* in a junkyard." (42) It is a spatial moment when commodities metamorphose into material objects, an event irreducible to the logic of commodity. Note the numerous *figural* devices of simile—repetitive use of like or as/if (*yō ni*)—testifying to a certain ontology exceeding *descriptive* language. Further, Yamaji becomes absorbed in a kind of choreographing act:

> I got the shop boy to fetch me some hemp rope, which I hung like a spider web, from the bars of the small storehouse window to the post supporting the shelves holding the pawned goods, from the post to a peg on a pillar, and so on, and then I proceeded to hang up my clothes, one by one. And while they were airing, a few hours at a time, I stretched myself beneath them and, using my arm as a pillow, took a nap. (44)

[23] Maurice Blanchot, *The Madness of the Day*, trans. Lydia Davies (Barrytown, NY: Station Hill Press, 1981), 11.

The ghostly space staged with floating kimonos carefully and lovingly hung in the dim light at once recalls and cancels out the ontology of commodity. On the one hand, objects, musical instruments in particular, make manifest the rise of the new bourgeois middle-class culture in the period.[24] On the other hand, it may be noted that the semiotic—integral to yet exceeding the symbolic—of music meaningfully thrust to the foreground does more (or possibly less) than highlighting the capitalistic status of the objects: it signals a certain melancholia of auditory (or non-visual) experience.[25] In other words, the sight of the dead commodities is given a certain poignancy—perhaps surplus value on a wholly different ground—through the conjuration of the musical. On the other hand, Yamaji's insertion of his own body into the scene—a stage perhaps—gestures towards a new modality of being ungraspable by the kind of humanism underlying Takahashi's lament. In this manner, Yamaji's retreat into the storehouse, crowded by objects whose exchange value emptied, use value displaced, at once evokes the spectral logic of commodity, and gestures towards a return to the objectal—different than objective—ontology.

Apart from this *other* spectrality, there is another register of what may be shorthanded as "capitalism" inscribing *Kura no naka*. This additional register should prove more profitable than the rigid application of the notion of reification: consumerism. Far from dehumanizing, in fact, commodity fetishism, and the libidinal investment therein by way of consumerism, affords a conceptual conduit between capitalist

[24] On the emerging Western musical culture in Meiji and Taishō Japan with violin as its star instrument, see Margaret Mehl, "Japan's Early Twentieth-Century Violin Boom," *Nineteenth-Century Music Review* 7, no. 1 (2010).

[25] Julia Kristeva, for example, categorizes music as one of "nonverbal signifying systems that are constructed exclusively on the basis of the semiotic." *Revolution in Poetic Language*, trans. Margaret Waller (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984), 24.

phantasies and (very human) dramas of sexuality and gender. The long lineage of the trope of the male author/teacher and the female reader/pupil as often represented in modern Japanese literature returns in *Kura no naka*.[26] What distinguishes the latter, however, lies in the way in which the author-reader relationship has largely shed the intellectual imbalance as a seemingly inevitable condition of the relationship and instead morphs by way of the notion of literature as commodity. The celebrity status of Yamaji as a novelist already signals the commodification of not only literature but also the author. Thus, women approach Yamaji as a consumer may be attracted to a brand. Yet, as will become obvious, the apparently coldblooded logic of capitalism harbors heated dramas involving the deepest recesses of subjective life.

In one instance, an avid reader of his novels sends him a series of letters finally to arrange a rendezvous:

> [One] day I received a letter from an unknown woman in which she told me in great detail how she fell in love with my novels and how she hadn't missed reading a single one of any that bore my signature, from way back up until the present, and how she longed to meet me face to face. … Not three days went by without a gift or a letter from her, and being the man I am, I finally gave in. (52)

It is clear that this feminine reader has come a long way from her more conscientious foremothers. It is important to note that this reader is not interested, even rhetorically, in becoming a pupil but only in bringing the consumptive procedure to its completion, so to speak, by commodifying the *man* himself supposedly *found* behind the novels. Is the

[26] Besides Katai's "Futon" and Ōgai's "Maihime" cited above, Futabatei Shimei's *Ukigumo* and Shimazaki Tōson's *Shinsei* also display this topos. Beyond the fictional texts, there are several notable female authorial and theatrical figures in modern Japan whose biographical narratives feature their coming of age under male mentors' guidance: for example, Higuchi Ichiyō, Hiratsuka Raichō, and Matsui Sumako.

presumption of the identification of the author and his *oeuvre* not a supreme form of commodification insofar as it regulates and standardizes, that is, effaces difference?

Significantly, as Yamaji soon finds out, she herself is a sexual commodity: "someone's kept mistress (*mekake*)." This last word is replete with the visual dynamic inscribing the time-honored practice of sexual slavery, to use the latter term rather liberally. Phonetically transcribed, *mekake* 妾 renders itself to *mekake* 目掛け—to "hang" one's "eyes"—and thereby positions the woman as the object of the male gaze, safely or at least rhetorically guarding the man from the messy business of the body. Interestingly, this particular mistress uses another visual term to invite Yamaji to their rendezvous: *omemoji* お目文字. Colorfully conjuring the textual trajectory of their romance, this act of "lettering" with "eyes" is how the mistress happens—surely with no semantic consciousness—to refer to her wish to meet the novelist. In a sense, what the mistress expresses is precisely this desire, that is, to catapult from being the one subjected to the other's *gaze* to one subjecting the other to *visual inscription*—the latter being perhaps a more active form of subjugation than the former, insofar as it involves the belaboring form of signification—writing. And, as such, it anticipates further dramas to arise later in the narrative.

Predictably from this inscriptive seduction, the conventional notion of the mistress takes a radical turn here:

> Once she asked me to meet her at the Tokyo railroad station at around four o'clock in the afternoon. When I got there, she told me that her patron had just left for Kyoto, that is, she had come to see him off and, ten minutes later, to meet me at the same place. Not only that, she suggested that we take the next train to Kyoto, the very place her patron had gone. (52)

The oppressive relation of sexual bondage gives way to a theatre of bold libidinal management. In other words, what is at stake for the mistress exceeds sexual agency *per se*, supposedly compromised by her "occupation" (*shokugyō*), and engages with a new set of desires en*gendered* precisely by the particular conditions of the bodily exchange. Yamaji relates his reaction, "My heart skipped a beat. How can a woman doing what she did be so lighthearted about it?" Yet she may not be lighthearted so much as she is fully inhabiting the logic of appropriation: the market and consumerism. In the end, she devises a flimsy strategy to put an end to the relationship without the bother of a romantic drama, as if Yamaji's shelf life had expired: "Our relationship lasted about a month. Yes, she soon tired of me." (53)

Yamaji encounters another beneficiary of sexual patronage, who similarly takes him out on a railway trip and lavishes a material show of affection:

> As soon as we arrived in Tokyo we went to the Mitsukoshi department store, and there without any further ado she bought the Satsuma kimono hanging there, and, mind you, I was thirty years old already. And in the evening, after we had returned to my rooming house and were talking about going to a play the next day…she abruptly took a ring off her finger and told me to try it on. When I had done so, she took my hand and looked at it. "It fits well," she said. "I'm giving it to you." (66)

The consumptive logic already implicit in the ontology of the mistress is thus given a full articulation, only not by some spectacle of oppression but by the women's ostentatious extravagances. Significantly, it is not only the liaisons but, rather obviously, Yamaji's very sexual and gender status that becomes modulated by the vengeful consumerism of the women. The way in which acts of consumption represent the erotic exchange for these women recalls what the critic Guy Davidson observes in Henry James's *The Golden Bowl*: the "[upset] expectation" of the "common enough topos of nineteenth-

century novels" with an "interest in the interimplication of consumer and sexual desires through an emphasis on the exchangeability of the female body."[27] In other words, it is the hero himself that is presented as the "pre-eminent human commodity."

For a woman to act as the consumer in the cultural market means "a sober search of her self" (*jibun sagashi*), if only finally to submit to the heterosexual normativity. The insertion of man therein precipitates forms of violence other than those often imagined by hardened feminist rhetoric.[28] For one thing, such a search would *act* (out) according to the structure of cultural ideology; for another, man too can only be conjured by way of sexualizing and gendering. Odaira Maiko illuminates the first point when she states in summation, "The establishment of woman as the counter category of man is inseparable from the startup of the single category of 'woman' repressive of individual differences, and that homogenization completed the opposition of heterosexuality/homosexuality."[29] Acting (out), of course, harbors the kind of performative possibility Butler has illuminated. Yet this is a foreclosed possibility if imagined without concurrent efforts to account for the latter point, that is, the way in which man is always already part of the equation, not (only) as the perpetrator of violence in the bi-sexual regime but—most consequentially for the feminist futurity—a subject ineluctably arising from psychic as social *histories* of sexuality and gender. In a momentous table-turning moment, Kaja Silverman argues:

> [Whereas] the Freudian account of that psychic mechanism [of disavowal] explicitly posits it as a male defense against *female* lack, [Freud's paper] "Fetishism" implicitly shows it to be a defense against what is in the final

[27] Guy Davidson, "Ornamental Identity: Commodity Fetishism, Masculinity, and Sexuality in *The Golden Bowl*," *The Henry James Review* 27, no. 1 (Winter 2007): 26.
[28] Odaira begins with the remark, "The phenomenon in which women thronged to culture (male artists) does not only mean that women fell for department stores' strategy…." *Onna ga onna o enjiru*, 52.
[29] Ibid., 104.

> analysis *male* lack. Since woman's anatomical "wound" is the product of an externalizing displacement of masculine insufficiency, which is then biologically naturalized, the castration against which the male subject protects himself through disavowal and fetishism must be primarily his own.[30]

The point about the male defensive displacement is certainly not new, but Silverman's perspective is refreshing with a tender openness towards its history, which cannot but thrust its misfires—injuries—into critical scrutiny. More immediately recognizable than this psychoanalytical structure may be the ideological topography, which Silverman offers by way of an interrogation of the "dominant fiction whose most privileged term is the phallus" for "a historical moment at which the equation of the male sexual organ with the phallus could no longer be sustained," and "some forms of male subjectivity that eschew Oedipal normalization."[31] And, the masculinities that emerge here are those which "not only acknowledge but embrace castration, alterity, and specularity," precisely the province in which the female *act* can collect certain performative funds–and which Yamaji inhabits.[32]

4.

In fact, it is not simply his halting gestures around the assertive consumer women that bring Yamaji into Silverman's horizon. More than that, it is something like visual hesitation that modalizes Yamaji's relation to women as *distance* that renders him a (in)felicitous subject best readable by way of "masculinity at the margins," an issue which will be further elaborated shortly. These figures of volatile sexuality already

[30] *Male Subjectivity at the Margins*, 46.
[31] Ibid., 2.
[32] Ibid., 3.

anticipate Hysterical Beauty (*hisuterī no bijin*), the only female character in the story's narrative present. The unsettling juxtaposition of the two words is not as benign or comic it may seem, especially because the phrase does not so much express the "truth" of the woman as traces the viewing subject's anxiety about her: "At that moment a woman appeared on the crest of the barricade, a young woman, beautiful, dishevelled, terrifying…. Suddenly a second woman appeared. This one was younger and still more beautiful."[33] Beauty at once signifies the desire to domesticate implicit in the gaze itself and designates the volatile field of mutually generative desires and fears. Thus, this sign, and the figure arising therefrom, bodes something far more complex than an effect of incongruity. The question is whether the possibility of this field has been exhausted; whether there is certain theoretical hope to be harbored.

Having made a breathless run to "specularity," it may be worthwhile to linger a little longer on the spectral scene inside the storehouse, especially because it so neatly choreographs the spectral and the specular into one cinematic sequence. Having twice found Yamaji sleeping in his futon under the kimonos hanging up to air, Hysterical Beauty, supposedly the sister of the pawnbroker, is bolder on this third tryst:

> The following day, I had barely begun getting my kimonos out of the drawers when she came to help me, and despite my objections, got the futon and laid it out. "Have a good rest," she said. I continued to protest for a while but eventually gave in. *As I crawled into it, she took up a crouching position leaning against the pillar.* Then she moved, and when I changed the position of my head on the pillow, her face was hidden by the kimonos hanging from the ropes. "Have you ever been married?" she asked suddenly. "No," I said, as I turned toward her. She was still hidden by the hanging kimonos. (75, italics added)

[33] This again is from Victor Hugo's description of prostitutes engaged in sexual/political gestures during the 1848 Revolution. See Hertz, "Medusa's Head," 29.

Thus a scene is set in which Yamaji has been induced—almost forced—to lie down inside a futon while Hysterical Beauty sits supported by a pillar. Even without reading further into the erect object underwriting the female subject's vertical position *vis-à-vis* the horizontal male subject, the postural relation already signals a certain drama brewing. The apparent mother-child scenario is only the most facile metaphor to conjure for this charged scene. Yamaji's infantile nesting is not exactly counterpoised by parental caring—the mother's desire, which is already desire for the Other, here given sensuous presence via the pillar.[34] Hysterical Beauty is featured as "crouching" (*shagande*) while "leaning" (*motarete*) against the phallic support. That is to say that the erect presence renders visibility to the ontological weight—that the female subject *is*—slouched, perhaps rather licentiously, in what is not a commanding pose. Even disregarding the crouching position as culturally unsurprising and therefore innocent of any indiscrete connotations (of orifices and discharges) or semantic thickness (the divested/screened breasts), the postural economy of the scene is nothing less than suggestive. And, there is more.

A conversation ensues with—or, precisely by way of—the subtle movement of Yamaji's "head on the pillow" creating that minimal visual distance *qua* obstruction, as if a narrative ought to be projected on a third surface. The drama, it turns out, concerns hysteria, of another woman and yet of this woman here as well. Hysterical Beauty *interrogates*—posturally empowered *vis-à-vis* the interlocutor—Yamaji regarding his marital history:

> "Did you separate?" At last she emerged from behind the *screen* of kimonos and faced me. Oddly enough those very clothes that served her as

[34] For the maternal body already endowed with the logic of the symbolic, see Kristeva, *Tales of Love*, 21-41.

> a *screen* were a constant source of irritation for the other woman. "Why did you leave her? Why are men so cruel?" she continued. "Oh, I wasn't cruel…. She was hysterical. She was…." I was about to say that she was uncontrollably hysterical and had been sent home for that reason, but the words got stuck in my throat. I suddenly remembered that the woman I was speaking to had been divorced and sent home because she was hysterical. *This time I used the silk crepe kimono hanging from the line to hide my face as I said*, "She was really very hysterical...." (76, italics added)

The "screen" (*byōbu*) is a felicitous double term: it at once divides and projects. The intersubjective commerce is projected on to a surface at a distance—as if no bare face would do, for a direct gaze would burn the very mediatory possibility.

5.

The conceptual pair of the screen and the gaze cannot but conjure Kaja Silverman's ongoing psychoanalytic investigation of the complex between the subject and cultural values, often via filmic texts and in productive fidelity to Lacan.[35] A rigorous investigation of the visual register of the symbolic field, Silverman's work offers a number of valuable insights toward reading the storehouse scene in *Kura no naka*. The following is somewhat of a detour but may prove worthwhile, especially in the context of modern Japanese literature standing in dire need of a fresh theoretical language.

Silverman pursues Lacan's theory of the gaze, screen, and the eye—in her language, the look—toward the mechanism by which "social and historical difference enters the field of vision," precisely what is deemed absent in the latter.[36] Conjured by way of the metaphor of photography, the eye stands for the subject and the gaze "the

[35] Immediately relevant to the present discussion are *The Threshold of the Visible World* (New York: Routledge, 1996) and *Male Subjectivity at the Margins* (New York: Routledge, 1992).
[36] *The Threshold of the Visible World*, 134.

point from which light irradiates" given as the camera itself. The latter is the visual register of the symbolic and as such represents "the presence of others as such" and at the same time "[the] gaze I encounter…is, not a seen gaze, but a gaze imagined by me in the field of the Other" to follow Lacan's own language.[37] Silverman renders their difference more systematically: "The relationship between eye and gaze is thus analogous in certain ways to that which links penis and phallus," with the gaze being "the 'unapprehensible' agency through which we are socially ratified or negated as spectacle."[38] And the site which finally hosts the mutual operation of the eye and the gaze is none other than the screen. Pressing her discussion beyond Lacan's suggestive remarks, which do not in the end yield a definition, Silverman specifies the screen as "that culturally generated image or repertoire of images through which subjects are not only constituted, but differentiated in relation to class, race, sexuality, age, and nationality."[39] Positioned between the eye and the gaze, the screen determines the "visual articulation of the subject" which is in turn, according to Silverman, riddled with sociocultural values.[40]

One thing critical to note is that the Lacanian "gaze" is rather different than the gaze as depicted in the scene of Yamaji's and Hysterical Beauty's visual hide-and-seek. Structurally, the gaze in the latter should coincide with the "eye" in the Lacanian diagrams.[41] At the same time, the modest aim of the present section is precisely to offer up the storehouse scene as a textual event that unhinges this triad. While a full account of the complex topography of the three terms underlying visual signification will be avoided

[37] *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psycho-Analysis*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: W. W. Norton & Co.,1978), 84.
[38] *Male Subjectivity at the Margins*, 130; *The Threshold of the Visible World*, 133.
[39] *The Threshold of the Visible World*, 135.
[40] Ibid., 134.
[41] See the diagrams in *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psycho-Analysis*, 91; 106; *The Threshold of the Visible World*, 132.

here, it will serve the interest of the present discussion to sketch out the ways in which Yamaji's screen of kimonos creates pressure on Silverman's Lacanian terminology to render an alternative passage to the subject's relation to the world.

Silverman begins her discussion by locating within Lacan's own shift from the mirror to the screen a suggestion of larger cultural implications for identity:

> [The] mirror reflection resembles the child, and attests to the child's simultaneous spatial contiguity. The concept of the screen implies no such iconic or indexical motivation. Lacan characterizes it as "opaque" or nonreflecting. There is no existential connection between it and the subject who is defined through it, and no necessary analogical link. … By severing the gaze from the look and denaturalizing the relation of subject and screen, [Lacan's] *Seminar XI* makes it possible to see that *méconnaissance* may induce a very different affective response than the jubilation attributed to the child in "The Mirror Stage"—in other words, it does not invariably involve an identification with ideality. [42]

In other words, depending on the makeup of the screen, that is, what "the cultural gaze" irradiates, the subject could be forced to identify with deidealizing images such as those lying beyond "whiteness," "masculinity," and "heterosexuality." Simultaneously noted is the possibility of the "look" that is disruptive of "self-looking; looking 'through' or 'with' self-images," which the subject fills with "illusory *fulfillment*" typified by the mirror-stage.[43] From this theoretical detective work for the possibility of reading the "negative rather than ideal" images in the psychoanalytic paradigm, Silverman moves on to appropriate Lacan's metaphoric equation of the gaze with the camera, with the ultimate

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[42] Ibid., 19. See Lacan's "Mirror Stage as Formative of the Function of the 'I' as Revealed in Psychoanalytic Experience," in *Écrits: A Selection*, trans. Bruce Fink (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 2002); for Lacan's *Seminar XI*, see *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psycho-Analysis*.

[43] Mieke Bal begins with, "On the basis of the Lacanian model of looking anchored in the misrecognition of the mirror stage, the looking subject has the tendency to ascribe to itself what belongs to others and to project on others what belongs to the self but it wishes to cast out." See Bal, "Second-Person Narrative: David Reed" in *Looking in: The Art of Viewing* (Amsterdam: G+B Arts International, 2001), 230. Italics added.

aim of spelling out the apparatic as well as psychic functions of the cinema which can demonstrate and precipitate such an alternative, that is, "the process of idealization which, rather than blindly and involuntarily conforming to what the cultural screen mandates as 'ideal,' lights up with a glittering radiance bodies long accustomed to a forced alignment with debased images," which she calls "the active gift of love."[44]

In this pursuit of the sociocultural dimension of visual signification, or the visual dimension of sociocultural signification, Silverman does not waver from the premise of identification *qua* idealization, presumed to be the necessary passage by which *difference* could transpire. For her, idealization "is something we cannot do without…because it alone makes possible a genuine *relation* to the other. … [It] can open up identifications which would otherwise be foreclosed by the imperatives of normative representation and the ego."[45] Silverman's agenda lies in bringing marginalized subjects into the horizon of idealization, while leaving the identification model intact. In contrast, *Kura no naka* pries open an alter-space *within* the apparently already primary relational logic that is identification: namely, mimesis. It may be recalled that the final section of Chapter 2 in the present study approached hysteria precisely as a failure to identify, which as such destabilizes the equation of the subject's position within *and vis-à-vis* the symbolic order. What follows is another reiteration of identification in suspension, so to speak. Lacan's flirtation with the concept of mimicry in *Seminar XI*, which Silverman closely examines, offers a propitious passage toward the specificity of mimesis as conjured in *Kura no naka*, and helps to clarify its difference from the identification in Silverman's paradigm. And it

[44] *The Threshold of the Visible World*, 19; 78-79.
[45] Ibid., 40-41. Silverman's italics.

is the subject's position *vis-à-vis* the screen, and, of course, the gaze, that illustrates this differentiation.

If the Lacanian mirror is reflective and therefore receives, if only fantasmatically, a modicum of the existential content of the self—"the mirror reflection *resembles* the child"—at the same time its ontological implication lies precisely in the way it obfuscates the very idea of the self as an accessible content. The child's first recognition of, claim to, himself arrives via the mirror image that is finally *not* the child; to put it in Silverman's terms, "the proprioceptive ego is *always* initially disjunctive with the visual image."[46] It may be added that the "initially" is more emphatic than particular to the infantile phase of the subjective life—the screen is precisely that which inherits the disjunction between the sensational body and the visual imagistic body. Given this obfuscation that the mirror structures in the very first moment of the subject's identificatory constitution, it may be possible to read the screen not so much as "nonreflecting"—as if to imply that the mirror was reflecting in some unproblematic way—as conferring a different kind of obfuscation, which by virtue of its noncoincidence with the mirror may suggest another passage to/of the subject.

The screen (*byōbu*), as mentioned above, at once divides and projects. The dividing function is obvious in the given scene whereby Yamaji and Hysterical Beauty deflect each other's gaze. The projecting function is more convoluted: it transfers the sensuous register from the visual to the acoustic. That is to say, with the visual obstruction arises the narrative intercourse, trafficking in voice. Recall how their conversation begins with deflected gazes in the passage cited above. The mutual exclusivity of the visual and the auditory commerce is a key to reconfiguring the

[46] Ibid., 17. Silverman's italics.

identificatory scenario exceeding the scheme of the mirror, not so much to supplant one with the other but to shift the logic of "contact" as the premise of a relation. That is, inasmuch as the auditory medium cradles the intersubjective encounter in a way that the visual counterpart often blunts, the sensual shift from one to the other register already signals a certain destabilizing effect in the very equation of contact. Simply put, contact and encounter are not necessarily mutually conducive, or, as *Kura no naka* seems to suggest, perhaps even mutually aversive.

Interestingly, when read according to the suggestions of the ideographs, the screen arises as that which "dams" (*byō* 屏) "wind" (*fū* 風)—perhaps currents of air, that is, the vehicle of the voice itself. In other words, it is by way of highlighting the obstruction that the voice can flow. This is indeed the archetypal modality of storytelling in the classical Japanese *monogatari* genre: layers of *interposing* objects—blinds and curtains as well as screens—are sensuous invitations to the narrative act, a familiar trope to any reader of *Genji monogatari*. It may be added that kimonos are often found draping over screens for decorative effects in classical narrative scenes. At any rate, could this apparently incongruent logic of production be read into the visual topography also, such that not seeing the other allows a certain visibility?

If the voice arising from the other side of the screen in *Kura no naka* is a narrative voice, the gaze is a mimetic gaze. Leaving the necessary explanation of the latter point to a later section, it may be helpful to note the figurativity of the narrative and mimetic senses which the screen—*byōbu*—already *inscribes* with letters and images. Put in the terms advanced by Lacan and Silverman, the nonreflecting surface of the screen is always already riddled with images before the subject becomes projected thereupon. Yet,

different than this model which impels to instruct on the otherness integral to the subject's identity, the originary negativity, the screen in *Kura no naka* offers an amplifying medium for both visual and acoustic flux—not without negativity but via an alternate route toward an alternate mode of relation.

Provocatively, Lacan accounts for "the image in the guise of which we invite the gaze to affirm us" by way of mimicry, which Silverman sums up as follows:

> [The] subject does not always wait passively and unconsciously for the gaze to "photograph" him or her in the shape of a preexisting image. On the contrary, he or she may give him- or herself to be apprehended by the gaze in a certain way, by assuming the shape of either a desired representation or one that has come through less happy circumstances to mark the physical body. When this happens, the subject does not simply hold up the imaginary photograph in front of him or her, but approximates or attempts to approximate its form.[47]

In simpler terms, mimicry refers to this "assuming" act involving nothing less than what Silverman calls "the transformation of actual muscles and flesh into a photographic representation," or more compactly "a corporeal assimilation of the image."[48] Thus the subject puts himself in the topography of the gaze and the screen.

This psychic procedure is, by Silverman's account, in the lineage of "the anticipatory congealing of the body confronted with a real or metaphoric camera into the form of what might be called a 'pre-photographic photograph" whereby "the subject offers him- or herself to the gaze already in the guise of a particular 'picture.'"[49] If this is indeed the case, however, mimicry seems to be a misnomer. In fact, Lacan cautions against any simple notion of mimicry: "[We] should not be too hasty in introducing some kind of inter-subjectivity. ... To imitate is no doubt to reproduce an image. But at bottom,

[47] Ibid., 201.
[48] Ibid., 202.
[49] Ibid., 200.

it is, for the subject, to be *inserted* in a function whose exercise grasps it."[50] Put in the terms already introduced in the present study, the subject's embedded status within the photographic apparatus of visual signification cannot afford the *distance* necessary for mimicking. This "inter-subjectivity" is yet to be exhausted in either Lacan's or Silverman's articulations, however. Uno's text seems to gesture towards a certain productive linking of mimicry and the subject that is *not alone but with an other*—not necessarily inter-subjectively yet nevertheless impelling towards (the place of) the other—that certainly does not dispute but somewhat unhinges—to supplement—them.

Lacan's conceptualization of the photographic subject—the subject that [becomes] part of a particular 'picture'"—by way of mimicry derives its metaphor from Roger Caillois's thesis on homomorphy or homochromy in organisms like insects.[51] In turn, the latter harbors a striking, indeed pictorial, indexicality to the storehouse scene in *Kura no naka*. Objecting to the widespread notion of defensive disguise, Caillois puts forward a spatial definition of mimicry: "The search for the similar would seem to be a means" and "the end would appear to be *assimilation to the surroundings*."[52] Mimicry, in the end a mechanism by which "the frontier between the organism and the milieu" is blurred, has an affective consequence that is, familiarly, melancholy: "[Alongside] the instinct of self-preservation, which in some way orients the creature toward life, there is generally speaking a sort of instinct of renunciation that orients it toward a mode of reduced existence, which in the end would no longer know either consciousness or

[50] *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psycho-Analysis*, 100. Italics added.
[51] Silverman unpacks Lacan's rather laconic reference to Caillois in *The Threshold of the Visible World*, 201-2.
[52] Roger Caillois, "Mimicry and Legendary Psychasthenia," trans. John Shepely, *October* 31 (Winter 1984): 27. Caillois's italics.

feeling—the *inertia of the élan vital*, so to speak."[53] Caillois's reading of mimicry as an impulse to assimilate to the inert space cannot fail to recall Freud's theory of death drive in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*: "It would be in contradiction to the conservative nature of the instincts if the goal of life were a state of things which had never yet been attained. On the contrary, it must be an old state of things, an initial state…."[54]

Indisputably, *Kura no naka* arises as a series of spatial coordination. Besides the obvious scenes inside the storehouse, Yamaji's small quests and conquests in the diminutive boarding room return time and again to the question of managing the space. A colorful passage details the process by which Yamaji orients his newly custom-made futon in the room :

> I would have loved to show off this futon to my friends, had I had any. Anyway, I spread it out, got into it, got out, admired it, then got in again and, eventually drowsy, dozed off. When I woke up, I remembered at once that I was in that wonderful futon and jumped out to inspect it again. I rearranged the sheet I had spread over the bottom pads to make sure that it revealed evenly—a strip of two or so inches on either side—the egg yellow beneath. I smoothed out the top part, pushed down its four corners, and went back to curl up under it. I felt as if I were in the maw of a lovely, soft monster. Reading in it was also very comfortable, but when I tried to write, the top part bulged and got in my way, so I asked a carpenter to make me a desk about four inches high so that I could write by getting out of the futon just a little. (50-51)

The long passage is given here to capture the sense of the way in which a single object could organize the *life* of the room and its inhabitants, animate and inanimate, giving rise to a kind of ecstatic solitude. On the one hand, the futon and the room inclusive of all its components are mutually transformative. On the other, this life-movement impels towards a certain stasis that finally induces the hero to reading and writing repeatedly

[53] Ibid., 32.
[54] *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, trans. James Strachey (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1961), 45.

punctuated by sleeping, all the while lying inside his futon. In this sense, the futon is not merely one of the objects together constituting the singular space of Yamaji's room but a synecdoche, the ultimate "end" of the little spatial drama. When even this futon is given up to the pawnshop, Yamaji starts from scratch:

> So, having lost…my darling futon (oh, I get so sentimental when I talk about such things…one wouldn't think I'm forty years old)…I made up my mind to change rooming houses. I needed a new lease on life (*atarashii seikatsu no hottan*): a fresh start, peace and quiet, and (I know this sounds crazy) to shake off an evil spirit that I had come to believe wanted to possess me. (54)

True to the "new start," Yamaji's *nesting* begins with a bird's eye view: "So I rented a room in a rooming house that had the shape of a blown-up carpenter's square (*kagi no ten i natte nobite iru*)." Then the visual focus narrows to verbalize the full floor plan:

> This room was located in a corner of the building and, therefore, had a sliding door somewhat less than three feet wide. The doors of the other rooms facing the same corridor were over twice as wide, and they had one large window, whereas mine had two, nice enough, smaller ones at right angles to one another, and the maid assured me that it and the room above it were the best in the house. (54)

Interestingly, the room turns out a disaster for reasons that his eyes could not have foreseen: unbearable noises. The narrator visualizes the auditory situation with detective's acuity, not only to conclude that the corner location in this particular house is a curse but also give a complete logic drawn from days' observation, down to the minutest detail: "Worse yet, every passerby had to take an extra step right in front of my room because that's where the corridor came to the aforementioned right angle." (55)

The storehouse is a kind of last refuge from the undesirable conditions of his room—the room being an absolute necessity for the hero to live without being assailed by

the visual and auditory assaults of the world. Significantly, as observed above, it is the objects within that render a certain integrity to the room. With the room increasingly bare as the result of pawning his possessions, Yamaji can only recreate that haven in the place that now contains his objects. This *objectal* logic finally gives rise to the "decision to go to the pawnshop" that Yamaji announces in the opening passage of the novella. What stands out in the spatial ontology of Yamaji's room is a certain blurring that places the hero and his objects into the same existential equation. This blurring does not only mean that the human subject treasures the objects to the point of subjectivization or anthropomorphization. More significantly, it is the *scene*, a tableau composed of the disparate entities each in its bodily containment yet choreographed for effects of organic integrity. It is toward the production of the inert space, animated by exuberance that is austerely intrinsic, that Yamaji and his objects form a collective of mimicry. Once spent, it is structurally determined; the exuberance will have to give way to the end of movement, that is, history. The wholeness devoid of psychologizing "depth"—a true tableau—characterizing the ontology of Yamaji's space suggests a certain halting towards *thanatos*, and as such reverberates with Caillois's thesis of spatial mimicry—organism mimics *into* the milieu, to depersonalize.[55]

Yet, Yamaji stops short of complete inanimation and seeks out the "lack" that comes in the form of the other, alterity. The motive and motor behind this venture is precisely the narrative which, of course, presumes the other *qua* listener. Hence enters Hysterical Beauty, the sexual other, the interlocutor, "exuberance," into the space and giving rise to the narrative.

[55] The Greek term is given here to recall its opposing semantics *vis-à-vis* Freud's use of Eros.

Yamaji's euphoria thus displays strikingly corresponding traits *vis-à-vis* the homomorphy and homochromy observed among organisms by Caillois, a correspondence apparent in both Yamaji's boarding rooms and in the storehouse. At the same time, the introjection of the other subject disrupts its interiorizing, depersonalizing dynamic. Silverman, modifying Lacan, positions the screen as a mediation between the gaze and the subject-as-spectacle *and* between the gaze and the subject-as-look, each marking passive and active aspects of the subject as the eye. *Kura no naka*, however, inserts the screen between two subjects.[56] Insofar as the other "is there as absolute Other" in the first place, this differentiation may seem like a moot point.[57] Further, if the subject takes his position in the picture always "in the form of the screen," the conceptual boundaries among the three points of the visual field may seem redundant. Yet, it is the subtle gap or incommensurability between the terms that provides the very stuff of theory. The two subjects are different than the subject and the gaze insofar as it is their relation that effects certain shifts in the relation between the subject and the gaze/symbolic/Other.

Positioned between Yamaji and Hysterical Beauty, obstructing yet enabling the flow of their narrative voices guiding them towards *knowing* one another without *seeing*, a visibility possible only at the expense of blindness, the screen ceases to be a surface and becomes a thing among other things, amidst which the two subjects find themselves. Put in Caillois's terms, the objects together with the subjects give rise to a "milieu" whereby mimicry is "on the level of the object and not on that of the image."[58] This last term is rendered superfluous by the "depersonalization" of the screen into a *thing* that engenders "the active gift of love" by way of venturing into the other's memories and not at all a

[56] *Male Subjectivity at the Margins*, 145-50; *The Threshold of the Visible World*, 131-37.
[57] Lacan, *The Psychoses, 1955-56*, 38.
[58] Caillois, "Mimicry and Legendary Psychasthenia," 23.

surface either reflecting or nonreflecting *of images*: "[Her] face was hidden by the kimonos hanging from the ropes. 'Have you ever been married?' she asked suddenly." (75)

"Memories" is indeed the term to which Silverman's "ethics of the look" finally returns.[59] She conveys the crux of her discussion in the following passage:

> The conscious and unconscious faculties "lose their mutual exclusiveness" during the act of artistic creation. The works resulting from such an act consequently often engage us in more "primarized" forms of mental activity than are normal in daily life…. Such texts are capable of implanting in the viewer or reader "synthetic" memories—libidinally saturated associative clusters which act like those mnemonic elements which, as a result of a psychic working over, have been made the vehicles for the expression of unconscious wishes. … They are thus in a position to put marginal elements of the cultural screen in contact with what is most meaningful to a viewer or reader, and thereby to validate what would otherwise be neglected or despised. … It would, in short, introduce the "not me" into my memory reserve.[60]

It is certainly dubious that the two subjects in the storehouse are necessarily interested in the "not me" of one another's memories. At the same time, it is not so much their conscious intention as certain affective and bodily kinetics that lure them to a different relation. In other words, it is by way of *giving in* to the objectal milieu that the power of the screen and the gaze may be mitigated and unsettled. The key to the ethics proposed in *Kura no naka* has little to do with "the most conscious and willfully assumed pose" to counter the power of the screen—the latter as a set of socioculturally meaningful images—but everything to do with *undoing* such "photographic" poses, if by way of hyperbolic self-reflexivity of the visual apparatus apparent in the performativity as the virtual condition of the scenes inside the boarding house room as well as the storehouse.

[59] *The Threshold of the Visible World*, 170.
[60] Ibid., 184-85.

What is conspicuously absent in Silverman's studies, socioculturally motivated as they are, is this *second* subject. The cinematic text as the principal parameter may have effected this particular structure. At any rate, her explicatory paradigm passes between the gaze and the subject with the screen as their mediating surface, and thereby obfuscates the lateral relation *between* subjects—their contiguity, proximity, and distance that finally to give rise to that site where the "social and historical difference" must occur. Even when she differentiates the subject-as-spectacle and subject-as-the look the subject remains monadic, standing alone towards the blinding gaze that is the symbolic order. Silverman's reading of Rainer Werner Fassbinder's films bears out this fundamental paradigm. Valorizing the director's refusal to "commute exteriority into interiority—his refusal, that is, to naturalize identity by concealing its external scaffolding," Silverman spells out the "cultural difference" that may be reaped: "No character within that cinema, male or female, is ever represented as possessing the gaze."[61] This is a point designed to emend the canonical feminist critique in film studies problematizing the male look that "attempts to pass itself off as the gaze" by shifting the equation from the assumption that "the dominant cinema's scopic regime could be overturned by 'giving' woman the gaze" to "exposing the impossibility of anyone ever owning that visual agency."[62]

The shortcoming of this approach, this omission, is most starkly visible when the subject's "agency" *vis-à-vis* the gaze receives consideration. The crucial passage in Lacan's account of mimicry reads, "The human subject… is not, unlike the animal, entirely caught up in this imaginary capture. …He maps himself in it. How? In so far as he isolates the function of the screen and plays with it. Man, in effect, knows how to play

[61] *Make Subjectivity at the Margins*, 129.
[62] Ibid., 152; see 409 n. 30 for representative studies on the subject.

with the mask as that beyond which there is the gaze."[63] Silverman is quick to rectify any false hope that this "agency" may engender: "Mimicry also proceeds in relation to a preexisting representation which, in the case of the pose, derives from the cultural screen. It is thus limited to what is at a given moment representationally 'possible.'" Arguing that the "specularized subject has at best only the barest modicum of control over how he or she is apprehended by the camera/gaze" fails to offer a new bearing. What does "the barest modicum of control" signify *vis-à-vis* the camera/gaze if not *no control* in real terms?[64] Since Silverman adds,

> Mastery within the domain of mimicry does not imply only—or even primarily—that one successfully controls via the pose and various supplementary props how one is "photographed." The subject adopts an active role *vis-à-vis* the camera/gaze only insofar as he or she resists imaginary capture by the images through which he or she is voluntarily or involuntarily 'photographed'…. However, remaining at a productive distance from the mirror is almost impossible.

It is unnecessary to enter the long dispute as to where and how much subjective agency is to be located. Of interest for the present discussion is the missing piece in this *mise-en-scène* of theory itself. In other words, what if mimicry is imagined not only in the subject's relation to the gaze and the screen, but to also the other subject? Further, is it possible to speak of the "subject" in the absence of the other subject-as-look and subject-as-spectacle in the equation?

Silverman seems in fact to anticipate this concern when her discussion makes an uncharacteristic turn away from cinematic texts ordered by the single subject, the screen, and the gaze, to the life world that ought to be managed by the "conscious" subject for sociocultural changes:

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[63] *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psycho-Analysis*, 107; *The Threshold of the Visible World*, 204.
[64] *The Threshold of the Visible World*, 206.

> Assuming even a limited agency with respect to the images through which one is seen thus necessitates more than a preliminary acknowledgment of the exteriority of the screen and the camera/gaze, and an attempt to control the circumstances under which one's self-constituting 'photo' is taken. Adopting an active position in the field of vision entails, as well, a constant disruptive and transformative labor at the site of ideality. Such an effort requires the disjunction of the operations of idealization from both the self and the cultural ideal, as well as the subsequent identification at a distance with the newly and provisionally irradiated bodies…. However, it requires, as well, the exposure of our passionate and limitless desire to be the ideal, and, since that desire can never be definitely abolished, its continual deconstruction and displacement. Once again, I would maintain this as an ethical imperative (and as such a necessary impossibility) at the level of individual conscious subjectivity, and as a political imperative at the level of representational practice.[65]

This is a dense passage weighed down by the difficulty facing the (psychoanalytical) critic, that is, the precarious balancing act between the conscious and unconscious, agency and structure, and desire and ethics. At the same time, it is hard not to read it as a moral lesson, a far cry from the psychoanalytic investigation preceding it, and, for that, without the warmth of the other. How is the subject supposed to chart this beleaguered terrain exposed to the gaze *alone*? The conspicuous absence of the other subject, the *second* subject, seems to enable the very schematism of this abstract passage, even as Silverman reintroduces the conscious subject to the sociocultural field peopled by so many second subjects.

Put differently, Silverman's apparatic concern with the cinematic text always installs her critical enunciative position behind the camera, and thus even when the discussion involves plural subjects in their complex relations of desire and fantasy, the fundamental visual passage remains between the camera and one subject. The discussion

[65] Ibid. Italics added.

of *Kura no naka* in the rest of this chapter will work towards interjecting a second subject into that solitary scene as continually conjured by Silverman: "Even the subject who arrives at some understanding of his or her specular dependency generally does not then call into question the authority of the images which conventionally represent the visual idea. He or she merely seeks to be apprehended through them, thereby reaffirming the dominant fiction." Further, mimicry will make another return by way of the two subjects.

The exchange between Yamaji and Hysterical Beauty inside the storehouse now merits revisiting:

> Then she moved, and when I changed the position of my head on the pillow, her face was hidden by the kimonos hanging from the ropes. "Have you ever been married?" she asked suddenly. "No," I said, as I turned toward her. She was still hidden by the hanging kimonos. (75)

> I was about to say that she was uncontrollably hysterical and had been sent home for that reason, but the words got stuck in my throat. I suddenly remembered that the woman I was speaking to had been divorced and sent home because she was hysterical. *This time I used the silk crepe kimono hanging from the line to hide my face as I said*, "She was really very hysterical...." (76, italics added)

The scene recalls the case of film, marking as it does the visual distribution in every movement: The narrative follows each glance thrown, obstructed by the screen of kimonos, met by the other, or diverted in a splitting moment of discomfiture much like in a series of camera close-ups and short takes. And the screen is indeed what precipitates the relation to the other, hence a true mediating third term in the dynamic. Yet at the same time, it is a marker of non-fulfillment, insufficiency, even while enabling the relation to arise and therefore nothing to overcome. With the fantasy of fulfillment suspended, may it be possible already to imagine that the forbidding omnipresence of the Other's gaze has also been compromised? After all, is it not the subject's act-as-if that

sustains the Other and the "as if" precisely the "fantasy-construct," a transport toward fulfillment, and misrecognition thereof?[66] In other words, the screen as an obstructing yet enabling visual register holds a passage to the other that is disruptive of the triad of the eye/look, screen, and gaze. And, it is finally the other subject on the other side of the screen, now visible and now hidden, that precipitates "the look [that] foregrounds the desiring subjectivity of the figure from which it issues, a subjectivity which pivots upon lack."[67] In other words, the look—the subject, that which is most endowed with "conscious" agency—alone cannot deliver the ethical "act of love," but it is the continual seduction of the other mediated by the screen that flashes—a caprice of light and darkness, visibility and invisibility—more than it is "opaque."

Thus de-etherized, the screen, and, by extension, the gaze, gains further definition when Hysterical Beauty breaks out of the unspoken narrative agreement and "faces" Yamaji, which coincides with the deterioration of the magic of the moment supported by the spectral setting—another play of light and darkness. A series of *demand-ful* questions ensues, which traces her gradual identification with Yamaji's ex-wife, a complete stranger to her, and then with all women in the world, against men: "Why did you leave her? Why are men so cruel?" (76) The whirlwind continues: "What on earth did she do?" This is precisely a hysterical crisis whereby the female subject enacts transference—by both becoming the other woman and flashing back to her own trauma of divorce—on the one hand, and rages from an "identification with the violence of the thing that is

[66] See Žižek, *How to Read Lacan*, 10. Žižek's thesis is discussed in greater detail in chapter 2 of this study. For a more extensive discussion on fantasy and the Other, see Žižek's *The Sublime Object of Ideology*, 43-49.
[67] Silverman, *Male Subjectivity at the Margins*, 142.

experienced as traumatic," that is, perceived male "cruelty," on the other.[68] In other words, these questions *about* the other (woman) are so many articulations of the demand *of* the other: "*Che vuoi*?" More stage choreography follows: "By then we had moved away from the screen of clothes that hung between us and were facing each other. And again I forgot myself. I kept repeating the word hysteria over and over again." (77) And, more questions follow—"Did your wife come from the country?" "And where is she now?"—as if she must trace her own future in the other's past.

Two points are of particular interest here. First, it is a subtle but superb irony in the psychic dynamic that the direct gaze—"we…faced each other"—induces *forgetting*. Yamaji speaks of a forgetting of *himself*—"again I forgot myself (*ware o wasurete*)." Yet, the ensuing tension signifies quite the opposite: he has forgotten the *other*. The same can be said of Hysterical Beauty, whose gentle interest in Yamaji quickly clenches into a vengeful indictment. Thus, *the unobstructed view of the other renders him/ her invisible to the subject*. Alternatively, *the subject can hear the other only by the mediation of the screen*, without which conversation turns into a monologue—or, the subject regresses to the narcissistic mirror-stage: the *byōbu* as an object gives way to the screen on which is projected the light of the gaze/Other. Secondly, Yamaji's remarkable sensitivity to the visual organization within the scene and its enabling/disabling of different enunciatory modes/moods signals a particular subjective possibility under the guise of frivolity. At the same time, Hysterical Beauty betrays a certain psychic volatility erupting through the apparently tender scene of seduction.

[68] Mitchell writes, "A hysterical identification with the violence of the thing that is experienced as traumatic is also a part of the rage that is the other side of the charm of the hysteric." *Mad Men and Medusas: Reclaiming Hysteria* (New York: Basic Books, 2000), 33.

Thus, as soon as the screen is drawn back to allow full visual exposure, the Lacanian gaze returns to the psychic horizon. For hysteria cannot constitute without this gaze, "the intrusion of the symbolic into the field of vision."[69] Yet to argue, even tentatively, that the storehouse scene does away with the Lacanian gaze ought not be taken to suggest that there is such a significatory space as able to constitute itself apart from the symbolic. The subtle difference worth insisting upon is the intimacy of the *two* yet to be explored, which may dislodge, however subtly, the totalizing dynamic of the subject, the screen, and the gaze. The intimate scene inside the storehouse is a way of releasing, if tentatively and subtly, "the absolute imbrication of ideology and subjectivity" in order to narrate the site in which two subjects are bared down to the absolute reality of being with the other.[70] Put differently, the socialized, "ideological status of the screen" may be unfettered down to the private commerce between two subjects.[71] The screen *between* rather than *of* subjects, that is, the screen that divides or distances the subject from the other rather than project an image(s) for the subject to idealize suggests a certain passage that softens, certainly not to dismiss, the Lacanian gaze. Lacan's conjuration of "the mediation of masks"—the screen, that is—as that through which "the masculine and the feminine meet in the most acute, most intense way," echoes here for yet different reverberations.[72]

In the end it is distance that enables the subject to relate, listen, and speak to the other. In other words, *Kura no naka* suggests that the "productivity of the look" perhaps does not depend so much on "its acknowledgement and acceptance that the void upon

[69] Silverman, *The Threshold of the Visible World*, 133.
[70] Ibid., 23.
[71] Ibid., 150.
[72] Lacan, *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psycho-Analysis*, 107.

which it depends is the irreducible condition of all subjectivity" as the account by Silverman suggests.[73] Rather, it returns to the key term in Silverman's work on the visual field and the possibility of love therein: distance. Yet, here distance is, ineluctably, to the other subject. Is it not akin to the "distance" to which Benjamin referred in relation to "aura"?: "We define the term aura …as the unique phenomenon of a distance, *however close it may be*."[74] For, crucially, "to perceive the aura of an object we look at means to invest it with the ability to look at us *in return*."[75] Furthermore, considered this way, the body also receives a different imagery, not one "in bits and pieces" but one that morphs around the contours of the other's body.[76]

6.

In bringing this discussion close, the initial observations that began it may be recalled. If the mistresses of other men with whom Yamaji dallies desire to letter, *spell*, inscribe the other, and if Hysterical Beauty resorts to hysterical transference at the glare of the gaze which has necessarily been brought on by the other, Yamaji hesitates before the very possibility of the gaze. This indeed opaque awareness of the gaze renders the very performativity of the hesitation inflated into the storehouse scene. The whimsical close-up of Yamaji—or, his mouth— reduced to *stammering* in the storehouse scene speaks volumes as it illuminates the Father's language captured in a moment of compromise on

[73] Silverman, *The Threshold of the Visible World*, 169.
[74] "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Production," in *Illuminations: Essays and Reflections*, ed. Hannah Arendt, trans. Harry Zohn (New York: Schocken Books, 1969), 222. Italics added.
[75] "On Some Motifs in Baudelaire," *Illuminations: Essays and Reflections*, ed. Hannah Arendt, trans. Harry Zohn (New York: Schocken Books, 1969), 188. Italics added.
[76] Silverman deploys this imagery as an alternative to the "wholeness" and "unity" conjured by the Lacanian mirror image, and extends it to refer to a fantasy of bodily disintegration arising from the impossibility of approximating an ideal image or "an obligatory identification with an intolerable imago." *The Threshold of the Visible World*, 20; 29.

the one hand and the hysteric's large mouth—a "vocal Medusa"—transferred to the male body.[77] If Yamaji could be considered a male hysteric as his own words express—"Of course, you could call a man such as I am a male hysteric" (76)—it would be for this transference, which takes the form of an assault on the phallic sign, language itself. The question then arises of Yamaji's "masculinity," to use the term not as an essential property of man, but following Silverman's problematics.

To speak first of all in terms of the capitalism proposed as a critical framework at the beginning of the chapter, insofar as consumerism itself was feminized in his own milieu, Yamaji's love of kimonos, easily misrecognized as a consumerist desire, already compromises whatever heteronormative identitarian contours may be ascribed to him.[78] Further, when he unwittingly becomes a beneficiary of women's consumption, as noted above, their sexual and gender relation enters a mode of female domination. To characterize Yamaji as "dephallicized," however, would be misleading not only because it presumes a prior "phallic" mode of being but also he may call for an entirely different subjective articulation.[79]

To complicate matters still further, in contrast to the women almost virile in their sexual manifestation, Yamaji confesses to the sudden onset of sexual impotence:

> Last year I had a strange experience, though. I, who have known women since my teens and have enjoyed them much more than most men, suddenly, without warning, completely exhausted (*sukkari shōmō shikitte*)

[77] On the "vocal medusa," see Kahane, *Passions of the Voice*, 7.
[78] For gendering of the consumer and department stores' role therein in from the 1890s, see Odaira, *Onna ga onna o enjiru*, chapter 1; Jinno Yuki, *Shumi no tanjō: hyakkaten ga tsukutta teisuto* (Keisō shobō, 1994), chapter 2. Closely reverberating with the two, Ruth E. Iskin notes, "It is thus very likely that posters, along with other department-store advertising, played a significant role in this change by encouraging women to consume mass-produced fashion and accessories to establish their status and identity." See "Material Women: The Department-Store Fashion Poster in Paris, 1880-1900," in *Material Women, 1750-1950: Consuming Desires and Collecting Practices*, ed. Maureen Daly Goggin and Beth Fowkes Tobin (Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate, 2009), 36.
[79] Davidson uses the term to describe James's hero Prince Amerigo. "Ornamental Identity," 35.

> my vitality (*seiryoku*). … I felt as if I were losing my mind completely…and let my feet guide me…. They led me to a place where women are available for money. (47-8)

The measures Yamaji chooses to cure what he terms his "strange lapse in health" (53) are extreme not so much for their inordinacy but the most undesirable consequence imaginable for this lover of kimonos: "Then too, I was almost buried in debts, and all I had left were a few kimonos, and I had to have new clothes each and every season. So I had to pack off, one by one, those dear kimonos to the pawnshop." (48) Yet, his sense of urgency regarding the event of impotence seems misplaced, if not completely bizarre: "I was abandoned (*suterare*) by the woman with whom I had been on very intimate terms for a while. And, *this—you may think I am vain* (*unubore*) *but—was absolutely not for any other reason*. Even now I believe that the reason why I was abandoned was the problem I just mentioned." (48, italics added)[80] Regarding the first mistress, Yamaji makes a similar point: "Yes, she soon tired of me. And I don't believe that I'm conceited when I say I'm convinced that my strange lapse in health was the reason…." (53)

For Yamaji, it seems, penile potency is far from the supreme value in sexual relations. The question then becomes: When the penile has been subtracted from the sexual, what fulfills the heterosexual relation for man? Tentative answers may be found by way of scrutinizing the incongruity of the situation itself. Formulated differently, what exactly is valorized when Yamaji professes his love of women? What could he possibly imagine as reasons for which women may abandon him, other—and more important—than impotence? What kind of heterosexual love is conjured here? Perhaps "heterosexual" itself ought to be rethought to afford a heterogeneity that is not reducible to the "two"

[80] In Gerbert's translation the italicized portion is drastically truncated.

sexes. Further, could it be that the consequence—or, *production*—of the pervasive indebtedness, pawned down to "the kimono I'm wearing," has some light to shed on this libidinal matter? For the *debting* involves none other than the most treasured—"I love them more than women"—objects of desire?

What seems ripe for suggestion is the entire sequence—or, rather, metonymy—of impotence, pawning driven to its limit, and the entry into the storehouse that signals a libidinal economy irreducible to the heterosexual progression, i.e. from seduction to intercourse, or any facile metaphoricization, e.g., kimono fetishism symbolizing the materialization of human relations. This will be the subject of the following section. What needs to be recalled here is the drama of the consuming, sexual, and vengeful woman dialectically woven together with the impotent man. At the same time, it is precisely the seeming inevitability of this juxtaposition *qua* opposition that demands further reading. And it may be undone, theoretically if not in the relation itself, only by way of the textual investment in pathology from which they suffer, together.

If commodity fetishism configures *Kura no naka* as Takahashi Seori argues, it does so insofar as it gives way, or is always already integral, to sexual fetishism. Or, as Slavoj Žižek's psychoanalytic reading of Marx would have it: "'Instead of appearing at all events as their own mutual relations, the social relations between individuals are disguised under the shape of social relations between things'—here we have a precise definition of the hysterical symptom, of the 'hysteria conversion' proper to capitalism."[81]

[81] *The Sublime Object of Ideology*, 26.

7.

If the mistresses' consumerist appropriation of Yamaji seems at once juvenile and disconcerting, it may be due to the very familiarity of the psychic and behavioral operation laid bare in these scenes: namely, mimesis. In a highly performative feat of mimetic inversion, these women play the part of their patrons and thereby reproduce their own images in Yamaji. In fact, if it is possible to read a certain "simultaneity of contradictory actions" of "bisexual disposition" in their acts—feminine seduction played out in the masculine domination reconciled in the ambiguous semantics of consumerism—following Freud, it can be found that these mistresses display nothing less than the hysterical identification.[82] The reflexive transference of Hysterical Beauty herself, that is, mimetic identification with women, in the same movement rapidly mobilizing violent urges against men, signals a replication of this hysteria. In fact, mimeticism constitutes the very grammar of relation between Yamaji and women. On the one hand, it designates in a realist semantics Yamaji's novelistic production, which supposedly takes its materials from his relationships with women. This narrow concept of mimesis, or *shajitsu* to be precise, recalls the contemporary literary discourse on the relation between literature and reality, which began with the very inception of modern Japanese literature but became most notably articulated with the Naturalist debates towards the end of the Meiji era.[83] On the other hand, it organizes Yamaji's gestures of *relating* to women. For Yamaji, (hetero)sexual encounters are intricately woven together

[82] Sigmund Freud, "Hysterical Phantasies and Their Relation to Bisexuality," in *Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, vol. IX, trans. and ed. James Strachey (London: Hogarth Press; Institute of Psychoanalysis, 1959), 166.
[83] See Hibi, "*Jiko hyōshō" no bungakushi*, 107-126.

with pleasures of *approximating* women. Further, his extravagant love of kimonos stands as the mediating site of these two articulations of mimeticism.

A more nuanced instance of woman's mimesis found in the character of the "unknown actress" (*na mo nai joyū*) may afford an illuminating entry into Yamaji's mimeticism, novelistic and more. One the one hand, she recalls more docile female figures, like Yoshiko of Tayama Katai's "Futon," desiring and mimicking male ideals: "At first she thought she would write, then she thought she would paint; but she never wavered in her desire to lead the life of an artist." (73) To call these aspirations "male" may seem reverse sexism. However, they are indubitably situated within the larger "exclusive-inclusive" discursive economy discussed in Chapter 2:

> She said to me, "A *literary man* that you are (*bungakusha no kuse ni*), you don't have *thought* (*shisō*). You have such old ideas, no wonder you can't write anything better than mushy stories of love (*ren'ai shōsetsu*). … It may seem that I lead a *life* of *love* (*ren'ai seikatsu*) but in *truth* I lead a *life* of *thought* (*shisō seikatsu*)." … "I'm going to take off the doll's clothes," she said, and that was that. Of course, I recognized it as a line from Ibsen.[84]

Her censure of Yamaji's literary status reads like a montage of citations from a contemporary literary journal, precisely the province of the literary fraternity of *shishōsetsu* authors. It is worth noting that Yamaji consistently refers to himself as a "novelist" (*shōsetsuka*), not a "literary man" (*bungakusha*). The implied continuity between the "literary man" and "thought" is an articulation of the larger ideology of the author pivoting on the notion of character (*jinkakushugi*), often translated as

[84] Gerbert's flowing translation has been literalized here for the benefit of the argument. Uno, *Love of Mountains*, 73. Italics added.

"personalism."[85] A comment by psychologist Dr. Morita brings the further implications of the actress's critique into focus: "[Hysteria] occurs most often between the age of 15-25, marked by emotional sensitivity, after which thought (*shisō*) becomes firmer and hysteria weakens."[86] (108) This opposition of hysteria to thought clearly betrays the ideological project of domesticating what was considered the "female" psychic life. At the same time, however, her dramatic reference to Ibsen's heroine positions her, doubly and contradictorily, as a mimic: she voices a feminist desire through the thoroughly masculinist ideological language. This brings her precisely to the psychosomatic mode of "tonal instability" that Kahane theorizes as the hysterical voice.[87] Yet, it may be unnecessary to consider the actress a hysteric insofar as she seems successfully interpellated. For as Žižek observes,

> [In] the last resort, what is hysteria if not precisely the effect and testimony of a failed interpellation; what is the hysterical question if not an articulation of the incapacity of the subject to fulfill the symbolic identification, to assume fully and without restraint the symbolic mandate?[88]

Yet, to repeat, considering the actress a hysteric is unnecessary, but not unfeasible because complete interpellation is finally a fantasy as much as a complete faith in the subject as agent. In the end, does not the potency of the Lacanian *objet petit a* lie precisely in this doubleness of the psychic operation?[89] Hence the hysteric increasingly theorized as that universal subjective affliction.

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[85] For more on personalism during the Taishō era, see Yamamoto, *Bungakusha wa tsukurareru*, esp. 89-109; for its earlier history, see Ōhigashi, *Bungaku no tanjō*, esp. 5-24.
[86] "Hisuterī no hanashi," 109.
[87] *Passions of the Voice*, viii.
[88] Žižek, *The Sublime Object of Ideology*, 113.
[89] Žižek argues against Althusser's notion of "ideological interpellation through which the symbolic machine of ideology is 'internalized' into the ideological experience of Meaning and Truth," to which he responds, "[This] 'internalization', by structural necessity, never fully succeeds, that there is always a

The actress inherits the mistresses' heterosexual and capitalist dominance to articulate it in the particular ideological language. Several questions arise from this dramatic scenario in which women mimicking men descend upon the hero with their respective hysterical demands: What constitutes this recurring dynamic? What kind of *man* is Yamaji to render himself to their aggression? What do these women achieve through their mimetic appropriation of Yamaji? In order to account for this intriguingly convoluted relationality, charged as it is with sexual/izing and gendered/ing signification, it is necessary to draw further on the kimonos, Yamaji's supremely narcissistic objects.

Yamaji is emphatic in expressing his love of kimonos. Throughout the narrative he repeats "my dear kimonos" (*watashi no aisuru kimono domo*) (43; 48; 49) to the point of considering them "almost dearer to me than my very life." (49) It may not be theoretically viable to call this libidinal investment in kimonos "feminine." To orient the discussion differently, in *Kura no naka*, this love tends towards a transvestism. First, Yamaji volunteers,

> I fully understand women who part with their most precious possession for the sake of kimonos. Should I be mistaken, surely that can easily be forgiven. Anyway, who would care to contradict the likes of me? And if there were such a person, I would have to say that that person doesn't know how much women love kimonos. (63)

It is Yamaji's own understanding that his peculiar love of kimonos draws him close to the other sex, even though it is Yamaji, a man, who exemplifies a most extreme obsession with kimonos to the point where his economic life is wholly devoted to paying interest on

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residue, a leftover, a stain of traumatic irrationality and senselessness sticking to it, and that *this leftover, far from hindering the full submission of the subject to the ideological command, is the very condition of it*." *The Sublime Object of Ideology*, 43. Žižek's italics.

kimonos that he no longer sees, and wears still less and thereby earning amazement and derision in turn from the women

Yamaji's professed physical frailty, extending beyond sexual impotence, also aligns him toward this feminization, yielding as it does to a certain pose that is at once corporeal and affective: "My heart skipped a beat" (53); "She beat me mercilessly" (77); "my extreme sensitivity to drafts and cold air" (46). Perhaps most consequentially, Yamaji is acutely conscious of the critical audience, which is most clearly captured by his linguistic pose. The narrative language gives rise to a certain modality of gender that may be characterized as feminine within the particular discursive milieu of the Taishō era. Not only the grammatical details—the ubiquitous formal first-person pronoun *watakushi* and deferential verb forms of *desu* and *masu*—highlights the performer's lowly position *vis-à-vis* the imaginary audience. Intriguingly, through this interlaying of performance and a particular language, performance itself becomes feminized—insofar as the latter term designates a discursive impulse that is non-phallic, that is, dispersive rather than cohering. Yamaji himself characterizes his "foolish, rambling tale" (64) as feminine: "It's little else but the woman in me, whining, complaining, and bumbling on from behind a manly mask." (57) If Yamaji's self-characterization seems sexist at a first look, it is sufficiently allayed when considered *vis-à-vis* the ways in which he engages with his body *en route* to the female sex on the one hand and in which "real" women encounter him on the other, which the rest of the discussion will elaborate. For now, suffice it to recall Neil Hertz's brilliant if scandalous characterization of Freud as a young physician in the company of masters like Breuer and Charcot: "Freud's distinctly marginal relation to this scene of professional knowingness…locates him close to the position of the woman in his

analysis…, just as his being paralyzed with amazement aligns him with the (mostly female) victims of hysterical paralysis. *In his innocence, in his capacity to receive impressions, he is feminized.*"[90] It is an instance of "not so much coding of men as women rather than uncoding men as men" to borrow Lynne Kirby's reading of male hysteria in the context of the early films representing railway trauma.[91]

To take further this point regarding the integration of Yamaji's sexual and gender attributes with his staged narrative persona, it is hardly unsurprising that a most sophisticated articulation of "gender trouble" should have turned to the performative province, even though the theoretical thesis strives not to slip into the most superficial understanding of "performance."[92] In other words, there is a certain antithetical force in *performance per se vis-à-vis* the phallic, Oedipal, or Symbolic regime that merit further investigation within and beyond the particular gender or feminist theories that currently appropriate the concept. At any rate, Yamaji's consciously performative language almost *has to arise as* a feminized pose, or *vice versa*.

Yamaji's language is also marked by extreme loquacity, hyperbole, and self-deprecation and thereby displays qualities dialectically opposed to the contemporary ideal of "the self-aware, mature, emancipated 'modern self' (*kindai jiga*)," that is the *shishōsetsu* author/hero.[93] The *shishōsetsu* narrative language thus gains its contours and force through complete absorption in the narrating subject and, simultaneously, feigned ignorance of the readers—a fabulous pose considering the tightly woven community

[90] "Dora's Secrets, Freud's Techniques," in *In Dora's Case: Freud-Hysteria-Feminism*, ed. Charles Bernheimer and Claire Kahane (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985), 239.
[91] "Male Hysteria and Early Cinema," *Camera Obscura* 17 (May 1988): 126.
[92] Butler endeavored to rectify this slippage to which *Gender Trouble* had been reduced in conjunction with the question of the material body in the performative in her subsequent book *Bodies That Matter*. In the latter, she notes, "[The performative act] is not primarily theatrical," 12.
[93] For Gerbert's eloquent descriptions of the narrative language of *Kura no naka*, see Uno, *Love of Mountains*, 13-15.

conditioning the very possibility of the *shishōsetsu* narration. In turn, Yamaji's language is persistently focused on calling attention to the narrative situation, a point highlighted by the ostensibly performative narrative frame.

Thus, if Yamaji's libidinal economy may be called "feminine," it designates, first, the narrative and gestural performativity and second, in the more immediately recognizable register of gender roles, his (perception of) an affective bond with women on the one hand and self-professed unmanly qualities on the other. The confusing inter-*posing* of the two registers is precisely what provokes discourse, that is, where hysteria gapes. In other words, in the kind of approximation of the female sex that Yamaji performs, it is the temporality or modality of *relation* that is this "approximation," rather than the female sex as its object, that may be called feminine. Once again, it is *distance* in the manner captured by Derrida:

> A woman seduces from a distance. In fact, distance is the very element of her power. … Out of depths, endless and unfathomable, she engulfs and distorts all vestige of essentiality, of identity, of property. … There is no such thing as the truth of woman, but it is because of that abyssal divergence of the truth, because that untruth is «truth.» *Woman is but one name for that untruth of truth.*[94]

This *move towards* may be thought by way of the conceptual passage of mimesis. Read in this way, *Kura no naka* could perhaps offer itself up as a felicitous textual moment to address multiple strata of a single problematic: *shishōsetsu*, feminism, modernity, all of which continue to raise the question of how to relate to the other.

[94] Jacques Derrida, *Spurs/Éperons*, trans. Barbara Harlow (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979), 51. Italics added.

Behind the long history of Yamaji's treasured kimonos is his sexual body from its brimming youth to impotence.[95] Yamaji's first experience with pawning coincided with his first romantic encounter—or, more an adolescent infatuation with a seasoned entertainer (*gidayū*). Failing to reach consummation, it nevertheless inaugurated both the succession of "uncommon women" (72) in his heterosexual history and pawning as a poetic vice intimately tracing them. Beyond immediate economic exigency, for Yamaji pawning gains its true significance in his libidinal life, signaling a certain affective logic or circulation of traces. That is to say, each of Yamaji's encounters with women is memorialized through the *loss* of a tangible object, i.e., a kimono. Yet loss is a relative term. Through the perpetually provisional act of pawning, Yamaji recuperates the objects—or, rather, preempts their loss. The question is then why this anxious gesture *vis-à-vis* loss must arise in libidinal contexts—love, sex, and marriage. What is the status of the objects—i.e., kimonos—in relation to women, the sexual others? Or, *are they* others? Could it be that their otherness is none that could be so hastily pronounced? Some provisional answers may be sought in the narrative production to which kimonos give rise, which is also the region where hysteria invites critical attention.

From the very first account of a romantic/heterosexual encounter, Yamaji promises: "Since I'm going to write about this in greater detail in a novel, I'll just give you a sort of summary here" (52); "[Since] one of these days I'm going to write about this in a novel anyway, I'll be as brief and to the point as possible." (64) Most emphatically, the narrative itself arises as a fulfillment of these promises as Yamaji the narrator reminisces about several of his past romantic encounters. However, it may be

[95] As a beginning he cites his "middle school days," which should correspond to the late teens. At the narrative present, he is forty years old.

hasty to read these declarations as derivative of the *shishōsetsu* economy of "real" life providing narrative material for the literary work. As suggested earlier, *shishōsetsu* gains its final dignity by *not* referring to this mechanism. More importantly, any critical postulation of a direct relation between "real" life and the literary text itself would be a naïve capitulation to the *shishōsetsu* regime. This is the kind of textual moment that critics have valorized as Uno's "critical consciousness" *vis-à-vis* the contemporary *bundan* milieu, i.e., that of the *shishōsetsu*.[96] However, to call anything "critical *of*" something fails to move beyond the positivism that is precisely the cardinal error of the *shishōsetsu* confidence in representational reality. In other words, Uno's text is not so much critical of anything as it bears out the ways in which a text can (only) both thoroughly inhabit and insert itself as difference into, or arise as alterity of, a given discursive field. Thus, what is available for further reading below leads to a rather different direction than that which preceding studies have taken.

There are two women characters in *Kura no naka* who make direct comments on the mode of narrative production that Yamaji cannot seem to announce enough: writing women into novels. One is Hysterical Beauty, the supposed sister of the pawnbroker, who has been recently divorced and is now staying at his brother's, her legal natal residence assuming that he is the head of the family; hence her other unpalatable moniker *demodori*, literally "returned," meaning divorcée. She too is an avid reader of Yamaji's novels: "[That] divorcée checked out your name and said that you're a famous novelist. Miss Hysteria is a great reader of novels, you know." (59) The productive metonymy of marital breakdown, hysteria, and the novel goes back to the quintessential hysteric,

[96] For example, see Tani Akira, "Uno Kōji no hihyōsei"; Miyasaka Kōichi, "Katari tsuzukeru 'watashi'—Uno Kōji 'Kura no naka' ron," *Kokubungaku kenkyū* 150 (October 2006).

Emma Bovary. Idling in fantasies of reading or writing *herself*, this particular hysteric desires to be narrativized: "Please *write* about me sometime in your novels. I'll *tell* you everything. May I visit you?" (74; italics added) The differentiation *assumed* between the position/right/ability to write (*kaku*) on the one hand and to speak (*hanasu*) on the other is a significant one. At the most basic level, it bears out the culturally instituted sexual/gender inequivalence. In addition, and especially within this erotically charged scene—she has just walked into the storehouse where Yamaji had been napping under the kimonos hung up to air—writing thus privileged signals a certain inscriptive domination that carries the double entendre of sexual seduction. It takes only one breath to arrive at Freud's seduction theory for hysteria.[97] However, the text of *Kura no naka* complicates the Freudian thesis further. That is to say, Hysterical Beauty's self-intuited seduction scenario discordantly reverberates with the first mistress's invitation to Yamaji for a rendezvous of *omemoji*—lettering with eyes, i.e., visual inscription. If woman emerges first and foremost as a hysteric, the status of writing as a form of dominance ought to be grasped for its complex significatory value. Thus, between these two episodes of heterosexual affairs, writing is given as a sexual act, with all the attendant dynamic of power, subjection, and violence. And the drama further heats up beyond even this.

The most vicious figure in the story, who happens to be the only woman ever married to Yamaji, contends this very problem of narrativization. And it is her whom Yamaji in an almost automated pronouncement describes as "hysterical": "She was hysterical." (75); "She was really very hysterical." (76) Within the few paragraphs spared her, this ex-wife conjures extreme volatility, both physical and psychical. First of all, she

[97] For the revised version that displaces actual sexual abuse with fantasies, see "Extracts from the Fliess Papers" (1950 [1892-1899]), in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, vol. I, trans. and ed. James Strachey (London: Hogarth Press, 1966), 259-60.

comments on Yamaji's obsession with kimonos: "A man that you are (*otoko no kuse ni*), you wear something like *omeshi*" (*omeshi* is a luxurious type of silk crepe).[98] While her derision harbors a certain normative anxiety *vis-à-vis* Yamaji's gender-bending fashion, she does not shy away from voicing the ambivalence of her own desire, albeit entirely unconsciously:

> [Without] warning she would thrust some of her kimonos at me and tell me to take them to the pawnshop at once. My pleadings to her to give me a little time to raise the money she needed—if she needed any—had no effect. … When I came back with money, I had to take her to the Ginza or to a movie, and she became so lively, in so weird a way, that I didn't dare show any dejection. And if she detected the least expression of disapproval on my face, she exploded in a rage. And it didn't take her more than two days, or at the most three, before she started all over again with complaints such as, "You have all the Ōshima silk and other nice kimonos that you want, and I have nothing but this common silk that I'm wearing. How can I go out with you, so elegant, when I'm dressed so miserably? And it's all because of you. You forced me to pawn my best clothes." (76)

Putting aside the readerly suspicion of the narrator's positionality from which this woman figure is captured, and also letting pass the obvious illogic that her behaviors supposedly display, it may be more profitable to focus in on the mimetic acts that yield to (in)felicities.

First, it is entirely imaginable that she had known of Yamaji's habitual visits to the pawnshop, which allowed him to acquire new kimonos each season. Given this, the woman's insistence on pawning her own kimonos, despite Yamaji's pleas to let him procure money without recourse to that demeaning service, is more a gesture of mimetic vengeance. What she is after is not money but a certain libidinal participation. In short, it

[98] Translation modified. Gerbert gives a more colloquial version: "Why do you, a man, need so many clothes?" Uno, *Love of Mountains,* 75.

is Yamaji's narcissism that his ex-wife finds unbearable. When this demand has been met, however, there remains another side of Yamaji's narcissism: namely, his luxurious indulgence in kimonos, which has nothing to do with financial means but everything to do with bodily comportment, whereby he derives every drop of delicious appreciation from each kimono he dons:

> At times I not only changed kimonos three times a day but changed all of my clothes three times within the very short period I spent at my desk. I changed obi, *haori*-kimono combinations, underkimonos, and all my underwear. Someone watching might have thought that I suddenly had to go somewhere and would certainly have been surprised seeing me in the nude, stripped of my clothing, as if my extreme sensitivity to drafts and cold air had suddenly vanished. Sometimes, and just as impulsively, I changed into Western clothes and sat in the wicker chair…watching the sky while smoking a cigarette. On other occasions I went as far as spreading newspapers on the tatami, and putting on the appropriate geta or straw sandal…walked back and forth swinging a walking stick. (46)

It is this euphoric pleasure that the ex-wife is at a loss to *apprehend*. Thus, her mimetic effort misfires; or, rather, by its very psychic structure, her discontent can only misfire. For it is the form of *being* that she defies, necessarily in *both* herself and her sexual other, Yamaji. Her "*Che vuoi*?" is "What is this pleasure you seem to have that I cannot?"; "What is it that you do?"; "What is it that I want that gives rise to this rage at you?" all modalized by the condition of Yamaji being a "man," and therefore her being a woman.

One might rush to the most superficial interpretation: She does not know what she wants! Superficial it may be, however, such a confident pronouncement does approach the conundrum of the hysteric. In Freud's formulation, the hysteric is characterized by *ignorance* that arises from a certain type of *knowledge*: "For where there is no knowledge of sexual processes even in the unconscious, no hysterical symptom will arise; and where

hysteria is found, there can no longer be any question of 'innocence of mind"…."[99] What/That she knows without knowing is ultimately the enigma of the hysterical enunciation, which may be more available for reading than its forbidding appearance warrants.

The most dramatic explosion is saved for a seemingly entirely different matter: "The worst was when she discovered and was offended by the mention of a love affair in one of my novels, a love affair that had nothing to do with her…. [It] fanned the fire of her hysteria to the point of where—and this is embarrassing to say—she beat me mercilessly." (77) It would be a theoretical failure to read this hysterical rage as an expression of jealousy. The text is ambiguous about the possible relation of the woman to the figures supposedly portrayed in his novels. Suzan Katz may have captured the ex-wife's rage best in her remark,

> "What remains troubling about the literary form of the case history as a synthesis of clinical observations and fictional devices is that the 'heroines' disguised for anonymity's sake behind pseudonyms and altered circumstances were *real* women; and Freud was trying to direct the course of their lives with his personal and literary values."[100]

In other words, Yamaji's emphasis—"a love affair that had nothing to do with her"—suggests her impulse to read herself in his novels. That is to say, it is possible to read her rage as a reaction to narrative subjectivization.

Despite the apparently opposing views of narrativization held by the ex-wife and Hysterical Beauty—the former violently negative and the latter seductively inviting—they converge on the assumption that writing is a man's job, even more than the beating

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[99] Sigmund Freud, "Fragment of an Analysis of a Case of Hysteria" (1905), in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, vol. VII, trans. and ed. James Strachey (London: Hogarth Press, 1953), 49.
[100] "Speaking Out Against the 'Talking Cure,'" *Women's Studies* 13 (1987): 299.

of a spouse: "If I were a man, I'd want to be a writer," says Hysterical Beauty. (74) The ex-wife's corporeal protest suggests her (unconscious) acceptance of the reality as impossible to signify in the given Symbolic language. Theirs is what Kahane calls "a doubled conflict" familiar to "the etiology of hysteria: identification and rivalry with [their] mother (which implies desire for the father) and identification and rivalry with [their] father (which implies desire for the mother)," articulated in their ambiguous superimposition of seduction and violence.[101] Between the two women, hysteria gathers its semantic as well as structural contours as *seduction of and resistance to mimesis*.

8.

Yet, this expropriative view of narrativization is acceptable only as part and parcel of the *shishōsetsu* logic of a transparency between "real" life and the literary *work* (*sakuhin*)—the latter by definition foreclosing the concept of the text. Most obviously, literal transcription of lived experience is impossible. More properly, however, mimeticism implicit in the *shishōsetsu* ideology conceals the ontology of the mimetic operation that is generative of *difference* rather than sameness. In fact, it is the women themselves who expose the gap between speaking and writing—which ought further to be released into *writing that always already inscribes speaking*—albeit unwittingly, and thereby unsettles the *shishōsetsu* confidence in mimesis as a nondifferential copy.

Shishōsetsu is nevertheless a poignant response, not only in the (post)colonial context discussed above, but also to the mandate for realism. It would not be farfetched to consider the early phases of modern Japanese literature as those of an evolvement around

[101] Kahane draws on Joan Rivière's article, "Womanliness as Masquerade" (1929) to advance this psychic diagram. *Passions of the Voice*, 8.

the single quest of realism, that is, the question of how to depict reality. This process gave rise to various technical—linguistic, narrative, and even printing—innovations, all converging on the supreme problem of the narrating subject. The combined weight of this background propels *shishōsetsu* toward its final baptism as *the* Japanese novel.[102] Karatani Kōjin provides a cogent summary: "Then and now, there is criticism of shishōsetsu that considers it a departure from the novel, that is, a late and distorted form of the novel. But, shishōsetsu has its own logic. Shishōsetsu was a way of making 'realism' as complete as possible, I think. For that, the fiction of the third-person objective description is unacceptable."[103] In the end, it is a question of mimesis: "[An] imitation is unified when it is the imitation of an unified object, so in poetry the plot…must be the imitation of a unified action comprising a whole…*if the presence or absence of a thing makes no discernable difference, that thing is not part of the whole*."[104]

Against this exclusionary notion and operation of mimesis, it seems almost inevitable that the feminist intervention came in large measure by way of precisely that concept. Luce Irigaray's at once philosophical and poetic insurgency aiming at "disrupting and modifying" the unquestioned order of the "one sex" or the "indifference that underlies the truth of any science, the logic of everyday discourse" arrives at a scandalous proposal for voicing the feminine sexual experience.[105] Placing pressure on Plato's distinction of two mimeses—the productive kind found in the realm of music, and

[102] For this subject, see Kamei, *Transformations of Sensibility*; Komori, *Kōzō to shite no katari* and *Buntai to shite no monogatari*; Seth Jacobowitz, "The Scene of Writing in Meiji Japan: Media, Language, and Realism in Modern Japanese Novel" (Ph.D. diss., Cornell University, 2002).
[103] *Kindai bungaku no owari*, 55.
[104] Aristotle, *Aristotle's Poetics*, trans. James Hutton (New York: Norton, 1982), 53-54.
[105] Luce Irigaray, *The Irigaray Reader*, ed. Margaret Whitford (Cambridge, Mass.: Basil Blackwell, 1991), 118.

another that is "already caught up in a process of imitation, specularization, adequation, and reproduction"—Irigaray differentiates two registers of the feminine speech corresponding to two discursive "syntaxes."[106] Masquerade designates "what women do in order to recuperate some element of desire, to participate in man's desire, but at the price of renouncing their own."[107] The alternative she suggests is an inverse performance of mimicry, which is "historically assigned to the feminine," that is, to "assume the feminine role *deliberately*."[108] The theoretical problem of the Platonic bifurcation of mimesis or Irigaray's positing of masquerade as separable from mimicry demands a closer examination than can be undertaken here. Closer to the interest of the present discussion, Irigaray proposes a radical reading of hysteria as "a privileged place for preserving that which does not speak," that is, a strategy—not so much to be deployed as to be found—in the syntax of mimicry:

> Hysteria: *it speaks* in the mode of a paralyzed gestural faculty, of an impossible and also a forbidden speech…. It speaks as *symptoms* of an "it can't speak to or about itself"…. And the drama of hysteria is that it is inserted schizotically between that gestural system, that desire paralyzed and enclosed within its body, and a language that it has learned in the family, in school, in society, which is in no way continuous with—nor, certainly a metaphor for—the "movements" of its desire. Both mutism and mimicry are then left to hysteria. Hysteria is silent and at the same time it mimes. And—how could it be otherwise—miming/reproducing a language that is not its own, masculine language, it caricatures and deforms that language: it "lies," it "deceives," as women have always been reputed to do.[109]

[106] Luce Irigaray, *This Sex Which Is Not One*, 131.
[107] Ibid., 133.
[108] Ibid., 76. Italics added.
[109] Ibid., 136-37. Irigaray's italics and elisions.

The dramatic coincidence of harrowing abjection and protestant potential recalls several of the female hysterics that have appeared thus far. Mutism and mimicry in particular capture the poignant finale of Ōgai's "Maihime":

> When [Elis] awoke some time later, her eyes were fixed in a stare and she could not recognize those around her. She cried out my name, abused me, tore her hair, and bit the coverlet. Then she suddenly seemed to remember something and started to look for it. Everything her mother gave her she threw away, except the diapers [she had sewed] that were on the table. These she stared at for a moment, then pressed them to her face and burst into tears. … She would continually clasp a diaper to her breast and bring it out to look at, and this seemed to male her content.[110]

In *Kura no naka*, this complex relation among mimesis, sexuality and gender, and language receives a narrative treatment by way of the problem of *writing qua storytelling*. The next section will trace the way in which the text *fabulously* carries out a hysterical experiment by way of the male (or, professed as such) body mimicking the female sex to give rise to an unpredictable psychosomatic and affective drama of sexuality and gender.

9.

Kura no naka delivers in significant measures Silverman's hope for "identification [that] might function in a way that results in neither the triumph of self-sameness, nor craven submission to an exteriorized but essentialized ideal."[111] Uno's text accomplishes this, however, by a different conceptual as well as affective passage than that which Silverman suggests, which is "the disjunction of the operations of idealization from both the self and the cultural ideal, as well as the subsequent identification at a distance with the newly and provisionally irradiated bodies" in the end left to the apparatus of the cinema or the

[110] "The Dancing Girl," 24.
[111] *The Threshold of the Visible World*, 79; 206.

conscious subject's agency. That is to say, when mimicry is directed towards the other subject, even if within the *mise-en-scène* of the photographic apparatus, there opens up a certain possibility of relation that exceeds the orientation *toward* the gaze—the preposition as a marker of the structurally determined directionality rather than conscious position or final arrival. In other words, to argue that "mimicry may bespeak the subject's completely unconscious compliance with the images to which he or she is accustomed to being apprehended by the camera/gaze" attains its degree of correctness only as a partial account, insofar as it fails to account for the other subject.[112] While Fassbinder's cinematic texts "exteriorize the gaze," *Kura no naka* overflows the visual field as ordered by the triad of the eye/look, screen, and gaze. And the lure of this excess is the sexual other in the intimate aperture—inside the storehouse, behind the wavering screen of kimonos.

While Silverman's paradigm holds fast to identification *qua* idealization, *Kura no naka* offers mimesis as an approximation that in its very movement highlights the distance or difference of the subject to the other. Rather than "struggle…to see again, differently," Uno's hero acts "as if" identification were not his first language.[113] Mimesis is given as a constant production of distance: the more he mimics the (sexual) others, the more distance opens up, prolonging his travel towards the other. The question now is how this "feminization" of the space pans out to allow the subject to *be differently with the other*.

[112] Ibid., 205.
[113] Ibid., 184.

If Yamaji's affectation noted above falls along the line of "nervous, brittle, delicate, tender, [and] frail,"[114] "timid and fearful" or "coquettish and eccentric," thereby gesturing towards a certain "effeminate" or "feminine constitution," could it mean that the textual configuration of hysteria extends itself to the male subject?[115] In other words, is Yamaji a male hysteric? After all, Yamaji himself professes, "Of course, you could call a man such as I am a male hysteric." (76) At least two aspects of Yamaji's affectation could be cited as signaling hysterical symptoms. First, if the women display the hysterical voice unstable in its conflictual representational desires, Yamaji speaks in a voice that liquidizes, so to speak, the affective as well as ideological protest of the female hysteria. His uncontrollable speech does more than self-ridicule *vis-à-vis* the "masculine attribute" of "holding one's tongue," speaking *over* the female voice, a topic addressed in greater detail below.[116] Secondly, Yamaji's approximation—both drawing close and becoming similar—to the female sex suggests a certain diffusion of sexual difference, a denial of the lack constitutive of the subject, which shares the originary problematic with female hysteria. This is quite different than it would be to exclaim, "Hysteria!...That mystery…which is expressed in the case of women by the sensation of an ascending and asphyxiating lump…and which translates itself in the case of excitable men into powerlessness and a liability to excesses of all kinds."[117] In other words, Yamaji's apparent effeminacy is an issue here not because he is like a woman but precisely for the

[114] G. S. Rousseau, "'A Strange Pathology': Hysteria in the Early Modern World, 1500-1800," in Sander Gilman, et al., *Hysteria beyond Freud* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 169.
[115] Elaine Showalter, "Hysteria, Feminism, and Gender" in in Sander Gilman, et al., *Hysteria beyond Freud* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 289.
[116] Kahane, *Passions of the Voice*, 71. The Jamesian notion of the masculine subject in the age that is "too talkative" reverberates with the authorial ideal in the early twentieth-century Japanese literature. That Uno "constructs the novel as full of chatter, of women's talk" by way of the male subject further complicates James's experiment with the hysterical female voice in *The Bostonians* as elucidated by Kahane.
[117] Ender citing Charles Baudelaire's essay on *Madame Bovary*. *Sexing the Mind*, 11-12.

way it seems to do away with the heterosexual categories themselves and as such is positioned in contiguity with the women's hysterical androgyny.[118] Jan Goldstein has noted a relevant reading by Charles Baudelaire, the first to anoint Emma Bovary a hysteric; Baudelaire seems to read hysteria as "[representing] in *each sex* an aspiration to androgyny—that is to say, a protest against conventional gender definitions and an (ultimately failed) attempt to transcend them."[119] In this apparently wholesome acceptance of hysteria as not only a universal malady—one affecting both the male and female sexes—but also leading to the "double nature of rational calculation and of dreaming that constitutes the perfect human being," however, Baudelaire seems to posit a balancing act as the hysterical virtue, the proper concoction of the male and the female sex into a superhuman being. This is a prospect that may be as unviable as the rigid institution of the difference of the two sexes and as such is entirely different from the hysterical figure that Yamaji cuts, or indeed stylizes.

If, as Goldstein also argues, Flaubert indeed "uses hysteria as the vehicle of androgyny, as the liminal ground where ordinary gender boundaries can be transgressed," his own self-identification as a male hysteric seems to suggest precisely the limits of such a conception.[120] Flaubert, who marveled at Baudelaire's reading of *Madame Bovary* saying, "You have entered into the secrets of the book as though my brain were yours,"[121] echoes the latter's theory of hysteria: "I believe that the heart does not grow old. There are even some people in whom it expands with age: I was more dried up and crabbed twenty years ago than I am today. I have been feminized (*je me suis féminisé*) and

[118] "The hysteric mimes her own sexuality in a masculine mode." Moi, *Sexual/Textual Politics*, 135.
[119] "The Uses of Male Hysteria: Medical and Literary Discourse in Nineteenth-Century France," *Representations* 4 (Spring 1991): 145. Italics added.
[120] Goldstein, "The Uses of Male Hysteria," 146.
[121] Ibid., 144.

softened with wear and tear, as others become callous."[122] At the same time, however, Flaubert's self-diagnosis is precisely that: *self*-diagnosis. He writes from "complete solitude," an environment in which "the sensibility becomes inordinately exalted…an understandable thing…in an old hysteric" like himself.[123] Alternatively, he reads "the best authors" on the subject of hysteria and recognizes "all [his] symptoms."[124] Thus, Flaubert's self-diagnosis arises from either an "anchorite" seclusion or scientific discursive community via his reading: in other words, in alienation from any relation. The fact that he shared through epistolary mediums these thoughts with his friends, and that the most significant of these is the female androgyne George Sand, complicates the matter, an exciting interpretive path worth further development in some other discussion. Yet, the fact that his self-diagnosis indeed arrived on the solitary site, perhaps like the child's jubilatory recognition of himself in front of the fabled mirror, remains unaltered.

In this manner, Flaubert's hysteria seems of a different register than Yamaji's, insofar as the latter is almost parasitic in its need of the *other*. The question then becomes that of Yamaji's relation to women. If they are all afflicted by varying shades of hysteria, "a particular response to aspects of the human condition," could there be a certain empathy in their relations, a certain loving identification?[125] Perhaps a productive question to catalyze this discussion is: Why do Yamaji's heterosexual encounters invariably end with the women's ill-articulated exasperation? In its redundancy, the last phrase is given to highlight the hysterical *tenor* of the event. How does the male hysteric provoke female hysteria? Alternatively, what is the make-up of this exasperation?

[122] Ibid., 149.
[123] Ibid., 134.
[124] Ibid., 135.
[125] Mitchell, *Mad Men and Medusas*, 19.

Coinciding with the conventional notion of female hysteria, the women in *Kura no naka* assail Yamaji with resentment and revolt *against* the perceived predatory male sex. Yet, the shift from their initial attraction to final exasperation exhibits a pattern of provocation that concerns precisely Yamaji's sexual and gender status. The mistresses' sexual domination played out in their consumerist acts, the actress's literary disparagement, and finally the ex-wife's rage converge on Yamaji's emasculation, of which literal impotence is only the most outward manifestation.

The jarring language echoing between the actress and the ex-wife—"A literary man that you are" (*bungakusha no kuse ni*) and "A man that you are" (*otoko no kuse ni*)— pivots precisely on the dis-fulfillment of sexual plenitude. The obverse of the resentful arraignment is Hysterical Beauty's commendation: "[All] you have to do is to put forth (*dashite*) a little effort (*sei*) and write something, and everything will be fine."[126] The ontological juxtaposition of writing and the male sexual power—forcibly marked with the sexualized *sei* (精)—is precisely what underwrites the feminine reader's desire to be objectified. And, Yamaji answers, "But that 'little effort' doesn't come (*denai*) that easily." (68) When the sexual other is measured as "male" with all its cultural accoutrements, the script has already been written to see her disappear down the stairs, "without another word" to him. (78) The women's indignation is fundamentally not with the implied gender inequality but rather with the fact that the male sex pales in Yamaji. Failing to embody the supposed literary sex and instead jubilantly approximating the other sex, Yamaji confronts the women with the absurdity of their expectation, of a *mirror* perhaps. Mizuta Noriko's twofold outlook on the mirror is illuminating for the

[126] The first two lines much less literally rendered in Gerbert's translation. Uno, *Love of Mountains*, 73; 75. The final quote is taken from 68.

kind of impasse in which these women are located—and, to a large extent, the feminist criticism in modern Japanese literature as well. On the one hand, she condemningly charges, "In modern Japanese literature, the mirror that reflects the interiority [of the heroes] is 'woman.'"[127] On the other hand, she lauds Miyamoto Yuriko's heroine Nobuko for her making a demand identical to that of men: "Nobuko's dissatisfaction lies in that her husband fails to become a mirror that reflects her interiority. … She is able to see that Tsukuda's mirror is too narrow to reflect Nobuko's extensive and deep interiority."[128]

The female desire manifested in between seduction and belligerence fails to locate *this* other in Yamaji, particularly configured according to the "dominant fiction," that is, that which not only "mediates between the subject on the one hand and the symbolic order and the mode of production on the other," but "functions to construct and sustain sexual difference."[129] His insufficiency—more phallic than penile—to provide a mirror adequate for their desire leads to the eventual enraged or disgusted departure of the women. The final inside-the-storehouse scene captures the acoustic register of the encounter. Rather than responding to Hysterical Beauty's hysteria verbalized in so many demands/questions, Yamaji runs off in his own hysterical volubility, signaling a case of transference to his own traumatic past—*of being the other to the hysterical wife*. In other words, his voice speaks over hers. It is worth noting the mimetic exchange between the female hysteric and the male hysteric in this scene. The final and sudden change of *look* on her face is provoked by this mimeticism that blurs the boundary of the "envelop" that should have contained him. Silverman uses this term in explicating proprioceptivity—

[127] "Onna e no tōsō to onna kara no tōsō," 6.
[128] Ibid., 8.
[129] Silverman, *Male Subjectivity at the Margins*, 8.

"the apprehension on the part of the subject of his or her 'ownness.'"[130] It is invoked here to suggest the way in which one's own "ownness" necessarily involves conferring it on the other. Thus, the women end up enacting only the anxiety of mimeticism without arriving at the affective profit expected at the end of a hysterical episode, which would sustain the relation for another duration with false peace and quiet as in Sōseki's *Grass on the Wayside*: "Fortunately there was always her hysteria to bring harmony back to the couple."[131]

Considered in this manner, the women's encounters with Yamaji, with all their affective volatility, destabilize Irigaray's thesis distinguishing masquerade and hysteria. That is to say, their hysteria arises in conformity with the heteronormative regime insofar as it seeks to *fix* sex and gender in the first place and predictably fails to gain on it. The hysteric's desire to identify with the father wins over that productive field of ambiguity. The question is then what *allows* hysteria that ontological possibility? Could the modal variations as well as differential libidinal compositions marking the women and Yamaji in their respective hysterical symptoms offer any clues? Certainly not all psychosomatic eruptions are the same. Are there conditions for hysteria to transpire as that movement that disrupts heteronormativity? Perhaps this has already been amply suggested. The answer seems to lie in Yamaji's mimetic relation to women—hysteria or not.

If as Kahane as written, "what is repudiated in both sexes is femininity" and "both female and male hysterics [are] involved in conflictual feminine identifications that they both desire and abhor," a question arises in consequence.[132] It seems clear enough that the women's hysteria erupts precisely on the sites where the heterosexual relationship

[130] *The Threshold of the Visible World*, 16.
[131] Natsume Sōseki, *Grass on the Wayside*, 127.
[132] Kahane, *Passions of the Voice*, 9-10.

provokes self-reflexive enunciations *qua* "*Che vuoi*?," defined by their psychic life specifically as "daughters": "[At] the heart of the daughter's oedipal oscillation was a more primal engagement with a maternal fantasm, an archaic figure of power and pleasure whose inevitable loss and social devaluation persisted as a burr in the daughter's psyche."[133] How does this repudiated femininity then articulate itself in Yamaji the male subject?

One may find in these women the "feminine subject [called upon] to disavow the male subject's castration, and—by looking at him with her 'imagination' rather than her eyes—to confer upon him a phallic sufficiency," which, when unmet, leads to exasperation.[134] Yet, it is precisely the reverse course which the text seems to gesture towards: Yamaji cannot bear the *taking of a position*, which is by definition *the position of the other*, conferred on him by way of the look, the direct gaze, and thus runs to approximate the other as if mimeticism is the only salvation for the trauma of being (with) an *other*—"the monstrosity of the neighbor," the "unbearable intensity and impenetrability."[135] Otherwise, the only feasible mode of alterity requires that distance, visual obstruction whereby the imaginary could tune the subject into "the senses developed before the sense of sight."[136] It may be possible to rephrase the latter as the "semiotic *chora*," to borrow Kristeva's language, the "modality of significance in which the linguistic sign is not yet articulated as the absence of an object and as the distinction between real and symbolic," that is, prior to the mirror stage and the subsequent Oedipal

[133] Ibid., 35.
[134] Silverman, *Male Subjectivity at the Margins*, 8.
[135] Žižek, *How to Read Lacan*, 43.
[136] Gerbert in Uno, *Love of Mountains*, 12.

structuration of the ego.[137] The *chora* is analogous to "voice as rhythm and timbre, the body as movement, gesture and rhythm; prosody, even word-play, and especially laughter."[138] Upon entering the pawnshop storehouse and being reunited with his long longed-for kimono and other objects, Yamaji shakes in ecstasy: "Ah…the feeling of opening and closing those full, heavy drawers, to say nothing of the sight of their contents. The sweet whispering sounds they made as I opened and shut them, and the feel of the air expelled, roundly, firmly against my skin." (62)

Yamaji's amorphous sexuality and gender not only fails in the mirror function that the women seek but also provokes them with the specters of what has been disavowed in their heteronormative interpellation. Yamaji fails to *read* the women:

> As she laughed I was aware of becoming involved in her laughter and being part of it…. I was drawn in by her short gasps, inhaled at each momentary recovery, lost finally in the dark caverns of her throat, bruised by the ripple of unseen muscles. … I decided that if the shaking of her breasts could be stopped, some of the fragments of the afternoon might be collected, and I concentrated my attention with careful subtlety to this end.[139]

The bracing emboldening of the sex of the hysteric passes through anxiety of "becoming" the other—the seduction of and resistance to mimesis—to be indeed "collected" through the male subject's poised mental process. This *reading* forever reflexes to the Truth of the two sexes:

> [While] the hysterical scenario represents a questioning of gender ("Where am I that is supposed to be a woman? The hysteric's body seems to be asking), it can merely trigger, on the part of the interpreter, the symmetrical question (If this is what woman can be, how am I to be a

[137] *Revolution in Poetic Language*, 26.
[138] Lechte, "Art, Love, and Melancholia," 27.
[139] T. S. Eliot, "Hysteria," in *The Complete Poems and Plays: 1909-1950* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1971), 19.

> man?). Thus, with each feeding the other's hysteria, this intersubjective scene displays increasingly complex and intense rituals of engendering as if to ensure that the difference between men and women be restaged or played out again.[140]

This interpreter is precisely what Yamaji cannot be because he is a mimic. And, the mimetic dispersal blurs into the inanimate objects.

To recall a scene introduced earlier, Yamaji whimsically responds to a highbrow reference by the actress by saying, "Of course, I recognized it as a line from Ibsen. But I wonder what sort of merit a woman has when she's stripped bare? It may be all right in a play, and then again…Ibsen may not know what he's talking about." (73) Apparently disparagingly the opposite sex, this remark in fact conceals a bold rejection of the very notion of the subject as property: rather than *contained by* the cutaneous "envelop," the subjective coherence arises from the very porosity, the impulse to merge with others—objects, environment, as well as human beings. It is not just women who gain "merit" by putting on kimono: "'Tis true, seen naked I am hardly more than skin and bones, and even I can't call that handsome. But put a kimono on me, one of my dear kimonos, and I look striking." (47) Similarly, even a futon becomes part of the bodily composition and thereby the "body" proper: "I much preferred that she see me sleeping in the futon than sitting in the kimono I had on." (63) Then Ibsen indeed "may not know what he's talking about" if his agenda had been to represent a way in which a woman can "assume the feminine deliberately."[141] For such a deliberation ought to take place, Yamaji seems to grumble ever unostentatiously, by way of dislodging the cultural terms of identity from

[140] Ender, *Sexing the Mind*, 20-21.
[141] Irigaray, *This Sex Which Is Not One*, 76.

the perceived *reality* of the body and nomadically inhabiting its surface, stylizing perpetually.

In his constant approximation of and towards the other, Yamaji fashions a kind of hermaphroditism—a term that does not designate so much a composite of *two* sexes as a *series of putting on*—dressing and staging—*simulacra*: "I who am like a woman wearing a man's face/mask" (*otoko no men o kabutta onna no yō na watashi*). (67) The perpetual *delay* in assuming an identity reverberates with the series of similes—so many "as if"s—mobilized to render the spatial modality of the storehouse to verbal coordinates. And, it is here in the diffusive modality of the subject and the space that the disavowed mother returns in the *mood* of Yamaji's amorphous gender—mood because it arises from the province of hysteria, the unarticulable affect—signaling not a nostalgic object embodied in "woman" but a necessary return to the psychic scene in which life and death were first learned to be differentiated.

To return briefly to the spectral specularity of the storehouse, it may be worthwhile to note that as the *space* of the storehouse is "dim" (*usugurai*), so is also the *place* where Yamaji finds Hysterical Beauty: "I entered the dim interior" (61); "It was a woman sitting in a dim spot at the counter behind the row of clerks and shop boys." (58) The coincidence lies not so much in the choice of the word as in the narrative suggestion that the particular spatial ontology of the storehouse, with all its haunting possibility, is constituted through the *place* of woman, a point substantiated by the constant narratives *of* women, if not the warm body of Hysterical Beauty herself. It should be stressed once again, however, that this is not to return to the familiar, and valid, notion of the male subject expropriating woman. Rather, it is to turn attention to the way in which the "two"

sexes encounter each other only to chance on their shadows in the other, some to their horror and others towards that *jouissance* verging on the deathful solitude.

Takahashi Seori properly and perhaps inevitably, albeit insufficiently, supplements his Marxist critique of the capitalist narrative configuration of *Kura no naka* with psychoanalytical insights when he reads Yamaji's entry into the pawnshop storage room as "a regressive (*taieiteki*) desire to return to the womb."[142] Yamaji repeatedly takes infantile positions, not only often lying down literally but *vis-à-vis* the environment itself by mimetically morphing in the plenitude of animate and inanimate beings, motorized towards nondifference. Spreading out his treasured futon, which has been in the pawnshop for some time, he reacts, "[It] seemed almost too precious to put that body of mine in it," (63) before dozing off "curled up in my darling futon, on the second floor of the pawnshop storehouse," and he dreams. (67) And, the sensation of lying down is indeed regressive: "As I slipped into [the futon], clad only in my under-kimono, I felt as if my body had suddenly become strangely small, and I thought that my neck sticking out of its ample swellings must look ridiculously scrawny." (63-64) In the uterine space, the "miniaturized adult" dreams, his most exhilarating pleasure.

Commenting on Gerald de Nerval's poem "El Desdichado" (The Disinherited, 1953), Kristeva reads the "melancholy" of the narrative subject as arising from the loss of "that Thing," that is, "the consistency of an archaic mother, which, however, no precise image manages to encompass."[143] This evocation of a French poet and prose writer does not find its context wholly in the fact that Uno as many of his contemporaries was an indulgent reader of Arthur Symons's *The Symbolist Movement in Literature* (1899) which

[142] "Oni (Mania) no bungaku," 87.
[143] *Black Sun,* 145.

features the mad suicidal genius Nerval in the very first chapter.[144] It is more for what may be called the ontological modality that seems to inscribe him in a way that closely resembles Yamaji—and, Uno: "The 'I' then asserts itself on the field of artifice: there is a place for the 'I' only in play, in theater, behind the masks of possible identities, which are as extravagant, prestigious, mythical, epic, historical, and esoteric as they are incredible, Triumphant, but also uncertain."[145] That the longing for the inarticulable must arise with this performative distance from the "I" marks precisely the modality of Yamaji's hysteria, the "I who [is] like a woman wearing a man's face/mask." Further, that this "uncertain" "I" must gesture towards the maternal region or memories of the psychic life throws light on the "dim" "uterine" space of the pawnshop, the site of perpetual *debt*.

10.

Discussing Nikolai Leskov's stories, in which he finds "so profound a kinship with the spirit of the fairy tale," Walter Benjamin adds an intriguing note: "'Magically escaped' are the beings that lead the procession of Leskov's creations: the righteous ones. … all of them embodiments of wisdom, kindness, comfort the world, crowd about the storyteller. They are unmistakably suffused with the *imago* of his mother"[146] Benjamin continues even more provocatively:

> In Leskov [the righteous man] has a *maternal touch*…. This figure, a peasant named Pisonski, is a *hermaphrodite*. … In Leskov's view, the

[144] *The Symbolist Movement in Literature* (London: William Heinemann, 1899). For the reception of symbolist literature in Japan, see Ōnishi Terao, "Uno Kōji to Arthur Symons—Nihon ni okeru shōchōshugi no ichimen—," *Kansai daigaku bungakuron shū* (June 1961) and Kagami Kunihiko, "'Seikimatsu' Igirisu bungaku to Taishōki no bundan—Simonzu to Wairudo no eikyō ni tsuite," in *Kokubungaku nenjibetsu ronbunshū: Kindai*, vol. 3, ed. Gakujutsu bunken kankōkai (Higashikurumeshi, Tōkyōto: Hōbun shuppan, 1985), 736-42.
[145] Kristeva, *Black Sun*, 145.
[146] "The Storyteller: Reflections on the Works of Nikolai Leskov," in *Illuminations: Essays and Reflections*, ed. Hannah Arendt and trans. Harry Zohn (New York: Schocken Books, 1969), 103. Italics added.

> pinnacle of creation has been attained with this, and at the same time he presumably sees it as a bridge established between this world and the other. For these earthily powerful, *maternal male* figures…have been removed from obedience to the sexual drive in the bloom of their strength. …the continence of these righteous men has so little *privative* character that it becomes the elemental counterpoise to uncontrolled lust.[147]

Implicit then in Benjamin's valorization of the storyteller with an "incomparable aura" in the increasingly disenchanted world is the metonymy of narrative and desexualized man mediated by the mother into a wholly altered ontology verging on the mythical.

Benjamin's view is more complex than the now familiar association of hysteria and literary production noted by many, from the nineteenth-century writers to contemporary critics. His account traverses the assumed distance between narrative, which writers like Baudelaire and Flaubert presumed to be the male hysteric's provenance, on the one hand, and the mother, whom psychoanalytic theorists have located in the origin of the hysteric's psychic injuries on the other.[148] Benjamin's Leskov offers ample suggestions for the present reading of *Kura no naka* insofar as Yamaji's hysteria, infantilism, mimicry, and even impotence finally impel towards the narrative—telling and writing stories—precisely by way of the hermaphroditism "touched" and cradled by the maternal.

Yet, critical assessment of Benjamin's drawing upon woman or the mother is far from settled. Rey Chow, for example, takes a critical position toward Benjamin's figuration of woman. Tracing the way in which woman becomes aligned with death on the one hand and bifurcated into the mother and the prostitute, the former to reject and

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[147] Ibid., 104.

[148] Showalter goes so far as to say, "*Madame Bovary* (1855) not only set the style for much subsequent fiction about female hysteria but also molded medical diagnosis and patient behavior." *Hystories*, 82. Similarly, Wajeman states, "The hysteric is a speaking riddle, the symptom that elicits speech from the other" in "The Hysteric's Discourse," 84.

latter to allegorically dissipate the male subject's feelings of impotence, on the other, Chow effects a trenchant critique regarding this much revered modern thinker.[149] Yet, questions linger. First, is not death or the "fascination with the inanimate" precisely that which Benjamin conjures in order to open a distance *towards,* and thereby enfeeble acts and ideas of *life* in all their robust certainty and violence?[150] In other words, death insofar as it is negativity need not be negative in all its implications. Secondly, does not the male subject's ambivalent sundering of woman bear out in the final analysis the "monstrosity" of the (sexual) other, to recall Žižek's term, and as such lay bare the most vulnerable and ineluctable, and therefore productive, passage of the subject? Without going so far as disputing the critique Chow has carried through with such sensitivity and acumen, it is difficult to imagine what more desirable solutions are imagined therein.

Miriam Hansen's reading seems to offer a view akin to what has been sought in the present study. Indeed Hansen echoes Chow's concern when she notes a certain fetishism "linked to death" in Benjamin's "theory of experience": "'the sex appeal of the inorganic,' which guides the senses through the 'landscape of the [female] body.'" [151] Yet, there seems to be more than a simple notion of sexual difference conveyed in Benjamin's definition of the "convolute" on "dreams" in his monumental *Passagen-Werk* as follows: "What the child (and, weakly remembering, the man) finds in the old folds of the mother's skirt that he held on to—that's what these pages should contain."[152] Hansen captures that subtle yet profound deviation in her comments on Benjamin's concept of the gaze:

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[149] "Benjamin's Love Affair with Death," *New German Critic* 48 (Autumn 1989).
[150] Ibid., 79.
[151] "Benjamin, Cinema and Experience," *New German Critique* 40 (Winter 1987): 214.
[152] Cited in Hansen, ibid. See Walter Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, trans. Howard Eiland and Kevin McLaughlin (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1999), 391; [K2,2].

> The memory of what is all too close has to be projected into a stellar distance; yet *this metaphoric defense allows Benjamin to conceptualize a dimension of reciprocity* which defies the social and historical organization of looking. …
> Assimilated to an Oedipal economy, the memory of this imagined glance [of the maternal look] is likely to succumb to repression—and hence bound to return as distant and strange.[153]

Thus, the rhetorical flight to the distant place, temporal, spatial, and figural, seems to be a passage precisely toward that otherness—of the (sexual) other—both seductive and terrifying, like the night sky, and not a gesture of holding up femininity as a fetishistic object.

Thus modalized by the maternal space of the storehouse, Yamaji tells stories. It may be apposite to recall here the simile that Yamaji evokes for the pawnshop storehouse: "As I passed the shelves where bundles of kimonos neatly wrapped in *old paper* were stacked on the shelves, layer on layer in perfect order, I was overcome with a feeling almost, but not quite like the joy I felt when I entered, accompanied by a professor, the *library* reading room of my alma mater." (42, italics added); and again, "I got to the second floor, to the place that reminded me of a *library* reading room, and I saw the heaps of clothes all wrapped in *old paper*—oh, what a sight!—I forgot about everything else and reveled in my newfound happiness." (61, italics added) If "library" captures an imaginary and spatial modality of the storehouse with stacks of narrative-ridden items, the less conspicuous sign, "old paper" (*hogo*), conjures the literal yet spectral *remains* of written words. Originally referring to sheets of paper discarded, carrying mistaken strokes of the brush, the word *hogo* (inscribed either as "反故" or "反古") is permeated with memory, and memories: Gazing at it, one may reminisce, "What

[153] Hansen, "Benjamin, Cinema and Experience," 215.

discomfiting moment induced such floundering?" At the same time, often used for writing practice, *hogo* further signals a certain historicity as the very condition of writing—a palimpsestic visibility and obfuscation. Evocative to this end, the couplets at once signify the (over)turning (反) of the old (古) or inheritance (故) *qua* traces on paper, and returning (反) to the past (古) or history (故) *qua* origin. In other words, writing arises from this site always already marked by prior presence—the remains.

Thus the forms of the library and old paper, together replete with (specters of) written words, modalize the storehouse precisely as a narrative space where Yamaji weaves stories in at least three different registers: as the performer on the implied stage, as Hysterical Beauty's interlocutor, and, finally, as a dreamer. Yet, these written marks alone would be unable to generate the optimal conditions; otherwise he would not have ventured outside his room in the boarding house to press his way into the storehouse. It is the kimonos and other objects that finally render affective support for the narrative space. Put in Kristeva's terms, it is when the symbolic comes together with the semiotic that the narrative space arises, that is, when "sign and syntax" are modulated by "vocal or kinetic rhythm" or "material supports susceptible to semiotization: voice, gesture, colors."[154] This ineluctably evokes the mother insofar as "the mother's body is what mediates the symbolic law organizing social relations and becomes the ordering principle of the semiotic *chora*," that is, that threshold between the semiotic and the symbolic, that momentous event whereby the mother is abjected and the speaking subject flutters off.[155] Then, properly speaking, the speaking being that is also the bodily being—insofar as

[154] Kristeva, *Revolution of Poetic Language*, 29; 26; 28.
[155] Ibid., 27. For Kristeva's theory of the abject, see *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*, trans. Leon S. Roudiez (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982), 1-18.

"[the] body must be clean and proper in order to be fully symbolic"—becomes constituted through this *debt* to the mother.

Indeed, if the seduction of and rage against literary subjection at the male author's pen is not commensurate with a critique of gender inequivalence, as suggested above, it is not only because of the self-consciously frivolous narrative tone, which may ineffectuate any sober aspiration. A more fundamental reason is scripted by the very narrative setting: the pawnshop itself. The narrative inscribes the entire ontological environment which Yamaji inhabits with *debt*. Yamaji's "dear kimonos" are ontologically dual. They are mnemonic objects, the conduit of memories, dreams, and narratives arising from his relation to the women: "[The] truth is, even if I were forbidden to remember, there's not one kimono…that wouldn't make me think of at least one woman." (64) Yet, considering the idiosyncratic mania of (the excess that precisely marks) pawning, it may be possible to say that kimonos are no longer—if ever—valorized for their mnemonic value, that is, for their *utility* in conjuring memories. Put differently, the (poetic) acceleration of divestiture to the very limit of ownership—pawned down to the kimono on his body "now"—signals the *fait accompli* of affective transference to dispossession as a mode of ownership. Yamaji, in other words, ventures into human relations in anticipation of their end, and the kimonos that will remain *in his ownership in dispossession*:

> Although I may not immediately recall some of the clothes I haven't seen in ten or more years, I can say that I haven't forgotten any of the many I owned. And all during those past fifteen to twenty years while I lost many friends, men and women, they left me or I left them, I was never really separated from my kimonos. (41)

This is the mechanism by which *ownership returns as debt*. Implicit in the seemingly ludicrous logic is an ontological proposition: the ineluctability of the other, and history.

As Mark Osteen observes in regards to James Joyce's *Ulysses*: "The acknowledgment of a debt creates a connection between two moments; thus it does not free the debtor, but rather attaches him to past and future."[156]

May it be said that the Leskovian storyteller with "so little privative character" has been run over by his mischievous twin? Yamaji experiences kimonos always as what *remains*, as ruins of the past, and if there is any pleasure in this repetitive act, it is indeed the *jouissance* of melancholy itself. Each lovingly commemorated, the kimonos spell out precisely Yamaji's *distance* from the past events as well as the world at large: Takemura Tamio notes that kimonos disappeared as salaried workers (*sararīman*) increasingly became a dominant class during the Taishō era.[157] The storehouse is a kind of a sepulcher and Yamaji, inseparable as he is from it, is a melancholic. At the same time, rather than the mere detritus of spent passions, kimonos *summon the past into passions*—a word signaling a certain sacrificial and dispossessive passivity. The revenant of the past renders narratives, in the storehouse.

In sum, indebtedness as the general mode of being perhaps redeems Yamaji's narrative debt to the women, a debt not owed in the name of "realism" as they seem to claim but as that which circulates in the general mode of being *with others*. Further, Yamaji's approximation not only of woman, the sexual other, but also the semiotic *chora*—and, finally, the mother—labors to exonerate all speaking beings. For the mother returns *as* and *through* narratives so that we may *love* again. In *Kura no naka*, the women's hysteria seems not only to enact psychic crises originating from the abjection that enabled their entry into the (Father's) Symbolic. At the same time, the very

[156] *The Economy of "Ulysses": Making Both Ends Meet* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1995), 54.
[157] *Taishō bunka teikoku no yūtopia*, 102.

opaqueness of the psychosomatic articulation leaves room to read a certain injunction against the originary debt to the mother. In other words, confronted by a mirror different than that they (thought they) wished for—not one that reflects and eventually consolidates their ambivalent desire for the father but one that conjures the injuries of subjecthood, the traumatic history of the ego through the revenant of the mother and the semiotic—the women become disquieted, disgusted, and dissembled. The unsolicited psychic flashbacks transport them, to re*member* the abject. And, this *remembrance is an ambiguous confession to affliction.*

It is against this backdrop that even the giddiest scenes are overshadowed—or, rather, conditioned or activated—by melancholy. Yamaji's kimonos release him into a state of euphoria, yet the only articulation of difference is found in the specular reproduction of his own image. Hovering over the threshold of the ego, recalling precisely the Lacanian mirror stage, Yamaji's jubilation is oblivious to the world at large. It is finally the solitary body that dons, poses, and delights. The inexorable conduit of experiencing the world can only stage melancholic pleasures in *repetition*—a poignant word in the world no longer innocent of the fated knowledge of the "death drive." The hysterical other injects that necessary difference, life force, into this melancholia that hovers the male and female subjects distributed on the expansive field of sexuality and gender that constantly stylizes, performs.

Kristeva proposes a "three-way" relation, alternative to the Oedipal structure, toward the possibility of love, by way of the "imaginary father." Her emphasis on "the regulated aspect of *chora*" seems only momentarily akin to Silverman's general understanding of the Other and gaze as a fixture like a camera: "[Social] organization,

always already symbolic, imprints its constraint in a mediated form which organizes the *chora* not according to a *law* (a term we reserve for the symbolic) but through an *ordering*."[158] Kristeva turns a subtle yet significant corner from the Lacanian model when she posits the plenitudinous and indeed hermaphroditic "father-mother conglomerate."[159] Kelly Oliver unpacks the rather perplexing proposition as follows:

> [The] infant identifies, through an immediate transference that is preoedipal, with the gap between the mother and her desire, which founds the oedipal move and motivates the child's entrance into the Symbolic…. Here the father is not yet the Father of the Law of the Symbolic. Rather, he is a presymbolic imaginary father who stands in as a support for the place of the mother's desire. …the identification with the imaginary father allows an identification with the paternal function as it *already exists in* the mother. … The separation from the mother is not tragic…because it is supported by the imaginary father, which is the mother's love itself.[160]

The "imaginary father" is not really a "Third" but the doubled "Second" insofar as he is really "in" the mother, or even "the One" insofar as the child has yet to separate from the mother-father. The question as to how this "imaginary father" could be read outside the family triad or the clinical paradigm—"The analyst…is summoned in place of the imaginary father"—is beyond the scope of the present study. Instead, it may be asked if the scenes inside the storehouse may conjure a still different triangular relation, which would further soften the Oedipal rigidity and perhaps expand the horizon from the hysteric as a single subject toward a relation that could deliver a certain healing—*love*. The latter is a particularly necessary perspective as studies on hysterical narratives characteristically focus on the traumas—psychically, ideologically, and culturally

[158] *Revolution of the Poetic Language*, 27.
[159] *Tales of Love*, 40
[160] Kelly Oliver, "Kristeva's Imaginary Father and the Crisis in the Paternal Function," *Diacritics* 21, no. 2/3 (Summer Autumn, 1991): 52.

sustained—that the psychosomatic malady articulates, and rarely explore what possibilities of survival may be born out of so many scenes of volatility.

It is precisely the collaborative work among Yamaji, Hysterical Beauty, and the kimonos that finally generates a space in which perpetual hesitation toward an unobstructed gaze coincides with narrative fecundity. The calculated *distance*—perpetual *delay*—takes the *three* to choreograph. For the storyteller is "someone who has come from afar."[161]

In the more properly literary realm and against the *shishōsetsu*-dominated modern Japanese literature in particular, debt may be said to inscribe the gap between speaking and writing—or, better, *writing* that gives rise to speaking. In other words, the supposed inscription *of* speech can only occur as voice-over, palimpsest, and deletion all at once. The women in *Kura no naka* unwittingly expose incommensurability: "Please *write* about me sometime in your novels. I'll *tell* you everything." (74) This hysteric's knowledge *par excellence*, unconscious and ill-articulated, amounts to a profound debt owed by the storyteller whose stories arise from that aperture. If Yamaji's novels and indeed his mode of being are irreducible to *shishōsetsu*, it would be precisely to the extent that they operate as a perpetual act of *debting*. The debt disturbs the naturalized conceptual continuity between identity (of the author) and ownership (over the literary work), a kind of capitalist faith pervasive in the Taishō-era cultural discourse.

It is worth noting that *Kura no naka* features few male characters besides Yamaji. The pawnbroker is rarely encountered at his own shop because every afternoon he commutes to the stock exchange in Kabutōchō. (69) As for Inokichi (or, Ino-kun), an employee at the pawnshop who maintains a friendly relationship with Yamaji, an

[161] Benjamin, "The Storyteller," 84.

offhanded supplement speaks volumes: "I forgot to mention that Inokichi had a slight stutter, not that it matters…." (69) Between the phantasmagoric capitalism that can *own only spectrally*—stocks being the apotheosis of capitalist fetishism—and the stuttering speech that betrays or indeed *un-sutures back* the phonocentric poise, the limits of the cultural ego ideal of the male are given as the marks of blindness and muteness. In one of the story's few references to the modern nation-state, the narrative interjects of Ino-kun, "He hadn't had his army medical examination (*kensa mae*) and could not smoke openly," suggesting a yet-to-be-hardened national subject.[162] The one vaguely "literary" male to appear in the story —an "aspiring student of literature" (*bungaku seinen*)—is as ill-suited to safeguard (and indeed damages) the most reified form of the male ego, the author. To the freshly impotent Yamaji, he offers his wisdom: "Well, Sensei, since an ordinary person's day is three days for you, when one ages one day, you must age three," (48) a comment meant to recall Yamaji's almost automated daily *regime of slovenliness*— oxymoron with perfect reason in the given case— whereby he "changed kimonos *three times a day*." (46, italics added)

What seems obvious here then is the utter absence of "fraternity," the kind that arose from (post)colonial affective investment, by way of an inclusive-exclusive discursive operation, to deposit its psychic injuries in the melancholic narcissism of *shishōsetsu*. If generations following Sōseki wished to live out the identity of a "'literary man (*bunshi*)' as a substitute expression (*dairi hyōshutsu*) for the samurai masculinity," Yamaji can be neither literary nor masculine.[163] That which he *is* instead will be further explored in Chapter 4 of this study, by way of a discussion of space, body, and objects.

[162] Gerbert translates the first phrase, "He had not reached the legal age." Uno, *Love of Mountains*, 69.
[163] Komori Yōichi, *Sōsekiron—21seiki o ikinuku tame ni* (Iwanami shoten, 2010), 133.

11.

In the preceding discussion, the employment of Silverman's theoretical terms of the look, screen, and gaze for a dynamic of subjective and visual relation different than that treated by Silverman herself was proposed; it seems that the central psychoanalytical assumption regarding permeation by the Other may offer still more productive potential than is allowed in her studies. In other words, the lack has a way of traversing rather than dwelling upon violence and injuries. This is not at all to write off the "libidinal politics" or "dominant fiction"—two of the many illuminating concepts that Silverman devised—but rather to revisit the private and intimate site of the *two* subjects where subtle gestures and glances could deliver them, if for a split moment, to the imaginary beyond ideology, beyond the "reality principle," and even "beyond the pleasure principle." As the last phrase suggest, indeed, this deliverance impels towards the "death drive," the limit ontology where the openness to the other may arise as a certain mode of inertia.[164] This apparent paradox is not as unworkable as it may seem. Yamaji is an infantile man but not an infant and, as such, his journey back towards the semiotic *chora* will never culminate in an arrival between the folds of the mother's skirt, even less inside the mother's womb. Yet, insofar as such an impulsion accommodates the mimetic approximation to and of the other, perhaps it is inertia, or, indeed death itself, that will and perhaps hast to be *poetically* embraced. For, if separation from the mother is a precondition of love, *remembering* her is an indispensible condition of love. And, for such an embracement means nothing more privative than not fearing blurred boundaries of identities, giving in to the other's hysteria *as mine*. Judith Butler's suspicion of "those specific power relations by which the trope of the maternal body is produced" is a sound warning only

[164] For "death drive," see Sigmund Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle.*

up to that inevitable limit where the *relation* must unfold as two subjects who are *here* to survive *together*.[165] Thus, the way Butler critiques Kristeva—"How do we know that the instinctual object of Kristeva's discourse is not a construction of the discourse itself?"—leaves no room for imagination, for the futurity that takes off only in *flight*, and which criticism cannot afford to be without.[166]

As well as bringing to light "phallic divestiture," whereby "masculinity and dominant fiction experience at least a temporary disintegration" and "the typical male subject, like his female counterpart, might learn to live with lack," *Kura no naka* affords the possibility of imagining "at least a temporary" journey back to the originary "two" in the subjective formation by way of intimacy.[167] Inside the storehouse, distant from the world at large yet vividly harboring the marks, indeed memories, of injuries, the two subjects rise to *ecstatic curiosity*, towards a relation with the other, the single other *here and now*. In this way, Silverman's attempt to draw upon the identification *qua* idealization as the very possibility for "love" could be differently articulated. Rather than expecting "success" from *knowingly* submitting to—posing for—the interpellating Other, the subjective redress towards love may be sought on the plane of the ephemeral *posing vis-à-vis* the other, now exposed, now hidden.[168] Alternatively, at least in *Kura no naka*, the subject does not so much "embrace castration, alterity, and specularity" as he is—or, poses to be—oblivious, that is, *acts as if*, quite felicitously.[169] By constantly *staging* his surroundings towards that *distanc*e, so necessary for mimetic *approximation*, Yamaji

[165] *Gender Trouble*, 92.
[166] Ibid., 88.
[167] *Male Subjectivity at the Margins*, 65.
[168] Love is the central concern of her book *The Threshold of the Visible World*: She begins with the question, "Does psychoanalysis have a theory of love?," 1.
[169] Ibid., 3.

recuperates a modicum of the relation lying in ruins in the psychic memories. Kimonos through their *layering*—chromatic palimpsest, patterned *screen*—denote the ruins from which futurity arises precisely by way of the narrative. It is this distance that calls for further theoretical experimentation, or so it seems after *Kura no naka*.

Bringing the discussion to a close, it may be only proper to return to Mizuta Noriko's feminist thesis cited at the beginning of Chapter 1, and, even more fittingly after the preceding discussion, by way of a two-some affair. Mizuta has held a heated exchange on paper with Chida Hiroyuki concerning a model text of Japanese literary feminism: Miyamoto Yuriko's *Nobuko* (1924).[170] The debate began with Chida posing an antithesis to the dominant critical gravitation towards biological and biographical hypostatization of women authors. Arguing that the difference of the woman author's text ought to be sought within its *écriture* rather than her signature, Chida illustrates the heroine Nobuko's "faith in transparent language coinciding with interiority" and "*logos* aspiring for 'presence' and a unified subject of 'truth.'"[171] Thus bared in her "phallic" (*dankonteki*) figuration, Nobuko cuts a stark contrast with her husband Tsukuda, who is unable to deliver the kind of "manly and plain" (*otokorashiku tanpaku ni*) responses that Nobuko demands of him.[172] Tsukuda's academic writings on ancient Indian and Iranian languages only further configure the impotent pen in his hand.[173]

Mizuta rallies with a caustic reply: "The 'phallic woman' that Chida repeats has been established as a discriminatory term against the woman full of castrating

[170] Chida Hiroyuki began his own analysis with a comment on the attention already being received by this text, "It is a well-known fact that with the recent flourishing of feminist criticism the novel called *Nobuko* and the author that accompanies (*fuzui suru*) it by the name of 'Miyamoto Yuriko' are receiving renewed appreciation." "'Sakusha no sei' to iu seido," 319.
[171] Ibid., 323.
[172] Ibid., 320.
[173] Ibid., 323.

menace."[174] It almost seems that the last phrase is valorized in this particular feminist horizon. In a testimony to her own critical naïveté, Mizuta demands that Chida "prove that Nobuko's way of life (*ikikata*) was phallic and that Miyamoto Yuriko who wrote Nobuko was a phallocentrist (*dankonshugisha*)."[175] Rather than a comparison of the respective merit and shortcomings of these two positions, Mizuta and Chida's exchange ought to occasion an evaluation of an intriguing oversight of the two, that is, an unacknowledged agreement between them. Mizuta asserts, "Men took literature away from the feminine realm and therefore women had to find ways to express themselves, which posed the options of 'writing like a man' or 'writing like a woman.'"[176] Chida on the other hand states, "Nobuko is a phallic text in the lineage of the realist novel that Naturalist and Shirakaba authors penned throughout their lives."[177] In other words, it is possible to read these viewpoints together to conclude that Miyamoto's novel manifests some of the ways in which a "woman" could/had to/desired to write like a "man" in the male provenance of realist literary tradition. Falling by the wayside are textual vagaries answering to multiple psychic as well as ideological demands. Put in the terms introduced above, it is precisely the fissure opened by the incommensurability of the ideological, by way of biological, fixing of woman as body, the symbolic ordering of desire, and semiotic excess of fantasy that give rise to multifaceted operations of seduction and disavowal—hysteria or not. A parallel event, it may be added, takes place in the

[174] Mizuta, *Nijisseiki no josei hyōgen*, 87.
[175] One may wonder what Mizuta's view of Higuchi Ichiyō might be; her view seems to expect that no distinctions can be made when it comes to women who are notable in the feminist history. The celebrated pioneering Japanese feminists of the Seitō Society were certainly ill disposed toward their ancestral sister Higuchi, whom they deemed lacking in "creativity" and "self-reflection" and steeped in the mentality of the "woman of the past Japan." Hiratsuka Raichō, "Marumado yori: onna to shite no Higuchi Ichiyō," *Seitō* 2 , no. 10.
[176] Mizuta, *Nijisseiki no josei hyōgen*, 81.
[177] Chida, "Sakusha no sei," 319.

extratextual contention, a drama inscribed in the *biographies* of the critics in question. They are surely *affected* by (their keen awareness of) the sexual and generational differences that implicate their discursive positions. They do not dare speak of this unutterable *matter*.

More significantly, neither critic gives sufficient credit to *Nobuko*'s textual configuration, which is too deliberate either to unthinkingly conflate the heroine with the author and thereby epitomize the historical "woman," or to give unconscious rein to Nobuko's or Miyamoto's phallic aspiration. The ideographs marking the names Nobuko 伸子 and Tsukuda 佃 already bear out the textual design behind these heavily and complexly gendered figures, inviting and even predicting contentious contests of interpretation through their relations to the deceptively simple semantic-graphic component for "field" (田). As Nobuko "grows," "extends," or perhaps "erects" with the vertical axis penetrating or exceeding the (re)productive "field," Tsukuda's ontological inscription is contained within the "field." More scandalously perhaps, it is with Tsukuda, who "tills the field" that Nobuko can "grow." Yet, both "fields" are accompanied by another "person"—marked by the radical (亻) in both characters—inexorably yet unobtrusively standing *next to* them. The presence of the *other* is the fate they share. An invitation to sit down, to hold, may be what the text actually desires in its enactment of these *mis-given* names, or *misgivings*.

Would it be frivolous to argue that Yamaji's approximation of woman is a model for the feminist? Insofar as his bodily flourish—motherly or not—is all about adorning that inevitable *abyss towards* the other, there remain distances to travel, and stories to tell.

Chapter 4

Pawn to Own, Collect to Tell

1.

If the early twentieth century is indeed impossible to imagine apart from the emblems of capitalism, and if capitalism is fundamentally a form of relation organized by the notion of property, Uno Kōji's *Kura no naka* occasions a singular moment of reflection on the leviathan structure, dispersing as it does the very possibility of the property relation, i.e., *ownership*, for both material and human *targets* of the subject.[1] Chapter 3 has discussed debt as that which characterizes the relation between Yamaji the novelist and his female readers-*cum*-lovers insofar as the former purportedly subjects the latter to an unwarranted narrativization; thereby, this study has touched upon the issue of ownership of a mnemonic kind. Chapter 4 explores more literal questions regarding ownership through an examination of Yamaji's compulsive pawning—a particular transaction of surrender and recovery of material possessions—to arrive at a subjective possibility, or an ethics,

[1] Georg Lukács, through his seminal notion of "reification," asserts that the "central structural problem of capitalist society" is the "model of all the objective forms of bourgeois society, together with all the subjective forms corresponding to them." See *History and Class Consciousness* (Cambridge, Mass.: The M.I.T. Press, 1971), 83. In *Targets of Opportunity: On the Militarization of Thinking* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2005), Samuel Weber begins his study by inquiring into the term "target": "If consciousness is understood as consciousness 'of an object,' the manner in which it negotiates the distance that separates it from its object is often compared to…'targeting'" See *Targets of Opportunity*, viii. Although Weber's study is an endeavor to arrive at an alternative subject-object relation, which he imagines as a kind of "netting," his use of the word "target" effectively calls attention to the implied relational tension which will also be a significant textual aspect in the following discussion, even with its "potentially and tendentially lethal" execution. Ibid., 105. "Target" may even serve as a more adequate equivalent of the Japanese term *taishō*, for which the standard translation is "object," as the Japanese word displaces the deceptive certainty of the subject-object binary with the *effort* involved in the relation of "facing (*tai*)" the "form (*shō*)" of the other.

that metonymically issues from such an ambiguous relation to objects, indeed to ownership itself.

The following discussion proceeds in three parts. First, the pawnshop in real as well as metaphorical terms is employed to shed light on the economic inflections of literature in early twentieth-century Japan. Yamaji's patronage of the pawnshop is situated as an eccentric yet revealing reconfiguration of one of the recurrent themes of narrative representation and conditions of literary production in early twentieth-century Japan, namely the intersection between poverty and the capitalist regime. Second, the suspension of ownership—the crux of the practice of pawning—will be highlighted as that which occasions a new form of relation. Yamaji's isolation from the world folding into an intimately sensual experience of material objects in the pawnshop storehouse opens up a certain subjective space, some repercussions of which have been addressed in relation to the hyper visual scene in Chapter 3. Third, the particular spatial register of the pawnshop that releases the materiality of both the human body and the inanimate objects furnishes infinite narrative germination—a kind of library for Yamaji. Beyond what has been suggested in Chapter 3, the semiotic confluence of the materiality of the body and objects giving rise to the narrative act, or storytelling, conjures forth one of the quintessential figures of modernity—if only in his vanishing: the collector.

2.

> And friendless, without women, without the kimonos almost dearer to me than my very life, I had no choice, I had to write. I wrote feverishly, page after page, story after story. … And as I wrote I tried to figure out how much I would be paid. I finished each page by writing, in place of the page number, in very small numbers, the amount of money I thought the page would bring me. (49)

Kamei Hideo has noted that Kunikida Doppo (1871-1908) at the time of writing "Musashino" (The Musashino Plain,1898) must have referred to himself as a "poet" (*shijin*)—a term that more or less meant "someone who, with delicate sensibilities and sharp intelligence, appreciates the mystery of nature and the incomprehensibility of life and is troubled by the absurdity of society." [2] Doppo is known best for the said short story as well as another one titled "Wasureenu hitobito" (Unforgettable People, 1898), both of which Karatani Kōjin treated in relation to his famous thesis on modern epistemic structure, i.e. the "discovery of landscape."[3] Kamei further defines the "poet" as comparable to the "high-class idler" (*kōtō yūmin*), a term devised by Natsume Sōseki (1867-1916) a decade later to designate "a man of intelligence who, economically well endowed, disdains employment as a compromise with the secular world, yet is absorbed instead in problems of society and life that do not even dawn on those who have jobs and are harried by the demands of living." According to these definitions then, the "poet" and the "high-class idler" coincide in their superfluity in an industrious society, a description which belies their real capacity as the "transcendental critic of civilization" (*chōzokuteki bunmei hihyōka*). Thus, Doppo's apparently purposeless promenade on the Musashino plain takes on a philosophical depth, suggesting a perceptual and ontological bifurcation that underlies the larger epistemic shift.

Kamei calls this indulgent writerly outlook on the world "self-illusion" (*jiko gensō*)—the interiorization (*naimenka*) of the image of society or the world alienated by way of collective ideals (*kyōdō kannenteki ni*) and the subsequent valorization of individual existence in 'yoking together (*sic*) with it'—an idea widely entertained by

[2] Kamei Hideo, *Meiji bungakushi* (Iwanami shoten, 2000), 161.
[3] *Origins of Modern Japanese Literature*, 23.

those who found their sense of identity and purpose in literature in Japan at the turn of the twentieth century.[4] Persuasive if not surprising, however, Kamei's characterization of these mutually related terms within the given abstraction seems hindered by the same blind spot as that which gave rise to their circulation in the first place. The fact that Kamei deploys "self-illusion," a concept that he had coined originally in the context of the discourse on the "subjectivity" (*shutaisei*) in the 1970s, in explicating the author of the 1890s already suggests a certain historical slippage, or hypostatization of the modern Japanese writer. The immediate concern here is the fact that the status of the "poet" was thoroughly conditioned by economic reality as the "idler." It is instructive to recall Yamamoto Yoshiaki's observation of the ways in which a literary career was long considered an utterly unprofitable enterprise. For example, Yamamoto notes, Kawabata Yasunari's youthful imaginings of an authorial future were overcast by economic anxieties suckled by frequent recollections of the days of misery penned by his literary forefathers, almost too methodically, down to the pennies earned per page.[5]

Fujimori Kiyoshi's perceptive reading of the epistemic "landscape" (*fūkei*) in intimate relation to "environment" (*kankyō*) affords a relevant insight into the concealment of material reality apparent in the figure of "poet" and "idler." According to Fujimori, landscape—the modern epistemic condition as theorized by Karatani—emerged as external conditions were internalized or psychologized.[6] Significantly, the "external" (*gaibu*) in this transaction is the environment as a set of *economic* resources. Fujimori argues that Doppo's famous "discovery of landscape," that is simultaneously

[4] Ibid., 164.
[5] Yamamoto provides Tsubouchi Shōyō's recollection as an example in *Bungakusha wa tsukurareru*, 188-92.
[6] Fujimori Kiyoshi, "Fūkei to shoyūken: Shiga to Doppo no bungaku, Roka no bungaku," *Nihon kindai bungaku* 79 (November 2008): 6.

"discovery of interiority" in Karatani's reading of "Musashino" and "Wasureenu hitobito," takes the form of the relinquishment of his status as *homo economicus* (*keizaijin*). On this point Fujimori points to Doppo's declaration, "There has never been another time when my heart so forgot all vulgar ambition to compete for fame and wealth and was so absorbed in a deep sense of sympathy as then."[7] The will to economic power is sublimated here as "sympathy," which renders the phenomenal world as a manifestation of homogenized humanity on the one hand and privileges the gazing subject on the other. In this context, the "poet" is an inverse figuration of the political and economic privation, signifying more than a literary prototype, and as such parallels "landscape" as an "imaginary form of possession for those who do not own."[8]

It is often noted that Doppo's life was one of unending trial and error in various kinds of enterprises, all geared towards his inexhaustible political ambitions modeled upon Tokutomi Sohō (1863-1957) and his Min'yūsha (Society of the People's Friends, 1887-1933), a journalistic powerhouse behind the periodicals *Kokumin no tomo* (The Nation's Friend, 1887-98) and *Kokumin shinbun* (The Nation's Newspaper, 1890-1929).[9] Modest public recognition of his literary career failed to give him satisfaction. His final attempt to realize the long-cherished dream of founding his own publishing company failed in 1907, and soon he succumbed to tuberculosis from which he never recovered and died in 1908.[10] Put plainly, Doppo was a "poet" inasmuch as he was economically inept. The notion of the "critic of civilization" noted by Kamei conceals this stark material reality. The Japanese literary class in this period thus arises from a double

[7] Fujimori, "Fūkei to shoyūken," 6-7.
[8] Ibid., 8.
[9] Suzuki Hideko, *Kunikida Doppo ron: Doppo ni okeru bungakusha no tanjō* (Shunshūsha, 1999), 35.
[10] Jay Rubin, "Kunikida Doppo" (Ph.D. diss., University of Chicago, 1970), 90-100.

illusion, twice removed from the original *ressentiment*. Not only is the aesthetic ideal of literature a substitute for political success; the abstract, interiorized, and psychologized modalization of literature was itself a very material articulation of that affect. Alternatively, the literary beginnings of modern literature in Japan were thoroughly saturated by the ideal of worldly success (*risshin shusse*) and the frustration thereof.[11]

Exacerbating this domestic sociohistorical perception was the global geopolitics that had reduced Japan to a cultural colony of Europe within the naturalized dyad of Japan versus the West. As the frustrated youth reworked their domestically thwarted political ambitions into the professedly apolitical agenda of literature, they were confronted with an unforgiving reality: the new aesthetic epistemology was not only a powerful alternative to the Meiji state and society but charged with both the seduction and threat of the Other; the discussion on *shishōsetsu* in Chapter 2 of this study addresses this ambivalence and its psychic composition and consequence. At any rate, it is within this continuity of perceived historical injustice that the practical motto of *risshin shusse* gave way to increasing narrative introversion under the banner of Naturalism, which shows little trace of ambition for worldly success and instead indulgently magnifies private channels of experience—hence the "Trinity" of confession, sexuality, and truth commencing with Katai's "Futon."[12] Yet, when Noguchi Takehiko locates "sorrows" (*hiai*) as the new affective mode characterizing the literary class in the last years of the Meiji era and does so in relation to Ishikawa Takuboku's thorough disenchantment with,

[11] For Maeda Ai's classic treatment of the topic, see "Risshin shusse shugi no keifu," in *Kindai dokusha no seiritsu* (Chikuma shobō, 1989). For "*risshin shusse*" as a pervasive ethos of modern Japan, see Earl H. Kinmonth, *Self-Made Man in Meiji Japanese Thought: From Samurai to Salary Man* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981), esp. chapter 6.

[12] For example, Maeda Ai posits the literary topos of *risshin shusse* as coming to an end as early as 1890 with Miyazaki Koshōshi's *Kisei* (Returning Home). For the "Trinity" of signs that gave rise to *shishōsetsu* see Karatani, "Shishōsetsu no keifugaku," 121.

and call for organization against, the nation (*kokka*), the earliest (political) history as the precipitant for the birth of literature is palpable if only as remnants.[13] Thus, the original conditions of modern Japanese literature, modalized as they were by particular forms of will-to-power, i.e., *ressentiment vis-à-vis* the political and cultural O/others, continued to inform many writers at least until the very end of the Meiji era. This redoubled affect giving rise to particular *écriture* is precisely what some critics have described as "Meiji-esque" (*Meijiteki*) as opposed to "Taishō-esque" (*Taishōteki*).[14] From the 1910s, the revolutionary ethos underlying literature for the previous generations increasingly become lost in what Karatani has termed a "pathological" (*byōteki*) obsession with the transgressive body, as in Shiga Naoya's early narratives.[15]

It has been noted that the Taishō era witnessed a new turn in literary discourse, spearheaded by young critics under Sōseki's guidance such as Akagi Kōhei and Ishizaka Yōhei. These critics sought to revamp the axiom of Naturalist realism to valorize the author's personal character (*jinkaku*) as the ultimate measure of literary value.[16] Understandably, it was Natsume Sōseki who became the foremost beneficiary of this discursive change and anointed as the first "national author" (*kokumin sakka*).[17] The new literary standard, cloaked in the abstract language positing a continuity between the author and his work, once again sought to purge literature of any trace of banal life scenes, poverty foremost. Hence Akagi's criticism of Chikamatsu Shūkō is presented as a

[13] For *hiai* as a central emotive register among late Meiji youth, see Noguchi Takehiko's "Hanmon, kōyō, soshite hiai: kindai Nihon no 'hihyō' no hakken," in Karatani, ed., *Kindai Nihon no hihyō III*, 8-32.
[14] Ibid., 189.
[15] Karatani, "Shishōsetsu no keifugaku," 119.
[16] For detailed discussion on the Taishō era literary discourse, see Yamamoto, *Bungakusha wa tsukurareru*, chapter 1.
[17] In *Natsume Sōseki* (1917), Akagi Kōhei asserts, "Frankly speaking, with Sōseki Sensei, for the first time we have found a national author who deserves the title 'the great.'" Cited in Yamamoto, *Bungakusha wa tsukurareru*, 29.

dichotomy between the pecuniary interest on the one hand and "self-examination" (*hansei*) and "anguish" (*kumon*) on the other:

> In the end, what meaning is there in writing with such an attitude? What value is there? Further, what satisfaction can be found there? Any author who takes a certain pride and confidence in self-deprecation, would answer, to a question like this, "It brings in some money though!" and feel satisfied. That's right, it is only money that can be a reward for this author. When it comes to a novel like this, there is not one thing to take from it.[18]

Chikamatsu retorts in response,

> People like Ishizaka Yōhei would tell one that the trend this autumn is to give more consideration to spiritual matters of life like "self-cultivation" (*shūyō*) or "honor" (*taimen*) than to something so base as "poverty" (*hinku*) or "food and clothing" (*ishoku*)…but that applies only to those who sit on piles of money and so have the liberty to go shopping for the new autumn trends at Mitsukoshi or Shirokiya. As for me and others, for the reasons of our innate affinity for poverty, the matters of hardship and food and clothing never leave our minds."[19]

In fact, a considerable part of the *magnum opera* of modern Japanese literature features dire financial straits as a fundamental reality of (authorial) life. In Futabatei Shimei's *Ukigumo* (Floating Clouds, 1887-89), often designated Japan's first modern novel, the hero Bunzō's psychological unfolding is inexplicable without the unambiguously economic matter of unemployment. In Shimazaki Tōson's *Haru* (Spring, 1908), the memorable poet easily identifiable as Kitamura Tōkoku (1868-1894) has his share of inner struggle due in great part to dire economic circumstances. In another of Tōson's novels, *Ie* (Family, 1910-11), the downfall of long-standing families is woven largely as a story of economic disintegration, with the protagonist closely modeled upon the author emerging from the ruins with literary productivity. Even Natsume Sōseki, the first

[18] Ibid., 60.
[19] Ibid., 61.

Japanese professor of English Literature at the prestigious Tokyo University, in *Michikusa* (Grass on the Wayside, 1915) depicts his alter ego struggling with financial trouble to the extent that he feels obligated to feign ignorance of the wife's patronage of a pawnshop. The list could be extended further. In short, material comforts were more an exception than rule among professional writers in this period.

It is against this context that a 1992 collection of personal writings (*zuihitsu*) by novelists and poets was given the quirky title *Shichiya* (Pawnshop).[20] Dotting various points in the first half of the twentieth century, the impressionistic jottings collected within reminisce about the individual writers' encounters with pawnshops, suggesting that poverty and the pawnshop constitute notable topoi in modern Japanese literature both inside and outside the text. Lacking even an editor's introduction, it should be noted, however, the volume hardly begins to consider the pawnshop beyond the texts of the autobiographical anecdotes themselves. Nevertheless, an examination of the narratives within provides a pertinent introduction to the textual investment in the pawnshop in *Kura no naka*.

The narratives in *Shichiya* are mostly candid reflections on poverty suffered in bygone days and the pawnshops that offered a detested yet addictive and merciful measure by which to eke out a daily living. Nagai Tatsuo (1904-90), for example, notes the intriguing balance between harsh reality and affective surplus that renders the pawnshop an ambiguous establishment:

> The use of the pawnshop was entirely driven by necessity; people would pawn things in the morning and redeem them in the evening on their way home from work. They would bring in anything from the bedding still warm from the night before to pots and kettles in order to raise funds for

[20] Tanemura Suehiro, ed. *Shichiya*, Nihon no meizuihitsu, bekkan vol. 18 (Sakuhinsha, 1992)

> breakfast or train fare. There was a sense of comfort that, once tasted, was hard to forget, and some people even held a certain fondness for the neighborhood pawnshops.[21]

Ozaki Kazuo (1898-1983) on the other hand vividly remembers the beginning of his long ties with pawnshops. In order to raise funds for the last installment of his tuition fee before graduation from college, Ozaki takes a bundle from his then-fiancée and wanders into the night: "Although there was [a pawnshop] nearby, I intentionally passed it by and went to one slightly farther away. I told him the amount I needed and asked if I could have a loan."[22] His initial assessment of the dealing as a pleasant surprise—"better than expected"—soon gave way to resigned addiction that allowed him to "frequent them without scruples" and "the woman (*onna*) too, having learned the taste of pawning, got to where at the slightest excuse she would take kimono to the pawnshop."

Amidst these mundane accounts of the pawnshop, several narratives hint at the peculiar rapport formed between literature and the pawnshop. Ozaki's aforementioned maiden entry into a pawnshop—which quickly undergoes a lexical demotion to criminology, referred to subsequently as a "previous offense" (*zenka*)—was for the sake of completing his education in National Literature (*Kokubun*) at Waseda University. With a revealing air of nonchalance, Ozaki mentions that he pawned the foreign watch received as part of the Akutagawa Prize and, as an editor of the literary journal *Waseda bungaku*, continued his patronage of the pawnshop nearest to his house.[23]

Hirabayashi Taiko (1905-72) and Hayashi Fumiko (1903-51), known respectively for proletarian and modernist writings, similarly reminisce about the days when they

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[21] "Shichiya ni tsuite," in *Shichiya*, ed. Tanemura, 10.
[22] "Shichiya ni tsuite, shō." Ibid., 20-21. As Nagai explains, "Pawnshops were furtive operations that would lower their shop curtains in inconspicuous places in the neighborhood. That theirs was a nighttime business was due to the customers' fear of being seen by others,"10.
[23] Ibid., 23-25.

were struggling to make their debuts as writers while worrying about the next meal. In one of the most poignant passages in the volume, Hayashi juxtaposes literature and the pawnshop as follows:

> What I envy more than anything is someone who writes good stuff even while [lacking food, is] sucking on a pickled plum, not anyone that dashes off forty pages a day and leads a comfortable life. The whole day goes by while I am musing like this, which yields not a cent, and at night I head out to a pawnshop with a *haori* in Chinese weaving. I come back with a loan of five yen. A vague sense of joy that, once I leave the pawnshop, I might be able to write something good passes through my heart. I suppose this is happiness.[24]

In this general view of poverty as an experience integral to literary production, and the pawnshop as a particularly necessary evil, albeit with a certain affective value, *Kura no naka* cuts a rare figure, doing away with sentimentality, yet yielding to no ignominy. By Uno's pen, the pawnshop ceases to be a theme and instead becomes a narrative prop that highlights the very possibility of the narrating act. In other words, the pawnshop in *Kura no naka* pressures the notion of ownership and thereby offers a site of meditation on some of the most fundamental assumptions subtending modernity, all replying on the overriding faith in *private property*. Arresting a scene that could so easily have yielded to sublimation amid dominant contemporary literary concerns, *Kura no naka* presents a tableau or, better, a cinematographic pause that disconcertingly repeats a scene.

3.

> I've come close to being evicted from my lodgings for not paying my rent, but I've never failed to pay interest on money I owe my pawnbroker. Indeed, I pay my dues on the third of each and every month as a peasant has to pay a tyrannical landlord. You see, the interest is payable every six

[24] "Nikki, shō," Ibid., 55.

> months, but I have pawned so many things, at so many different times, that some interest becomes due every month. So, each and every month I pay interest together with the monthly rental fee (actually a compensation for wear and tear) for the kimono I'm wearing…. (41)

The reason for this unreasonable practice of pawning, despite the fact that he could instead relinquish the pawned objects and exonerate his debts, lies in his peculiar obsession: "It's foolish, I know. If it can't be helped that by some misfortune I can't keep the kimono under my care, I can't, no matter what, let go of my *ownership* over them." (41, italics added) Thus Yamaji willingly submits to what is indeed a lifetime of economic dysfunction for the sake of the utterly abstract status of ownership (*shoyūken*) whereby he can *own* yet cannot *possess*.

Private property is a "quintessentially modern notion," which in Japan took on its concrete shape when the Meiji Civil Code was complete in 1898.[25] The individual right to private property *within* the bounds of law as propagated by the capitalist language presumed a host of other relations organized around the same notion of property. To recall Fujimori's observation of the synchronicity of the quickening capitalism evinced by the Meiji Civil Code and the constitution of the modern episteme, "interiority" as the semantic hinge of modern literature was in lockstep with the economic structure based on private property.[26] In other words, it is rendering the "external" world of human, material, or natural beings as composed of possible objects of propertization, yet concealing the process, that the literary subject emerged. It may be relevant to recall that Immanuel Kant, in an originary moment of the Enlightenment, defined the new epistemological paradigm fundamentally as the "freedom to make use of [one's] *own* reason," in a cogent synthesis

[25] Fujimori, "Fūkei to shoyūken," 2.
[26] Ibid.

of the twin pillars of the modern episteme: property and reason.[27] Put differently, the creed of Reason is always already predicated upon that of property. Straddling the economic, sociological, and psychological domains, or, alternatively, comprising a general epistemological condition, property or ownership then emerges as a mode of relation that ought to presume identity rather than subjecthood, temporality rather than spatiality, and experience rather than encounter, insofar as these notions seek to locate the *origin* of the transaction implicit therein.

Michael Bourdaghs further elucidates the epistemic continuity between the new ideologies concerning literature and the capitalist organization of economy made explicit in Fujimori's juxtaposition. Reading Natsume Sōseki's theory and practice of literature (*bungaku*) as a "critical response to modern norms of property, norms that underwrote the discipline of sociology as he knew it," Bourdaghs draws out the ways in which Sōseki intervened in the dominant notion of property and offered a different way of imagining the notions of owning and narrating—that is, the "gift" of the narrative.[28] Unsurprisingly, as Bourdaghs argues, the economic notion of property has implications in apparently distant domains, such as psychology. The premise of William James's psychology, for example, posits a form of "possessive individualism" in which "personal experiences and memories formed a kind of inalienable property."[29] The meeting points of the psychological structure of the individual and the sociological axiom of private property, Bourdaghs seems to suggest, afford a discursive aperture that Sōseki appropriated in

[27] Immanuel Kant, "An Answer to the Question 'What is Enlightenment?'" in *Practical Philosophy*, ed. Mary C. Gregor (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 19. Italics added.
[28] Michael Bourdaghs, "Property and Sociological Knowledge: Natsume Sōseki and the Gift of Narrative," *Japan Forum* 20, no. 1 (2008): 82.
[29] Ibid., 88.

order to, first, introduce "a different ethic and aesthetic stance" by way of the narrative and, second, insist on the particular ontology of literature that permits it.[30]

What little attention is paid to the economic aspects of *Kura no naka* tends to focus on the perceived "ills" of the capitalist formation of society as supposedly configured in the narrative, and less on their interstices. Passages like the following may support such an apprehensive reading:

> As you know, each season requires its own kind of clothing. I could, of course, redeem some of my old clothes from the pawnshop, but as it is, I prefer to buy new ones, and at times I have to go to great lengths to raise the money I need. But one thing I always do at the end of a season is take to the pawnshop the clothes I used during that season and use the money I get to buy new ones, and I repeat this every season, and that is why, over the years, the clothes I keep at the pawnshop have multiplied at such an amazing rate. (44)

Takahashi Seori, for example, seems confident in the neat relation he draws whereby the literary work represents certain dominant cultural phenomena: Yamaji's relationship with his objects is one of capitalist consumerism, marked by a "desire to purchase (*kōbaiyoku*) continually yet unconsciously dug up (*horiokosare*)."[31] In the process, humanity itself would be usurped by the relation of objects: "Relations of production necessarily imply relations between men and things, such that the relations between men and men are defined by the precise relations existing between men and the material elements of the production process."[32] Thus Takahashi reads Uno's fiction as a "novel about economy" (*keizai shōsetsu*).[33]

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[30] Ibid., 99.
[31] Takahashi, "Oni (mania) no bungaku," 91.
[32] Althusser, *Reading Capital*, 174-75.
[33] Takahashi, "Oni (mania) no bungaku," 88-89. For a discussion of literature and the market from an extra-textual perspective, see Yamamoto Yoshiaki, *Bungakusha wa tsukurareru*, Chapters 8 and 9.

Similarly, scholars have located critical inflections *vis-à-vis* capitalism in another of Uno's works, *Ko o kashiya* (Children for Hire, 1923). It tells a story of a shady business that rents out first one child and then multiple children to prostitutes, who would then pose as innocent mothers in their discreet pursuit of customers and thus avoid the searching gaze of the police.[34] Straddling the vanishing line of ideology between state and family, misrecognized as representing public versus private, prohibition versus composure, or law versus affect, the apparently naïve strategy proves ingenious. An unspoken rapport with the women leads the male proprietor Sazō, the sole bearer of moral sensitivity, to suffer from an increasing ambivalence toward and ultimate alienation from the scheme, which is at once his and not his own. At the same time, desire has a complex way of redoubling: quickly exceeding the entrepreneurial bounds, two main conspirators in the scheme are driven into a contest by their respective "motherly" claims to Taichi, a prized commodity who also happens to be Sazō's five-year-old adopted son. In the end, Taichi mysteriously disappears, befitting the status of commodity and bespeaking the ontology of the market. To borrow Ueno Kōshi's words, the women want to own something impossible to own; their desire has transformed to want the "real thing" (*honmono*) in place of the object only available for rental, circulation.[35] More starkly, Taichi's absence leaves no mark: not only the business continues but the women quickly recover from the loss of the object that they never owned: "No, it just doesn't work when he isn't your own (*jibun no ko de nakereba*)."[36]

Yamamoto Yoshiaki reads this story as a "fable of capitalism (*shihonshugi no gūwa*)," in which Sazō the laborer (*rōdōsha*) is forced to become a capitalist (*shihonka*)

[34] For translation, see "Children for Hire," trans. Edward Seidensticker, *Japan Quarterly* 10, no. 2 (1963).
[35] "Kasu/kariru no dainamizumu," *Waseda bungaku* 111 (August 1985): 60.
[36] Uno, "Children for Hire," 230; *Uno Kōji zenshū*, vol. 3, 457.

by turning children into new laborers.[37] While calling attention to commodification as a relational paradigm among human subjects, Yamamoto notes the way in which the text achieves a critique of capitalism at the expense of the ideal of masculine industry, which inscribes the particular brand of Sazō's moral ambiguity: "Of course, it is possible to call [*Ko o kashiya*] a critique of 'capitalism' but the critical tone of the narrative…is born of the myth of 'masculinity' and the nobility of hard work to which Sazō is captive."[38] Further postulated in Yamamoto's argument is the regrettable position of the women, who furnish an axis of "gender ideology" whereby the notion of masculine industry is reinforced and familial bond further reified.

Yamamoto's understanding of the textual blind side within the very critical possibility *vis-à-vis* capitalism is a sound one. However, it is questionable whether the capitalist logic of relation is as exhaustive as he insists. If anything, in *Ko o kashiya*, capitalism is unmistakable inasmuch as it simultaneously flourishes and is corroded. That is, the narrative depicts the ways in which the peripheral figures of the society *answer* the capitalist order enforced *as* and *by* the state through law—amply suggested by the police in the narrative. They do this first and foremost by retaining the *local* registers of economic transaction that operate around ad-hoc exchanges taking place at once beyond and under the state's juridical surveillance. Their participation in capitalism, in other words, takes the peculiar mechanism whereby the *legal* is practiced by way of the *affective*—appeal to neighborly humanism and the familial bonding—or, alternatively,

[37] Yamamoto Yoshiaki, "Uno Kōji 'Ko o kashiya' shiron: jendā ideorogī to keizai," *Gakushūin daigaku bungakubu kenkyū nenpō* 47 (2000): 111. Similarly, Takahashi defines Taichi as a "dummy" (*damī*) that functions only as a sign in the currency (*ryūtsū kigō*) that is money, the background of which is the swarming society of desire (and money). Takahashi, "Oni (mania) no bungaku," 87.
[38] Yamamoto, "'Ko o kashiya' shiron," 112.

the legal is substantiated through the affective. In this ironic manner, the state is given its ontological guarantee even as resisted by the peripheries, the local.

Indeed, the family is precisely the channel by which the apparent incommensurability between the two terms legal and affective achieves a fabulous transmogrification to become naturalized to the point of invisibility. In the process, the prostitutes in the story become doubly excluded: from the legally sanctioned capitalist order and from the ideology of the *sanguine* family—a "healthy" family dependent on the genealogy (of blood). In an ironic yet familiar inversion, however, they hold off the state's intervention precisely by way of deploying the state ideology of the family, i.e., by hiring children in an extra-capitalist mode of exchange and thereby dodging the state's assault blow by blow. It seems that Yamamoto assumes capitalism as the fundamental logic underlying the extrasanguine/genealogical mother-child relationship performed by the prostitutes and the children for hire, which to him evinces the *blood*less logic of monetary exchange. He argues, "[Theirs] is nothing but a relationship formed through money," that is, "pseudo-family" (*giji kazoku*).

However, the very act of mourning implicit in this critical (mis)recognition of a capitalist usurpation only gives rhetorical substance to the phantasm of ideology that is the family.[39] It is significant to note instead the ways in which a certain discursive complicity pervades. Readily apparent is the mutually complicit operation of the capitalist system of exchange and the humanist notion of the family. What ought also to be made visible, however, are the more subtle ways in which the supposed capitalist

[39] At one point, Yamamoto argues that there could have been the possibility of a "real family (*honmono no kazoku*)" if Taichi's father had not died and remained a connecting piece among the otherwise motley collective of Sazō, Taichi, and the prostitutes, thus privileging the sanguineous family. "'Ko o kashiya' shiron,"104.

appropriation harbors a certain generative power that may be called fantasy—hence the way in which the women's desire makes wide leaps between economic expropriation and the very bodily experience of *having* a child. Certainly, there is no reason not to—or, it is perhaps even proper to—consider these seemingly disparate desires as issuing from the same impulse for ownership modalized by the state capitalist regime. At the same time, any interpretation of capitalism rigidly referring to the correspondence between the base and the superstructure cannot begin to address generative desire, which both exceeds and provides the final support for ideology.

The interstices of the competing ideologies or strategies in this narrative are inhabited by the notion of childhood. During the "era of children's culture" of the Taishō years, children ceased to be treated as "small adults" who shared the responsibility of labor and became endowed objects of protection, allowed to spend time for the *future*.[40] Childhood came to be regarded as "a kind of utopia" or the destination to "return to," as portrayed in children's magazines like *Akai tori* (Red Bird, est. 1918) and children's literature in general under its influence, a depiction that heartlessly backfires in *Ko o kashiya*.[41] The plight of Taichi exposes the fiction of the family that the prostitutes deploy against the state's surveillance. Children are for hire insofar as they function as a mortgage in the transaction between the capitalist market of prostitution and the state's political grounds for surveillance thereof, i.e., the protection of the family and its attendant morals. *For ideology arises as a loan on the O/other's fantasy.* In this way, the ambiguity of the child is in the final analysis not simply ideological if the word

[40] Yamagishi Yūko, "Kodomo bunka no jidai," in *Taishōki no katei seikatsu*, ed. Yuzawa Yasuhiko (Kuresu shuppan, 2008), 246.
[41] Maeda Ai, "Kodomotachi no hen'yō: kindai bungakushi no naka de," in *Higuchi Ichiyō no sekai*, *Maeda Ai chosakushū*, vol. 3 (Chikuma shobō, 1989), 388.

necessarily entails victimhood. Taichi's unbridled material indulgence betrays not only the consumerist appropriation of childhood and children in the Taishō era, but also the sensorial pedagogy that cannot but incur consequences for the production of desire/fantasy, and which may be behind his mysterious disappearance.[42]

Thus, the multiple levels of incommensurability—family, childhood, and state—allow heterogeneous registers of relation to reveal themselves and defy any attempt to order them by the logic of usurpation—e.g., the state-sponsored capitalism has created commodities out of children. To this extent, it is futile to call Uno's narrative a *critique of* capitalism as long as these terms revolve around the preserving or foregoing of the humanized past—*loss*. Instead, the critical effect of the text is found in the economic and familial mode of relation that fails to arrive at the state's ideology and hence produces a certain alterity *vis-à-vis* such modern monuments as capitalism and humanism.

Similarly, while Takahashi is correct to point out capitalism as a partially camouflaged force which orders human relations, to read *Kura no naka* fundamentally as a novel that "takes as its subject the kimono=pseudo-commodities (*jun shōhin*) that get stored away (*taizō sare*) and collected (*kaishū sare*)" and thereby valorizing it to the extent that it critically reflects on the era in which "the *Cogwheel* of capitalism sped up its rotation and its mechanism infiltrated the entire society" is utterly inadequate.[43] In other words, capitalism is precisely what at once enables and threatens Yamaji's world, and by extension the narrative act. Take, for example, the owner of the pawnshop who

[42] Yoshimi Shun'ya notes that the Mitsukoshi Department Store began to hold events and exhibits for children in the late Meiji era, marking the emergence of a new market. *Hakurankai no seijigaku: manazashi no kindai* (Chūō kōronsha, 1992), 161. For a related discussion on the "discovery of the child," see Karatani, *Origins of Modern Japanese Literature*, chapter 5.
[43] Takahashi, "Oni (mania) no bungaku," 88. By "*Cogwheel*" Takahashi alludes to Akutagawa Ryūnosuke's 1927 autobiographical sketch by that title.

purportedly commutes to the stock exchange at Kabutochō daily, supposedly dealing stocks. (69) Preoccupied with profiting from this quintessentially fetishistic form of trade, the pawnbroker, in and by his absence, makes it possible for Yamaji to gain access to the storehouse. At the same time, with fast money made from the stock market, he may close down the antiquated business, thereby not only driving Yamaji out of the storehouse but depriving his numerous objects of their privileged status—releasing them back into the market. Alternatively, it is the profusion of objects *qua* commodities that drives Yamaji to the *queer* obsession with his possessions, dividing the phenomenal world into the outside versus inside, what circulates and what belongs to him, statically. Capitalism thus *conditions* the very milieu in which Yamaji inhabits the world in a manner irreducible to the capitalist order. Thus, it is with a purposeful irony that Yamaji relates "ownership" as cited above and, similarly, "trust"—or, credit in the capitalistic context: "[My] pawnbroker…[is] probably the only person in the world who still trusts (*shin'yō shite kureru*) me" or "I'm an unusually dependable customer, and so they trust me." (40-42) The frivolity of the narrative and the absurdity of the situation structurally defy the hardened capitalist definitions of the terms. If anything, they accentuate the incommensurability of Yamaji's world and that in which these notions circulate.

Thus, *Kura no naka* instantiates a critical event by way of a mode of being that unreservedly inhabits the sociocultural milieu defined by ownership, market, and commodity, and yet displaces the capitalist regime perpetuating itself by way of circulation and surplus value. Only to this extent does *Kura no naka* constitute a critique of capitalism. Another novella by Uno, *Yume miru heya* contains an illuminating passage articulating this ambiguity marking the textual event:

> When I think about how the things I am moving to the room on the fourth floor of the Tōdaikan, even the cheap desk or futon, are things that are *close to what can be called completely mine*, I feel that my joy is difficult to exchange for money. Every afternoon, or sometimes when I've gotten up in the morning, I go to my room on the fourth floor of Tōdaikan.[44]

On the one hand, the extreme privacy of *his* room (*watashi no heya*) is nestled in a tortuously circuitous definition *vis-à-vis* monetary value ("cheap") and ownership ("mine")—simultaneously bearing out the unalienable affective claim to *my*-ness and a negative dialectic that seeks to exclude the market ideology. The irreconcilable yet synchronous impulses of non-reason and reason, or affect and law, lead him to pronounce the most deflated triumph of ownership: "close to what can be called completely mine" (*kanzen ni watashi no mono de aru to ieru ni chikai mono*).

Such an unforgiving view of Yamaji as a mindless "cogwheel" of the capitalist system—and the consequent, damagingly incomplete assessment of the text—becomes possible, in large part, by way of disregarding the pawnshop's semiotic force. Perhaps the hesitation implicit in the "pseudo-" (*jun*) of "pseudo-commodity" (*junshōhin*) in Takahashi's passage is precisely the opening that suggests this ontological ambiguity of Yamaji's pawned objects, and therefore Yamaji himself, and as such needs further prying.[45] Yamaji resists, perhaps more doggedly than the critic can counter, any reduction to an *example*, simulacrum—commodity *par excellence*—in the market of scholarly discourse.

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[44] Uno Kōji, *Yume miru heya*, in *Uno Kōji zenshū*, vol. 3 (Chūō kōronsha, 1968), 298. Italics added.
[45] Takahashi makes a suggestive overture to such a reading when he captures the complex web of transactions: "[Yamaji] takes his most valued 'futon' and inversely loans it (of course, as an article for pawn) to someone else's storehouse as the capital for a loan, then moves his body therein, and 'dreams,'" 87

4.

A decade after Sōseki—writing marginalia in sociological texts in his library—expressed a resentful objection to the equation of property with civilization (*bunmei*), Uno's text thus presents yet another alternative to the naturalized notion of ownership to unsettle unostentatiously yet profoundly the fundamental logic of civilization. It is not entirely to Uno's credit, however. By the world war era of the 1910s, "civilization" had begun to give way to the newly dominant lexicon of "modern" (*modān*), with which the sober rigidity of the discourse of progress abated while the consumerist formation of society enabled new sensory apparatuses and thereby allowed varied (accesses to) imagination and indeed fantasies. [46] In such a cultural milieu, even the notion of private property had to undergo a significant shift. Sōseki wrote *Theory of Literature* (1906), the theoretical basis and expression of his literary engagement with sociology, in an era of "enterprising spirit" (*shinshu no seishin*) whereby accumulation was valorized and property unambiguously marked as either "had" or "had not."[47] By the time Uno was writing *Kura no naka*, the spiteful luxury of certainty had given way to an ambiguity whereby possession failed to commensurate necessarily with ownership. Perhaps it is with the latter era that capitalism took on a more authentic form: After all, the capitalist assumption of private property has nothing to do with the individual's intention but depends solely on the economic conditions.[48]

[46] For the transformation in the semantics and practice of "modern" in the early twentieth-century, see Elise K. Tipton and John Clark, eds., *Being Modern in Japan: Culture and Society from the 1910's to 1930's* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2000).
[47] Takahashi Seori, for example, uses culinary metaphors to characterize Taishō as an era of "storage" (*chikuzō*) when the institutional and material accumulations had to be turned into Japan's *own* through processes such as "fermentation" (*hakkō*) and "curing" (*kunsei*). "Oni (mania) no bungaku," 86.
[48] Karl Marx quoted in Fujimori, "Fūkei to shoyūken," 3.

In other words, the idea of ownership was no longer straightforward. Bourdaghs has written that Sōseki's novel "depicts characters who seek a way out of the norms of modern ownership and possessive individualism" and thereby imagines "a different kind of social formation, one that…does not lend itself to providing the sorts of total social facts."[49] This can be juxtaposed to Uno's narrative, which directly inhabits "modern ownership" in all its absurdity and ambiguity. Rather than aspiring to any positive difference, Uno's (anti)hero tests the limits of what is familiar, seemingly the same. In other words, he dives directly into the world of objects:

> And I, as if I were opening some secret door, stealthily and carefully opened the first drawer of the chest. … Ah…the feeling of opening and closing those full, heavy drawers, to say nothing of the sight of their contents. The sweet, whispering sounds they made as I opened and shut them, and the feel of the air expelled, roundly, firmly against my skin. Please don't think I exaggerate! Far from exaggerating, I'm exasperated because I haven't got the words to describe it! (62)

Yamaji approaches his pawned objects in mystery and deference, with utmost care and sensory alertness. The spatial and bodily notations together enable a fresh relation, a sensuous profundity. As such, the category of "commodity" is utterly inadequate to contain Yamaji's objects. Most importantly, the significant question remains as to Yamaji's bizarre insistence on "ownership" over kimonos that in some cases he has not seen, even less worn, in decades.

Shut away from the market, the pawned objects accrue value precisely by virtue of simply *being*, rather than circulating. The pawnbroker's profit by way of interest and the owner's simultaneous claim, however tenuous, over the objects depend on this *stasis*. The implicit anticipation of future circulation is no concern to the objects. In the dim

[49] Bourdaghs, "Property and Sociological Knowledge," 96.

space designated for their placid hibernation, they are endowed with a certain ontological dignity, hardly thinkable in the market under the daylight, under electric illumination. Musty air violates the sterility of commodity while sensual indulgence displaces consumerist desire. The pawnshop then bespeaks, simultaneously, vastly inflated potentiality and faintest actuality in relation to ownership.

Within the history of economic modernization, the pawnshop both practically and metaphorically designates a site of negotiation between the older or traditional economic milieu and the new or modern capitalistic order. This negotiation is more complex than a simple "transition" from one to the other. A detailed study on the economic practice of pawning, Shibuya Ryūichi's *Nihon no shichiya* (The Pawnshop in Japan), notes intriguing paradoxes regarding its development in modern Japan. On the one hand, the geographic centers of loaning activity moved from the more developed to less developed areas within rural regions as they absorbed the commercialized economy (*shōhin keizai*), and from rural regions to urban regions.[50] On the other, in urban areas the number of pawnshops saw an unambiguous decrease whereas the volume of exchange saw an overall increase. The decrease is due to the expansion of the modern banking system while the increase was the result of the abundance of manufactured goods thanks to mass production.[51] Many of the writings in the aforementioned collection *Shichiya* reflect these geoeconomic changes.

[50] Shibuya Ryūichi, et al., *Nihon no shichiya: kinsei, kindai no shiteki kenkyū* (Waseda daigaku shuppanbu, 1982), 325.

[51] The class economy of the pawnshop is easy to perceive here. The urban proletariat became the main beneficiaries of the service, and cities became new hosts to the pawning market as the increasing rural-to-urban migration expanded the patron base: "The class constituting the majority if the debtors comprised non-capitalist farmers, handicraft artisans, small business owners, laborers, or the poor." Shibuya, et. al., *Nihon no shichiya*, 328.

In an apparent attempt at intertextuality *vis-à-vis* Uno's novella, "Kura no naka" by Yamaguchi Hitomi (1926-95) recounts an unexpected visit from a pawnbroker whom he used to patronize in the past. Composed in a tone of absurd jocularity that strongly recalls Uno's narrator, the narrative traces Yamaguchi's gradual shift over the span of the afternoon from a half-hearted yet palpably resentful defiance against the memories of the past—poverty and the consequential familiarity with the pawnshop—now revived by the pawnbroker, to a sense of nostalgia for that very past, in which the pawnshop remains foremost. Yamaguchi greets the old man, "First of all, I can't stand how you smell. You smell like naphthalene and camphor. That, I cannot take." In poignantly halting brevity, the old pawnbroker traverses the long yet rapid history of the pawnshop in modern Japan, which eventually leads the insolent host to indulge his guest in his impulse to tell stories: "Well, now is a time when a person who once urged the creation of an era without pawnshops is prime minister. … The history of the pawnshop goes back six hundred years. My family has run it for three generations. This has been the only way of living for us."[52] The pawnbroker further explains, "In the past, it was craftsmen, students, shop owners, and merchants who came to pawn things in order to buy rice. It was capital for living, so to speak" but, with drastic transformations in the economic life, the pawnshop's role has also changed: "No money to keep for overnight, they say. That has disappeared. … Those who come to my shop are people who want to enjoy themselves. … It's what they call leisure, I guess. Today, it takes three to four thousand yen to go to the movies and have a meal with a girl."[53] Counting telephone financing, real estate, and *sara-kin* (loans serving salaried workers), the pawnbroker illustrates that the pawnshop has entered

[52] Tanemura, ed., *Shichiya*, 236-37.
[53] Ibid., 239-40.

another phase of its history. The impossibility of at once being marginalized by the modern banking system and thriving by virtue of the misery of capitalism—serving the indigent—is now in the past. So as well is the enlivened ontology that had been born of the very same ambivalence. Finally, the old pawnbroker concludes of the pawnshop's cloudy future, "For Japan, it is a happy thing. But, it is very gloomy for us. What can be done?"[54]

Interestingly, this nostalgia for the pawnshop's glory days dwells on the ever elusive "thing" (*mono*) and once again "mother": "Your mother knew things—kimono, jewelry, watches, or anything. That made me happy, this old man of the pawnshop. Not only objects—she knew everything else. Would you call it etiquette? If it were my shop that she came to, she would only come to my shop. She was a patron. … What I dislike the most is when an article brought in shows a tag from another shop. That's hateful."[55] The unlearned, elliptical pronunciation by the old pawnbroker—who himself inhabits the twilight years—of the "thing" (*mono*) as an intrinsic experience of the pawnshop is remarkable for a multiplicity of reasons. It captures the fundamentally *ontological* semantics underlying the pawnshop whereby objects are afforded due singularity. Secondly, the "thing" functions as the kernel around which to weave together apparently disparate stories, not only of the particular pawnshop that the happened to run, but also the histories, tribulations, and even romances issuing from the pawnshop as a modality of relation among people and between people and *things*. Thus, the old pawnbroker's stories return to the same narrative fecundity arising from the nexus of the mother, the inanimate object, and sexuality (of a wise man) which diffuses any privative claim, i.e.,

[54] Ibid., 241.
[55] Ibid., 233.

hermaphroditism, as in Benjamin's reading of Leskov as discussed in Chapter 3 of this study. As if in an afterthought, the old man utters, "There was pathos in [instances of] runaways under the cover of night. I wish I could encounter a good runaway. … I wish I could meet shop proprietresses like your mother, who would be well liked by her neighbors even while taking loans from a pawnshop."[56] His is a story of the past that leaves its ruins in the form of a hope, unfulfillable as it may be.

Thus the question at hand becomes that of the way in which the status of the "thing" as the cohering modality of the pawnshop mutually gives rise to Yamaji's insistence on the hyperbolic practice of pawning.

5.

The reader will recall a passage from *Kura no naka* introduced in Chapter 3; here it is reintroduced with shifted boundaries and center:

> I was as happy as a child. The top part was of *Yūzen* crepe, showy but in a subdued sort of way and set off by a red-bean-colored border. The bottom part of the futon was an egg-yolk yellow of the sort used in guest rooms in many ordinary homes. And to cover it I had a sheet made that was narrower by several inches. I also wanted very much a second top part, but my money didn't go that far. And as I was afraid to soil the underside, I had a muslin night jacket made with the money I got from the ragman. … [When] all of these things were finished and ready, I was as deliriously happy as a child on a holiday. I would have loved to show off this futon to my friends, had I had any. Anyway, I spread it out, got into it, got out, admired it, then got in again and, eventually drowsy, dozed off. When I woke up, I remembered at once that I was in that wonderful futon and jumped out to inspect it again. I rearranged the sheet I had spread over the bottom pads to make sure that it revealed evenly—a strip of two or so inches on either side—the egg yellow beneath. I smoothed out the top part,

[56] Ibid., 242.

> pushed down its four corners, and went back to curl up under it. I felt as if I were in the maw of a lovely, soft monster. (50-51)

It may be recalled that the Overture called skeptical attention to modern Japanese literary criticism's turn to cultural studies in recent decades. A similarly dissenting view is offered by Bill Brown *vis-à-vis* a parallel development in Euro-American academic discourse on material culture, yet from a rather different direction. While noting an intense interest in materiality, which has "[summoned] us to attend to things," in the given context, Brown challenges the relevant studies by asking, "[Is] it *things* that these volumes constitute as the object of their address?"[57] He argues, "[The] degree to which the essays [in recent publications] trace generalizable circuits of exchange and consumption is the degree to which they can address *no thing at all*, but only objects…."[58] The "thing" in Brown's argument refers to the unobjectified ontological status, which nevertheless resists the reified notion of "primeval history of the object."[59] In other words, in acknowledging the urgent need to attend to material reality, Brown first debars the seduction of the essentializing departure from "the subject/object nexus where [things] occur, or where they can be narrated as the effect (not the ground) of an interaction."[60] At the same time, "the 'thing' names a mutual mediation (and a slide between objective and subjective predication) that appears as the vivacity of the object's difference from itself."

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[57] The specific volumes cited by Brown include *The Social Life of Things* (1986), *Material Cultures: Why Some Things Matter* (1998), *History of Things* (1993) and *The Sex of Things* (1996). See "The Secret of Life of Things: Virginia Woolf and the Matter of Modernism," *Modernism/Modernity* 6, no. 2 (1999): 2.
[58] Ibid. Brown's italics.
[59] Brown, "The Secret of Life of Things," 2. "Primeval history of the object" is Theodor W. Adorno's phrase: "The preponderance of the object is solely attainable for subjective reflection, and for reflection on the subject. … [One] might write a primeval history of the subject…but one cannot write a primeval history of the object. Any such history would be dealing with specific objects." *Negative Dialectics*, trans. E. B. Ashton (New York: Seasbury Press, 1973), 185.
[60] Brown, "The Secret of Life of Things," 2.

Although the focus of the present study only touches upon the phenomenal "life of things" as much as the body's "autonomy" (to recall Brian Massumi's term) rather than study them as the immediate topic of scrutiny, Brown's reading of the "thing" in Virginia Woolf's "Solid Objects" (1920) offers some openings towards a new conceptualization of the material that helps move away from sociological conclusions and thereby enable fresh possibilities of thinking different registers of the material such as the body, language, and the narrative status of inanimate objects, all in relation to the being of literature. Further, by situating the material against early twentieth-century modernity at large, Brown's essay serves as a compelling reference point against which to read *Kura no naka*, which in its own way engages with materiality as a region of phenomenal reality and thereby articulates that which preoccupied many literary minds of the early twentieth-century global modernity. For *Kura no naka* is indeed situated at the threshold of the 1920s, characterized by Brown as "the decade when things emerge as the object of profound theoretical engagement in the work of Georg Lukács, Heidegger, and Walter Benjamin, and which is the decade after objects and things are newly engaged by (or *as*) the work of art for Pound, Marcel Duchamp, Williams, Gertrude Stein."[61] The insight most relevant to the present discussion is what Brown calls a "fetishistic overvaluation or misappropriation" or "an irregular if not unreasonable reobjectification of the object that dislodges it from the circuits through which it is what it typically is," namely, commodity. Through this process is rendered *misuse value*, that is, "the aspects of an object—sensuous, aesthetic, semiotic—that become legible, audible, palpable when

[61] Ibid., 3.

the object is experienced in whatever time it takes (in whatever time it is) for an object to become another."[62]

As explicit in the passage cited at the beginning of the section, *Kura no naka* is precisely such a temporalized space that renders objects to deliberate and indeed elaborate "misuse." Yamaji's futon is not just an item of bedding endlessly substitutable, but an object obtained in great anticipation, installed with exacting execution, and constantly cared for in order to lure out the greatest potential in its existential purpose and ontological destiny. More importantly, however, it strategically misappropriates the pawnshop itself:

> So when I moved away from the chest, took the rope I had tied to my waist when I left the rooming house, and strung it up in a straight line, from the lattice of the window to the pillar, and from the pillar of the pegs in the wall, and so on, and hung up the contents of the first drawer. … Of course I hoped that this airing would go on for quite a while—at least four or five days. … Then I called the shop boy to get my futon. As I spread it out—I hadn't seen it for such a long time—it seemed almost too precious to put that body of mine in it. … [There] would be no need to feel ashamed if [the shop owner's sister] were to see me; indeed, I much preferred that she see me sleeping in the futon than sitting in the kimono I had on. As I slipped into it, clad only in my underkimono, I felt as if my body had suddenly became strangely small, and I thought that my neck sticking out of its ample swellings must look ridiculously scrawny. I put aside the magazine I had brought along to read and gazed at the clothes dangling over my head. … And so I dozed off curled up in my darling futon, on the second floor of the pawnshop storehouse. And I dreamed a strange dream. (63-67)

The pawnshop has metamorphosed from a temporary space, which objects pass through to reassume their use value or eventually reenter the market, into a permanent storehouse for Yamaji's possessions down to the last garment, which no object would ever—Yamaji

[62] Ibid., 3.

would pray—leave again. Further, it is a *stage* on which Yamaji can perform the most condensed fantasy, propped with kimono exquisitely and hauntingly hung over him, the futon enveloping his near-bare body in the most sensuous embraces, and even a living woman ready to emerge to add to the drama at any moment. As Brown suggests, these objects have "a life that the subject must catalyze but cannot contain."[63] It is this life that becomes rejuvenated as Yamaji undoes the underpinnings of the subject as pinned up and hardened by various cultural mandates. Yamaji and the objects collaborate and thereby produce the most optimal environment in which dreaming becomes possible, and it is in this seemingly narcissistic space that the other can be *approximated*, sensually and with all performative deliberation. In other words, the scene of the two subjects as discussed in Chapter 3 becomes possible in this spatial, that is also relational, reconfiguration that begins with material objects in intimate tune with the material fact of the body.

Woolf's "Solid Object" is so incisively condensed that it approximates an adage on the individual gone awry—if "awry" would highlight the non-arrival of normality rather than designate abnormality—in modern conditions.[64] It tells of how a young man named John on "the brink of a brilliant career" in politics happens to pick up a piece of broken glass on a beach, and from that moment his life transforms. He is now solely focused on collecting similarly shaped objects of different materials and finally ends up abandoning his bid for to the parliament. In the sequence of the encounter with a piece of glass, missing a train, then a meeting, in his pursuit of more discarded bits resembling the glass, and eventual abandonment of the parliamentary career, John undergoes a profound subjective transformation that at once turns him away from the society of people and

[63] Ibid.
[64] Virginia Woolf, "Solid Objects," in *A Haunted House and Other Short Stories* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1972).

draws him into the world of "things." And with it, the notions of the political enterprise and the capitalist commodity become enfeebled.

The reverberations between Woolf's and Uno's narratives are unmistakable. Brown's observations about John can be matched to Yamaji point for point: the objects granted "a kind of agency" whereby they inhabit "lives of their own" apart from the consumer culture, and the utter isolation of the individual drawing close to "social sclerosis."[65] Perhaps Uno's text does not insinuate "the cosmological into the daily" as Woolf names the "scrap of modern iron a 'meteorite," thereby dislodging it from the homogeneous structure of time—at least not yet. Nevertheless, Yamaji dwells in the same "state of wonder" that John displays toward his found objects: "[The] background of thought and experience which gives an inscrutable depth to the eyes of grown people disappeared, leaving only the clear transparent surface, expressing nothing but wonder, which the eyes of young children display."[66]

As Brown persuasively points out, John's fascination with odd material objects is a "kind of fetishism that seems like an alternative mode of inhabiting modern culture."[67] Similarly, the private and infantile inflections evident in not only Yamaji's encounter with his pawned objects but his daily life in general seem to suggest a kind of fetishism: spatially managed, this fetishism intervenes in the capitalist fetish of commodity revolving in the temporal production of value. Perhaps the remedy for the capitalist fetishism takes the form of another fetishism. Or, rather, fetish is the only structure available in modernity, and the critical/political praxis lies in rendering it visible and testing its limit rather than surmounting it. At any rate, in both texts the object designates

[65] Brown, "The Secret of Life of Things," 5-6.
[66] Woolf, "Solid Objects," 80.
[67] Brown, "The Secret of Life of Things," 4.

the region reminiscent of Julia Kristeva's "semiotic" or Jacques Lacan's "real," and thereby dissolves the presumed ontological pivot of the supremacy of the self-same subject that endows meaning upon objects and at the same time resists relenting to the lure of the object endowed with a "primeval history." Put differently, the *material* here refers not so much to an objective quality but a modality—a different mode of being together—that both subject and object, inevitably *together*, enter. The fetishism manifest in John's and Yamaji's relations to material objects is qualitatively different than that of capitalist consumerism, if only for the absence of abstract social relations inscribed in commodities.[68] Further, their relation takes the form of *care* and hereby leads the way to perhaps the most caring form of relation to objects, namely, collecting. And, the practice of collecting—culminating either on a mantelpiece or in a pawnshop storehouse—is always mediated by the narrative, the telling of stories. Marveling at and studying the physical properties of the lump of glass found on the beach, John conjures stories:

> You had only to enclose it in a rim of gold, or pierce it with a wire, and it became a jewel…. Perhaps after all it was really a gem; some thing worn by a dark Princess trailing her finger in the water as she sat in the stern of the boat and listened to the slaves singing as they rowed her across the Bay. Or the oak sides of a sunk Elizabethan treasure-chest had split apart, and, rolled over and over, over and over, its emeralds had come at last to shore.[69]

One significant difference between "Solid Objects" and *Kura no naka* lies in the ways in which *Kura no naka* delves right into the thick of ownership, via the pawnshop, to highlight the inevitable moments in which the naturalized notion falters and bares its

[68] Karl Marx states, "A commodity is therefore a mysterious thing, simply because in it the social character of men's labour appears to them as an objective character stamped upon the product of that labour…a social relation, existing not between themselves, but between the products of their labour." *Karl Marx: Selected Writings*, ed. David McLellan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), 436.
[69] Woolf, "Solid Objects," 80-81.

limits. And, it is Yamaji's own body that renders such a visibility. For, as William Pietz brilliantly notes, "the idea of the fetish is, then, that of the subjection of the human body…to the influence of certain significant material objects that, although cut off from the body, function as its controlling organs at certain moments."[70] In other words, it is precisely to the extent that the objects become extensions of the subjective body that Yamaji's (pawned) possessions are fetishes.

Thus, the splicing of the thing and the narrative must be effected via the body—the subject of the rest of the present chapter.

6.

> Mindlessly gulping down hot water onstage, with a face increasingly distorted from distress, he shot glances towards the backstage with eyes all bloodshot as if in anticipation of rescue. It had become now unbearable for me to watch him. … With his forehead profusely sweating, shouting out [the last phrases] with a guttural final pitch as though wringing them out of himself, taking a bow, the look on his face, the posture, the rounded back, as he exited towards the backstage! (What hardship of being an entertainer of life!) Seeing that, not only me but everyone in the usual difficult-to-please audience all fell silent, stunned, with their mouths vacantly open, and saw him off.[71]

Above is Uno's description of a *rakugo* performer that he went to watch on an inclement evening. The audience is sparse, mostly made up of know-it-all regulars, which dampens the performer's spirits on stage on an already damp day. Added to the ennui are the unwelcome excitement of lightning and the consequent power outage, which leads to indecorous repairs of the stage light and the delayed arrival of the next performer. In the midst of possibly the most detrimental combination of apathy and agitation, the

[70] "The Problem of the Fetish I," *RES: Anthropology and Aesthetics* 9 (Spring 1985): 10.
[71] "Chikamatsu Shūkō ron," in *Uno Kōji zenshū*, vol.10 (Chūō kōronsha, 1973), 21-22.

performer is obliged to continue to entertain so that, even for the ill-disposed and uninterested audience, the show goes on.

If *Kura no naka* is indeed a story about storytelling, as the ostensibly performative set up should indicate, it is important to note that the storytelling is foregrounded on the very surface of the storyteller's body. While the *rakugo* performer sweats on the lonesome stage, the sympathetic audience member holds his breath: "Only when [the performer] disappeared into the backstage was I able to breathe again."[72] It takes two bodies—of the performer and this particular member of the audience—to register the forlornness of the crowded theater. Comical and absurd as it seems, the last scene of *Kura no naka* is in fact a citation of the above observation: "Where is everybody? … Isn't there one single person left—still listening?" (80) What Uno adds to his fictional narrative is an insight into the pawnshop as the locus in which the storyteller emerges through the embodied transaction of the subject and material objects.

This productive imagining of the *embodying* pawnshop is remarkably forethought in Charlie Chaplin's 1916 short silent film *The Pawnshop*.[73] Or, rather, the respective linguistic and imagistic narratives wonderfully resonate with each other *vis-à-vis* several symptoms of modern society. *Kura no naka* unfolds as repetitive returns to the narrator's sober acknowledgment of his inadequacy as a storyteller, each following a long-winded meander through his memories. The seeming narrative disorder is due to the performative overturn whereby the narrating act takes center stage, overshadowing the presumed

[72] Ibid., 22.
[73] *The Pawnshop* (1916), dir. Charles Chaplin, 32 min., Image Entertainment, 1997. Videocassette.

"content."[74] Chaplin's *The Pawnshop* progresses in a similar repetition of order and disorder in turn. The endless series of mischief by the clerk played by Chaplin is regularly punctuated by the pawnshop owner's intervention and the subsequent restoration of order, only to resume the next moment. There is no apparent message intended by the narrative, of which the repetition itself presents as the essential constituent stuff. From this temporal paralysis emerges a particular spatial modality that characterizes the respective pawnshops, a modality which swivels around the body of the subject and the materiality of the object.

When objects are brought into the pawnshop, they are first examined for their history in regards to workmanship—*labor*—and use, this latter being precisely the property that the consumerist context expunges. By his actions, Chaplin's clerk showcases this materiality that reasserts itself at the moment of exchange. A doleful looking man, in the shabbiness befitting a pawnshop customer, enters carrying an alarm clock. Chaplin deploys various sensual faculties to probe it. Kyp Harness's marvelous description of this long sequence is as follows:

> [Charlie] pulls out a stethoscope and expertly listens for the alarm clock's heartbeat. He takes its pulse. Still eyeing [the old man] doubtfully, Charlie holds the clock up to his ear, pinging it with his finger to check its resonance. With fierce, decisive solemnity, Charlie makes the decision to corkscrew into the alarm clock with a drill. Finding the results of this inconclusive, he tries to chisel in, then pulls out a can opener and opens it that way—sniffing the contents most disapprovingly. He examines them, using the mouthpiece of a telephone as a jeweler's glass, with the intense concentration of a diamond aficionado. He pulls the mechanical innards out with a pair of pliers—the mainspring begins wriggling on the counter

[74] Once again, for Gerbert's eloquent description of this style, see "Uno Kōji." 32-35; Uno, *Love of Mountains*, 12-15. For contemporary responses to it, see Masuda, *Uno Kōji bungaku no shoshiteki kenkyū*, 92-97.

> as it uncoils, so he attacks it with a hammer, finally "killing" it by dousing it with an oil can.[75]

The momentous event of grappling with the object constitutes an allegorical relation to the general spatial modality of the film whereby the material and the bodily become textualized to the foreground.

Quite like the timepiece, the clerk's body too undergoes a series of dis-assemblage, in rapid shifts between awesome nimbleness and paralyzing stupor. The clerk's pleasure lies in this very temporality, which is, by structure, modalized by spatial coordinates. The owner of the shop certainly seems idiotic as the clerk repeatedly gets the better of him. Yet, the failures of the proprietor to discern the prankster's mischief are invariably rendered as effects of his bodily faculties: too slow, too large, or too clumsy. The clerk's pranks are none other than a gestural economy marked by compulsive repetition of the wondrous faculties of his body.

Thus, both material objects and human beings are undone down to their common elements, energy and motion. Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari's concept of the "machinic" seems to point toward precisely this ontic modality. Brian Massumi explains this easily misunderstood concept as follows:

> By MACHINIC they mean functioning immanently and pragmatically, by contagion rather than by comparison, unsubordinated either to the laws of resemblance or utility. … Living bodies and technological apparatuses are machinic when they are in becoming, organic or mechanical when they are functioning in a state of stable equilibrium.[76]

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[75] Kyp Harness, *The Art of Charlie Chaplin: A Film-by-Film Analysis* (Jefferson, North Carolina and London: McFarland & Company, 2008), 70.
[76] Massumi, *A User's Guide to Capitalism and Schizophrenia: Deviations from Deleuze and Guattari* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1992), 192, n. 45.

The intriguing possibility lies in the extreme proximity between this "machinic" on the one hand and what might be designated as the "mechanical" in Yamaji's everyday life on the other. This proximity sheds light on the reason why Deleuze and Guattari's concept is often mistaken. Modern individuals would readily reduce the "machine" to a matter of the body alone insofar as the concept connotes a "metaphor between the body as organism and the machine as technological apparatus."[77] This quick conceptual reduction simultaneously signals the desire to protect the other half of the equation, i.e. mind, psyche, and so on, from the image of mechanicity, and thereby entertain the fantasy of the beyond-the-body realm of human ontology. But, what does the latter signify?

Precisely in his bodily proximation to the *mechanical*, Yamaji illuminates the *machine* at work:

> One may say that in general I lead a rather slovenly existence. Yet I never fail to get up about six in the morning, make my bed, clean my room, and wash my face before eating breakfast. But then, after sitting at my desk for a couple of hours not doing much of anything, I usually go back to bed and, while leafing through a magazine, fall asleep again. Around noon the rooming-house maid wakes me, and again I wash my face and then eat lunch. … After lunch I go back to my desk for an hour or two, then go back to bed, do a little light reading, and doze off again. Come evening the maid wakes me once more. I put away my bedding, wash my face, and sit down to supper. (44)

The regulated mechanical management of his body and indeed *everyday* is emptied of significance insofar as it fails to cater to the modern ideology of constant change *qua* progress. Into that space cleared by mechanicity enters the machine:

> Once the structural unity of the machine has been undone, once the personal and specific unity of the living has been laid to rest, a direct link is perceived between the machine and desire, the machine passes to the heart of desire, the machine is desiring and desire, machined. Desire is not

[77] Ibid.

> in the subject, but the machine in desire—with the residual subject off to the side, alongside the machine, around the entire periphery, a parasite of machines, an accessory of vertebro-machinate desire.[78]

In his nonchalant dismissal of the social field organized first and foremost by the Oedipal ideals, Yamaji's body translates or *carries across* his ontic reality from the ideal of the industrious modern masculine individual to the machinic body, "an endless weaving together of singular states, each of which is an integration of one or more impulses."[79] In sum, Yamaji's body and everyday existence is what Deleuze and Guattari call "anti-Oedipal."

The mischief of Chaplin's clerk revolves around teasing and testing out physical limits, the body's incredulous shift between agility and oblivion. Ceaseless punching and ducking, relentless seeking of his antagonist's blind spot, and other acrobatic feats seem to give him endless pleasure. In Chaplin, as Harness puts, "[the] rapid changes in mood, [the] split-second shifts in emotion follow one upon the other so quickly that one is left wondering which one of them is authentic. … [The] core of the Tramp…is this very *flame of transformationalism*."[80] Similarly, Walter Benjamin captures Chaplin's cinematographic figure, the Tramp, through the concept of "negative expressionism" which "set him drifting from the demands of bourgeois sociality—moral propriety, consistency of character, domestication."[81] The status of a man who "has lost an ego" and thus "unable to take part in what is usually known as life" is precisely where Chaplin's

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[78] Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Robert Hurley et. al. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003), 285.
[79] Explicating "becoming," Massumi deploys "translation" to designate the process of the "carrying across" of "interrelations of relations" from one substance to another. "Substance" here is a "heuristic device" to illuminate the process of translation. See Massumi, *A User's Guide*, 14. For the baby as the machinic body, see 70.
[80] Harness, *The Art of Charlie Chaplin*, 71. Italics added.
[81] Nieland, *Feeling Modern*, 252.

Tramp comes to join Yamaji.[82] Alternatively, to borrow Kaja Silverman's formulation, the ego comprises not only the visual imago, which is the "mirror-stage" *méconnaissance*, but also what she terms "sensational" or "proprioceptive" ego, which arise from muscular and cutaneous sensation "responsible for the production of a nonvisual corporeal *Gestalt*."[83] Chaplin's clerk and Yamaji illustrate this latter passage, which has been obscured if not suppressed in the Oedipal discursive regime. At the same time, this formation of ego, by definition, destabilizes the ego that seeks, regardless of its impossibility, a single locus.

Theirs is a pleasure that inhabits what can only be referred to as *surface*. Put differently, they foreground the human body in motion as it progresses little in the way of *subjective transformation*. In Chaplin's pawnshop, the clerk's unpremeditated and almost inadvertent foiling of a burglar's scheme and the subsequent winning of the pawnshop owner's daughter at the cinematic finale is not so much a development—be it subjective or narrative—as a further gesture of calculated superficiality that renders any hope for *progress* upended.

In his study of the Japanese fascist aesthetics of the 1930s, Alan Tansman designates its linguistic quality as "[striving] to tap the surface resources…by making words approach the flatness of the plastic arts and the rhythm of music"—hence "the aesthetic of flat surfaces."[84] The "surface" in this context is marked by a concern with "lyric [moments] of beauty devoid of the slightest trace of narrative construction," as in Cézanne's painting or the "eschewal of semantic value" exemplified in the "carnal beauty" of Shiga Naoya's narratives. The modernist aesthetic, with its investment in the fragment

[82] Ibid.
[83] Silverman, *The Threshold of the Visible World*, 17
[84] Tansman, *The Aesthetics of Japanese Fascism*, 38.

in particular, may be a common denominator between the motorized body in Yamaji's and Chaplin's pawnshops on the one hand, and the "fascist aesthetics" on the other. In other words, the absence of any impulse toward meaning is also identifiable in both cases. They part ways, however, as the pawnshop figures perpetually inhabit their bodies in immanent and disruptive repetition, whereas the fascist aesthetes incant transcendent wholeness in impenetrable sterility. The fact that these contrary ontologies should lodge on the same "surface" suggests more a modernist sensibility and less irreconcilable contradiction. Apparently polarized assessments of film, the modern visual apparatus *par excellence*, by Benjamin and Susan Sontag bear out this potentiality: film is portrayed as, simultaneously, a new form of art for political praxis and a fascistic instrument of the aestheticization of politics, that is, depoliticization of the supremely political subject matter.[85]

While *Ko o kashiya* illustrates in large part the systematic complicity between capitalism and the state that sponsors it, that is, the mechanism of the Foucaultian discourse, both *The Pawnshop* and *Kura no naka* present an alternative discourse by way of foregrounding the pulsing body in sensuous motion. Yet the reverberations among these texts converge on the *narrative* as an ontological other of the legal. For as Louis Althusser argues, what orders the capitalist system is first and foremost legality:

> "[The] buying and selling of labour power in which capitalist relations of production *exist* (the separation between the owners of the means of production on the one hand and the wage-workers on the other) directly presupposes…a consideration of the *formal legal relations* which establish

[85] Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction"; Sontag, "Fascinating Fascism" in *Under the Sign of Saturn* (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1980).

> the buyer (the capitalist) as much as the seller (the wage-labourer) as legal subjects…."[86]

Insofar as their transaction takes the form of concrete objects, Yamaji's dealings with the pawnshop evade legality in its pure abstractness. For example, Yamaji is able to request a personal airing of the kimono, over which he can claim no definitive rights, in part because the objects themselves announce their own material ontological register—the wear and tear and memories therein; in short, history. Alternatively, legality as far as it concerns the pawnshop is always already compromised because the materiality of the objects impedes the necessary reification. Therefore the pawnbroker is caught in a double bind: first, of the incomplete legality and, second, of the suspension of ownership as the core principle of the pawnshop whereby, as long as interest is paid, the objects belong to *neither or both* parties. In this complex self-contradictory transactive condition of the pawnshop, the clerks find themselves compelled to allow, albeit reluctantly, Yamaji access to the storage. Affect retains muscles to flex in the form of *things* inhabiting no man's land.

Chaplin's pawnshop similarly demonstrates that the basis of transaction can be as haphazard as melodramatic narration. An old man enters Chaplin's pawnshop to pawn an object barely visible on his palm—or, is it there at all? After an impassioned presentation of what is presumably his dejected situation, appealing to the clerk's sympathy, the old man successfully collects money for what is supposedly a ring. The absurd humor of the scene is found in the thick bundle of bills from which he produces the necessary change, reducing the clerk to a nonplus. This is perhaps the only moment when the mischievous

[86] To be precise, Louis Althusser here argues the absolute necessity of thinking of relations of production ("the buying and selling of labour power") in concrete terms of the material conditions ("the formal legal relations"). In any case, legality is given as the basic condition of the particular set of economic relations that is capitalism. Louis Althusser and Étienne Balibar, *Reading Capital*, 177-78.

clerk is outmaneuvered. He has succumbed to the trick precisely because he is susceptible to the *narrative*. On the other hand, the man has traded an idea rather than an object—an object that the Tramp cannot bear to take away from the poor old man. The clerk cares nothing about the presence of the object when the narrative has done the work of suasion.

As an interesting aside, the pawnshop's alterity *vis-à-vis* the law is encapsulated in a sequence of scenes in Chaplin's film as it elaborates on the modern state surveillance apparatus. The corpulent figure of a policeman attempts to control the clerk's troublesome indolence outside the pawnshop and ends up becoming another victim to his pranks. Intriguingly, Chaplin and his fellow clerk—more often a stooge than a collaborator of Chaplin's mischief—escape into the pawnshop leaving the officer behind, mad with indignation yet somehow resigned rather than pursuing them into the shop—as if to say that the shady space beyond the storefront is off limits to the police. The lurking presence of the capitalist state represented by legality—both monetary contract and police surveillance—is precisely that, *lurking* yet incomplete in its exertion of disciplinary power. Such appears the case at least at the present of the 1910s when *Pawnshop* was produced.

By the time the Tramp made his way into *Modern Times* (1936), the first Chaplin film that incorporated words and human voices, including the Tramp's own—albeit, or purposefully, in the poignant guise of singing—the police are conspicuous all over the scenes, frequently and unscrupulously incarcerating him: "They are more like soldiers in a war that society has declared on its citizens."[87] The only salvation is, Chaplin hints, love. Harness writes with a superb sensibility,

[87] Harness, *The Art of Charlie Chaplin*,156.

> If Chaplin has sounded the death knell for the Tramp in allowing sound to invade his domain, so now he finishes the job by retrieving him from the existential solitude of his most iconic image—the trip down the endless road is now made with a companion, so that there is no need for the little shaking off of care as he disappears from view. … He extends a gracious generosity to his creation by allowing him, finally, a companion and helpmeet for the long struggle ahead.[88]

Yamaji may seem like an unlikely model of "the very human need for acceptance and understanding" in light of his regressive gestures into his private interior, the storehouse.[89] Yet, as Chapter 3 has suggested, Yamaji seeks a different route to this humanity, markedly different than the Taishō cultural discourse of "humanism," by way of the other in and as the narrative in the intimacy of the material(ized) space.

7.

In Natsume Sōseki's *Higansugi made*, Matsumoto diagnoses his nephew Sunaga's brooding despondency as follows:

> Ichizō's disposition is one that coils inwardly whenever he comes in contact with the world. … The time is going to come when he'll inevitably collapse, totally alone, under his own mental exertion. He's going to dread that moment. When it happens, he'll be exhausted, like a mad man. This is the great misfortune lying at the very core of his life. In order to turn it onto a blessing, there's no other way except to reverse the direction of his life and to make it uncoil outward. … He should find one *thing* under heaven—and a single *thing* is enough—which is so great or beautiful or gentle that it will engross his entire being.[90]

The verdict passed here on the excessively mental life, a judgment buttressed by a prophecy of a fateful end in melancholy, seems a fitting description of the modern

[88] Ibid., 158.
[89] Ibid.
[90] Natsume Sōseki, *To the Spring Equinox and Beyond*, 283. Italics added.

individual familiar in modern Japanese literary representation. As such, Matsumoto's words are delivered not so much as edification as a sympathetic pity. Indeed, Matsumoto is so similar to Sunaga that his own sisters—Sunaga's mother and aunt—regard them "as two eccentrics cut from the same mold." Although Matsumoto finds this assessment "unquestionably wrong," the reader would likely recognize the features of the quintessential "high-class idler" in both.[91] In this distant proximity to Sunaga, a poster child of modern melancholy, Matsumoto's character provides certain philosophical articulations that seem to function as the blueprint for the entire narrative.

Besides the more obvious personality differences that set him apart from Sunaga, Matsumoto is first and foremost a figure steeped in material reality—or, rather, reality that finds its most compelling articulation in the material. The novel first introduces Matsumoto as the unnamed target of a detective job assigned to Keitarō, the narrator of the section in question. Accordingly, the narrative approaches him only through physical and sartorial observations: a mole between his eyebrows, black fedora and a salt-and-pepper cloak.[92] The most enigmatic scene in the series of the investigative puzzles centers on Matsumoto's conversation with a young woman—who later turns out to be Chiyoko, Sunaga's cousin and object of ambiguous attraction—which Keitarō labors to decipher from what he overhears. Disappointed that Sunaga has arrived too late for them to go "there," Chiyoko asks him to compensate by letting her have "it"; the unnamed object prompts her to say, "What use do you make of it? You, a man, having such a thing?"[93] Keitarō infers:

[91] Ibid.
[92] Ibid., 92.
[93] Ibid., 122-23.

> [What] the woman had asked for was perhaps a coral or some such stone. Speaking as if he were a connoisseur of these items, the man explained various things to her. But the information could have pleased only a dilettante; Keitaro himself found it neither interesting nor comprehensible. The man told her in detail about ingenious imitations made of paste, fingerprints pressed onto their surfaces to dupe the innocent, but these counterfeits, due to their less smooth feel, could easily be distinguished from the genuine coral imported of old. From the context, Keitaro could make out that she had exacted his promise to give her a very precious and very rare piece, quite an antique and hardly obtainable nowadays.[94]

Soon the conversation moves on to the aforementioned mole. She inquires of its origin—"How did you come to have it?"—and suggests that he has it "removed at the University Hospital."

Keitarō is vexed by these amply suggestive exchanges, which nevertheless fail to lead him to any definitive clues regarding the identity or relationship of the two. More significantly for the present discussion, these scenes prepare Matsumoto's eventual emergence as one who articulates the assessment of Sunaga's existential condition as cited in the beginning. As a self-fashioned "wanton," who is convinced that the "flippant pose" is the "only way in the world to save" oneself, Matsumoto practices the tea ceremony and frequents storytelling halls, theaters, and wrestling matches—all venues marked by the materiality of the body surrendered to exquisite stylization.[95] The "there" that the pair missed on this particular evening may very well be some such performative space. Further, as Keitarō gathers from the conversation, it is likely that Matsumoto is a collector of objects. Matsumoto's ease with the world, so hard to grasp for Sunaga, lies in

[94] Ibid.
[95] Ibid., 284.

this relation to material objects. As Bourdaghs aptly puts, "It is only through external acquisitions…that self-possession can be sustained."[96]

In Matsumoto's account then, materiality emerges as the necessary medium for the modern subject to attain self-possession. A fabled walking stick carved in the shape of a snake's head fulfills this mediating function for the narrative at large, by "not only [eliciting] narrative from people, but also as a kind of talisman guiding their actions…[transforming] into an almost magical object."[97] Thus, in activating and configuring disparate narratives into signifying constellations, the magical object of the walking stick corresponds to the "thing" in the remedy that Matsumoto aphoristically suggests for the conundrum of the modern individual. In modernity, both individual and collective life necessitates the medium of the material object for the production of meaning.

Bourdaghs utilizes the concept of the gift (of narrative) to explain the binding force behind Sōseki's text, which foregrounds the community of tellers and listeners in their moments of uncommodified exchange and thereby disrupts the modern principle of property propounded by turn-of-the-century English sociology.[98] Interestingly, by deploying such a magical object as the snake-head walking stick as a medium (of narrative), the text suggests something beyond the gift—something as primordial yet differently modalized in its transactional economy: the longing for the mythic. Put differently, the endless spawning and transmitting of stories imagined through the concept of the gift is thinkable only through the mythical object, whose force is not

[96] Bourdaghs, "Property and Sociological Knowledge," 91.
[97] Ibid., 93.
[98] Bourdaghs cites Charles Letourneau among others as an example from Sōseki's library, "Property and Sociological Knowledge," 83-84.

traceable but can only be acknowledged. The narrative insistence in *Higansugi made* that the mediating object be acknowledged by all narrative participants betrays the moderns' inability to tell stories without the pretext, and the guidance, of a medium. The pattern appears clearly in the following encounter between Sunaga and Keitarō: "And so their talk proceeded, each trying to drag the topic on until it was driven either to the point where something critical had to be confessed or the subject had to be dropped. Finally, with a wry smile Sunaga said, 'You've brought your cane with you again, haven't you?'" [99] In other words, the horizontal web of narrative gifting is subtended by the vertical arc towards the mythic.

The narrative medium that can be acknowledged but not explained recalls what Walter Benjamin locates in death, from which the storyteller borrows his authority: "Death is the sanction of everything that the storyteller can tell."[100] He adds, "[The storyteller] borrowed his authority from death. In other words, it is natural history to which his stories refer back." Alternatively, locating the "first true storyteller" in the teller of fairy tales, a genre that "tells us of the earliest arrangements that mankind made to shake off the nightmare which the myth had placed upon its chest," Benjamin gestures towards the destined affinity between the mythic and the storyteller while acknowledging the former as the unnameable origin.

In fact, Benjamin's oeuvre arrays several such concepts, or, rather, images that are mutually transposable though never commensurable—perhaps like different languages related to one another through "the task of the translator" or stars arranged into different constellations for the astrologer's reading—in such a way as to gesture towards an

[99] Sōseki, *To the Spring Equinox and Beyond*, 196.
[100] Benjamin, "The Storyteller," 94.

ontological, epistemic, as well as affective region that circumvents the explanatory or informative mode of knowledge, which stands diametrically opposed to the *story*, but can only flash across as moments of grasping the inaccessible. When historically modalized, it takes on a "Messianic" vision;[101] and when linguistically reflected, it looks back on the Fall from the Adamic language, whereby "man abandoned immediacy in the communication of the concrete, name, and fell into the abyss of the mediateness of all communication, of the word as means, of the empty word, into the abyss of prattle.[102] The historian and the storyteller converge as they necessarily must, through a language that remembers its original purity whereby "[the] uninterrupted flow of [communication] runs through the whole of nature from the lowest forms of existence to man and from man to God," and this is the mythic—the *memory of* the unnamable origin—as the necessary medium of hi/stories. If this seems "theological" in the senses that some have argued,[103] Benjamin responds,

> Recollection can make the incomplete (happiness) into something complete, and the complete (suffering) into something incomplete. This is theology; but in recollection we have an experience which forbids us the chance of conceiving history as essentially atheological, just as we ought not to write it [sic] immediately theological concepts.[104]

Surreptitiously slipped into an incidental disguise, the description of the stick in *Higansugi made* bespeaks the proximity of the mythic and capitalist modernity: "Unlike

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[101] Benjamin writes, "A historian…stops telling the sequence of events like the beads of a rosary. Instead he grasps the constellation which his own era has formed with a definite earlier one, Thus he establishes a conception of the present as the "time of now" which is shot through with the chips of Messianic time." From "Theses on the Philosophy of History," 263.
[102] See Walter Benjamin, "On Language as Such and on Human Language," in *Reflections: Essays, Aphorisms, Autobiographical Writings*, trans. Edmund Jephcott and ed. Peter Demetz (New York: Schocken Books, 1978), 328.
[103] For the different interpretations of the "theological" in Benjamin, see Esther Leslie, *Walter Benjamin: Overpowering Conformism* (London: Pluto, 2000), 168-175.
[104] Max Pensky, *Melancholic Dialectics: Walter Benjamin and the Play of Mourning* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1993), 247.

the vulgar canes with the whole length of a curved snake winding round and round the stick, the kind often *exported,* his had only a carved snakehead. And that head, with its mouth open as if it were about to swallow something, served as the handle."[105] The mythic by definition tantalizes with only an opening; or, rather, myth is never more than an opening, like the eternal *beginnings* of Scheherazade's night.

8.

The almost imperceptible semiotic slide from the material to the hi/story is exquisitely recounted in Benjamin's reflection on another of the quintessentially *vanishing* figures of modernity: the collector.[106] Reminiscent of the "classical episteme," to borrow Foucault's terminology, marked by a classificatory and bibliographical ordering of the world, the collector has been the object of modern fascination precisely for his seeming anachronism, either evoking nostalgia or provoking dismissal.[107] Ackbar Abbas notes that modernist literature often drew on the collector:

> In Flaubert, it is the danger of a classification that reduces the heterogeneity of experience; in Nietzsche, it is the threat of knowledge being increasingly reified and so losing its ability to "serve life"; in Conrad, it is the ironic spectacle of the collector's object of desire producing a narrative of desire whose theme is the impossibility of desire being fulfilled.[108]

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[105] Sōseki, *To the Spring Equinox and Beyond*, 52. Italics added.
[106] Benjamin states, "[The] art of storytelling is coming to an end" in "The Storyteller," 83; "I know that time is running out for [the collector]" in "Unpacking My Library: A Talk about Book Collecting," in *Illuminations: Essays and Reflections*, ed. Hannah Arendt and trans. Harry Zohn (New York: Schocken Books, 1969), 67.
[107] Foucault, *The Order of Things*, esp. chapter 3.
[108] Ackbar Abbas, "Walter Benjamin's Collector: The Fate of Modern Experience," in *Modernity and the Text: Revisions of German Modernism*, ed. Andreas Huyssen and David Bathrick (New York: Columbia University Press, 1989), 225.

One of the most celebrated figures of the collector is found in Benjamin's autobiographical essay, "Unpacking My Library" (1931).[109] Beyond an antiquated avocation, the figure of the collector conjures Benjamin the critic peripatetically appearing across his oeuvre and thereby configuring his profound philosophy of history.[110] Benjamin defines the collector as follows:

> One may start from the fact that the true collector detaches the object from its functional relations. But that is hardly an exhaustible description of this remarkable mode of behavior. … It must be kept in mind that, for the collector, the world is present, and indeed ordered, in each of his objects. Ordered, however, according to a surprising and, for the profane understanding, incomprehensible connection. … (and collectors are physiognomists of the world of things)….[111]

Thus his massive *Arcades Projects* is unthinkable apart from this figuration of the collector as historian and vice versa.

Significantly for the present discussion, "Unpacking My Library" offers a striking reference point for the textual concerns of Uno's *Kura no naka*, as the two texts display remarkable parallels in terms of affective orientations while gesturing towards rivetingly dissimilar cathectic targets and philosophical destinations. On an immediately visible level, both Benjamin's collector and Uno's compulsive pawner resist "the dispersion to which objects are prone, [rescue] them from their functional role in use and exchange value"; both of them instantiate Rajeev Patke's characterization of figures whose "habitation corresponds to the museum, which resists the conversion of the street into the

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[109] See note 106 above.
[110] For Benjamin's other articulations on the collector, see "Convolute H," in Walter Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, trans. Howard Eiland and Kevin McLaughlin (Cambridge, Mass.; London: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2002), 203-11; "Eduard Fuchs, Collector and Historian" in Walter Benjamin, *Walter Benjamin: Selected Writings Vol. 3: 1935-38*, trans. Howard Eiland and Michael W. Jennings (Cambridge: Harvard University press, 2003), 260-302.
[111] Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, 207.

market, bazaar, arcade, or department store, all sites for the transformation of objects into commodities."[112] It may also be recalled that Woolf's John would slip the lump of glass inside his pocket, an impulse that "may have been the impulse which leads a child to pick up one pebble…promising it a life of warmth and security upon the nursery mantelpiece, delighting in the sense of power and benignity which such an action confers, and believing that the heart of the stone leaps with joy…to enjoy this bliss instead of a life of cold and wet upon the high road."[113] These collectors "[lock] individual items within a magic circle in which they are fixed as the final thrill" and therein experience "the most profound enchantment."[114] Or, as Yamaji exclaims, "[When] I saw the heaps of clothes all wrapped in old paper—oh, what a sight!—I forgot about everything else and reveled in my newfound happiness." (62)

Part of their pleasure lies in a vigilant watch for the chance to test their "tactical instinct." Benjamin experiments with different passages of acquisition in augmenting his library—"[Collectors'] experience teaches them that when they capture a strange city, the smallest antique shop can be a fortress, the most remote stationery store a key position. How many cities have revealed themselves to me in the marches I undertook in the pursuit of books!"[115] Yamaji, on the other hand, performs a suasive feat *par excellence* when he gains anomalous access to the pawnshop's storehouse, characterized by what Abbas calls "the anonymity and privatization of the interior," that he inhabits with his pawned/collected objects.[116]

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[112] Rajeev S. Patke, "Benjamin's Arcades Project and the Postcolonial City," *diacritic* 30, no. 4 (Winter 2000): 13.
[113] Woolf, "Solid Objects," 81.
[114] Benjamin, "Unpacking My Library," 61.
[115] Ibid., 63.
[116] Abbas, "Walter Benjamin's Collector," 219.

The impassioned acquisition of objects and the subsequent retreat into the interior is a feature common not only to Benjamin and Yamaji, but also John in Woolf's "Solid Objects."[117] Yet, while the latter is attuned to the more banal aspects of the objects—shapes, colors, material and so on—the other two figures are primarily concerned with hi/stories, or as they call them, "memories": "This or any other procedure is merely a dam against the spring tide of memories which surges toward any collector as he contemplates his possessions…collector's passion borders on the chaos of memories."[118] Further, hi/stories are necessarily an amalgam of those of the collector and those of the collected objects: "Not only books but also copies of books have their fates and the most important fate of a copy is its encounter with [the collector]."[119] Or, as Yamaji phrases it: "I don't want to sound pretentious, but the truth is, even if I were forbidden to remember, there's not one kimono…that wouldn't make me think of at least one woman." (64) Thus, it is "the *relationship* of the collector to his possessions" in which the collector would "[see] through them into their distant past as though inspired" that in the end renders Benjamin and Yamaji reverberating with each other.[120]

Fascinatingly, in both texts the memories take the performative passage of the narrative. For Abbas, it is the *ritual* of summoning memory that is embedded in both storytelling and collecting which are "alternative means of laying hold of experience in modernity"[121]: "As the collector is concerned not to reify the art object, so the storyteller

[117] John keeps his collection "upon the mantelpiece, where it stood heavy upon a little pile of bills and letters, and served not only as an excellent paper-weight, but also as a natural stopping place for the young man's eyes when they wandered from his book." Woolf, "Solid Objects," 82.
[118] Benjamin, "Unpacking My Library," 60. Brown examines a palpably historical dimension of "Solid Objects" and its preoccupation with material objects in the second half of his article, "The Secret Life of Things."
[119] Benjamin, "Unpacking My Library," 61.
[120] Ibid. Italics added.
[121] Abbas, "Walter Benjamin's Collector," 229.

is concerned not to reify the story."[122] Or, in Benjamin's words, "[Storytelling] 'sinks' the thing into the life of the storyteller, in order to bring it out of him again. Thus traces of the storyteller cling to the story the way the handprints of the potter cling to the clay vessel' and, we might add, the way marks of the collector cling to the object. Storytelling is a medium in both senses of the word, as is collecting."[123] Collecting is indeed "'a way of telling,' a way of transmitting experience through objects rather than through verbal language."[124]

Thus, the two forms of anamnestic modes of relation are not so much analogous as *contiguous* and mutually constitutive. Put differently, collecting is a narrative act not simply because it produces stories as a kind of inevitable byproduct of amassing objects but because it only completes itself as an act when it is *told*. The narrative import of the practice of collecting is immediately clear from the style of both texts as they highlight a certain dialogic impulse. *Kura no naka* famously begins, "And so I made up my mind—I was going to the pawnshop." Uno's "loquacious" or "garrulous" style has been well noted—although "performative" would be a more adequate term for the self-conscious foregrounding of the narrative act itself, far different than the gratuitous excess of verbiage that the conventional characterizations tend to imply. Similarly, Benjamin begins his account by announcing "I am unpacking my library. Yes, I am."[125] The jovial salutatory voice, departing from the generally somber undertone of most of Benjamin's writings, eventually addresses the readers directly: "You, ladies and gentlemen."[126]

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[122] Ibid., 233.
[123] "The Storyteller," 91-92.
[124] Ibid.
[125] Benjamin, "Unpacking My Library," 59.
[126] Ibid., 61.

Despite the ostentatious acknowledgment of the audience, neither narrative seems solicitous of a (narrative) community. If anything, both narrators present themselves as fugitives from the world that their respective audiences inhabit. Benjamin presumes his readers' "conviction that this passion is behind the times" and "distrust of the collector type."[127] Precisely from this knowledge he is able to assert rather haughtily, "Nothing is further from my mind than to shake either your conviction or your distrust" and even celebrate such obsolescence, "[As] Hegel put it, only when it is dark does the owl of Minerva begin its flight. Only in extinction is the collector comprehended."[128] Uno's text conjures up an audience similarly yet more overtly ill-disposed than Benjamin's readers. Their convictions on the bizarre practice of collecting by way of pawning are less definite. Rather, the object of their derision is the narrative act itself: "Please forgive my rambling….Sort it out—any way you please, only hear me out." While repeatedly announcing his inadequacy as a storyteller, Yamaji seems nothing but solicitous of his audience. Yet, his apologies never amount to narrative accommodation for the sake of intelligibility. To the contrary, he continues his story in whatever (dis)order the story finds itself: "Now then, at the beginning of this story I told you that I had decided to go to the pawnshop…but could you please wait a little longer and let me tell you another story before I go back to that?" (54)

In both texts then, the imagined audience functions as a narrative prop. Benjamin makes no concessions to readers while exhibiting his unabashed indulgence in a supremely private pleasure: "O bliss of the collector, bliss of the man of leisure! Of no one has less been expected, and no one has had a greater sense of well-being than the

[127] Ibid., 66.
[128] Ibid., 66.

man who has been able to carry on his disreputable existence in the mask of Spitzweg's 'Bookworm.'"[129] Yamaji, so absorbed in the (*telling* of the) story, only notices that he has been abandoned when "not one person" remains in the audience. And yet, both storytellers insist on the *being* of the audience in order for their narratives to arise. This precisely suggests the performative, or, better, ritualistic modality of collecting and storytelling. In fact, the audience need not be in the conventional form of readers or listeners. The collector's encounter with his objects in and of itself takes a narrative form, which by its very structure presumes the dialogic other.[130] The narrative configuration of an audience only highlights this always already dialogical scene of storytelling: "The storyteller takes what he tells from experience—his own or that reported by others. And he in turn makes it the experience of those who are listening to his tale."[131] Thus, collecting takes the practical as well as conceptual passage of the story to become intelligible as a *significant* act. Alternatively, hi/story impels for collecting: insofar as he takes what he tells from the "experience which is passed on from mouth to mouth," the storyteller ought to have a penchant for collecting.[132] In sum, Benjamin's and Yamaji's collecting cannot begin to *be* without being told and without the *other*—an absolutely essential component of this solitary pleasure.

At the same time, however, the inadequacy of the imagined audience is unmistakable in both texts. The necessary sequel Benjamin describes—"And [the storyteller] in turn makes [the story] the experience of those who are listening to his

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[129] Ibid., 67.
[130] Mikhail Bakhtin's concepts of "dialogism" and "heteroglossia" afford a relevant perspective, although they privilege language and context of the "utterance" rather than history embedded in the narrative. See *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*, ed. Michael Holquist and trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981), esp. "Discourse in the Novel." James Fujii reads Bakhtin with a focus on its ramifications on the subject. See *Complicit Fictions*, 27-40.
[131] Benjamin, "The Storyteller," 87.
[132] Ibid., 84.

tale"—fails to consummate in either instance of storytelling. Hence Benjamin's pre-emptive and peremptory disclaimer: "Nothing is further from my mind than to shake either your conviction or your distrust."[133] In a similarly fractured dialogic sphere, Yamaji is driven to end the performance when, to his sudden realization, the last of the audience has apparently exited in the middle of his story. To extrapolate along the line of collecting as a fundamentally narrative enterprise, Yamaji has been deprived of the very possibility to "collect." This final scene bears out the reality in which the art of storytelling as well as collecting is "coming to an end." For the listener's "naïve relationship to the storyteller [that is] controlled by his interest in retaining what he is told" to continue, and for the listener to "assure himself of the possibility of reproducing the story," there ought to be "memory" that "creates the chain of tradition which passes a happening on from generation to generation."[134] The audience cannot tolerate Yamaji's "short-lived reminiscences" and perhaps demands "remembrance," that is, a linear progress of events to reach an adequate end, if not a novelistic "unity" and "meaning of life."[135] Yet, Yamaji's story always offers *stories* and *beginnings* but never an end. Put in Benjamin's language, Yamaji's memories find no "heir" in his listeners and will eventually become lost.

Benjamin seems to diagnose this unsympathetic, impatient, and snobbish audience when he probes the nature of modern experience in his famed essay, "On Some Motifs in Baudelaire." Seizing upon shock as the definitive feature of modern

[133] Benjamin, "Unpacking My Library," 66-67.
[134] Benjamin, "The Storyteller," 97-98.
[135] Benjamin contrasts "the perpetuating remembrance of the novelist" with "the short-lived reminiscences of the storyteller," the former "dedicated to one *hero*, one *odyssey*, one *battle*," Ibid., 98; or, as Rilke writes, "The function of remembrance is the protection of impressions; memory aims at their disintegration. Remembrance is essentially conservative, memory is destructive," cited in Benjamin, "On Some Motifs in Baudelaire," 160.

experience—*Erlebnis*—, Benjamin privileges and proposes *Erfahrung*, the reflective kind of experience that enters the reservoir of memory, as that which could reconfigure the former.[136] The attempt to reconstitute this dimension of experience and retrieve the faculty of memory is precisely what underlies Benjamin's discussion of the storyteller and the collector with all the historical particularity of modernity.

The story ceases to be when it has lost its listeners and, in parallel, the collector disappears into the deepest interior of his room, or a storehouse. In solitude, he mobilizes his legendary tactical instinct and imagination as the only capital with which to conjure the audience, or the *community* of the ritual. Significantly and ironically, however, this impossibility of completing the act—storytelling and collecting in the absence of the other—affords precisely the textual possibility upon which *Kura no naka* takes form. And, when the other appears into this space by some felicitous accident, the subjective, material, and spatial life enlivens to open up that distance *toward* death once again, life still to be *spent* in order to arrive at the time of the inorganic. The unmistakably performative site of the *rakugo* stage and the transitory modality of the pawnshop suggest the peripatetic, ephemeral nature of the entire endeavor. Put differently, Yamaji essays a double fraud. First, he derives utter (narrative) pleasure under the guise of a solicitous performer, turning the (absent) audience into a prop. Second, he courteously obliges the wishes of the (absent) audience by ending his performance, belying his full cognizance of

[136] Benjamin, "On Some Motifs in Baudelaire,"163. For a fuller examination of the subject, see Scott McCracken, "The Completion of Old Work: Walter Benjamin and the Everyday," *Cultural Critique* 52 (Fall 2002): 148-49.

the perpetually *nomadic* nature of his (ad)venture: the *Finis* is always already *scripted*.[137] The performative register of the entire narrative comes full circle.

9.

As often acknowledged, collecting for Benjamin is a method of historical reconfiguration or provocation for new constellations, whereby not only is the past rescued but also the future pointed to.[138] For some critics, this is nothing short of a "political action: the collector's reconfiguration of things prefigures the self-organization of people."[139] *Kura no naka* may seem to lack historical consciousness, and perhaps the most significant reason lies in its unapologetic preoccupation with intense privacy. Yet, as the preceding discussions have demonstrated, it is not only indelibly inscribed by history—as any text is destined to be—but also bears out its historicity in what are seemingly the most unhistorical scenes of modern life, and thereby illustrates aspects of reality to which a constative description/prescription is inadequate. Yamaji's peculiar patronage of the pawnshop—a patronage which, rather than simple loans of money in place of objects, seeks access to the deepest recess of the storehouse—constitutes perhaps a hyperbolic response to Matsumoto's call to find a "thing" in Sōseki's *Higansugi made*. Only Yamaji's peculiar insistence on pawning as a form of access to *things*, compounded with his overt performativity, produces a drastic critical difference.

Matsumoto imagines the "thing" as a medium through which to impoverish the ego and thereby recover experience of the world: "I'm so diverted by these interests that

[137] "Nomad space is 'smooth,' or open-ended. One can rise up at any point and move to any other. Its mode of distribution is the *nomos*: arraying onself in an open space…as opposed to the *logos* of entrenching oneself in a closed space…." See Massumi, *A User's Guide*, 6.
[138] McCracken, "The Completion of Old Work," 147.
[139] Ibid.

quite naturally I reach a point in which I can't help feeling emptied even of my very self."[140] On the other hand, Yamaji seems absolutely oblivious to the existential problem of the modern individual that Matsumoto articulates so well. What is absent in *Kura no naka* is certainly not the modern man, but rather any trace of *intention* in the relation to objects. As Benjamin observes,

> Truth never enters into a relation, and particularly not an intentional one. The object of knowledge as something determined within conceptual intention is not truth. Truth, built out of ideas [rather than appearing within them], is unintentional being. The procedure which adequately conforms to it is therefore not an intending within the knowing process, but an entering into [truth] and disappearing. Truth is the death of intention.[141]

Matsumoto's proposal to Sunaga—the absorption into a "thing" as a truth *qua* remedy concerning the modern individual—is this methodized consequence of the "knowing process."

Even if only to exit from it in the end, *Higansugi made* operates within the paradigm of possessive individualism, with the ultimate narrative edification of "self-possession." On the other hand, dispossession defines *Kura no naka*. This is historicity at work, contending not so much with positive/positivist historical reality as such but circumventing it so proximately as to constantly verge on, yet never quite touching, the seemingly obvious property of history. In view of the so-called humanism pervasive in the Taishō discourse, Uno's text makes a case for narcissism as the condition of Eros, to profit from Freud's insight.[142] More poignantly, however, Yamaji's compulsion to repeat

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[140] Sōseki, *To the Spring Equinox and Beyond*, 284.
[141] Walter Benjamin, *The Origin of the German Mourning Play*, cited in Susan Buck-Morss, *The Origin of Negative Dialectics: Theodor W. Adorno, Walter Benjamin and the Frankfurt School* (New York: Free Press, 1977), 77.
[142] Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, 60-62 After displacing the ego versus libido onto life versus death instincts, thereby redefining the ego and libido as composed of the same property, Freud observes,

recalls the *fort-da* sequence of the child's game whereby the departure of the cathexed object is choreographed into the theater of his storytelling.[143] Viewed against this "impulse to work over in the mind some overpowering experience so as to make oneself master of it," Yamaji's performative scripting of the very obsolescence of the ontology that he inhabits seems less triumphant than it is melancholy. Further, to recall Cathy Caruth's delicate reading of "trauma" as an "unclaimed experience," Yamaji is enacting the trauma of modern experience—what Benjamin differentiated as *Erlebnis* characterized by shock—in order to transform it into *Erfahrung* whereby the integrity of its contents is retained through reflection.[144]

Sōseki's narrative configuration of Sunaga as a cultured idler is confirmed once again when his effort to come to terms with his melancholy existence culminates in the finale of sorting through his bookshelves. The unsurprising return to his room and books is reminiscent of the first (anti)hero of modern Japanese literature: Bunzō of *Ukigumo*. Yet Sunaga's awakening, however tenuous, to the world at large fascinatingly coincides with the discovery of a long forgotten book that he had borrowed and never returned.[145] The belated reading of the book—a novel about a man's tenacious attainment of revenge by murder, which in the end leads to doubts about his own sanity—unsettles Sunaga's long-held hierarchical binary of reason and feeling: "When I compared myself with him, I envied his ability to act so intently without reflection. At the same time, I was so

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"[The] ego is the true and original reservoir of libido, and it is only from that reservoir that libido is extended on to objects"

[143] Ibid., 13-17.

[144] Cathy Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996). For Benjamin's discussion of these different registers of experience, see "Some Motifs in Baudelaire,"163.

[145] Sōseki, *To the Spring Equinox and Beyond,* 257-262.

terrified by all of this that I had broken out into a sweat."[146] This corporeal reaction to the borrowed-and-never-returned novel narratively aligns itself with Sunaga's close observation of the maid Saku: "Saku's figure before me looked like a morning glory drawn with one stroke of the brush. … As I put down my ricebowl on the table, I saw in Saku's face something sacred."[147] The implications of gender and class in the scene must be put aside for another discussion, as must the hereditary repetition cautiously introduced here—recall the secret in the center of Sunaga's personal history, that is, he is a child born between his father and a housemaid. The interest of this narrative moment lies in the ways in which it constitutes a textual reiteration *vis-à-vis* Benjamin's assertion: "Of the customary modes of acquisition, the one most *appropriate* to a collector would be the borrowing of a book and its attendant non returning."[148]

Productively reverberating with Bourdaghs's reading of Sōseki's representation of modern ownership, Ravit Reichman notes the ways in which modernist fiction "depicts property as a source of grief, disappointment, dispossession, and guilt."[149] Tracing back to the theory of property proposed by Jeremy Bentham, Reichman observes, "From a legal standpoint, property describes not an entity but relations among people with respect to that entity. These relations evoke emotions but are grounded in and reified by law. Because property creates a web of relations, it contains multiple *narrative* possibilities."[150] Perhaps law is less immediately applicable here but the import of the observation remains germane. The property relation *qua* debt incurred whilst unaware dawns on Sunaga as a metaphorical tie that still holds him in relation to the world, which

[146] Ibid., 261.
[147] Ibid., 263.
[148] Benjamin, "Unpacking My Library," 62. Italics added.
[149] Ravit Reichman, "Mourning, Owning, Owing," *American Imago* 64, no. 3 (Fall 2007): 433.
[150] Ibid., 434. Italics added.

has long been obliterated in his life of "thought."[151] It opens up the possibility of radical new constellations of the *history* of his life and thereby that of the world. Thus, property as an oppressive epistemological inheritance as Bourdaghs perceptively grasped erupts here, differently configured—as debt.

Reading James Joyce's *Ulysses*, Reichman states, "each of the micronarratives of ownership forms a thread in the larger web of debtorship in which Dubliners are imbricated" and "the novel's prevailing atmosphere is infused by the debtor's excess."[152] This insight linking property, debt, and narrative into a single loop points toward another passage of the story: the relations emanating and extending *ad infinitum* from objects *in circulation* rather than in a collection, like the snake-head stick and now the borrowed book. In fact, the collector—"the traumatized, privatized, and impotent individual, the etui man of the interior"—operates from a prodigious vision of the world extending both spatially and temporally[153]: "Actually, inheritance is the soundest way of acquiring a collection. For a collector's attitude toward his possession stems from an owner's feeling of responsibility toward his property. [And] the most distinguished trait of a collection will always be its transmissibility."[154] Debt *qua* responsibility is the affective ground of the collector's solitary endeavor and melancholy pleasure—debt owed, if not to identifiable benefactors, to the objects themselves. *The collector owes it to the objects—and with it, their stories—to circulate them, in some other place and some other time than the market.*

[151] Sunaga finds it "sad to realize [he] could not live without analyzing everything minutely" and concludes, "It's best not to think about anything." Sōseki, *To the Spring Equinox and Beyond*, 263.
[152] Reichman, "Mourning, Owning, Owing," 441.
[153] Abbas, "Walter Benjamin's Collector," 226.
[154] Benjamin, "Unpacking My Library," 66.

Thus, some answers have been suggested to the question concerning Yamaji's insistence on "ownership" over his objects, or a bizarre form of ownership *qua* pawning, with which the present chapter began. It is an ontological passage rarely available to the subject who must procure the necessary support of the other—even in the form of specters—in order to tell stories and collect objects. Alternatively, he tells stories and collects objects precisely in a melancholic longing for the other—even in the form of specters. The end of the magic of being with the other, which Chapter 3 discussed by way of the cinematic scene in the storehouse, does not testify to the insupportability of the world that Yamaji inhabits—that it is insular, narcissistic, and unfeasible. Rather, it articulates the truth of the relation: The desire for the other cannot but arrive as the absence of the other. Yet, the care of that desire is already an ethical force insofar as it *turns* the subject towards the other to see the expanse of distance, which can only be traveled with the support of the *promise* of the other.

Chapter 5

Becoming Mad *Bio-graphically*

What one calls life
—the thing or object of biology and biography—
does not stand face to face
with something that would be its opposable ob-ject:
death, the thanatological or thanatographical.
This is the first complication.
-Jacques Derrida, "Otobiographies:
The Teaching of Nietzsche
and the Politics of the Proper Name"

1.

The present study began with a discussion of hysteria as a psychosomatic passage to the concept of mimesis as a relational and narrative possibility, and proceeded to discuss the body as the very site thereof nested in the particular spatial coordinates of the pawnshop storehouse. The focus has now arrived at what may be considered the question of critical praxis, i.e., the how to read hysteria, mimesis, and the body into the supremely institutional problem of modern Japanese literary history. What can a solitary text such as *Kura no naka* offer towards examining the monolith of literary history for all its ideological, national cultural, as well as aesthetic implications? The following discussion will address a particular mode of literary history whereby the variously modalized yet mutually arising concepts and operations pursued thus far in reference to Uno's text become palpable and in the very same movement subjected to erasure: namely, biography, or literary history with a penchant for *biographism*.

With a particular event in the biography of Uno the author as the interpretive hinge, the following discussion will attempt to imagine anew this weathered notion in order to release the biographist absolutism, fantasy, whereby the author stands for textual meaning and literary value, and grasp the possibility of accounting for the *bios* and *graphia* as the constituents of *bio-graphy*. In other words, extending the body—the concern of the present study thus far—into the literary historical arena, this chapter attempts to reimagine biography as a conjunction of the body and writing, or, more precisely, the way in which writing can only arise as bodily inscription and the body gather visibility by way of writing. Shifting the discussion on *shishōsetsu* as a symptom of the modern coloniality (Chapter 2) towards the problem of literary history, accelerating hysteria (Chapter 3) into madness, and conjuring the mobile and indebted body (Chapters 3 and 4) in moments of scandalous stylization will finally illuminate the always simultaneous advent/event of the body and writing, the stake of which is *literature* itself.

The earliest voices valorizing hysteria as an eruption of artistic creativity predictably presume biographical continuity between the author and the authorial work. Baudelaire's and Flaubert's valorization of hysteria as a potent channel of literary inspiration is mentioned in Chapter 1. Subsequently, much of the critical scholarship on the literary representation of hysteria ventured into psychobiographical interpretive marshes whereby the authors of hysterical narratives are considered for their own hysterical symptoms, presumably located in such conventionally biographical sources as letters and diaries.[1] It certainly seems that Jean-Paul Sartre's monumental biocriticism of

[1] Studies of Flaubert are a textbook example. See Chapter 3 of the present study.

Flaubert consolidated the tether between the hysterical text and the hysterical author.[2] More recent studies have only further normalized the interpretive procedure.[3] Perhaps this is not a surprising development considering the powerful impact of psychology and psychoanalysis on general humanistic discourse in the past century. As such, the biographical lure is not confined to discourses on hysteria. At the same time, it may be accurate to say that the modern biographical penchant is contiguous with, and is most enthrallingly captured by, the unprecedented seduction of hysteria. That is to say, they converge on the interest in "*man* as such" to borrow Foucault's term.[4]

In modern Japanese literature, biography has a strong association with particular critical methods known as *sakkaron* and *sakuhinron*, which are in fact different articulations of the same historical concern with the positivist notion of the unified person of the author and the oeuvre, which in turn is unified under the authorial person. Ultimately revolving around the author as the ultimate site of interpretation, these criticisms were openly and intimately related to the dominance of *shishōsetsu* in modern Japanese literary discourse. It should be emphasized that *shishōsetsu* in the present study certainly refers to the autobiographically inflected novelistic genre that emerged in the early twentieth century but, more urgently, designates the discursive paradigm in which the genre appeared, which made possible *sakkaron* and *sakuhinron* with a semantic gravitation towards the author, and, finally, the epistemic field with affective as well as epistemological consequences that conditions/is conditioned by the very *place* of the O/other, a certain directionality of the symbolic order itself. The intriguing gaps among

[2] *The Family Idiot: Gustave Flaubert, 1821- 1857*, 5 vols., trans. Carol Cosman (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981-1993).
[3] These are discussed in Chapter 3 of this study.
[4] *The Order of Things*, 309.

them and, for example, the way in which the *shishōsetsu* discursive paradigm and the *shishōsetsu* genre do not always commensurate even while mutually generative will be further elucidated below. For the moment, suffice it to say that *sakkaron*/*sakuhinron* and *shishōsetsu* as a critical subject matter inevitably suffered a simultaneous decline within modern Japanese literary discourse.

As often noted, the demise of *sakkaron*/*sakuhinron* and *shishōsetsu* as viable critical terms is in large part due to the conspicuous intervention of poststructuralist discourses in modern Japanese literary studies since the 1980s, which helped objectify what seemed an essentialist legacy of the postwar criticism. With the rejection of the unified subject as a principal effect as well as object of the theoretical sea change, and also given the particular *history* of modern Japanese literary discourse to date besieged by *sakkaron*/*sakuhinron* as well as *shishōsetsu*, it was precisely the biographical kernel of critical discourse that became untenable. Amidst the generally enthusiastic approval of this critical coming of age, however, what has become obscure is the specific form taken by the disengagement from the biographical. For the rejection of the unified subject is never a unilateral decision but requires a procedure.

As the Overture and Chapter 1 discussed, as the theoretical turn quickly descended in the direction of another return to history it figured itself in part as an enthusiastic reception of several notable European and American theorists. Michel Foucault's historiography and Judith Butler's gender theory proved particularly felicitous for the ways in which they apparently privilege historical and political methods and concerns, which afforded a certain rapport with the critical preoccupation in Japan at the time with the ideology of national culture. Thus, within the particular critical modality of

modern Japanese literature, the productive relation between desire and power in Foucault was largely effaced. Similarly, Butler's concept of the performative has been appropriated in such a way that the reiterative body is all but invisible. In other words, modern Japanese literary criticism took as its task to foreground the "constructed" nature of history, but largely ignored those registers of reality that are irreducible to empirical objectification.

At any rate, even the most salubrious achievements in bringing the new theoretical insights to bear on the particular critical situation in modern Japanese literary studies—disarticulating *sakkaron*/*sakuhinron* and *shishōsetsu*—display a certain repressive operation. Put differently, there is an unacknowledged consequence of the rejection of the biographical, and the related terms of ontology. Despite the supposed critical leap out of essentialism, its avatars continue to make surreptitious returns, though in different guises and under different names. Criticism may not be given under a single author's name and *shishōsetsu* may not be discussed *as such* but the rhetorical structure of scholarly discourse still constantly conjures them as indispensible components of the operative modality.[5] More pervasive and therefore less noticeable is the dominant critical *culture* itself, which embraces even the most theoretically astute members of the critical community. Chapter 2 touched upon the critical perils that *zadankai*, the roundtable discussion, as a predominant discursive format signifies for modern Japanese literature, with its reliance on fraternal network of critics and publishers, informal setting, colloquial rhetoric, and insider information. The continuation of *zadankai* indeed throughout the

[5] At least two titles testify to what might be termed the "return of the repressed": Hibi, *"Jiko hyōshō" no bungakushi* and Ōhigashi, *Bungaku no tanjō*. These authors evade the term *shishōsetsu* yet pursue precisely the trajectory of the authorial self as the organizing principle, under the labels "self-representation" (*jiko hyōshō*) and "self-expression" (*jiko hyōgen*) respectively.

twentieth century to this day is nothing less than a testimony to the very epistemic dimension of *shishōsetsu*.

Thus, to dismiss these instances of studies and discussions as insufficiently critical or theoretical would be not only futile but inaccurate insofar as these terms are indeed historical. While acknowledging the "returns" of the "biographical" as signaling certain epistemological impulses modalized by the particular history of modern Japanese epistemic condition extending beyond the immediate problems of *sakkaron*/*sakuhinron* and *shishōsetsu*, it also seems possible to pursue them for their reverberation with global theoretical agendas and misfires. For these impulses, which may be provisionally called biographical, seem to find a paradigmatic moment in the death of the superlative figure of poststructuralist theory in the last few decades: Jacques Derrida. British scholar Seán Burke, for example, astutely and provocatively notes: "[The fact that the] concept of author is never more alive than when pronounced dead…was borne out in the literal context of the global responses provoked by the death of the unique irreplaceable author that 'remains' Jacques Derrida."[6] Given the way in which Derrida had been associated with the theoretical killing of the author, so to speak, this event of death and mourning ironically attests to the "man" as the cohering site of all textual meaning returning against all critical odds.

It should be noted that there are some serious doubts to be held against Burke's critical operation. The very phrase "anti-authorial criticism" coined to refer to the theoretical articulations ventured by Roland Barthes, Michel Foucault, and Jacque Derrida is violently reductionist, cuttingly and glaringly blurted out in what frequent

[6] *The Death and Return of the Author: Criticism and Subjectivity in Barthes, Foucault and Derrida*, 3d ed. (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2008), xvi.

amounts to grievances rather than critiques. A supplementary insertion carries the rhetorical import with an added effect: "The work of that other great anti-subjectivist of the modern era, Jacque Lacan, is as surely implicated in the *folie circulaire* of the *authoring* and *authorizing* the disappearance of the subject, of *declaring* that no-one speaks."[7] Without aspiring to any project as sweeping as an appraisal of the named theorists—a venture with its own merit as well as risk—it may be possible to discern in Burke's study a certain salience insofar as it calls attention to the question that has silently yet persistently haunted recent theoretical successes in certain parts of global discursive community. In modern Japanese literary criticism this *anxiety* surrounding the biographical has taken the obvious path of the rejection—which has proved more a repression or concealment—of *shishōsetsu*. The point is neither to recuperate the *shishōsetsu* genre or discourse nor argue for the universal relevance of biography, but rather to pose the hard question of how to negotiate the obvious limits of the critical paradigm in a way that accounts for the persistent if covert valorization of the biographical.

The affinity between the old (*sakkaron*/*sakuhinron* and *shishōsetsu*) and the new ("theoretical") inflections of criticism in modern Japanese literature was pointed out in the Overture to this study. Its basis was found to be their respective privileging of history: history of the author in the former and history of the era in the latter. It has further been argued that this faith in history, perhaps positivism, has ordered its contours by way of disregarding the very properties that make literature the singular discursive mode that it is.

[7] Ibid., 99. Burke's italics. Among the texts that Burke addresses are two quintessential theses on the subject: Barthes, "The Death of the Author," in *Image-Music-Text*, trans. and ed. Stephen Heath (London: Fontana, 1977), 42-48; Foucault, "What is an Author?" in *Textual Strategies: Perspectives in Post-Structuralist Criticism* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1979), 141-60.

Hence the irony that the methodological vigilance against (past) wrongs led to the relinquishment of that very thing which constitutes literature, which the present study has endeavored to access by way of the body. For it is the body that forever eludes the historical—as particularly modalized in modern Japanese literature—and thereby procures a certain alterity for the literary. An illuminating symptom may be found in the feminist repudiation of the biological, which contributed to the critical effacement of the sexual, sensual, and kinetic body, leaving the feminist discourse barren. What seems called for is an imagination of another "literary *history*," which cannot but arise as "good literary *interpretation*" that strives towards the *time* of literature, that is, writing that is first and foremost a temporal movement.[8] The body is simultaneously a metonym, conduit, and hope of *this* literature.

2.

There may be a number of ways to approach what may be called the being of literature, but as the preceding chapters have made it clear, the present study presumes to find it in the body—or, rather, *on* the body as will become clear—a passage thereto. Or, this particular approach is concerned with, in Derrida's language, "the *dynamis* of that borderline between the 'work' and the 'life'…its force, its power as well as its virtual and mobile potency," or the "divisible borderline [that] traverses two 'bodies,' the corpus and the body in accordance with laws that we are only beginning to catch sight of."[9] Meanwhile the theoretical traversal from biography to the body requires more elucidation.

[8] See de Man, "Literary History, Literary Modernity," 403.
[9] "Otobiographies: The Teaching of Nietzsche and the Politics of the Proper Name," in *The Ear of the Other*, trans. Peggy Kamuf and ed. Christie McDonald (Lincoln; London: University of Nebraska Press, 1985), 5-6. Derrida's italics.

Of course, the word *bio-graphy* already signals certain tension arising from the body: the Greek concept of *bios* dwells in the indeterminate region between *zoē,* the simple fact of living, on the one hand, and the *polis,* the site of the qualified life, the good life, on the other.[10] *Bios* is this modal arc over the impossible binary. That the word "life" as it currently used has effaced this ancient philological and philosophical differentiation properly articulates this originary impossibility but at the same time deadens the critical edge borne in such a differentiation, baring as it does the precise composition of the impossibility. In other words, while a subjective life free of political inscription is indeed unimaginable, it is certainly possible to conjure that register of the subjective life that escapes the political, ideological, or symbolic order. Hysteria, for instance, offers precisely such conjuring.

For the concerns of the present study it is astute to address hysteria as Porter does in reference to "style," that confluence of the body and writing by way of inscription on/of the body, replete with interpretive energy.[11] When Judith Butler refers to gender as "a corporeal style," the body that inscribes, the inscriptive body, extends beyond the pathological boundary of hysteria—that is, if there ever had been such a boundary in the first place.[12] Taken to a visible extreme, the stylizing body receives a scandalous name, "dandy," another modern(ist) concept that has received considerable yet far from exhaustive treatment in global literary discourses.[13] Further pressuring "style" opens the

[10] Giorgio Agamben, *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*, trans. Daniel Heller-Roazen (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995), 1-3.
[11] Porter, "The Body and the Mind, the Doctor and the Patient," 229.
[12] "Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory" in *Performing Feminisms: Feminist Critical Theory and Theatre*, ed. Sue-Ellen Case (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990), 272.
[13] On the general subject of the dandy, see Jerrold Seigel, *Bohemian Paris: Culture, Politics, and the Boundaries of Bourgeois Life, 1830-1930* (New York: Viking, 1986), chapter 4; Jessica R. Feldman, *Gender on the Divide: The Dandy in Modernist Literature* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993), chapter

other route to *bio-graphy*—that is, writing as a bodily act. To do so is to translate, transpose, and trans*figure* the English word "style" into the Japanese word *buntai* 文体. Inscribed this way, style gains further visibility as that which inevitably refers to the body and writing in one *pose*: the body that arises as writing (writing *of* the body) and writing that is bodily (the body *of* writing). The productive ambiguity of the preposition "of" felicitously fleshes out the double ontology: belonging and yielding. In this manner, *buntai* and *bio-graphy* arise as mirror images of each other gesturing certain promises toward a new literary history.

Thus the heuristic bifurcation ventured with "*bio-graphy*" receives a theoretical vindication. Inflating style and *bio-graphy* to their mutual significatory limits, with the body and writing as their pivots, still leaves the question: If the body and writing are indeed always already one and the same movement, where is *bio-graphy vis-à-vis* the subject—the authorial subject, precisely? In other words, if biography as practiced in modern Japanese literary history is somehow critically insufficient or even theoretically unviable, where has it gone astray? After all, is biography not redundant—emphatically signaling the inevitability of the body and writing in their mutuality? Where is the margin of error there? And, how can the presumed error be rectified to illuminate anew the possibility of biography, i.e., *bio-graphy*?

The following discussion will attempt to answer these questions by departing from a particular suspicion: Modern Japanese literature has produced its canonical narrative—literary history—by way of disintegrating *bios* and *graphia*, that is, extinguishing the mutual ontology of the body and writing, from which *bio-graphy* arises.

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1. Particularly relevant to the problem of gender as pursued in the present study is Elisa Glick's article, "The Dialectics of Dandyism," *Cultural Critique* 48 (Spring 2001).

In other words, this scission of *bios* and *graphia* is precisely a literary historical mechanism. The following discussion will proceed as a series of negative gestures: a disarticulation of the aforementioned disintegration into a certain mutuality that has never been anything else yet ought to be reinstated. What is suggested here is not an "alternative" biography, and even less a better or truer form or meaning of biography. The aim is to release anew *bios* and *graphia* into their always already mutual choreography so that biography is given another *life*, that is, another *writing*, and literary *history* as another literary *interpretation*.

A final note must be spared for the problem of modernity. Hysteria and the particular bodily kinetics and spatial coordinates in the preceding discussions are firmly conditioned by and as modern experience. Style also unfurls as particular articulations of and against the global commerce of ideals, hopes, and despairs, ontological, aesthetic, or political, all enabled by modern conditions. *Bio-graphy* will finally prove a singularly viable site on which the modern melancholy, sometimes pressed to verge on madness, can and ought to receive certain amatory address.

3.

Uno Kōji is an intriguing figure because his authorial name inhabits precisely the outer limit of the *shoshōsetsu* discourse. Indisputably, he penned many novels that would easily fall into this generic category insofar as he gathered narrative materials from his daily life, which involved many well-known literary figures who could and did testify to or against the veracity of his novels. *Kura no naka* itself circulated often framed by the narrative (of) origin, necessarily arising from the fraternal milieu:

> Hirotsu Kazuo had heard from the head of the *Shinchō* publishing house how the novelist Chikamatsu Shūkō (1876-1944) loved clothes so much that he pawned his kimonos to raise money to have a new outfit made each season and then went to the pawnshop to visit his old clothes. Hirotsu passed the anecdote on to Uno and challenged him to "make something out of it." Uno rose to the occasion, wrote for "three days in his futon," and produced a story that he called "Aru oroka na otoko no hanashi" (A Tale of a Foolish Man).[14]

A memorable moment came with the 1925 essay entitled, "Watakushi shōsetsu shiken" (Personal view on *shishōsetsu*), in which Uno advocated for the genre in the following terms:

> I believe that the interesting aspect of "*shishōsetsu*" lies in the depth to which it delves into the humanity of its author. This is the reason for its being referred to as the subjectivist novel. While at first glance the "*shishōsetsu*" appears monotonous, with the author writing only of the personal affairs of the "I", when the "I" has been probed, everything is there and there is nothing that cannot be said. While it is not impossible to write of states of mind in a conventional novel, it would not equal the directness of the "*shishōsetsu*." Furthermore, on the craftsmanship of "*shishōsetsu*," I believe that Japanese authors or Japanese people possess the most distinguished inborn talent. No doubt this has been passed down in the blood from Matsuo Bashō.[15]

Intriguingly, as unambiguous as its apparent message may seem, this celebration of *shishōsetsu* instantiates a cacophonic moment when juxtaposed with another of Uno's well-noted observations, one found, however, in a novelistic text. Written in 1920, *Amaki yo no hanashi* (Tale of a Sweet World) had called attention to the then yet-to-be-named narrative convention:

> Surely any intelligent reader has noticed a peculiar development in much recent fiction, namely the appearance of a nebulous figure known only as "I." One reads nothing about his looks, much less about his behavior or his occupation. What does one read, you ask? Merely a string of impressionistic musings. Soon you realize that the "I" is none other than the author himself. This is almost always the case. The "I" therefore is a

[14] Gerbert in Uno, *Love of Mountains*, 16.
[15] Uno Kōji, "*Shishōsetsu* shaken," in Yoshida Seiichi and Sofue Shōji, eds. *Kindai bungaku hyōron taikei, vol. 7 Taishō 3/Shōwa 1* (Kadokawa shoten, 1971-1975), 64.

> writer, and the reader never seems to question this curious convention whereby the author alludes to himself by writing in the first person. Now, while there is nothing wrong with having the narrator double as the hero and the hero poses as a writer, it is regrettable that readers have come to equate him automatically with the author and think of all the story's incidents as actually having taken place.[16]

Surely, there is no reason to reconcile the two apparently opposing views of *shishōsetsu*; such an effort would simply replicate the familiar discursive desire to read the author as an immutable source of an equally immutable idea. Rather, the productivity of the juxtaposition may be sought in exposing the insufficiency of *shishōsetsu* as a critical term in the absence of the larger epistemic context, which demands psychoanalytical readings. Thus, scholars have often solely focused on identifying these disparate discursive moments insofar as they yield to a literary chronology and in the process conferred a certain ontological tie between *shishōsetsu* and Uno. The naturalized association of the genre and the author, aided by other literary historical events, which will soon be discussed, has foreclosed any scrutiny of the possible irreconcilability of the two views cited above and by extension a different configuration of their relation that may exceed the *shishōsetsu* paradigm.[17]

Understandably then, the two observations are rarely presented together—most likely for the obvious difficulty that such juxtaposition would pose for literary historical, that is, biographical positioning of the author. Separately, however, they are deployed for the same discursive purpose and literary historical argument: the former (later) passage would prove Uno's unmistakable advocacy of the *shishōsetsu* genre and stabilize Uno the

[16] Translation taken from Gerbert, "Uno Kōji," 4. For Japanese, see *Uno Kōji zenshū*, vol. 2, 442.
[17] Many scholars have contributed to this development, either by arguing for such a link or by citing earlier studies that do so. An early example is found in Hirano Ken, cited in Gerbert, "Uno Kōji," 5-6. For recent examples, Hijiya-Kirschnereit addresses the two instances separately; see *Rituals of Self-Revelation*, 154 and 174-175. Suzuki mentions only Uno's essay, calling it "one of the earliest essays to defend the I-novel," *Narrating the Self*, 50-51.

author as a *shishōsetsuka*; the latter (earlier) would mark Uno's place within the very origin of *shishōsetsu*—he was one of the first to observe the emerging genre. At the same time, the irreconcilability between the two articulations is only apparent for another entirely different reason.

As discussed in Chapter 2, the *shishōsetsu* subject is a psychic formation *vis-à-vis* the West, the authentic, threatening, and thereby enabling *Other* in the Meiji and Taishō national cultural imagination. Note the conspicuous presence of "Japan" and "Japanese" in Uno's manifesto above. In both its semiotic structure and semantic manifestation, *shishōsetsu* as conjured by Uno is a *national* construct. Put differently, "Shishōsetsu shiken" is unconcerned with the phenomenal genre of *shishōsetsu*, a point that becomes obvious when it is compared with the critique explicit in *Amaki yo no hanashi*. The latter regards the *practice* of the novel: the ways in which *reading* actually *writes*, so to speak. The former departs from the site of practice to take flight into the abstract notions whereby a number of mutually replicating terms, the *watashi* and Japan/ese foremost, stifle any critical need to pause—for writing. Strategically enunciated in a novelistic scene, Uno's critical awareness of the performative ontology of the *shishōsetsu* genre is neither directly opposed to nor extravagantly collaborative with the larger discursive—at once psychic and affective as well as ideological—formation of "Japan" and *shishōsetsu*. The genre and the discursive conditions are compatible insofar as the former inhabits the latter; or, the latter need not take any immediate interest in the former. To risk hyperbole, the *watashi* inscribed twice in the title "*Shi*shōsetsu *shi*ken" already signals the discursive disposition, which forms the very grounds of any "view" (*ken*)—a form of relation—in the *watashi*, the *shishōsetsu* subject. Considered this way, the proximity between Uno

and the *shishōsetsu* genre is palpable yet misleading, even while he is firmly situated within the *shishōsetsu* epistemic field. In other words, the two articulations are incompatible at the level of discourse rather than content.

Perhaps unsurprisingly then, the conventional association of Uno and the *shishōsetsu* genre, naturalized as it is, seems to have been ill at ease all along. Irmela Hijiya-Kirschnereit illustrates it as follows:

> The problems of conventional shishōsetsu research are particularly apparent in the example of Uno Kōji (1891-1961), since, according to Yamamoto Kenkichi, truth and lies cannot be distinguished in his shishōsetsu. However, if by definition shishōsetsu requires the highest possible degree of sincerity in order to be seen in its factual truth, then Uno should give rise either to an examination of the label "shishōsetsu writer" or to a new definition of the terms reality and truth. This problem, however, does not exist for Yamamoto. On the contrary, the blending of "fiction" and "reality" in Uno Kōji's literature is for him proof of the inseparability of work and life.[18]

In fact, Hijiya-Kirschnereit's puzzlement was foreshadowed as early as 1963 by Itō Sei in a thoughtful reflection:

> Literary historical assessment of Uno seems yet to become clear. Where is Uno within the course of *shishōsetsu*? Or, how can his work be interpreted in relation to realism? These are difficult questions to answer. Uno is a difficult person to discuss. Of course, that he has been excluded from such a literary historical method of classification does not mean his value is denied. *Rather, he reveals the instability of the literary historical method of classification itself.*[19]

Befitting such monikers as monster (*monsutā*), chameleon (*kamereon*), or *nue* (鵺)—referring to the legendary fabulous creature with the head of a monkey, the body of a raccoon-dog, and the legs of a tiger—or another all-encompassing title, "the demon of literature" (*bungaku no oni*), Uno continues to present a taxonomic problem for those

[18] Irmela Hijiya-Kirschnereit, *Rituals of Self-Revelation:*, 103.
[19] *Uno Kōji kaisō* (Chūō kōronsha, 1963), 246.

who invest in *shishōsetsu*.[20] Hence the sense of inadequacy that often haunts the very label: a reference volume titled *Shishōsetsu* includes Uno as one of four representative writers in the genre and yet its editors admit a certain uneasiness over such a characterization: "Uno [is a writer] whom one cannot judge by the category of *shishōsetsu*."[21] Similarly, a recent volume on Taishō literary history accords Uno a straightforward designation as a "representative writer of *shishōsetsu*" only to qualify it with a note on the difference that sets him apart from other *shishōsetsuka*: "[Uno] searched for materials from the hardships of life and yet managed to create a humorous style," implying that "the hardships of life" are the main domain of the genre, which can accommodate "humor" only through some unique quality of the author.[22]

The question emerging here is twofold: First, what about Uno's writing gave rise to this interpretive vexation? Second, could this be illuminated by way of literary history as a narrative mechanism? Put differently, it is the interplay between textual ontology and the literary historical narrative that needs to be elucidated. Any attempt to answer these questions must account for the oft-mentioned "style" in its discussion.

4.

Virtually all literary historical accounts of Uno's oeuvre refer to the distinctiveness of his early works. Such an assessment presumes several things—most intriguingly, a break in

[20] For an illuminating contemporary portrayal of Uno, see Funaki Shigenobu's "Bundan shinjin ron: Uno Kōji ron," *Shinchō* (November, 1919) reprinted in *Shishōsetsu*, ed. Nihon bungaku kenkyū shiryō sōsho, 108-117. Funaki begins by saying, "Uno is like a *nue*; he has so many traits that make him an inscrutable monster (*fukakai na kaibutsu*) to me that I cannot do anything like criticism (*hihyō*)"; this is another revelatory remark that betrays the assumption that "criticism" begins with knowledge about the author. See also Yamamoto Yoshiaki, "Shintai gihō to katari: Uno Kōji 'Ku no sekai' o chūshin ni," *Kokubungaku kaishaku to kanshō* 56, no. 4 (April, 1991): 110.
[21] Sekiguchi, "Kaisetsu," in *Shishōsetsu*, 299.
[22] Ueda Hiroshi, et al., *Taishō bungakushi* (Kyoto: Kōyō shobō, 2001), 48-52.

the (imagined) continuity of his writing. Before addressing this break, the purported particularity requires explanation, especially as these accounts most often refer to *Kura no naka* as the ultimate exemplar of Uno's early work. The works produced in the first years of his forty-year career generally do not agree with the protocols of *shishōsetsu* as similar figures continue to recur across different titles, effacing what variations there might be.[23] Evaluating reviews of *Kura no naka* contemporary with its publication, Masuda Chikako concludes that they were more or less negative. Tanaka Jun's review in the *Yomiuri shinbun* illustrates the chief complaint:

> As the storyteller (*setsuwasha*) often acknowledges, it is an extremely difficult style of writing (*kakikata*). I sense a naughty character: writing things that are not all that necessary, [the author] evades (*hagurakasu*) or bores the readers and seems to enjoy watching it. As I imagined what the author might have been thinking…I found it unpleasant (*fukai*). If he had tackled it in a more earnest and honest (*matomo ni bakashōjiki ni*) way, even if it meant something clumsy (*tsutanai*), this work could have been worth a read, but it added no substance (*atsumi*) to the good material. Regrettable.[24]

The underlying evaluative logic is plain: the narrator *is* in fact the author himself and, consequently, the frivolous tone of the story reflects the frivolous character of the author. Similarly, Funaki Shigenobu writes of Uno the author,

> He has suffered in the world. He has learned the world. And he has become a good man who "understands things." … I think those who do not understand human relationships and human psychology are not qualified to be artists (*geijutsuka*). … However, because he has suffered and understood things of the world, that is, because he is so "perceptive" (*monowakari ga yoi*), doesn't he have a tendency to hold everything in contempt (*kobakani shite*)—the world, man, life, and even his own self—

[23] *Yaneura no hōgakushi* (1918) and *Tenten* (1919) feature a hero closely resembling Yamaji in *Kura no naka*. Both *Munashii haru* (1921) and *Futari no Aoki Aisaburō* (1922) unfold by way of deliberately absurd twists and turns motivated by mimetic desire shared by two male figures. The so-called "Yume mono" series recycles identical material, supposedly taken from Uno's own travels to Shimo Suwa in Shinano and including his unrequited love for a *geisha* named Yumeko. The series begins with *Amaki yo no hanashi* to culminate with *Yamagoi* (1922).

[24] Masuda, *Uno Kōji bungaku no shoshiteki kenkyū*, 95.

> and belittle (*taka o kukuru*) it? *Kura no naka* smacks of it. And it is unmistakable in *Wandering* (Tenten).[25]

This naturalized slide between the journalistic assessment of the author the person and lay criticism of his novelistic works is a familiar interpretive paradigm, which is itself, once again, an apparatus of the *shishōsetsu* discourse. An intriguing symptom is found in the way "style" becomes a site of contest.

Words denoting style (*buntai* or *kakikata*) punctuate the contemporary reviews: wit (*saiki*), phraseology (*bunshō*), eccentricity (*fūgawari*), absurd comedy (*kokkei*), skillful (*takumi*), unique (*dokutoku*), tone (*chōshi*), special technique (*tokugi*) and gutter humor (*warujare*), all supposedly denoting some feature of Uno's manner of writing.[26] At a quick glance, the sum of the terminology may seem to commend unique and therefore laudable qualities of Uno's. When juxtaposed with their antitheses, however, these terms gather a particular normative semantics. Following are classic examples. The first, by Satō Haruo, states,

> As an entertainer (*geinin*) of letters (*moji*), [Uno] provides satisfaction without any regret whatsoever. At the same time, in order to think of this fellow as an artist (*geijutsuka*)…I would want to see instances where Uno's (*Uno-kun no*) humor (*yūmoa*) appears more agonizing, more disorderly, more careless and yet more natural (*shizen*).[27]

Miyajima Shinsaburō echoes Satō:

> I cannot rid myself of the uneasy feeling that a three-dimensional, independent being (*sonzai*) does not figure there. The modern novel (*kindai no shōsetsu*) departed from here and has advanced to the level of description (*byōsha*) or representation (*saigen*). At the same time, the *author (sakusha)* has come to have a feeling of three-dimensionality. Mr. Uno (*Uno-shi*), however, has paid no mind to this as always, and has not relinquished the attitude of the storyteller (*monogatariya*).[28]

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[25] "Bundan shinjin ron: Uno Kōji ron," 113.
[26] See examples in Masuda, *Uno Kōji bungaku no shoshiteki kenkyū*, 92-109.
[27] Ibid., 101.
[28] Yamamoto, "Shintai gihō to katari," 111.

What is condemned here is twofold: the author's character and the literary style, which are mutually and transparently reflective. At the same time, the stylistic consciousness highlighting Uno's fiction becomes an unwitting mark of frivolity. In other words, often opposed to nothing less than "literature" (*bungaku*), style denotes a discriminatory sign. Thus, Akagi Kōhei's famous advocacy for "earnest meditation on life" (*jinsei ni taisuru shinshi naru kōsatsu*) and "sincere attitude" (*seijitsu na taido*) is articulated as one of "artless impression" (*soboku naru kangeki*), in other words, stylistic impoverishment.[29]

In sum, the contention revolves around not so much the de/merits of a specific style as the determinative choice between style and content, that is, emptiness and substance, frivolity and seriousness, and finally "letters (*moji*)"—which in the final analysis amounts to writing—and the author. Plausibly, the fundamental impulse of these reviews is to disqualify Uno as an author. And that is effected through a kind of lexical discrimination: it marks a particular set of words with (anti-)value. Thus, such apparently innocuous phrases or even seeming praise as "well-done" (*umai*), "rare" (*mezurashii*), "connoisseur of life" (*jinsei no tsūjin*), and "without the reek of amateurism" (*shirōto kusaku nai*) do not so straightforwardly indicate a "[surprise] at the maturity he displayed."[30] This line of logic is particularly evident with the depreciation of the term "phraseology" (*bunshō*). Formerly an eclectic term designating anything from a sentence on a page to writing as an abstract notion, by the time Uno was writing it had been transformed into a negative definition of literature (*bungaku*). Nor is it surprising that the

[29] Akagi's essay "Yūtō bungaku' no bokumetsu" is a manifesto against what he perceived to be unwholesome works by Nagata Mikihiko, Yoshii Isamu, and Chikamatsu Shūkō among others, *Yomiuri shinbun*, 6 and 8 August 1916, cited in Yamamoto, *Bungakusha wa tsukurareru*, 59.
[30] Gerbert reads Hirotsu Kazuo's recollection from 1943 at face value, "Uno Kōji," 42. Hirotsu's preview of *Kura no naka* for *Jiji shinpo* ends with the following: "It would be absolutely wonderful if Uno entered the creative life (*sōsakuteki seikatsu*) with truthfulness (*shinjitsu ni*) and passion (*nesshin ni*)." Masuda, *Uno Kōji bungaku no shoshiteki kenkyū*, 94.

lexical alienation of style vilifies humor with a particular vehemence. At times the reviewers seem personally offended: "As I imagined what the author might have been thinking…I found it *unpleasant*."[31] To recapitulate the point, an underlying dichotomy gives the above passages their discursive contours: skillful and humorous design, i.e., style, constitutes one semantic cluster while serious and honest substance, i.e., literature, another.

Elaine Gerbert is correct to be critical of the studies that define Uno's early works as "mere displays of a certain linguistic adventurism."[32] Yet, revealingly, the same set of dichotomous notions underwrites her own deployment of "style" as a critical term. Discussing humor and play as key stylistic traits in Uno's work, she concludes, "The real life of *Kura no naka* lies not so much in its content…as in the rhythms of its rhetorical patternings…."[33] In this account, then, the valorization of style invariably takes the passage of devalorization of content. Furthermore, the dichotomy of content versus style is framed as that of *shishōsetsu* versus critique thereof.

> By borrowing the verbal mannerisms of the comic *rakugo* entertainer, Uno added to first-person narration a dimension that was clearly subversive, given the tendency to associate first-person narration with the *shishōsetsu* and the association of the *shishōsetsu* with a literature that was serious and 'sincere.' Uno's narrator, who repeats the pronoun "I," "I," "I" and bumbles through his tale, taking off on sudden unmotivated asides and stopping short with hyperbolic cries of surprise, challenged the sobriety of the *shishōsetsu*.[34]

In an article unambiguously titled, "Uno Kōji's Criticality" (Uno Kōji no hihyōsei), Tani Akira echoes Gerbert's two-pronged approach when he notes, "The narrative of *Kura no naka*, seen as the progenitor of the 'garrulous style' (*jōjetsu tai*), has the characteristic of

[31] See Tanaka Jun's review cited above.
[32] Gerbert, "Uno Kōji," 42.
[33] Ibid., 34.
[34] Ibid., 35.

drawing the reader's attention not only to what is being told but, more than that, to how it is being told" and concludes that Uno held a "critical consciousness'" (*hihyō ishiki*) *vis-à-vis* the contemporary discursive field.[35] The latter term refers to the general mode of reading oriented towards what is known as "personalism (*jinkaku shugi*)," which was born of the figure of the author epitomized by Shiga Naoya as well as Natsume Sōseki. Tani's approach is an improvement on Gerbert's insofar as it accounts for discursive reasons behind the particular reception of Uno's fiction. Salutary as the immediate antithesis may be, objectifying as it does the weight of the *shishōsetsu* interpretive paradigm, however, the logic of "critique of" forecloses the possibility of questioning either the "style" of *shishōsetsu* narratives or the "content" of stylistically conscious narratives. Here these dichotomous relations are heuristically and ironically delineated; the point is that such a questioning can reveal the ways in which they are intimately imbricated inside and across texts.

A critical term often mobilized in these recuperative efforts is parody. It affords a strategic position for Uno's case especially, acknowledging a certain proximity even while noting a difference between his works and *shishōsetsu*. Linda Hutcheon's definition of parody may be recalled: "imitation with a critical difference, not always at the expense of the parodied text."[36] Similarly, Fredric Jameson notes, "I won't say that the satiric impulse is conscious in all forms of parody: in any case, a good or great parodist has to have some secret sympathy for the original."[37] Considered from these perspectives, parody takes its critical effect through a *complementary* move. In other

[35] Tani, "Uno Kōji no hihyōsei," 22.
[36] *A Theory of Parody* (New York: Methuen, 1985), 7.
[37] Fredric Jameson, *The Cultural Turn: Selected Writings on the Postmodern, 1983-1998* (New York and London: Verso, 1998), 4.

words, the parodic text "mocks the original" in some ways by reinforcing, overshooting, the perceived properties of the object: "Uno developed *shishōsetsu* while parodying it."[38] To attribute definitively a parodic status for Uno's text is not a concern here. In fact, the use of the critical term itself demands scrutiny as the very gesture of calling—naming, summoning, ordering, and baptizing—a text a parody seems to activate a certain essentializing operation of a different order. That is to say, the object of parody does not simply remain "impervious" but further hardens through the critical appellation.[39]

Perhaps the subversive productivity of a parody is much more temporal and indeed contextual than conventionally considered. In other words, when a text is pronounced as a parody—an event of (meta)critical retroactivity—it somehow finds itself marginalized. It is crucial that the *marginality* of a parodic text (*vis-à-vis* the parodied original among others like it) be distinguished from the *marginalization* to which it is subjected, as argued here, by such a designation. The former provides the very ontological condition from which the critical force of parody ensues. The latter is more complex. The critical hierarchization—insofar as the textual value is assigned precisely to this marginality—confirms whatever generic properties are perceived in the object of the parody and, in the same movement, casts the parodic text as parasitic. In other words, not only is the parodic text presented as somehow *apprehended* via the parodied text, but also the parodied text becomes further settled into the traits that have been called into question by the parodying textual act. The consequence is the foreclosure of a critical inquiry into either. Parody may be a textual operation that resists critical domestication with a

[38] Gerbert, "Uno Kōji," 1. For similar assessments, see *Shishōsetsu* and *Taishō bungakushi* cited above. Izume Ayako makes a similar comment regarding *Yume miru heya*: "[Disguised] as a confession, [the novel] might have been a parody of [*shishōsetsu*]." "*Yume miru heya*: kasō sareta kokuhaku," 60.
[39] Long, *This Perversion Called Love*, 41.

particular cunning, thriving and expiring precisely in that temporal fissure between the literary text and criticism. As soon as it is pronounced, it is already different than itself. Gerbert's designation of *Kura no naka* as a "special version of the *shishōsetsu*" therefore fails to offer anything by way of criticism for either the text or the genre.[40]

In sum, the interpretive framework striving to contain Uno's oeuvre from its own era to the present has largely operated via the dichotomy of content versus style, regardless of the several shifts in critical language during the intervening period of close to a century. This situation recalls one critic's reflection:

> [The] story is of particular interest…because it is not merely a representation of a certain content; if so, it could be rephrased philosophically. [The] text (in its various versions) itself enacts the displacements and overrunnings that concern the narrative—not in some satisfying achievement of organic form, but in a way that challenges the initial separation of content and form that a theory of organic union presupposes.[41]

Kura no naka, in terms of its position in literary history and as an ontology unto itself, unsettles precisely the "initial separation" of content and form, or content and style.

5.

Thus, Uno has been a *shishōsetsu* writer, if trailed by the disclaimer that he is not quite a typical *shishōsetsu* writer. As the preceding discussion would suggest, the disclaimer is an allusion precisely to his narrative style. The question then arises: What happened to Uno's style to allow him entry into the *shishōsetsu* lineage? Or, perhaps better, what impelled the modern Japanese literary history organized around *shishōsetsu* values to

[40] Gerbert, " Uno Kōji," 119.
[41] Jacques Derrida, *Acts of Literature*, ed. Derek Attridge (New York: Routledge, 1992), 222. The passage is from Attridge's introduction to Jacques Derrida's essay, "The Law of Genre," referring to Maurice Blanchot's *The Madness of the Day*.

accommodate the antithetical Uno within its narrative? A certain event occurred, literary historical accounts announce, which brought on dramatic consequences for Uno's literary style and thereby inserted him into the *shishōsetsu* pantheon.

To recall the discussions in preceding chapters, Yamaji's narration in *Kura no naka* "seems to embody an unrestrained physicality, as if his irrepressible physical being itself were projected into the text."[42] This body registers in both the narrative *style* and ontological orientation *vis-à-vis* the world comprising material objects as well as other human subjects. Biography and style, tactically spelled out as *bio* (life *qua* the body)-*graphy* (writing) and *bun* (writing)-*tai* (the body), are given as a gesture precisely towards the inevitable imbrication of these two registers of the body: narrative and being. The following passage bears revisiting in this new light:

> At times I not only changed kimonos three times a day but changed all of my clothes three times a day…. I changed *obi*, *haori-kimono* combination, underkimonos, and all my underwear. Someone watching might have thought that I suddenly had to go somewhere and would certainly have been surprised seeing me in the nude, stripped of my clothing, as if my extreme sensitivity to drafts and cold air had suddenly vanished. Sometimes, and just as impulsively, I changed into Western clothes and sat in the wicker chair watching the sky while smoking a cigarette. On other occasions I went as far as spreading newspapers on the *tatami*, and putting on the appropriate *geta* or straw sandals walked back and forth swinging a walking stick. (46)

What becomes obvious from this passage and many others throughout *Kura no naka* is the fact that Uno's highly stylistic narrative is concerned with precisely the styling of the body.

If the contemporaries' discontent regarding his style turned into discontent about the author himself, there remains another way to read the implicit passageway from

[42] Gerbert in Uno, *Love of Mountains*, 12.

literary to biographical.[43] This is by way of calling attention to the intriguing way in which the narrative style bleeds into another register of style: Uno's public persona. This proposition, familiar as it seems against the *shishōsetsu* discursive paradigm, should not be confused with the impulse to examine the ontological *continuity* between the author and the novel. Rather, it is to excavate the *contiguity*, the metonymic—mimetic—proximity, between the two bodies, offered up for theoretical meditation precisely by the body's ontology that is kinetics, a dimension of writing, literature, or literary history that the *shishōsetsu* discourse cannot begin to address. Uno's contemporaries left illuminating observations regarding his public persona, which may well be read in productive juxtaposition with the preceding discussion on his narrative style.

Sasaki Shigesaku recounts various anecdotes, some relatively mundane and others more striking. Viewed together, they may point to something as straightforward as a certain fastidiousness. Uno would carry no coins and only freshly printed bills; he would change clothes every time they met. More involved examples follow. On one occasion a group of writers played baseball with a rubber ball inside a large banquet hall, and when the ball chanced to strike and dent a standing screen, Uno ran to the screen and tenderly stroked it to repair the damage. When traveling together, Sasaki remembers, Uno always carried a freshly tailored kimono still in department store wrappers inside his bag, which he would put on with the help of a maid who would take off the tracking thread for him. Mamiya Mosuke is one of many who remember Uno by his pale long face with long sideburns and his famous work station, which was set up in a permanently installed futon (*mannendoko*) at the Kikufuji Hotel. Ishikawa Jun portrays Uno in a rapture talking about

[43] Miyasaka Kōichi, "Katari tsuzukeru 'watashi'—Uno Kōji 'Kura no naka' ron," *Kokubungaku kenkyū* 150 (October 2006): 58.

French literature, "not [spattering] spit like a debater" but "as if whispering love, secretively, endlessly." Yamamoto Kenkichi notes how Uno was famous for fearing any intrusion of his study. Most suggestively, Kasai Zenzō once remarked to Uno, "The characteristics of your style have much to do with the fact that you write lying in a futon."[44]

Uno's well-known "proclivity for theatricals" unfolded as a series of spectacles:

> His rolling eyes, his lunging gait, the sudden garrulousness that broke long stretches of silence, the staring gaze that accompanied the quiet rapid roll of his speech, and the unexpected bursts of laughter that startled his listeners had led some to consider him a *kawattamono* (an eccentric in the extreme). Others were impressed by his weak, effeminate side. Tanizaki Seiji recalled that at their first meeting in 1917 Uno was quiet, used *onna no kotoba* (women's language) and worried constantly about getting headaches. … [Others] wrote about his inordinate fear of snakes and thunder, the sound of which sent him scurrying for refuge in closets. … Still others presented a portrait of an overbearing, self-confident chap who took advantage of his companions.[45]

Thus Uno fashioned himself through various registers of *style*—verbal and gestural mannerisms and sartorial guises—and in so doing deluged the public imagination with an endless series of specular copies of himself, whose ontology can only be spectral by virtue of its virtuality, its kinetics.

Uno's styling of the body—the "writing of the body"—took a wholly different turn when he developed symptoms of psychosis in 1927. Contemporary anecdotes provided several examples of its manifestations. He would go on shopping sprees at various department stores signing to pay on delivery only to forget all about the purchases, to the great embarrassment of his wife at home. He underwent a series of passionate interests such as oil painting, only to abandon each before a week had passed.

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[44] Kawasaki, et al., eds., *Uno Kōji kaisō*, passim.
[45] Gerbert, "Uno Kōji," 25-26.

Once he bit his lover's hand professing a great hunger; at another time he was found eating roses off a flower arrangement at a restaurant, and so on and so forth.[46] The first episode of psychotic symptoms came to an easy end within a little over two months. But, with a relapse two years later, he tested positive for syphilis. Uno underwent a malaria inoculation therapy at Keiō Hospital, which was declared a success. By 1931, he was actively writing again and in 1933 published a comeback novel, *Kareki no aru fūkei* (Landscape of Dead Trees). The metonymy of syphilis and the novel, intermediated by the sexual body, sexual and mental impotence, and madness, offers an ample ground for further reading. Indeed, Yamaji's professed love of women—prostitutes amply included—and impotence sketched a certain uncanny blueprint years prior to the biographical event, intimating a scandalous mimetic instance, overreaching the *shishōsetsu* normativity. At the moment, however, what stands to be questioned is the way in which literary history appropriated this event.

Literary historical accounts captured Uno's madness as a pivotal event within his literary development, and claimed that, with the madness and the subsequent recovery, Uno's novels began to show a drastic shift to a somber, mature, and serious pursuit of life. That is precisely in accordance with the *shishōsetsu* value. Dramatizing the episode as a "great trauma" (*taikan*), literary history incorporated Uno's madness into its internal narrative. For the present discussion, whether Uno's style really showed such a drastic shift is not as relevant—if ever verifiable—as the process by which his madness became narrativized into literary history. Praising Uno's work following the trauma and recovery, Yamamoto Kenkichi, an authority on Uno studies, remarks:

[46] See Nagase Yoshirō's recollection in *Uno Kōji kaisō*, 51-60. For a more detailed account, see Hirotsu Kazuo, "Ano jidai: Akutagawa to Uno," in *Sakka no omokage*, vol. 6, *Hirotsu Kazuo chosakushū* (Tōyō bunka kyōkai, 1959).

> Originally, sentiments and humor and other supplementary decorative things in *style* are nothing more than limits on the *self*. … When *reality* reveals its naked form and begins speaking its own cryptic language, the style (*fūkaku*) that the author built intentionally with his *design* becomes fetters that belong nowhere. Courageously, Uno cast away the aloof style. He returned to the blank page.[47]

Yamamoto follows with a reference to the term *buntai* in a seemingly neutral way, characterizing the new phase in Uno's literary career as "a style of infinite freedom, that is, a brusquely artless style." Yet the term "artless" (*mushoku*) already betrays the pivot of his valuation: transparency between the authorial life and the narrative language is considered the pinnacle of literary achievement. Once again "style" is demarcated as a value-ridden word, inherently derogatory, in this (colonial) narrativization of *tabula rasa* rendering all prior history as latency leading to this epochal moment. Moreover, these rhetorical maneuvers are constituted precisely by way of the disintegration of *bios* and *graphia*. Note how "self" and "style" are opposed, while "reality" and "design" are similarly in dispute. In sum, Uno's madness is inserted as that which puts life and writing in order, a transparently causal relation, readily available to an objective history—the order being one that seeks to prop up the "self" and "reality" as the origin of "style" and "design." Thus, literary history comes into being by concealing the madness of writing (the bodily register of writing—the stylistics), and madness that arises as writing (the stylization of the body towards the inarticulable, indeed *unreasonable*), through this impossible quarantine of style. When literary history disintegrates *bios* and *graphia* into a causality, the umbilical cord of *bio-graphy*, that is, the possibility of writing life and the life of writing withers. The disintegration of *bios* and *graphia* obliterates the very

[47] Yamamoto Kenkichi, "Uno Kōji" (1939), in *Shishōsetsu sakkaron* (Kōdansha, 1998), 117-18.

possibility of *bio-graphy*. This impossible biography, stillborn biography is the literary history that inscribes Uno the author.

Perhaps another instance of such a biography will elucidate this biographical operation.

6.

If Uno for all his bodily styling may be called a "dandy," it is necessary to recall its antithesis by the name of the "genius." If the latter is "the guardian of masculine strength" and the former "beset by impotence," the juxtaposition will prove all the more profitable insofar as Yamaji's—and now Uno's—bodily inscription is impossible to consider apart from the question of gender.[48] In a modest attempt to situate the notion of genius in modern Japanese literature, the present section draws on a term which with its presumption of intimacy conceals a certain mystifying operation that gives it semantic constancy: *sensei*. Beyond the most conventional use designating a teacher or, more broadly, a title of respect, "*sensei*" in early twentieth-century Japanese literature conjures a mentor, whose discursive figuration gathers its contours from the curious marriage between the hypostatized modern individual and the particular fraternal community, or the *shishōsetsu* milieu. That Natsume Sōseki's most revered novel *Kokoro* (1914) gives its *double hero*—rather than two heroes insofar as the narrative structure conjoins them in one fate—the appellation of *sensei* and *watashi* is suggestive of this discursive condition. In other words, the plurality of the character, which is at the same time the affinity of the two characters to the point of indistinction, bears out the ontologically as well as epistemologically *conterminous* relation of the individual and the community. More

[48] Wing, *Between Genders*, 56.

specifically, the figure of *sensei* arises from a narrative concoction that melds the semantics of genius riddled with such potently individual and transcendental elements as illness, madness, and death on the one hand and gravitating towards fraternal community, the discursive epitome of which is none other than literary history itself, on the other. Sōseki the author, unsurprisingly, marks a singular moment of the figurative effectuation, the precarious balancing act of the individual and the communal—indeed genius and pedagogy.

In fact, Sōseki advances a modest theory of the genius (*tensai*) in *Bungakuron*.[49] Listed as one of the "three main types of group consciousness," Sōseki's notion of genius is dis-individuating. Not only imitation, which inherently conjures the unsettling spectacle of the masses, and talent, which is accorded a certain timeliness *vis-à-vis* the *Zeitgeist* and therefore disposed to seek fulfillment outward, but also genius, for all its supremely individual connotation—which Sōseki acknowledges by way of "the vast gap" separating it from society at large—is configured as a collective problem of *time* itself. In simple terms, the genius is someone whose consciousness is ahead of his time, marking the future consciousness at which the common man will eventually arrive: the difference between them is one of "speed."[50] Scholars have commented on Sōseki's ambivalent position *vis-à-vis* Social Darwinism, accepting on the one hand the inevitability of evolution and rejecting on the other the presumption of an "advance or improvement" as the necessary outcome thereof.[51] However, the precise mechanism—epistemological as well as rhetorical—of Sōseki's "moving away from tenets" of Social Darwinism remains unexplored.

[49] For an abridged translation, see Sōseki, *Theory of Literature*. For the genius, ibid., 128-35.
[50] Ibid., 129.
[51] Ibid., 148.

The affective conditions shaped by Japan's (semi-) colonial relation to the West in large part give rise to this ambivalence. In a mock self-derision that moderates the poignancy of the underlying reference to historical traumas, Sōseki depicts a scene from a lecture hall to illustrate his point[52]:

> The talented ones who first feel the urge to yawn have no reason to prove it by rushing ahead of the others and precipitating the wave of boredom by placing the yawn clearly in the forefront of their consciousness. By the same token, those whose turn to yawn comes around last need not feel inferior. Even though it is mortifying to be the last to yawn and to face the scorn of one's fellows, the fact is that their time for yawning is not yet nigh and all they can do is muddle along until the urge strikes them.[53]

If the above passage indeed plays on a simile equating the modern West with the talented one and Japan with the late yawner—the mimic perhaps—the genius falls outside the contestatory equation and becomes a *third* whose ontology is somehow open to a configuration of a different order. At the same time, as his existential edges are increasingly chiseled off and smoothed out—"the difference between the common man and the genius is not the content of his consciousness but its timing (*sengo*)"—the genius takes on wholly mundane virtues.[54] In a significant *supplementary* move, Sōseki offers "additional interpretations," which he feels "free to imagine."[55] One of them is a temporal capacity: "In the focus of consciousness of the genius there is something that one might call a core, which, though not visible to others, is its most vital part. … This core is what in mathematics is called a constant."[56] The other concerns a "three-dimensional [or spatial] form of consciousness," whereby he "plumbs the depths" of his consciousness

[52] *Theory of Literature* was delivered as a series of lectures at Tokyo Imperial University from 1903 to 1905. Ibid., 2.
[53] Ibid., 127.
[54] Ibid., 129.
[55] Ibid., 130.
[56] Ibid., 130-31.

and "sends its waves forth to its innermost layers."[57] In sum, embedded with "constancy" and "depth," the genius comes to represent what may be called *pedagogical virtues*.

Insofar as "artists and academic specialists" are given as tangible borderline figures whose total absorption in topics of specialization begets geniuses, Sōseki, if by appearances unwittingly, presents himself as a viable candidate. In other words, a genius is not born as such but the end product of concentrated *work*. Then the singularity of the genius lies not in some intrinsic ontology but the potential for *becoming*. A better case for this self-presentation is found in the Preface to the book. From the outset, Sōseki occupies the unsettling region *in between* the categories of "the F of Talent" and "the F of Genius." After first pages given to mortifying accounts of insufficiencies of his studies and humiliating circumstances in London, Sōseki comes to what seems like the final push toward resignation:

> Having abandoned my reading, I considered what lay before me. It was quite regrettable that, given my innate stupidity and lack of scholarly ability, I had not attained any mastery of foreign literature, my supposed specialty. Given my past record, it seemed unlikely that my scholarly abilities would improve much in the future.[58]

Then, the moment of clarity arrives: "[It] was not until I sat under the solitary lamp in my London room, years after my graduation from the university, that my intellectual worldview first encountered its home territory. […] I decided that I must, first of all, resolve the more essential question: What is literature?"[59] Thus the moment of intellectual clarity arrives in the "unhappiest" time of his life. That is to say, his maddening focus on literature is a quest that transcends intellect to the arena of ontology

[57] Ibid., 133. Sōseki explicates "the form of literary substance" with the famous formula F+f. The "large F" designates the cognitive factor, i.e., impressions or ideas at the focal point of consciousness and the "small f" the emotional factor, i.e., the emotions that attend F. For details, see 52-59.
[58] Ibid., 44.
[59] Ibid.

itself. If not "constancy" and "depth," what is it that gives visibility to this singular autobiographical narrative?

At the same time as these traits of the "genius," however, Sōseki's absorption in his work, the epochal moment of illumination, and the final product given as this book, gain their conditions, contexts, and even impetus from somewhere other than "himself." While the genius "will not comprehend the customs of society, nor will he conform to the niceties of the world," and "will lack even the most basic moral sensibilities,"[60] Sōseki's intellectual pursuit is anything but narcissistic:

> Given that it is a will more fundamental than my own, I cannot somehow shape it to suit my own will. This will more fundamental than my own commands me: I must face without shirking whatever measure of unhappiness may prove necessary when it comes to upholding the honors and privileges due a sovereign subject of Japan.[61]

Thus genius *à la* Sōseki is necessarily motivated by the national reality. Genius is an ontology of *becoming*, inscribed in the ambiguous space between "passion-driven labors" and this insurmountable will of the Other. And this is a pedagogic value.

The suasive force of Sōseki's theory arises precisely from its pedagogical valence, that is, blueprint of achievement, propped up by his position as a pedagogue. The urgency—in both need and effect—of such an *applicable* exegesis of the *forbidding* figure of the genius only increased in the following decade, as many of the soon-to-be literary men found themselves exasperated over their less-than-a-genius station in the world. For example, as a middle school student Kawabata Yasunari agonized over the

[60] Ibid., 134.
[61] Ibid., 49.

question as to whether he was a genius.[62] It is true that the cultural discourse on the genius increasingly took on gradations of madness, informed by such indispensible textbooks among literary youth as Cesare Lombroso's *The Man of Genius* (1888), Arthur Symons's *The Symbolist Movement in Literature*, and Max Nordau's *Degeneration* (1892). However lackluster Sōseki's decade-old theory of the genius may have seemed to the Taishō youth indulgingly imbibing the doctrine of madness in all its oxymoronic force, death itself would affirm Sōseki's pedagogy as explored later in this chapter.

One further observation remains to be made regarding Sōseki's theory of the genius. The apparent resistance to swallowing Social Darwinism in its entirety presents a curious epistemological adventure. It is not only the racial discriminatory logic of progress propounded by this theory that Sōseki resists. Much more profound dissonance concerns time itself. If Darwinism and its subsequent sociological adaptations were often focused on the evolutionary process through which biological organisms and social entities adapt and survive, Sōseki's approach to them is more concerned with the eventual *end* of that process. Note the implicit temporality in the following passage:

> In the last section we saw how while the imitative consciousness remains behind at F, blind to what comes next, in the brain of the talented man F'—the next manifestation of F—is already visible. Someone whose consciousness is already focused on F' while it is still being anticipated by the man of talent could be said to be one step ahead of the latter in his perception of the trend of times. But what if he not only was conscious of F' but also not only foresaw but was conscious of F" and from then went on to F'". What if he did not settle for F'" but went on to F"" and *all the way* to F^n. Such a person would have run through (*kakenuketaru*) *a whole succession of waves*…. *Sooner or later F will end up at* F^n but for the

[62] Yamamoto, *Bungakusha wa tsukurareru*, 141. Hibi discusses the proximity of madness and artistic genius by way of Funaki Shigeo's short story "Gōho no shi" (1912) in *"Jiko hyōshō" no bungakushi*, 222-27.

> majority who are now in possession of F alone the gap is so great that they are unable to perceive it anywhere around them.[63]

If time continued *ad infinitum*, the posited non-difference of the consciousness across differential categories—imitation, talent, and genius—would lose its epistemological ground: "Because F tends naturally to flow towards F^n, there can be no difference in quality between the two. For this reason the difference between the common man and the genius is not the content of his consciousness but its timing [*sengo*]." Only when Time is imagined as an impulsion toward the End, the difference becomes so many variations rather than ontological alterity. By virtue of the End, the nothingness that pulverizes difference in advance or retroactively, Sōseki's sociological theory turns into an eschatology, theological nihilism. Put differently, even while relying upon sociological as well as natural scientific paradigms[64], Sōseki "oscillated between a positivism that reduces the transcendental to the empirical, and an eschatology that reduces the empirical to the transcendental."[65] To venture even further, Sōseki's is a furtive gesture towards a meta-epistemological perspective on coloniality itself.

In sum, by simultaneously repositioning genius beyond the romantic binarism of imitation and talent presumed by the contemporary geopolitical reality and instead as a new pedagogical possibility, and delivering the differential concepts by way of the theological Time, Sōseki strives to forge a certain epistemological and ontological

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[63] Sōseki, *Theory of Literature*, 129. Italics added. For Japanese, see *Sōseki zenshū*, vol. 14 (Iwanami shoten, 1995), 428. Outlines of the controversy within religious—Catholic, Protestant, and Jewish—establishments over Charles Darwin's theory of evolution by way of natural selection often demonstrate a concentrated interest in the "origin" of man. Jon H. Roberts, "Religious Reactions to Darwin," in *The Cambridge Companion to Science and Religion*, ed. Peter Harrison (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 80-102.

[64] Joseph Murphy emphasizes Sōseki's "serious engagement with science" in the introduction to Sōseki, *Theory of Literature*, 17-25.

[65] This is Foucault's characterization of the philosophical discourse concerning Man's transcendental and empirical being from Kant onward. See Mark Bevir, "Humanism in and against *The Order of Things*," *Configurations* 7, no. 2 (1999): 203.

interval necessary for a theory of (Japanese) literature. The question is then how this ingenious figure inscribes/is inscribed into the literary history of Sōseki, that is, the Sōseki biography.

In the larger lexical field of the genius beyond *Bungakuron*, the romantic notion of the artist, complexly imbricated with illness, madness, and death, affords an ample discursive plane on which to discuss several figures in modern Japanese literature. The lineage of suicidal literary figures from Akutagawa Ryūnosuke to Dazai Osamu to Mishima Yukio and on to Kawabata Yasunari has epitomized the poetic nexus of these elements.[66] However, more central to modern Japanese literary history are those figures who amalgamate illness, madness, death, and literary genius on the one hand and the pedagogue on the other to produce, and thereby maintain, a delicate balance between the individual and the community. The delicate tension between apparent dialectical opposites is precisely part of the institutional and narrative apparatus of modern Japanese literature as biography. And the idea of *sensei* affords an apposite conceptual contour for the singular status of those figures who not only configured the romantic ideal of *bungakusha* (literary man) with a particularly poignant proximity to illness, madness, and death, but also effected epochal shifts in modern Japanese literary history. And, of course, "history" is always retrospective, posthumous, presuming *death* of some kind.

Kitamura Tōkoku is perhaps the earliest poetic genius to be celebrated in modern Japanese literary history. Only a decade after his suicide in 1894, the ideology of literary history had purged his poetic genius of the political history that had underwritten it. Shimazaki Tōson's *Haru*, published in 1908, has long functioned as a major vehicle of

[66] For an attentive treatment of the subject of suicide, see Alan Wolfe, *Suicidal Narrative in Modern Japan: The Case of Dazai Osamu* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990).

the popular imagination of Tōkoku. Closely modeled upon actual personalities from Tōson's younger days, the narrative aligns the protagonist Kishimoto's coming of age with Aoki's poetic genius and eventual suicide, modeled upon Tōson and Tōkoku respectively. By the late 1900s, Tōkoku had been converted into a most poignant manifestation of the prescience of Naturalist literature, with his purported immersion in the "problems of life" (*jinsei mondai*).[67] Writing in 1912, Tōson revealingly reflects, "For long years and months, I studied what Kitamura was (Kitamura *to iu mono o sutadi shite ita*)."[68] Thus, Tōkoku's genius is retroactively rendered a pedagogical site that shifted the direction of modern Japanese literature towards Naturalism. Suga Hidemi goes so far as to say, "It is no different than the 'patricide' that Freud discussed in *Totem and Taboo*," and thus "by dying, Tōkoku became the totem and the 'father'" for Tōson's generation of literary youth.[69]

Similarly, Kunikida Doppo's premature death has been inscribed in the modern Japanese literary imagination as part of the Naturalist literary genealogy. It is frequently noted that Tayama Katai's sojourn with Doppo in Nikkō inspired him to turn to "realistic" prose. Following Doppo's death, Katai recalls that it was Doppo's advice to discard "fantasy" (*kūsō*) and write "truth" (*jijitsu*) that led him to "throw open himself" to carry out "unreserved confession."[70] Thus, Doppo was transformed into an "authentic" figure giving life to Japanese Naturalist literature. It is worth noting that the view Doppo

[67] Nagafuchi Tomoe, "Tōson *Haru* shippitsu tōji no Tōkokuzō," in *Kitamura Tōkoku towa nanika*, ed. Kitamura Tōkoku kenkyūkai (Kasama shoin, 2004), 162.
[68] Yabu Teiko, "Tōson to Kitamura Tōkoku," *Kokubungaku: kaishaku to kanshō* 67, no. 10 (October 2002): 69. Tōson confessed that he had not understood Tokoku's death at the time of its happening, and only later, through his study, did he come to understand it.
[69] Suga, *"Teikoku" no bungaku*," 65.
[70] Takitō Mitsuyoshi, "Doppo to shizenshugi—Tayama Katai ni furete," *Kokugo to kokubungaku* 56, no. 5 (May 1979): 80.

himself expressed of Naturalism had been at best ambivalent.[71] In sum, seizing on the poignant event of their untimely deaths, the Meiji literary discourse made of Tōkoku and Doppo figurative sites that effected pedagogical shifts with all the poeticity of genius. The narrative recollections of these figures through potently aphoristic moments managed a discursive feat that anoints genius as the transcendental individual *par excellence* with a remarkably normativizing function.

This literary historical practice—an apparatus that absorbs the individual into communal memory via, and thereby producing, a pedagogical discourse—gains a further focus against the discursive landscape that had long been in the making. As well known, behind Tōkoku's poetic turn was his political frustration at the demise of the Freedom and Popular Rights Movement. In her meticulous study *The Birth of the Seinen*, the critic Kimura Naoe investigates the process through which the particular strata of youth known as *seinen* came into discursive being.[72] In particular, Kimura examines different articulations of politics by the groups she differentiates as *sōshi* and s*einen*. *Sōshi* refers to the youth population who came of political age under heavy influence from the Freedom and Popular Rights Movement in the early 1880s and *seinen* those who configured themselves by negating the *sōshi*. This negation took the form of turning their political energy from the overtly external inscription of politics of the present to the internalized practice of *anticipating* future political participation. The implicit temporal shift is significant. The perpetually anticipatory and preparatory mode of politics of the *seinen* opened up an affective and discursive space for literature, neutralizing as it did the originary *ressentiment*. Significantly for the present discussion, the apparent disjunction

[71] See Doppo's brief essay, "Yo to shizenshugi" in *Kunikida Doppo zenshū*, vol. 1 (Gakushū kenkyūsha, 1965), 528-32.
[72] Kimura Naoe, *Seinen no tanjō: Meiji Nihon ni okeru seijiteki jissen no tankan* (Shin'yōsha, 1998).

between them notwithstanding, *sōshi* and *seinen* shared the core of their identificatory operation: namely, fraternal communities, significantly modalized by corporeal and affective practices.[73] The band of young men featured in Tōson's *Haru* has this discursive history behind it. It was also in this context that Doppo produced his first major publication in the form of battlefield reports for the *Kokumin shinbun*. Revealingly titled, "Aitei tsūshin" (Correspondence to my Beloved Brother, 1894-95) was born precisely of this fraternal corporeal milieu.

Scholarly discourse has long employed the term *bundan* to capture the communal discursive milieu in which particular aesthetics on the one hand and capitalistic apparatuses on the other formed a mutually perpetuating relation. Chapter 2 addressed the psychic as well as epistemological conditions behind the *bundan* in the specific case of the *shishōsetsu bundan*. What remains to be noted concerns the way in which the term tends to emphasize the egalitarian dimension of the tightly woven community of authors and readers spawned through the media of magazines and journals, and in the process obfuscates the implicit yet fundamental operation of pedagogy, that is, the inherently arising discursive hierarchy that surreptitiously manages such a privileged establishment.[74] It is precisely the *fabulous* nexus of the individual genius and the communal history materialized through pedagogical discourse that makes *sensei* a felicitous conceptual appropriation. The term *sensei*, of course, immediately evokes Sōseki—not only the famous protagonist of his classic *Kokoro*, but also the author

[73] Ibid., 64-98; 184-205.
[74] Fowler notes marked changes in the *bundan* culture from the Shōwa era when the capitalist publishing industry helped turn *bundan* into an increasingly "businesslike institution." *The Rhetoric of Confession*, 141.

himself as a literary master with a large following both known and unknown to him.[75] To argue that Sōseki was writing in a milieu still innocent of *bundan* is misleading, even if one considers only the portion of his career falling in the Meiji period.[76] If the literary, affective, professional collective, and *shishōsetsu* were to be considered, at the very minimum, as "set in the same direction" (*ki o ichi ni suru*) or, more plausibly, in practical as well as structural terms, as one and the same operation, any claim setting Sōseki apart from *bundan* would be dubious.[77] If anything, the Sōseki "circle" (*mon*) is akin to a *bundan* within the *bundan*, with its own network of people and characterized by mutual reliance as well as competition.

With the aim of illustrating the machinery of biography as it obliterates the very site on which the body and writing arise with their mutual inscriptivity given to rare visibility, the following section addresses one particular pedagogical relationship for which Sōseki is hardly remembered. The pupil in question is Morita Sōhei (1881-1949), who is known less as an author than for his participation in an infamous double suicide attempt together with one of Japan's first feminists, Hiratsuka Raichō (1889-1971). Purportedly inspired by the Italian *fin-de-siècle* writer Gabriele D'Annunzio's *Triumph of Death*, the incident dramatizes not only youthful passions but also the global cultural traffic of its era, taken to its imaginative extreme.

[75] For the numerous literary figures, both known and unknown, who composed the Sōseki circle, see Senuma Shigeki, *Nihon bundan shi* vol. 20 *Sōseki monka no bunjin tachi* (Kōdansha, 1978).
[76] Karatani, ed., *Kindai Nihon no hihyō III*, 243-48.
[77] Ibid., 248.

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Often referred to as the "*Baien* Incident" (*Baien jiken*), an appellation adopted from the novel *Baien*, Sōhei's novelization of the incident, the scandalous event effectuated a new level of discourse on the "schoolgirl" (*jogakusei*) in the media.[78] The interest of this study is not so much the girl as the two men involved in the cleanup of its aftermath, so to speak: Sōhei himself and his mentor Sōseki. Acting as Sōhei's guardian in his dealings with both the media and Raichō's family, Sōseki left several pedagogical marks on not only Sōhei but also modern Japanese literary history. One of the most memorable scenes that Sōseki and Sōhei enacted takes place around the problem of representation. Sōseki's appeal to Raichō's family to permit Sōhei to write the incident into a novel lead to a face-to-face meeting at the Sōseki homestead. Sōseki overrode the family's resistance by saying, "For this man, writing is the only way to live. To live is the last right allowed a man."[79] Moreover, he promised that there would be no distortion of facts. Ironically it was Sōhei who was suspicious of this promise, and noted the interpretive dilemma inherent in such a representation: "What if my and [Raichō's] interpretations differed on the same fact?" Having retreated into privacy, Sōseki disregarded Sōhei's anxiety and advised him not to pursue the matter. At another dramatic moment in the anecdote, having encouraged Sōhei to turn the incident into a novel, Sōseki added, "Well, what do you think? If you are not going to write about it, shall I show how a woman (*sō iu onna*) like that can be written?"[80]

[78] For the *jogakusei* discourse, see Levy, *Sirens of the Western Shore*, chapter 2; the Baien Incident is briefly discussed on 198-99.
[79] Sasaki Hideaki, *"Atarashii onna" no tōrai* (Nagoya: Nagoya daigaku shuppankai, 1994), 216.
[80] Ibid. 224.

This and other anecdotes surrounding the incident are for the most part found in Sōhei's recollections in his *Natsume Sōseki*, written decades later in 1942. However, insofar as it is the discursive constitution of Sōseki the "*sensei*" that is under discussion here and, more urgently, representation is the only access afforded, it would be futile to question Sōhei's narratives on the basis of their veracity. More relevant to the present discussion, in this surreptitious slide from the supremely bodily event verging on death to the inscriptive conjuring of "a woman like that" as a problem of representation, Sōseki the pedagogue stands out in sharp relief. It is an ephemeral moment in which the bodily writing and writing of the body as one movement are given to visibility, yet to be processed into a case of representation, history, and biography. It is not only the body and writing of the woman in question. Rather, it is Sōseki and Sōhei who are written into certain kinds of affective as well as cognitive subjects in relation to a set of objects. They stand in relation first to Raichō—and, indeed the female sex itself—arising as an increasingly rigid figure; second, the *sensei* and pupil that they are and are still becoming for one another; and, finally, a literature that somehow is destined to render ontological meaning to the entire event. If homosexual murmurs are properly allowed to cloak these different cathexes, the psychic modality of epistemology becomes even more suggestive.

At one level, contrary to the conventional literary historical portrayal of Sōseki as a figure apart from the *bundan*, and even a solitary genius, Sōseki's pedagogical intervention in Sōhei's dealings with Raichō betrays a mundane contiguity with the contemporary interest in "*moderu*" or "confessional" narratives. This trend had begun to assail the literary scene since as early as the 1900s with the publication of Tōson's *Hakai* (Broken Commandment, 1906) among other works, and since then has been identified as

an origin of *shishōsetsu*. So ubiquitous as to approach invisibility is also the paradoxical manner in which literary pedagogy was instituted through fraternal contention over the representation of the feminine. Sōseki's intense interest in and textual representation of the figure of Raichō the woman constitutes a literary historical event insofar as the equation of the feminine with the "unconscious hypocrite" was articulated into a literary prototype. The phrase was originally used to describe the heroine Mineko of Sōseki's *Sanshirō* (1908), a figure whose contours of sexuality and gender supposedly paralleled Raichō's as imagined by Sōseki.[81] It further provided a kind of template from which Sōseki would sometimes finesse and other times radicalize the feminine sex in many of his later novels. A radically different view designates Sōseki as the "first feminist author" insofar as he was "able to portray such attractive figures of woman…who skillfully manipulated men in a realm far away from patriarchy."[82] Perhaps more persuasively, Sōseki was a rare author who "wrote so many lines for women [characters]" and at the same time "featured women to leave them to their own behaviors (*furumawasu*)."[83]

At another level—far and apart from the facile evaluation of Sōseki's authorial and humanist merit or genius—the event of Sōhei and Raichō's attempted double suicide stands to illustrate simultaneously the *bio-graphical* possibility and the pedagogical operation. Or, more accurately, pedagogy is precisely an intervention in the bodily inscription. That *bio-graphy* could transpire for different modalities other than pedagogy is one of the interests of the present chapter, and is addressed further in later sections. In an observation drawing toward that end, Sasaki Hideaki makes a suggestive remark. Concerning the curious development whereby Sōseki the *sensei* received the inspiration

[81] Sasaki, *"Atarashii onna" no tōrai*, 176-77.
[82] Hasumi's argument in Karatani, ed., *Kindai Nihon no hihyō III*, 323.
[83] Ibid.

for the central element of his novels from the misconduct of his disciple Sōhei, Sasaki notes, "At least in terms of 'the madness that women displays' (*onna ga miseru kurui*), it is difficult to deny that Sōseki took from Sōhei something or other (*nanigashika o ubanatta*)."[84]

If the obliteration of this literary-historically meager event—indeed, pedagogical *debt*—had obscured the possibility of *bio-graphy*, the memorialization of a certain other event also foreclosed *bio-graphy*. The latter concerns another swerving contact with mortality. Disseminated by way of the dramatic appellation "great trauma" (*taikan*)" just as Uno's madness would later be, the crisis that delivered Sōseki to the limit of the "living" body occurred in 1910. Following diagnosis with a severe case of ulcers and subsequent hospitalization for over a month, Sōseki went to the hot spring town of Shūzenji for the purpose of climatotherapy. Contrary to therapeutic expectations, Sōseki suffered worsening symptoms, climaxing with his vomiting "500 grams of blood" and lapsing into a "coma" (*fusei*).[85] Sōseki's own journal entries during the period—continued by his wife Kyōko when the novelist was incapacitated—yield a remarkable picture of regression to a corporeal preoccupation.[86] The detailed record of the contents and amounts of food taken, injections administered, hours slept, and the color of excrements uncannily anticipates the "irreverent" (*fukei*) reports on the same, and more, details regarding the ailing Meiji Emperor that would appear in major newspapers less

[84] Ibid. 286.
[85] Natsume Sōseki, *Sōseki nikki*, ed. Hiraoka Toshio (Iwanami, 1990), 154; this entry was filled in by Sōseki's wife, Kyōko. Suga Hidemi attempts a psychoanalytical reading of this event against the scandalous attempted regicide known as the Great Treason Incident (*Taigyaku jiken*), the arrests and investigation for which took place in the same temporal window as Sōseki's trauma. See *"Teikoku" no bungaku*," 276-96.
[86] Sōseki, *Sōseki nikki*, 146-185.

than two years later.[87] As well known, physiological dismemberment receives yet another address in *Kokoro* through the figure of Watashi's father, who in terms of symptoms and eventual death parallels the imperial body. Further yet, Sōseki's own death—and thus life—was memorialized in part by "detailed reports of the autopsy [that] began appearing in the press, competing with what would be a rising tide of the more routine eulogizing."[88]

Yet, this metonymy of the body and writing in endlessly generative motions rarely offers itself up to theoretical pauses. Endowed with authenticity enshrouded in the mystery of death, and for that reason bespeaking extraordinary humanity, the Sōseki who threw up blood, plunged into oblivion, and finally revived as in a miracle tale, culminates in the axiom of "spiritual renewal" (*sokuten kyoshi*) and the literary manifestation thereof. Sōseki unriddles the esoteric phrase *sokuten kyoshi* as "to forsake the small self which I usually regard as myself, and to leave it to the dictates of a larger and universal self, so to speak."[89] Regardless of what Sōseki meant to convey thereby—he perhaps could not have imagined the mythologization to come on its account—the phrase has long been revered as the epitome of Sōseki the man, an eventuality owed to several of his disciples.[90] Of course, such a discursive transmogrification is in dire need of death as its sanction. Even with the discursive shift from around 1914 towards unambiguous lionization of Sōseki, which redefined his oeuvre as culminating in the "second trilogy" comprising *Higansugi made, Kōjin*, and *Kokoro* which marked a turn toward "critique of

[87] Watanabe Naomi, *Fukei bungakuron josetsu* (Ōta shuppan, 1999), 84.
[88] Marvin Marcus, *Reflections in a Glass Door: Memory and Melancholy in the Personal Writings of Natsume Sōseki* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2009), 190.
[89] Ward William Biddle, "The Authenticity of Natsume Sōseki," *Monumenta Nipponica* 24, no. 4 (Winter 1973): 418.
[90] Komiya Toyotaka's 1938 biography *Natsume Sōseki* constitutes the epochal moment in the trajectory of this mythologization.

life," it was only after his death the apotheosis of Sōseki as the paragon of literature took place.[91]

Since these early days of hagiographic fervor, the particular focus on the trauma suffered in Shūzenji and the subsequent valorization of the idea of *sokuten kyoshi* has been subject to criticism.[92] Ishihara Chiaki, for example, discusses two moments in what he calls the "Sōseki mythology" (*Sōseki shin'wa*): the posthumous mobilization around *sokuten kyoshi* among his disciples and the "current state of Sōseki criticism that designates Sōseki as a 'national author,'" pointing out discontinuities within the apparently totalizing discursive inheritance.[93] Especially in the post-1980s critical milieu, it may be said that Sōseki scholarship has no room for a naïve faith in biography as found in the former epoch or homogeneous community in the latter. Yet, *bio-graphy* remains unimagined.[94] Paralleling the fate of *shishōsetsu*, which has become "that thing, that, more and more, one avoids discussing as if one knew what it is and as if its riddle were solved," biography persists by virtue of *unaddress*.[95] The deep suspicion which the discussion thus far has attempted to articulate is precisely this *unaddress*, which has become the very site on which "criticism of" so many "themes" has deafened subtle doubts and hesitations towards those names of the culprits and redeemers.

Un-membered in the act of *re-membering* are precisely the volatile scenes of the body arising as writing, and writing unfurling as bodily notations. The latter not only

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[91] Yamamoto, *Bungakusha wa tsukurareru*, 1-34. Yamamoto situates the shifting Sōseki reception within the change of "paradigm" in general *bundan* discourse, 90-107.
[92] Etō Jun offers a critical address in *Natsume Sōseki*, Kindai sakka kenkyū sōsho, vol. 128 (Nihon tosho sentā, 1993), 11-20.
[93] Ishihara Chiaki, *Sōseki no sannin no dokusha* (Kōdansha gendai shinsho, 2004), 38-39.
[94] Even the very intelligent recent return to Sōseki's long neglected book *Theory of Literature* is organized by the notion of authorial presence behind the oeuvre, as its intent is on highlighting the completion of Sōseki's "ten-year project." See Sōseki, *Theory of Literature*, especially the introduction.
[95] Derrida, "How to Avoid Speaking," 17.

refers to the Baien Incident discussed earlier. Seductive and even reasonable as it is, the valorization of the trauma at Shūzenji as Sōseki's conversion experience is not a matter of imagination (of the vital scene of death), testimony (to the death touched), or pedagogy (regarding literature as spiritual manifestation). Nor is it a question of verifiability or faith. Rather, it is a critical problem, not so much for a plain naïveté, which is certainly there, as for the way it forecloses the possibility of drawing upon the body and writing—*bio-graphy*. To repeat, the causality posited through *sokuten kyoshi* between the bodily event and the literary consequence effaces the inseparable movement that is at one and the same time the body and writing. The cathexis towards literature (*bungaku*) as a finality arrives as discursive—literary historical and biographical—disintegration of the body and writing, and as such—and still more—turns *bio-graphy* into a thanatology.

The image of the blood can be seen extending into the past and future of the Sōseki biography as the cohering metaphor for the existential agony of living in the particular historical reality of modern Japan. Perhaps the most memorialized line in his *Bungakuron* sets off the metaphorical life of blood as follows: "I shut away all books of literature in my wicker trunk. To read literary works to try to learn what literature was, I believed, was the same as trying to wash blood with blood."[96] Inserted into a reflection, at once resentful and pedagogically sound, on his straitened sojourn in London as a (colonial) student of the language and literature of the metropole, "blood" signifies the bodily specter of "literature"— doubly removed from the desiring subject precisely by way of his phantasmic proximity to the very origin of "English literature." With the trauma in Shūzenji, however, blood reappears as Sōseki's own corporeal matter, constituting a metonymic passage between the author and literature. Sōseki was throwing

[96] Sōseki, *Theory of Literature*, 44.

up blood inasmuch as he was "living" literature. What transpires discursively at this juncture is precisely the disintegration of the body and writing, with literature (*bungaku*) given as the authorial essence. The distance towards literature that haunted Sōseki in London, the spectral Other forever luring without ever ameliorating the pain of *jouissance*—the masochistic pleasure *par excellence*—, has now been *incorporated* into the author's ontology. With *Kokoro,* finally, blood raises its dripping shape in a vampiric perpetuity of resentment—a return of the London melancholy in a vastly different tension, of life and death:

> Because you unreservedly showed me your resolution to catch something alive in my being, and to sip the warm blood running in my body, by cutting my heart. At that time, I was still living, and did not want to die. So I rejected your request, promising to satisfy you someday. Now I am going to destroy my heart myself, and pour my blood into your veins. I shall be happy if a new life can enter into your bosom, when my heart has stopped beating.[97]

Would it not be possible to read in Watashi, the interlocutor of this epistolary scene, the (young) generations of *bungakusha* absorbed in the production of literary historical "mythology" under the name of Natsume Sōseki? Yamamoto cites numerous statements of adoration and reverence culminating in the figure of "the Father of All" (*subete no mono no 'chichi'*) as early as 1913, a year before *Kokoro* was published.[98] And, if in a circular logic, the culprits are the most dutiful imbibers of Sōseki's pedagogy, i.e., his disciples—Suzuki Miekichi, Komiya Toyotaka, and Eguchi Kan, among others. They matured on Sōseki's "blood" as Watashi desires with regard to Sensei.

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[97] *Kokoro*, trans. Edwin McClellan (London: Peter Owen, 2007), 129. For an innovative reading of the blood image in Sōseki's *Bungakuron* in relation to the Gothic genre in English literature, see Anna-Marie Farrier, "Circulating Fictions: The Novels of Natsume Sōseki and the Gothic" (Ph.D. diss., Princeton University, 2007), chapter 1.

[98] *Bungakusha wa tsukurareru*, 2-34.

The genius pedagogue has plunged into the realm of the undead—specters—through the very work he had *conceived*/impregnated in the hope of deliverance from the blood of literature, injuries *of* the Other, and, finally, resentment toward Japan. It is hardly possible not to notice a poignant parallel between Sōseki's record of London and Toyotarō's Berlin as portrayed in Ōgai's "The Dancing Girl," gesturing as they both do to the psychic consequence of the national interpellation.[99] Nor is blood imaginable away from the image of the ritual suicide of General Nogi, following Emperor Meiji his lord into death (*junshi*). This dramatic event was simultaneously national and feudal, the irony of which added to its enigma.[100] Sōseki's emphatic insistence on the validity of "the Japanese point of view" (*Nihonjin no tachiba*) is, for all its universalizing rather than nationalizing discursive import, nevertheless a *symptom* of the national trauma sustained by the individual subject.[101] Thus mythologization, insofar as it becomes effectuated by so many acts of pronouncing the object dead (enough) and arises from the genius of theological nihilism, Sōseki's pedagogy is a *thanato-graphy*: writing of death, death that arises only as writing. If biography killed Sōseki, casting him into a purgatory burning with the blood of literature, Sōseki there continues to write death and to die in and of writing. It must be noted that insofar as the vampire can only *mis-live* on the blood of the living, Sōseki the author and modern Japanese literature as a historical narrative—biography—may be bound for mutual depravity, with no salvation sanctioned in this

[99] See Hill, "Mori Ōgai's Resentful Narrator."
[100] For a thoughtful study of the ritual and literary representations of this episode, see Doris Bargen, *Suicidal Honor: General Nogi and the Writings of Mori Ōgai and Natsume Sōseki* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2006).
[101] The editors of Sōseki's *Theory of Literature* provide a compact introduction to the issue of "Japan" and "the national" in Sōseki criticism, 31-32.

realm of cohabitation, or, indeed mutual *inhabitation* of the other. *Bio-graphy* then receives a *bare* address through Sōseki's thanato-graphy.

Plainly apparent to the critical view once again is the fraternal milieu as the enabling condition of this particular inscription of the genius, and the deathly *bio-graphy* at Sōseki's hands. It comes as no great surprise that Sōseki has provided an intriguing, indeed liminal, site on which literary fraternity transmogrifies into *national* community. Ishihara Chiaki observes Sōseki's keen consciousness of his readership, which he and his employer the *Tōkyō Asahi Shinbun* imagined to be composed of the intellectual class residing in the Yamanote district of Tokyo.[102] Sōseki was pronounced the "first 'writer of the nation' (*kokuminteki sakka*)" as early as 1917 by Akagi Kōhei, another of his pupils, an event of which Ishihara's critique has been noted above.[103] However, as Ishihara notes, it was in his maturing death, with his body in further retreat, that Sōseki the author underwent biographical reinscription in earnest: With the Shōwa-era high schools' adoption of *Kokoro* as mandatory reading, Sōseki's status as the "national author (*kokumin sakka*)" began its discursive life.[104] Since then, the fraternal legacy has continued to claim the rest of the Japanese population under the thus gendered and classed *kokumin*. The "*sensei*" of *Kokoro* emerges as something more than metaphorical. If Sōseki had been unable to deliver the thanato-graphy into *bio-graphy*, one reason may be this fatal indulgence in fraternity. For *shishōsetsu* can only *live* as melancholia driven by death instinct or *expire/resolve/die* as the equally unbearable fallacy and falsity of "superiority" *vis-à-vis* the O/other.[105]

[102] Ishihara, *Sōseki no sannin no dokusha*, 33-37.
[103] Yamamoto, *Bungakusha wa tsukurareru*, 29.
[104] Ishihara, *Sōseki no sannin no dokusha*, 26-28.
[105] Freud, "Mourning and Melancholia," 257.

Thus, what the attempted conceptual appropriation of *sensei* renders visible is Sōseki's concoction of the genius in the particular historical reality, modalized not only by textbook events with names and dates but more significantly by the psychic, affective, and even corporeal encounters in individual and national, and always fraternal, milieu. In Akutagawa's short story "Cogwheels" (1927),the narrator/hero's reaction to "*sensei*" as "a most unpleasant term" is followed only a few paragraphs passages later by the memory of Sōseki's funeral, stirred by the Aoyama Funeral Pavilion where the narrator's mistaken steps have led him. A presentiment follows: "I gazed at the gravel spread out inside and remembered the banana plant in [Sōseki's] house, the Villa Sōseki. Irresistibly I felt that my life too had come to an end and it was no accident that destiny had brought me here—to this place and at this time, a decade later.[106]

Finally, it may well be an adequate conclusion to the discussion of genius to cite Sōseki's own reference to genius as modalized by the pedagogical, fraternal, and supremely modern Japanese place from which he speaks: "If one takes literature as his life, beauty alone cannot satisfy. One ought to be ready to suffer just as the imperial supporters during the Restoration suffered. One must be ready to suffer the consequence of any mistake—neurasthenia, madness (*kichigai*), or imprisonment—in order to become a *bungakusha*."[107]

8.

The long detour by way of Sōseki, genius, and *thanato-graphy* has a place in the present discussion inasmuch as it renders visible the larger discursive blindness to *bio-graphy*

[106] De Wolf, trans., *Mandarins: Stories by Akutagawa*, 202-3.
[107] This passage is found in a letter by Sōseki to one of his close disciples, Suzuki Miekichi. Cited in Nakano Yoshio, "Ningen—Sōseki to sono monkasei (ge)—," *Shinchō* (May 1958): 95.

that has locked Uno's texts in the stricture of "style," and madness as a literary event and the subsequent "authorial" renewal into the *shishōsetsu* history. More recent scholarship on Uno has been no more successful in addressing the question of *bio-graphy* as it has attempted to recuperate—a colonial gesture *par excellence*—his name by way of haphazard celebration of his "literary style" as a "critique" of *shishōsetsu*, and thereby further obliterating the ontology of *buntai*. Giving fodder to the hypostasization of style as available to description is another complex register of mimetic operation. As Gerbert notes, "Foreign literature suggested not only a model for writing but also one for living. For some writers, so keenly aware of just how close at hand their reading audiences were, the style in which they conducted their lives was almost as important as the style in which they composed their sentences. …Mimesis became an all absorbing activity for many."[108]

This milieu consumed by mimesis confounds the perceivable gap, or, indeed proximity, between the serious clinical condition of madness and the discursive adulation thereof. Akutagawa reflects on Uno's madness by saying, "But, I think it is a splendid thing for an artist's life. ... If he remains that way, it is still splendid. Madness (*hakkyō*) is not a shame for an artist. So Uno has gone as far as he could."[109] This attitude is not surprising given the particular contours with which hysteria was endowed in the European literary discourse as discussed above. Yet, there are more specific mimetic conditions textually traceable, which Ōnishi Akio finds in Arthur Symons's *Symbolist Movement in Literature*, whose effects were further amplified by the contemporary introduction of Max Nordau's *Degeneration*.[110] As Uno readily admitted, "[What] bewitched us the most was…their mannerisms in life (*seikatsuburi*) that would seem like

[108] Gerbert in Uno, *Love of Mountains*, 8-9.
[109] Recollected by Hirotsu Kazuo in "Ano jidai," 50.
[110] See "Uno Kōji to Arthur Symons."

acts of madness from a commonsensical judgment."[111] Again, Uno's reaction to his own madness was anything but sane: "Of course, I am manic (*manī*). Everyone is too proper to say it but I know it well. … But, I want to tell the doctor that it wouldn't do if he were to treat this mania completely. If I were too cured, I would become unable to write novels."[112] Adding to Ōnishi's observation, Uno wondered, "There is also the fact that I have read too much Gogol."

Ōnishi is sufficiently subtle in juxtaposing the impenetrable event of madness and the overt testimonies to mimetic desires *vis-à-vis* European literary figures. He often vacillates between what he calls the "authenticity" of Uno's idiosyncrasies and even madness on the one hand, and the lure of texts as an unquestionable source of mimetic imagination: "[His fear of thunder and lightning] was indeed very serious. Yet, at the same time, it ought not to be forgotten that, for Uno at this time, neurasthenia and 'madness' were inevitably [expressions of] his wishes to draw the symbolist poets towards himself and his body (*ware to wagami*) and thereby have them rub off on him."[113] This uneasy balancing act between authenticity and imitation finds a rhetorical resolution by way of the vaunted notion of "the artist" (*geijutsuka*): "Uno's 'madness' means that the man (*ningen*) and the artist inside Uno collided face to face." And, finally, the interpretive conundrum culminates in a biographical distribution, namely "progress":

> It would be inaccurate to say that Uno consciously learned from Verlaine through Symons as the 'manual.' For, more than anything, it concerns inborn endowments (*tenpu no shishitsu*). The correspondence between Uno's and Verlaine's endowments was irreducible to a simple coincidence, something destined. By knowing [about] Verlaine, Uno arrived at a deeper awareness of his own endowments. But, it was only in his later years that

[111] Ibid., 58.
[112] Cited in Hirotsu, "Ano jidai," 49.
[113] "Uno Kōji to Arthur Symons," 59.

> this unconscious rather than conscious influence exerted power over Uno.[114]

Following decades after Ōnishi's study, Gerbert's discussion seems wary of the valorization of the event of madness as the pivot of artistic transformation in the preceding scholarship on Uno. Drawing fresh attention to Uno's narrative style as a constant throughout his oeuvre, Gerbert's criticism manages to destabilize the apparently natural trajectory of Uno's career:

> One might, however, be equally justified in regarding Uno's career as a seamless whole motivated by a sense of play which manifested itself on different levels of intensity at different stages on his life. … While lacking the spontaneity of the earlier years, the impulse to play is still evident in the ironic self-consciousness…. After his illness, as before, Uno approached writing as a man extremely self-aware of his place within a literary tradition. He was, seemingly, more conscious of style than ever: of how to use words within a context inhabited by the words of others. [115]

Yet, the dialectical vacillation once again becomes extinguished by way of an appeal to the author as the site of continuity. What emerges unaltered between the two views, each marked by different shade of humanism, is precisely the genius as articulated by Sōseki: the artist displaying constancy and depth.[116] This is a familiar moment in which the differentials painstakingly argued—the global affective as well as discursive traffic in Ōnishi and linguistic and narrative experiments in Gerbert—become unsustainable in the presence of—or, rather, find their guarantee only in—the author. In other words, there is a certain critical act of shying away from the very productive field in which the novel, the author, and the milieu amalgamate into indistinguishable masses of figures and motions.

The point here is not to dispute the perceived shift in the ambience of Uno's works, but rather to ponder if it is possible to slide the axis of literary interpretation from

[114] Ibid., 64.
[115] "Uno Kōji," 143-44.
[116] Sōseki, *Theory of Literature*, 130-33.

the content of style, so to speak—"humor" or "play (*asobi*)" versus "shadows of death"—to style as an always already bodily *event*.[117] For the "historicity, evaluation, and activity—in short, all that had been excluded as style" always return, if by different passages.[118] For, if it is indeed "the *fin-de-siècle* affectation of decadence" that Uno's early works depict (*egaku*), there may be ways to read that very affectation as well as the depiction as one event of style, that is, the body—the material actuality—of writing, and writing of the body: fashioning, posing, and comporting.[119]

Having considered what may be referred to as the literary historical machinery of biographism, to conclude that it bears out a discursive operation steeped in ideology would amount to nothing. The question, as always, regards gestures toward futurity. Must understanding end in the comfort of a handful of axioms? "Style intervened in the content/ideology of contemporary culture. Uno was critical of *shishōsetsu*. The West incited mimetic desires but in the end it was the author's own human as well as artistic qualities that made the oeuvre possible." What can be imagined differently if this is not to end in another dialectical sublimation?

9.

That *Kura no naka* exhibits, with a truly exhibitionist penchant, much of the rhetorical posturality of the traditional, *unliterary*, theatre of *rakugo* signifies beyond the "style" of the first order, namely, what circulates as "literary" or "narrative" style. For one thing,

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[117] Gerbert's study "Uno Kōji" is organized around the concept of *asobi*, see her Introduction; Ōnishi Akio reads the increasing shadow of death as the main symptom of Uno's later works; see "Uno Kōji to Arthur Symons," 68.
[118] Ken Hirschkop has written on Bakhtin's purpose to integrate these elements into "the social reality of language"; see his "A Response to the Forum on Mikhail Bakhtin" in *Bakhtin: Essays and Dialogues on His Work*, ed. Gary Saul Morson (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986), 77.
[119] Ōnishi, "Uno Kōji to Arthur Symons," 58.

the irony of *Kura no naka*'s textuality lies in the fact that its defamiliarizing effects transpire by way of conjuring all-*too-familiar* specters of the unliterary narrative. The devalorizing appellation of "style," marked as frivolous and opposed to "content," self-reflexively designates this familiarity, and the dismissive contemporary characterization of *Kura no naka* as "Osaka *rakugo*" is meant to conceal yet bears out this conflictual epistemological structure.[120] More relevant to the present discussion is the very bodily register of *rakugo*, which is due not only to its performative generic status but the entire milieu as its narrative condition, which precipitates the listening other. In other words, if read in silence, *rakugo's* narrative features would still ring in the ears, as Yamaji's "voice" does.

The way in which *rakugo* inhabits the body of the performer was noted in Chapter 4 by way of Uno's own very physical experience in the audience.[121] The same phenomenology appears in the narrative of *Kura no naka*, which Gerbert captures with her signature eloquence:

> At every turn, Yamaji's narration seems to embody an unrestrained physicality, as if his irrepressible physical being itself were projected into the text. There are uncontrollable emotional outbursts … and waggish exclamations …. As he babbles, he seems to take childish pleasure in the feel and sound of words as they roll off his tongue. Polysyndetic verb pairs create a rocking momentum…. Repetitions set up echoing rhythms as words are used to create sound impressions rather than to advance a line of thought. The many indeterminate constructions and rephrasings…. The plethora of conjunctions….[122]

This rising together of the body (of the narrator) and the narrative is precisely that modality of writing toward which *bio-graphy* and *bun-tai* have been motioning.

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[120] Gerbert cites Uno's contemporary Kikuchi Kan, "Uno Kōji," 35.
[121] Nobuhiro Shinji, et al. eds, *Meijin to wa nanika*, vol. 2, *Rakugo no sekai* (Iwanami shoten, 2003) provides a detailed portrayal of the *rakugo* theater.
[122] Gerbert in Uno, *Love of Mountains*, 12-13.

Imagining *bio-graphy* by way of *bun-tai*, that is, writing of and as the body, and vice versa, does spring forth from such discursive precedents as Roland Barthes's traversal from the "death of the author" to the "pleasure of the text," that is, the biographical identity yielding to the impersonal and at the same time thoroughly intimate motions of the body. Who does the latter belong to? Difficult to conjure as it is, this body is the body of the text—i.e. *écriture*—that arises *as and with* the author's body:

> As an institution, the author is dead: his civil status, his biographical person have disappeared; disposed, they no longer exercise over his work the formidable paternity whose account literary history, teaching, and public opinion had the responsibility of establishing and renewing; but in the text, in a way, *I desire* the author; I need his figure (which is neither his representation nor his projection), as he needs me….[123]

Bio-graphy is thus a procedure of witnessing the moments in which the author's body arises as that which renders the body of writing in a particular modality. Yet by then the author is no longer the author of literary history in the form and affect of biography; he designates some*thing* else, gestures towards some other futurity, and by all means eludes closure. This transmogrification is perhaps what Seán Burke, with his thesis of the "return of the author," misses in a drive towards *exposé*.[124] Considered in this way, the "death" has not killed the author so much as allowed him to *live properly*—that is, with death, as death, in writing.[125] Once again, a *thanato-graphy* that is *another* passage to and of *bio-graphy*.

Kristeva reads:

> [The] text emerges as the work of a subject […], a work that exceeds life, but whose life shares its structures. […] A double approach is consequently necessary to deal with the text: it must be seen through the

[123] *The Pleasure of the Text*, trans. Richard Miller (New York: Hill and Wang, 1975), 27. Barthes's italics.
[124] Burke finds the most damaging contradiction in Barthes's thesis on the death of the author to lie in the biographical fact that "the critic *too* becomes an author," *Death and the Return of the Author*, 61.
[125] For the object of Burke's reference, see Barthes, "The Death of the Author," 142-48.

> *linguistic* network, but also through *biography*. The proportion of each is already weighted in favor of the *written* element, which nevertheless merely releases, inscribes, and understands "lived experience."[126]

It is this duality, the excess that shares, that ought to be honored again in order to give *biography* another life. To address writing as "a kind of asymbolic memory of the body"[127] in this particular task of imagining *bio-graphy* is to admit to a certain distance *towards*, incomplete access to, and allure of, the choreography of different bodies—human, material, linguistic, musical, and more—which is precisely what receives ample care in *Kura no naka*.

10.

It is felicitous for the present discussion that Barthes's discussion of writing, albeit—suggestively—in a supplementary fashion, lurches toward "style" or, even more propitiously, *bun-tai*.[128] Laying out language, style, and writing as three "dimensions" of form, and distinguishing the last as that which binds the writer to society, Barthes notes of style in his celebrated *Writing Degree Zero*,

> A language is therefore on the hither side of Literature. Style is almost beyond it: imagery, delivery, vocabulary spring from the body and the past of the writer and gradually become the very reflexes of his art. Thus under the name of style a self-sufficient language is evolved which has its roots only in the depths of the author's personal and secret mythology, that subnature of expression where the first coition of words and things takes place, where once and for all the great verbal themes of his existence come to be installed.[129]

Leaving aside the political milieu and particular literary polemic that condition Barthes's slim book, it may be noted that the arbitrariness, indeed, historicity of the given

[126] *Desire in Language*, 105. Kristeva's italics.
[127] Ibid., 111.
[128] *Writing Degree Zero*, trans. Annette Lavers and Colin Smith (New York: Hill and Wang, 1968), 10.
[129] Ibid., 10-11.

distinctions fade in later reiterations to give rise to the notion of writing as always already inextricable from, or, indeed rising precisely from these other dimensions, i.e., language and style, and indeed the body.[130] Barthes continues in an observation most relevant to the thread that has been maintained so far in all precariousness:

> [Style] is a form with no clear destination, the product of a thrust, not an intention, and, as it were, a vertical and lonely dimension of thought. *Its frame of reference is biological or biographical, not historical*: it is the writer's 'thing,' his glory and his prison, it is his solitude. Indifferent to society and transparent to it, a closed personal process, *it is in no way the product of a choice or of a reflection on Literature*. It is the private portion of the ritual, it rises up from the writer's myth-ridden depths and unfolds beyond his area of control.[131]

Overtaking Barthes's future writings, which vigorously germinate in this passage, it seems entirely acceptable to shift the terms of discussion somewhat to render service to the question at hand. That is to say that language and style as "data prior to all problematics of language," that is, "the natural product of Time and of the person as a biological entity" and of "blind forces," always already contaminate writing, "the morality of form, the choice of that social area within which the writer elects to situate the Nature of his language."[132] In other words, whatever "freedom" is accorded the writer by the volitional act of writing is *affected*—delimited for surprises—by language and style. Hence the aphoristic line: "Literature is like phosphorous, it shines with its maximum brilliance at the moment when it attempts to die."[133] Kristeva offers an illuminating reading of Barthes:

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[130] For the discursive context in which Barthes wrote, see Susan Sontag's preface to *Writing Degree Zero*. For Barthes's textual concerns with language, style, and body, see *Sade, Fourier, Loyala*, trans. Richard Miller (Baltimore, Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997).
[131] Barthes, *Writing Degree Zero*, 11. Italics added.
[132] Ibid., 15
[133] Ibid., 39.

> Writing is upheld not by the subject of understanding, but by a divided subject, even a pluralized subject, that occupies, not a place of enunciation, but permutable, multiple, and mobile places; thus, it brings together in a *heteronomous* space the naming of phenomena (their entry into symbolic law) and the negation of these names (phonetic, semantic, and syntactic shattering). *Writing Degree Zero* identifies this type of heteronomy by the term "writing"….[134]

Thus situating language and style as the very stuff of writing by way of the "symbolic," Kristeva offers a passage from linguistics to psychoanalysis, the latter being particularly serviceable to the present interest in style as writing of the body. At the same time, it becomes clear that the "biographical" as treated in the last passage by Barthes is akin to what has been distinguished as *bio-graphical* in this study: it is that materiality which disrupts the symbolic order in and beyond which writing takes place.

This ontology of style as the body and writing, and writing arising from the materiality of the body, can be approached by way of a series of iconic scenes from the early twentieth century (global) cultural milieu. Given the above discussion, it comes as no surprise that Barthes's interests included fashion—charged for a rigid test of semiotic or, more familiarly, structuralist, methodology—but here fashion takes on more immediately historical colors.[135] If "[fashions] are a collective medicament for the ravages of oblivion,"[136] and modernity is marked by "ruthless forgetting,"[137] the Japanese moderns, young literary men like Uno in the early twentieth century who were mimetically fashioning themselves as dandies or neurasthenics or both at once, may be said to have responded to the ravages of modernity by way of a double oblivion that is

[134] *Desire in Language*, 111. Kristeva's italics.
[135] *The Fashion System*, trans. Matthew Ward and Richard Howard (New York: Hill and Wang, 1983).
[136] Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, 80.
[137] Paul de Man, "Literary History and Literary Modernity," 388.

simultaneously double remembering.[138] That is to say that, as the preceding discussions on *shishōsetsu* have already amply suggested, if purely by the economy of psychic cathexes, the forgetting of Japan's past becomes at once further aggravated and mediated—that is, ameliorated—by the encounter with the West as the cultural Other.

Against this cultural and affective backdrop of mimesis underlying cultural identity as well as forgetting, Uno seems to have cut a particularly curious form:

> His rolling eyes, his lunging gait, the sudden garrulousness that broke long stretches of silence, the staring gaze that accompanied the quiet rapid roll of his speech, and the unexpected bursts of laughter that startled his listeners had led some to consider him a *kawattamono* (an eccentric in the extreme). Others were impressed by his weak, effeminate side. Tanizaki Seiji recalled that at their first meeting in 1917 Uno was quiet, used *onna no kotoba* (women's language) and worried constantly about getting headaches. … [Others] wrote about his inordinate fear of snakes and thunder, the sound of which sent him scurrying for refuge in closets. … Still others presented a portrait of an overbearing, self-confident chap who took advantage of his companions.[139]

This portrait of Uno displays remarkable reverberations with the following passage, in which Benjamin offers a further note on the *fin-de-siècle* French poet Baudelaire, quintessential poet of the modern experience, as characterized by shock:

> Baudelaire has portrayed this condition in a harsh image. He speaks of a duel in which the artist, just before being beaten, screams in fright. This duel is the creative process itself. […] This self-portrait, which is corroborated by evidence from several contemporaries, is of great significance. Since he is himself exposed to fright, it is not unusual for Baudelaire to occasion fright. Vallès tells us about his eccentric grimaces; on the basis of a portrait by Nargeot, Pontmartin establishes Baudelaire's alarming appearances; Claudel stresses the cutting quality he could give to his speech; Gautier speaks of the italicizing Baudelaire indulged in when reciting poetry; Nadar describes his jerky gait.[140]

[138] For *bundan* fashion, see Gerbert in Uno, *Love of Mountains*, 8-9.
[139] Gerbert, "Uno Kōji," 25-26.
[140] "On Some Motifs in Baudelaire," 163.

Benjamin's summation of the contemporary image of Baudelaire seems to parallel that of Uno—from the *com*/*deportment* of the body of the writer even to the syntax of the hearsay, which marks, if anything, the constant dispersion of the (authorial) totality. The two authors' shared eccentricities, the confounding movements of parrying, finally, seem modalized by none other than the invisible yet palpable, varied yet pervasive adversary—the modern experience itself.

The bewildering caprice and solemnity marking Uno's stylization has often been explained by way of localizing rhetoric. On an immediately empirical level, critics have called attention to Uno's upbringing in Osaka, which they argue rendered a certain productively ambivalent perspective on humanity.[141] When invocation of the juvenile environment appears insufficient, the rhetoric becomes more worldly. A critic may note Uno's canonical status as a *shishōsetsu* writer "preserving characteristically Japanese (*Nihon teki na*) qualities" and at the same time gesture towards the "world of *Human Comedy*'s author."[142] In an exceptionally perceptive observation, Ishikawa Jun (1899-1987) offers a more nuanced picture of Uno the stylistic author: "Undoubtedly, the spirit of symbolism, which he had so imbibed, even though it was imitation and, moreover, *ought to have been imitation*, must have sunk deeply into the foundation of his literature. Wasn't this one factor that did not let him become an ordinary *shishōsetsu* writer?"[143] Uno's literature is a "lover's language" (*koi o sasayaku*) with all its tonal and gestural components of affect.[144] Only from this bodily surrender does Uno *own* Symbolism—

[141] Yamamoto Kenkichi, for example, discusses the expression *yayakoshii*, which may be roughly translated as "complicated (and so) troublesome" as capturing the Osaka literary sentiment. "Uno Kōji," 92-101.
[142] Ibid., 92.
[143] Kawasaki, et al. eds., *Uno Kōji kaisō*, 38. Italics added.
[144] Ibid., 34.

with this last phase, and each word therein, signifying the most tenuous gestures toward *property*.

At the same time, suggestively, the perceived excessive/liminal status of Uno the author is given as that impassable ontological divide between Japan and the West:

> It may be said that I saw a person who had formed himself (*jiko keisei*) in the Western way. … In terms of literature, he inherited, from his birth essentially the barbarian stock (*ketō no chisuji*). The misfortune is that because he is Japanese he can only look like a Japanese person, a fact of which nobody including he himself is unaware. This is the novelist Uno. He is a barbarian not because he has become one on account of sticking to bread. On the contrary, a barbarian whose taste is only for bread was born just like a Japanese because of his fate was to be born a Japanese. This is his fate.[145]

This impulse to—if most gently—exile him outside Japan may be a profoundly honest reaction to something so foreign and inassimilable as the *body that styles*. Provisional as it is, this statement loops back to the very beginning of the present study recalling the way the (sexed) body is coterminous with medicine, psychology, literature, and other epistemological emblems of modernity. In other words, the body is doubly *foreign* inasmuch as modernity itself is foreign to these Japanese subjects.

At the same time, Uno is *foreign* insofar as the styled body disrupts the mandate that one be either Japanese or European because style can only be imitation, a movement which perpetually opens up a distance *towards*, even as approximating, an other. The figure of Yamaji has already advanced this proposition by way of mimetic *becoming*, perpetual posing *towards* the other. The purposely ambiguous use of the preposition "towards" is intended to spell out, in a slow motion perhaps, that temporal, kinetic *conjuring* of the other that occurs in the very moment of the subject's *posing*.

[145] Ibid., 39-40.

The task of the following section is to read the stylized/stylizing body between Uno the author and Yamaji the fictional hero—that is, as that which simultaneously makes *bio-graphy* possible and renders a certain visibility to the fictional narrative. The mutuality between Uno and his text arises as this body—of writing and the writing subject—that hides at one moment and parades at another, suffers affectively or somatically, and de/composes—stylizes. It is a moment to inflate the scene a little bit.

11.

Paul Klee's painting *Angelus Novus* (1920) is well known to many in the humanities for its very biographical history em*bodying* the German-Jewish intellectual Walter Benjamin, who purchased it 1921 and kept it until 1940 when he fled Paris from the Nazis. Benjamin's frequently quoted reading of this painting is found in the ninth thesis of "The Philosophy of History":

> A Klee drawing named 'Angelus Novus' shows an angel looking as though he is about to move away from something he is fixedly contemplating. His eyes are staring, his mouth is open, his wings are spread. This is how one pictures the angel of history. His face is turned toward the past. Where we perceive a chain of events, he sees one single catastrophe that keeps piling ruin upon ruin and hurls it in front of his feet. The angel would like to stay, awaken the dead, and make whole what has been smashed. But a storm is blowing from Paradise; it has got caught in his wings with such violence that the angel can no longer close them. The storm irresistibly propels him into the future to which his back is turned, while the pile of debris before him grows skyward. This storm is what we call progress.[146]

Of a number of issues towards which the passage prods further thought, it is the two modes of history that are of particular interest here insofar as they may be rearticulated as two modes of biography: one whereby "we perceive" and the other whereby the angel

[146] "Theses on the Philosophy of History," 257-58.

sees. The first is marked by horizontal movement that conquers disparate events into a chain (or, with a chain!) and the second arises from the sediments hurled, with no order. There is an affective differentiation between the two figures of the historian: one perceives from perhaps an elevated point commanding a panoramic view that renders the chain, the order, visible; the other sees with downcast eyes towards the place so proximate, at his feet. If one is the modality of progress, the other is one of mourning. One moves on along the chain and the other lingers in the duration.

Unsurprisingly, the angel of modern melancholy has another life in another place. For infidelity is the symptom of the global milieu, which can only arise by way of translation. Briefly touched upon earlier in this chapter, Akutagawa Ryūnosuke's "Cogwheels" is a first-person, plainly autobiographical narrative written just months before Akutagawa's suicide that follows the increasingly disturbing signs of a nervous breakdown. The narrator encounters several images that continue to repeat with disconcerting effects on his psyche. One of these images concerns the cogwheels of the title: "[There] was something strange in my line of vision. … There were incessantly revolving half-transparent cogwheels. …The wheels increased until they blocked all other vision…then they gave way and a headache commenced—it was always the same. [Behind] the right eye when closed countless wheels continued revolving."[147] Then comes the following line: "I felt as if only my head had been walking."[148] What emerges from this narrative is the image of a large head increasingly swollen by endless sensual assaults—a head that is no longer supportable by the proportionately diminishing body.

[147] "Cogwheels," in *The Essential Akutagawa: Rashomon, Hell Screen, Cogwheels, A Fool's Life and Other Short Fiction*, ed. Seiji Lippit (New York: Marsilio, 1999), 144-45.
[148] Ibid., 171.

This image of distortion, almost in a mock citation of the Cartesian *cogito*, floats before imagining eyes to find its twin in Klee's *Angelus Novus*.

Akutagawa's narrative mirrors even the poignant hope of flying, a hope that the angel can only harbor as a melancholic desire alight the shriveled wings. The cogwheels in Akutagawa's narrative subside only to be punctuated by sounds and images of wings: "Then, from behind my eyelids a wing of overlapping silver feathers like scales began to appear. It was clearly reflected upon my retina."[149] Most poignantly, the text reads: "Icarus with his artificial wings. His attempt to fly high, his wings singed by the sun's heat, his finally being drowned in the sea."[150]

One scholar identifies the optic phosphorescence of cogwheels with what Charcot broadly categorized as scintillating scotoma, one of the quintessential symptoms of hysteria. That the narrator's ocular spasm patterns after cogwheels may be a purely lexical felicity.[151] However, it is not at all gratuitous that cogwheels constitute a quintessential image of modern industrial technology, which Charlie Chaplin's 1936 film *Modern Times* so famously brought to the fore of the contemporary imagination of modernity. To borrow once again Kyp Harness's beautifully lucid language capturing the Tramp's ordeal in the ultra-machinized factory, "He is made into a helplessly jerking, spastic automaton by the repetitive demands of his duties. However fast he tightens the bolts it is never enough—he's hectored to increase the speed."[152] This is the point at which the Tramp ends up becoming *inserted* ever so mechanically into the machinery; for

[149] Ibid., 174.
[150] Ibid., 167.
[151] Ishii, "Seishin byōri no seikimatsu," 113. Charcot describes the range of possible patterns as "first circular, then half-circular, in the form of a zigzag, or drawn like a fortification, shaken in very rapidly vibrating movement." See Georges Didi-Huberman, *Invention of Hysteria: Charcot and the Photographic Iconography of the Salpêtrière*, trans. Alisa Hartz (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2003), 292.
[152] *The Art of Charlie Chaplin*, 151.

devouring would take dislocations in several bodily registers, a prospect unavailable in this scene of "industry." In fact, in a trenchant imagistic rejoinder to Taylorism, a memorable scene features the Tramp being machine-fed in a most demeaning sequence, which may well drive the viewing subject to prefer to be devoured. Finally, "his only recourse is to go mad." Conjuring the compulsive body that marks Yamaji—"I change kimonos three times a day"—as well as Uno's own repetitive slides between different bodily styles, yet debased and lacking the pleasurable narcissism, the Tramp signals a momentous shift from one style of the body to another: that is, from fashion to psychosis. He returns—otherwise, he would not be the Tramp. Yet, it is clear that Chaplin finds a companion, an other, indispensible for the salvation.

Considered in this manner, Uno's hero, Klee's angel, Chaplin's Tramp, and Akutagawa's narrator form a figural continuum, pivoting on the melancholic surrender to the motion, transmogrification, of the body. Put differently, they are all dreaming nightmares for one another. In this respect it is productive to revisit Benjamin's portrayal of Baudelaire as a quintessential modern subject able to write from the singular experience of modernity: "Baudelaire placed the shock experience at the very center of his artistic work. … Baudelaire made it his business to parry the shocks, no matter where they might come from, with his spiritual and his physical self."[153] Thus, according to Benjamin, Baudelaire is a writer who enacts rather than represents the modern experience. A certain gesture towards *bio-graphy* is discernable here. Significant to note is that "parrying" is a bodily act. It is unabstractable into an idea or intention. When parrying, the body is brought forth to the maximum of its sensuous functions to guard against *unpredictable yet anticipated* projections. The latter phrase of course signals anxiety.

[153] "On Some Motifs in Baudelaire," 163.

Freud noted this bodily modality of anxiety when he cited birth itself as a trauma giving rise to anxiety.[154] For Freud then, anxiety bears out the economy of psychic energy, at once bodily and psychological, exceeding the region of consciousness. This body that by way of parrying comes into its own is precisely the cinematic body that Chaplin conjured through his Little Tramp, constantly jabbing and dodging, and kicking and ducking.

Uno elsewhere visualizes this anxiously parrying modern man. In *Yume miru heya*, the narrator first gives a long-winded description of his room and even provides its diagram. Then he continues, "What troubled me most in this room were the four panels of sliding doors adjacent to the neighboring room. … If I ever carelessly slid open the door, my room would be peeped into…."[155] It may be said that this paranoid man is parrying the gaze, anonymous and omnipresent, organizing his space with the aim of countering the gaze. He continues,

> Ordinarily, I would do everything, from writing to reading, and, if I was alone in my room, even eating, in my bed. [From] the strange disposition I mentioned earlier, the possibility of the book I had been reading or the manuscript I had been writing becoming known to any friend troubled me somehow. … So, when the maid notified me of a visitor, I would lose my head in hiding the book or manuscript, as if there had been some great secret."[156]

The narrator thus finds his ultimate haven in his bed, signaling a bodily, psychic regression. Although he portrays this secretive impulse as a matter of personal disposition, to accept this explanation would be to miss a significant clue toward reading this novella into the larger landscape of modern experience. Uno repeats this almost perverse fascination and obsession with the interior (of a room) in many of his narratives, and in

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[154] "Inhibitions, Symptoms and Anxiety" in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, vol. XX, trans. and ed. James Strachey (London: Hogarth Press, 1959), 170.
[155] *Yume miru heya*, 276.
[156] Ibid., 277.

so doing displays reverberations or at times a striking correspondence with the interests in the interior of the bourgeois home found in works of Edgar Alan Poe (1809-49) or Marcel Proust (1871-1922) as well as Satō Haruo (1892-1964) and Tanizaki Jun'ichirō (1886-1965).[157]

At the same time, it is hard not to notice the way in which *gaze* is hypostatized here into that of the anonymous crowd—vastly different than the gaze anticipated, choreographed, and preciously spared for the (sexual) other in *Kura no naka*. It is still different than the later reiteration within the same story when the hero finally sets up his own room away from the family home: the disappearance *qua* memorialization of the woman Yumeko—the "Dream Girl," as her name may be rendered—into mimetic reproductions several-fold.[158] As metonymically linked images produce/fulfill the melancholic, narcissistic desire, in other words, they retain their vivacity by relying upon the imaginary order energized and inflated precisely by the interior:

It is against this kind of psychic operation, manifested by the kinetics of the body particular to the modern experience, that Uno's styling of the body takes on a particular semantics. This vein of biography, author, mimesis, and madness recalls the famous infidel of an author by the name of Søren Kierkegaard, with whom, on account of whose promiscuous gift—taking as much as it gives—of *name*, "authorship as such disappears."[159] If the *shishōsetsu* writer was assailed by the authorial contract "to continue to convince their readers of the authenticity of those voices created in previous

[157] For the contemporary preoccupation with space, see Elaine Gerbert, "Space and Aesthetic Imagination" in *Japan's Competing Modernities: Issues in Culture and Democracy, 1900-1930*, ed. Sharon A. Minichielo (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1998).
[158] For perceptive readings, see Gerbert, "Space and Aesthetic Imagination"; Takahashi "Oni (mania) no bungaku."
[159] Joseph Westfall, *The Kierkegaardian Author: Authorship and Performance in Kierkegaard's Literary and Dramatic Criticism* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2007), 9.

works" by way of preserving referentiality—the semblance of identity—Uno's, and Kierkegaard's, performative obsession seems to impel towards another dream entirely:

> With me it was a question of deceiving inversely on the greatest possible scale, employing every bit of knowledge I had about men and their weaknesses and their stupidities, not to profit thereby, but to annihilate myself and weaken the impression I made. The secret of the deceit which suits the world which wants to be deceived consists partly in forming a coterie and all that goes with that, in joining one or another of those societies for mutual admiration, whose members support one another with tongue and pen in the pursuit of worldly advantage; and it consists partly in hiding oneself from the human crowd, never being seen, so as to produce a fantastic effect. So I had to do exactly the opposite. I had to exist in absolute isolation and guard my solitude, but at the same time take pains to be seen every hour of the day, living as it were upon the street, in company with Tom, Dick, and Harry, and in the most fortuitous situations. This is truth's way of deceiving, the everlasting sure way of weakening, in a worldly sense, the impression one makes…. Thus I existed. If Copenhagen ever has been of one opinion about anybody, I venture to say that it was of one opinion about me, that I was an idler, a dawdler, a *flâneur*, a frivolous bird, intelligent, perhaps brilliant, witty, etc.—but as for "seriousness," I lacked it utterly. I represented a worldly irony, *joie de vivre*, the subtlest form of pleasure-seeking—without a trace of "seriousness and positivity"; on the other hand, I was prodigiously witty and interesting. …by thus impairing my own prestige I contributed to the movement which was impairing power and renown in general….[160]

Uno's contemporaries were thoroughly conscious of fashion, and regarded the multifarious shifts in Uno's persona and other idiosyncrasies as part of the milieu. Yet, it seems that what set Uno apart even within this self-consciously fashionable crowd was again, the fact that his *style* was a singular site on which the sartorial, corporeal, and affective registers of the body arise as one and the same motion. His stylizing obsession not only gave rise to eccentricities but verged on the destabilization of personhood itself—identity. No mere disguise, dressing, or makeup, Uno's was a *total* performance. Uno's best friend and fellow author, Hirotsu Kazuo, left some of the most delightful

[160] Excerpt from Søren Kierkegaard, *The Point of View*, in *Existentialism from Dostoevsky to Sartre*, ed. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Meridian, 1989), 89 and 92.

portrayals of Uno before the "great trauma" of madness. Hirotsu recounts how Uno embodied for some time the persona of a dissipated "lady-killer" (*iro otoko*), who now wandered the pleasure quarter, weighed down by regrets and yearning in equal measures.[161] In another instance, Hirotsu describes something akin to the metonymy of sensual and sartorial transformations:

> When he puts on a Western suit, he once again transforms completely. Carrying a stick under his arm and twitching a Chaplin mustache, he walks with a quick and springy gait. … However, all this seems to manifest not so much his conscious design as his sensual sensitivity (*kankaku no eibin*). If one puts a woman's kimono on him, the tactile sensation on his skin may bring on a particular change in his appearance, I imagine.[162]

With no apparent theoretical motive, Hirotsu offers an extremely suggestive reading with a remark that may be rendered only imperfectly as, "He contrived the *styling* of the entire body" (*karada zentai no konashi o kufū shite ita mono da*).[163] It may even be possible to substitute the word "styling" with "co*m/de-port-ment*" so as to illustrate the movement of the body that runs in multiple directionality: "com-" to gather the body into a gesture and "de-" to distribute it in the diffuse dissemination of signification, which nevertheless are one and the same motion made up of this tension itself. In this way, Uno displayed a feat of mimetic becoming, shifting through multiple personae, by way of sensuous contact to render his body to a particular composition each time. This is where Yamaji and Uno rise to the *bio-graphical* event, fleeting—both temporally and substantively—as it is haunting, which brings to visibility "the irreducibility of the relation between the readable and the unreadable" that constitutes "*la chose littéraire*."[164] The *bio-graphical* is that register of

[161] "Hito no yoi furukitsune no kanji" in *Uno Kōji to Makino Shin'ichi: Yume to katari* (Yūseidō, 1988), 3.
[162] Ibid., 4.
[163] Ibid., 3. Italics added.
[164] Felman, *Writing and Madness*, 5.

the narrative whereby the body—as language, the author, and the phenomenal surface that remains obstinately opaque to reason—flashes to leave imagistic aftermath. It is where the acoustic of the language inevitably bonds with the visual of figures—bodily, poetic, and human.

On the mutual bearing of writing and madness, Shoshana Felman offers the following insight: "Since there is no metalanguage, could it not be that writing madness and writing *about* it, speaking madness and speaking *of* it, would eventually converge—somewhere where they least expect to meet? And might it not be at that meeting place that one could situate, precisely, writing"?[165] The conundrum of the persistent binary revolving around, or, rather, evolving as, form and content, or style and theme, is at least in part mitigated here, not so much by a claim of resolution but a gesture of surrender to not only the eventuality explicitly given in the passage but subtle acknowledgment of the epistemological necessity to resort to binaries. It is a moment of gift. This overture to writing and madness offers the question at hand—*bio-graphy*—a way to account for the particular felicity of Uno's "thematic" pursuit of hysteria *vis-à-vis* the event of the *life world* as well as the *techné* (of writing).[166]

This style infects writing with the body, com/de-ports and thereby writes the body, and inscribes the subject's place *vis-à-vis* the other. It thus cannot but be surprising, disjunctive, absurd, and indeed maddening. Style *is madness*. This is not to trivialize the singularly traumatic event of madness but to echo, "[In] the very solitude of madmen [is

[165] Ibid., 14.
[166] The last phrase alludes, beyond the immediate notion of technics, to Derrida's conception of writing as a productive iteration, that is, a movement partaking of both "static representation and dynamic event," which reverberates with the earlier discussion of Barthes's distinction of "style" and with the entire discussion at hand. For further discussion on *teché*, see Ryan Bishop, "Method, Techne and Auto-kinesis," *Theory & Event* 12, no. 1 (2009).

there not] something at stake for all of us?"[167] More concretely, insofar as they confound the epistemological order founded in the socio-linguistic and ideological faith in the coherent subject, that is, the modern industrial subject marked by interiority, is it not that the madmen of Yamaji and Uno render certain visibility, or, rather, audibility, to the unassimilated in the moderns? If so, is it not that madness is found, if anywhere, not in the "great trauma" but instead in Uno's style, that is, the styling of the body that configured both his text and his *being* (in the world)? Is this not a *bio-graphical* moment?

None would suggest that there had been no mad people before modernity. Instead, this particularity tying madness and modernity into a certain inevitability is to suggest that madness, just as any phenomenal event, can only be thought according to—following Foucault—the *epistemic* conditions surrounding it. Humans have always been differently mad. As such, that modern madmen feature a number of recurring movements dis/articulating a number of recurring questions, affords a certain theoretical orientation whereby madness in modern times could be drawn upon, provisionally. Madness is an outlay of anxiety seen in Benjamin, Baudelaire, and Akutagawa, as well as Uno's fiction—a psychosomatic crisis *par excellence*. The contemporary mimetic urges in Uno's circle ought to point to a double infidelity: the inherently global modernity whose *modus operandi* is imitation, and the non-arrival of the mimetic target. The gap between Uno's mimetic approximation of the (Western) O/other and his madness as palpably psychosomatic, even with syphilis available as a biochemical explanation, opens precisely as this infidelity.

The subject issuing from the styled body is always on the move, mimetically engaging with whomever and whatever enters his sensual field. In other words, it is an

[167] Felman, *Writing and Madness*, 13.

ontology marked by an impersonal yet intimate relation with the other. Considered this way, the styled body is a modality of an ethical being. While Akutagawa's angel walks only with his increasingly leaden head, Uno's hero constantly *comports* and *deports* his body. In the process, he brings back aura to the disenchanted modern world: *the aura of the body, the aura of the other's body, the aura of becoming the other*.

Whatever actually happened in the "great trauma"— to turn Uno into a somber author of somber narratives—it will remain impossible to know, not because it is a sovereign individual's interior experience, or language fails to communicate the event, but for the very ontology of style, which arises as that which does not yield *to*. Could it be then that Uno went really mad only after his "recovery" from the trauma? Stripped of styling gestures, the tactics of signification devised in order to live in modernity, Uno was left no distance to travel—to the other. Disenchantment overtook him. In the end, he began to *act* the part that his body had parried for so long, the role of the *shishōsetsu* literary sage. Whether he had indeed been as successful in that "function"—to belatedly recall Foucault's famous dictum—as his contemporaries claim, is a question to leave for another encounter.[168] How can *this* madness be now cared for? An answer has already been adumbrated through the course of the study, and will be revisited by way of another juxtaposition in the Coda.

It may be proper to leave this discussion with a cogently self-reflexive pair of question and answer offered by Foucault.

MF: What then is madness, in its most general but most concrete form, for anyone who immediately challenges any hold that knowledge might have upon it?

[168] "What is an Author?", 141-60.

MF: In all probability, nothing other than *l'absence d'oeuvre*.[169]

Uno's work (*oeuvre*) lay in styling madness. Uno's work (*sakuhin*) afforded *a* site that inevitably and always arose as transference *vis-à-vis* another site—which may be called "life" (*bios*) for now.

[169] "Preface to the 1961 Edition" in *History of Madness*, ed. Jean Khalfa and trans. Jonathan Murphy and Jean Khalfa (London; New York: Routledge, 2006), xxxi. The inserted French phrase is taken from the Preface of the original edition by Plon, 1961. Insightfully, Felman translates the phrase as "[u]naccomplishment *at work*." in *Writing and Madness*, 54. Felman's italics.

Coda

but in the last resort
we must begin to love
in order not to fall ill,
and we are bound to fall ill
if we are unable to love
-Sigmund Freud, "On Narcissism"

The psychotherapeutic relationship is
therefore a re-search,
a search for what we have all lost
and whose loss
some can perhaps endure
a little more easily
than others
-R. D. Laing, The Politics of Experience

A figure from another milieu condenses—indeed brings to their very limits—the affective features that *bio-graphically* traverse Uno and his prototypical hero Yamaji: Bartleby, the scrivener. Herman Melville's 1853 short story features the eponymous character whose entire existence is defined by negativity. With his speech and bodily acts arising as an endless series of refusals and machine-like repetitions, all devoid of sociality, Bartleby dwells on the very threshold that precariously guards the melancholic from affective death.[1] The narrator, the lawyer for whom Bartleby works, begins the story as follows:

> I have known very many of [law-copyists, or scriveners], professionally and privately, and if I pleased, could relate divers histories, at which good-natured gentlemen might smile, and sentimental souls might weep. But I waive the *biographies* of all other scriveners for a few passages in the life

[1] Kristeva captures a similar affective state in her discussion of Hans Holbein the Younger's *The Body of Dead Christ in the Tomb* (1522) in *Black Sun*, 107-15.

> of Bartleby, who was a scrivener the strangest I ever saw or heard of. While, of other law-copyists, I might write the *complete life*, of Bartleby nothing of that sort can be done. I believe that no materials exist, for a full and satisfactory *biography* of this man.[2]

It is the impossibility of "biography" that from the outset modalizes the scrivener, who over the course of the story emerges as an enigma—indeed an "error" in humanity.[3] With the curious phraseological construction of "I prefer not to"—doubly negative for its feeble import—as the single reply to all demands made of him, Bartleby's sole impulse, indeed compulsion, is to *copy*—a pure act of writing.

Bartleby's "passive constitutions" appear as a hyperbolic instance beside Uno or Yamaji—perhaps beside anyone. Without forgetting the potential illumination of which hyperbole is capable, it may still be noted that the "eccentricities" with which Bartleby confounds the lawyer are figured as a kind of dislocation between two forms of writing, and thereby cast light on the discussion advanced throughout the present study regarding literature and the body, culminating in *bio-graphy*. While the lawyer "*narrates* the error that cannot be explained and represented, that remains for literature an irreparable loss,"[4] Bartleby *inscribes* (by way of) the sheer physicality of his body: "As if long famishing for something to copy, he seemed to gorge himself on my documents. There was no pause for digestion. He ran a day and night line, copying by sun-light and by candle-light. I should have been quite delighted with his application, had he been cheerfully industrious. But he wrote on silently, palely, mechanically."[5] Literature as imagined by the lawyer—biography—is confronted by the ineluctable and insoluble fact of the body

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[2] "Bartleby, the Scrivener: A Story of Wall-Street," in *The Happy Failure: Stories* (New York: Harper, 2009), 1. Italics added.
[3] Branka Arsić treats Melville's text by way of a number of conceptual clues including error, melancholy, and machine, in *Passive Constitutions or 7 ½ Times Bartleby* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007). For the error that Bartleby introduces into the order of law and therefore language, see 27-32.
[4] Ibid., 31.
[5] Melville, "Bartleby, the Scrivener," 11.

that stands mute and unprotesting and yet—or, for that very reason—petrifyingly opaque. Bartleby is an affront to biography and as such an ontological passage to *bio-graphy*.

The nature of the "writing" produced at Bartleby's hand is a question of interest. Devoid of style—the semiotic, the affective, the literary—not so much for its "legal" contents but, more consequentially, its status as "copy," the scrivener strips writing bare to the simple fact of the body—of the stationery as well as the scrivener. The material minimum. Yet, Bartleby's writing, curiously, does not impersonalize reproducibility; quite to the contrary, it *singularizes the copies* arising from the particular hand. In other words, writing is shown simultaneously at its most mechanical and radically differential moment by virtue—and virtuality—of the body that imprints. Bartleby thus inscribes an unlikely tribute to writing. And the lawyer, by way of telling the story of *this* of all scriveners—the one that defies any "full and complete biography"—unwittingly relents to that from which the literary *qua bio-graphical* arises. That is, the bafflement that besieges him is not only Bartleby's mysterious mode of being but also this lure of literature beyond biography. The "irreparable loss" then is precisely the aperture by which writing may be conjured anew.

Another memorable scrivener hails from Uno's own library: Nikolai Gogol's Akaky Akakeivich, appearing in the short story "Overcoat" (1842). Uno's fascination with Gogol's works has been extensively discussed.[6] Akutagawa's thinly guised autobiographical narrator notes, "After his friend was committed to the asylum he remembered the terracotta bust he had once given him. It was a bust of the author of this

[6] See Gerbert, "Uno Kōji," 18; Odaira Takeshi, "Uno Kōji to Gōgori—sono 'kamen no shuhō' o megutte," *Waseda bungaku* 111 (August 1985). Uno published a critical biography of Gogol, *Gōgori*, in 1938. The phonic play evident in some of Uno's character names seems clearly inspired by Gogol, e.g. Hanko Hanshirō, Ichiki Naokichi, and Akagi Akakichi, mirroring Akaky Akakeivich.

friend's beloved *Inspector General*. Recalling that Gogol also had died insane, he couldn't help feeling that some power controlled both of them."[7] The unnamed madman is, of course, Uno; Kanbayashi Akatsuki recollects having seen the very bust on top of Uno's bookshelf.[8] Satō Haruo reminisces, "Once he asked me if I had read Gogol's *Dead Souls*. When I told him I had not, he said that to think that there remained for me the pleasure of reading something so interesting made him envious."[9] The melancholic reader of Gogol is once again Uno.

Almost identical to Bartleby, Akaky displays an absorption in the work of copying to the point of absolute oblivion as to the world beyond his desk. Yet, he is portrayed as a figure with extraordinary affective facility, a feature that brings him much closer to Yamaji:

> [He] was always to be seen in one and the same place, in the same position, in the same capacity, as the same copying clerk, so that after a while they became convinced that he must simply have been born into the world ready-made, in a uniform, and with a balding head. … It would hardly be possible to find a man who lived so much in his work. It is not enough to say he served zealously—no, he served with love. There, in that copying, he saw some varied and pleasant world of his own. Delight showed in his face; certain letters were his favorites, and when he came to one of them, he was beside himself. … Outside this copying nothing seemed to exist for him.[10]

Several other notable differences between Melville's and Gogol's stories of scriveners invite further examination. Gogol's self-conscious narrator is of a different stock than Melville's and in fact closer to those found in some of the earliest fiction in modern

[7] The passage taken from Akutagawa's "A Fool's Life" (Aru aho no isshō) in *The Essential Akutagawa*, 202.
[8] Kawasaki, et al. eds., *Uno Kōji kaisō*, 79.
[9] Ibid., 224.
[10] "The Overcoat," in *The Collected Tales of Nikolai Gogol*, trans. Richard Pevearand Larissa Volokhonsky (New York: Pantheon Books, 1998), 396-97.

Japanese literature.[11] If Bartleby's existence is an absurdity within the dominion of capital and law—"Wall Street"—the pathos of Akaky's life arising from a peculiar concoction of affect—love of copying and disinterest in the world—poses an implausible protest to the nation-state ordered by "departments, regiments, offices—in short, all this officialdom."[12] Implausible, that is, until he comes back *in* death to haunt. On the one hand, Bartleby's death—more properly, suicide from starvation—affords an ironic coda of affective absolution to the lawyer-narrator's encounter with his scrivener: The final line has him exclaim "Ah, Bartleby! Ah, humanity!" On the other, Akaky's revenant effects palpably disconcerting revenge on the men of officialdom. Yet, even the phantasmal demand remains methodical, repetitive, and unvarying: he wants an overcoat.

If it is indeed a certain register of mimesis that these scriveners illuminate in their embodied encounter with the act of copying—the pure instance of writing and the body coinciding—Gogol supplements by situating it within another register of mimesis: "[A] collegiate registrar should report to a provincial secretary, a provincial secretary to a titular or whatever else, and in this fashion the case should reach [the *important person*]. Thus everything in holy Russia is infected with imitation, and each one mimics and apes his superior."[13] Mediated by the inanimate, impersonal, and material fact of letters and documents furnishing the mechanical undertaking of copying, Akaky's as well as Bartleby's is finally a singular act at variance with this epidemic of mimeticism that engulfs the sociocultural milieu.

[11] The opening of "The Overcoat" is closely traced by that of *Ukigumo* (1887-9) by Futabatei. In both, the narrator descends gradually from a broad perspective to focus in on the hero, all the while maintaining the storyteller's pose as one who transmits what he has heard with a measure of both apprehension and flourish.
[12] "The Overcoat," 394.
[13] Ibid., 415. Italics in the text.

One final textual instance to conjure in driving the study to its proper close is, fittingly, "The Diary of a Madman" (1835), another of Gogol's best known stories. Putting aside many attributes that might profitably be pursued, especially in its relation to the multiple—knowing and unknowing—reiterations that transpired in its wake, it may best serve the present purpose to recall the final scene.[14] Confined in an asylum, the mad narrator Poprishchin's final moments add up to a choric euphoria that perhaps properly gives way to an austerely mournful evocation of the mother:

> Here is the sky billowing before me; a little star shines in the distance; a forest races by with dark threes and a crescent moon; blue mist spreads under my feet; a string twangs in the mist…. Is than my house blue in the distance? Is that my mother sitting at the window? Dear mother, save your poor son! shed a tear on his sick head! see how they torment him! press the poor orphan to your breast! there's no place for him in the world! they're driving him out! Dear mother! pity your sick child!...[15]

The "piercing note" of this "most human of [Gogol's] characters" comes in the moments when he simply appeals for the minimal funds required for being in the world, as when he questions his official title—"Why precisely a titular councillor?"—or in the above plea to the mother, bared down to infantile needs, immediate and elemental.[16] Further, as Richard Pevear astutely notes, the "note" repeats "in the voice of that other titular councillor, Akaky Akakievich, when his fellow clerks torment him unbearably and he finally says: 'Let me be. Why do you offend me?'"[17]

"Let me be," it may be added, poignantly corresponds to Bartleby's mystical refrain "I prefer not to" insofar as they articulate the same drive towards a certain stasis,

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[14] Lu Xun's *Diary of a Madman* (1918) and Maurice Blanchot's "The Madness of the Day" (1973) are examples particularly worthy of note in the context of the present study.
[15] "The Diary of a Madman," in *The Collected Tales of Nikolai Gogol*, trans. Richard Pevear and Larissa Volokhonsky (New York: Pantheon Books, 1998), 299-300.
[16] Pevear, Preface to *The Collected Tales of Nikolai Gogol*, xvii.
[17] Ibid.

perhaps mimicry impelling for the inorganic, in the barest of language. By way of a methodic repetition of copying, spectral preponderance, or delusional fantasies, the three characters, Bartleby, Akaky, and Poprishchin, coincide in the textual business of *reproduction*, of not only letters and documents but time, space, and indeed the very notion of *being* in the world. The proximity between mimesis and madness is traversed precisely by this proliferation.

Where does death enter?

Having considered Uno's madness as arising from—not reflecting—the cultural milieu consumed by a mimetic proliferation that affords the narrative energy for the configuration of Yamaji, a modern(ist) figure *par excellence*, it may not be unwarranted to imagine a question: How does one imitate the death of an other? After all, Uno the consummate mimic styled himself after such "degenerate" "geniuses" as Paul Verlaine and Gérard de Nerval, who left the event of death—even suicide—as the final scene to approximate.[18] And, once again, Uno's affectation *vis-à-vis* Gogol: "There is also the fact that I have read too much Gogol."[19] To the extent that it may be permissible to succumb to the dangerous speculation regarding the precarious vacillation between the mimetic lure and incontestable psychosomatic affliction, would it not be equally imaginable that madness cannot but be a brush with (*the impossibility of mimicking*) death? This is death conceded as such—beyond representation, styled or not. That is, the limit of (the reach towards) the other, the other that seduces by the arc of distance, the distance that can only be traveled *and at the same time* opened by mimetic approximation. The end of mimesis

[18] See Ōnishi, "Uno Kōji to Arthur Symons"; Symons, *The Symbolist Movement in Literature*.
[19] Cited in Hirotsu, "Ano jidai," 49.

is madness. Alternatively, it is when Bartleby is deprived of the scrivener's work that he has no alternative but death.

Where is the mother?

If indeed "[for] man and for woman the loss of the mother is a biological and psychic necessity," that is, "[matricide] is our vital necessity, the sin-qua-non condition of our individuation,"[20] melancholia as it figures/is figured in Uno and Yamaji, the two modern individuals, is not so much an "unsuccessful separation from the mother" as a name for that perilous yet inexorable journey back to the mother, called forth by the onus of living under assaults of that *other* mimesis that closes off the distance *toward* the other, stifles the senses.[21] For the "matricide" can only be an attempt in the first place, and a misfire finally: The melancholic "mourns not an Object but the Thing" that is "the real that does not lend itself to signification."[22] The very entry into the symbolic order owes a debt to this Thing. *And, debt conjoins rather than severs*. A similar configuration of the forfeiture unawares, historically modulated, is precisely the modern experience as "shock" as explicated by Benjamin. The modern experience is by definition traumatic, as birth itself is an event of anxiety. In the end, it is the events and encounters *unexperienced* that continue to return to collect proper rituals.[23]

At the same time, if Freud's observation of the mitigating effect of organic illness on "severe disorders in the distribution of libido as melancholia" were to be further advanced, insofar as illness is cited as a case of "narcissistic hypercathexis," it seems logical that Yamaji's and Uno's inordinate preoccupation with the body is a parrying

[20] Kristeva, *Black Sun*, 27-28.
[21] Lechte, "Art, Love, and Melancholy," 34.
[22] Ibid., 13.
[23] For a lucid exploration of trauma as "history grasped only in the very inaccessibility of its occurrence," see Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience*.

measure *vis-à-vis* the trauma of the modern experience.[24] Yamaji's storehouse signifies not so much the uterine space *per se* as this nexus, the umbilical cord, between the body and the mother, and the choric lure. In this manner, the mother that haunts almost all of the texts discussed in the present study finally finds her place always *giving* to the body. Precarious as the theoretical procedure may be, the mother ought to be differentiated from the "woman" that Gayatri Spivak, for example, is weary of: "We cannot share in the mysterious pathos of the longing for [woman]."[25]

Finally, distance.

Satō Haruo recalls an occasion when Uno came to visit at his "tastefully countrified house in Shibuya."[26] To Satō who professes his love of the view from the house, Uno speaks to the effect that it is pleasant to have the view of the fields but he finds it distasteful to have the expansive sky in his field of view. Satō, baffled, inquires regarding the reason behind this odd statement. Uno explains that he detests lightning and thunder, and so to have a view of such vast skies makes him anxious. From the vantage point at which he writes, Satō understandably claims that he felt something extraordinary about Uno's nerves from this fleeting exchange. Intriguingly, what Uno articulates here recalls Yamaji's acrobatics *vis-à-vis* the visual relation to the other, sharing the same distaste for the direct gaze or visual access. In other words, anxiety regarding an unobstructed view of the skies—or exposure of the body to the roaring and blinding violence of the skies—seems to yield an affective counterpart of that which gives rise to

[24] *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, 39.
[25] Spivak is specifically critiquing Derrida's reading of "woman" by way of Nietzsche in *Spurs: Nietzsche's Styles= Éperons: les styles de Nietzsche*. "Displacement and the Discourse of Woman," in *Displacement: Derrida and After*, ed. Mark Krupnick (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 1983), 184.
[26] *Uno Kōji kaisō*, 221.

the hide-and-seek staged in the storehouse, the aim of which is not the final visual claim of the object but a series of subtle and repetitive delays thereof.

The choreography of seeing and not seeing recalls the *fort* (gone)-*da* (there) game—a simple sequence of "disappearance and return" or loss and recovery—that Freud illuminates in his discussion of trauma.[27] Freud calls it a "great cultural achievement" insofar as the child, placed in a "*passive* situation" whereby he is "overpowered by the experience" of the separation from the mother, repeats the very experience as a game with "small objects" such as a wooden reel and thereby "[takes] on an *active* part."[28] Perhaps unsurprisingly yet significantly, Freud attributes "the greater pleasure" to the second act, that is, of return or recovery, even while noting the revengeful pleasure of the first act, that is, the active abandonment of the object.[29] Interestingly, this little infantile game, precisely in its primitiveness, gestures towards a certain *divinatory* act, staged with the other in the performative equation yet solely in the service of the subject's agenda—survival.

In the doubly mimetic scene in *Kura no naka*—twice removed from the originary loss of the mother via the little object taking her place in the game—Yamaji's contrivance does rest on the same visual sequence of loss and recovery as the child's. Yet, instead of the final jubilatory return of the object into the visual field, Yamaji dwells in that interval of anticipation. Freud may refer to this as perversion, insofar as he "[lingers] over the intermediate relations to the sexual object which should normally be traversed

[27] *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, 14.
[28] Ibid., 14-15. Italics in the text.
[29] Ibid., 14.

rapidly on the path towards the final sexual aim."[30] Further, scandalously, loss and recovery are given as corresponding each to seeing and not seeing. This apparent inversion of the relation is intentional: loss for Yamaji is not so much that of the object—because the object itself becomes constituted during the very encounter. The visual dominance, the direct gaze, is in fact the commencing moment of the object. Loss in this scheme then refers to the loss of (the perverse duration of) the narcissistic amalgam of the subject yet to become a subject and the object yet to become an object.

Secondly, the lightning that renders Uno so anxious—mad—is reminiscent of none other than the photographic mechanism. Situating the modern return of hysteria *vis-à-vis* the suggestively coeval technology, Ishii Naoshi observes,

> In the late nineteenth century, sensitivity (*kanjusei*) had a particular semantic value insofar as it was associated with the nascent photographic phenomenon: photosensitivity (*kankō kanōsei*; *impressionnabilité* [sic]). That is to say, "sensitivity" meant the site of the trace of an external stimulus and "nerves" carried the same value as the apparatus of the production of images, that is, the silver screen on which is projected a virtual image that momentarily vanishes; and, as it were, the medium generative of images and language formed like ephemeral shadows in the crevice between nothingness (*kyomu*) and death. [31]

Leaving aside the way femininity figures in this equation, the immediate interest here concerns the productive *flash* of light. Blindingly striking an open vista, the photographic lightning is that moment of *total exposure*, trauma yielding an image, that is, the subject brushes against death to arrive at the other—the other already *arrested* as an image. Yamaji's equivocation of the direct gaze and Uno's anxiety about lightning coincide in this hesitation *vis-à-vis* the visual exposure with its suggestive and historical affinity with photography. If it is a certain regressive kinetics that inclines them towards the psychic

[30] *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality* (1905), in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, vol. VII, trans. and ed. James Strachey (London: Hogarth Press, 1953), 150.
[31] "Seishin byōri no seikimatsu," 113.

landscape prior to the Lacanian mirror stage marked by a particular visual order, Yamaji and Uno are captured, most of all, in so many scenes of *unlearning* what Freud's little boy had to learn by heart and, even more, by body. And this new pedagogy must *begin* with *the other* fully embodied in flesh and blood, hysterical or not, in place of the child's wooden reel, which, for all the guise of divinatory felicitation, can only be thrown and retrieved *at will*. It is this solitary act—melancholy—that *Kura no naka* continually *dis-owns*.

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